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ETHNIC CONFLICT IN THEORY AND

ETHNIC NATIONALISM AMONG THE KURDISH PEOPLE

IN IRAN, IRAQ, AND TURKEY

by

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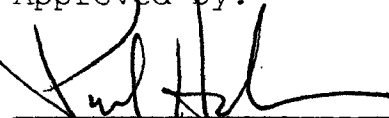presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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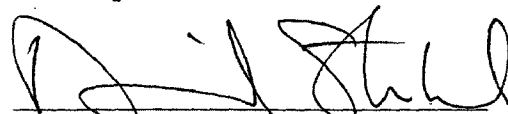
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Ethnic Conflict in Theory and Ethnic Nationalism Among the Kurdish People of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey (158 pp.)

Director: Dr. Paul Haber *P.H.*

This project outlines the assumptions of three schools of theory about ethnic conflict and relates them to the specific example of Kurdish ethnonationalist violence. The first school, the conflictual modernizationists, blames the social changes and economic competition of modernization for the creation and strengthening of ethnic ties. According to them, ethnic conflict results from modernization. The second school, the primordialists, portrays ethnic identifiers as traits that supersede economic ties. For them, ethnicity and ethnic organization are a natural, pre-modern system of differentiation between competing human groups. They believe that conflict results from deeply felt loyalties to pre-modern identities. These two schools have dominated the debate over the causes of ethnic conflict.

However, the third school analyzed in this project, the constructivists, best describes the conditions that have resulted in Kurdish ethnonationalism. The constructivists believe that ethnicity and nationalism are imagined identities, and that the ideologies of ethnicity and nationality are discourses that reinforce the legitimacy of or call for the destruction of states. According to the constructivists, a state that claims legitimacy based upon an ethnically homogenous citizenry promotes one ethnic identity as that of the nation-state. When the national identity excludes other ethnies within the state's borders, excluded groups resist assimilation, resulting in conflict between the excluded ethny and the state.

The example of Kurdish ethnonationalism exposes the weaknesses of the dominant approaches and the value of constructivism. Thus, future scholars must apply constructivist considerations to their studies of ethnic conflicts.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The issue of ethnic conflict strikes at the heart of

most nation-states. A recent study of ethnicity indicated

that, while there were only 165 states prior to the breakup

of the Soviet Union, there are as many as eight thousand

distinct ethnic groups in the world.[1] With so many

ethnicities scattered throughout so few states, few so-

called nation-states qualify even roughly as ethnic

nations.[2] These ethnically heterogenous states provide the

conditions for ethnic competition or, even, violence.

In multi-ethnic states, leaders often politicize ethnic

identity and promote competition along ethnic lines, causing

difficulties for these states. Ethnic conflicts manifest

themselves in international complications and domestic

crises. Foreign governments intervene on the behalf of

[1]James Mayall, Nationalism and International Society
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 64. The
study based ethnic diversity upon linguistic and cultural
differentiation.

[2]In 1972, Walker Connor estimated that only 12 of 132
contemporary states could claim an ethnically homogenous
citizenry. Walker Connor, "Nation-building or Nation-
destroying?" World Politics 24 (April 1972): 320.

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minorities or sponsor terrorist groups that organize around
ethnic identity. Additionally, the international community
sometimes imposes sanctions on states experiencing ethnic
conflict. Strong ethnic movements often accompany
intolerance and violence, threatening economic and political
order. Ethnic conflicts undermine the state at multiple
levels to undermine international standing, domestic order,
democracy, and legitimacy.[3]

Studies show that ethnic conflict is the most
persistent and problematical form of violence in the modern
world. Istvan Kende, studying 120 violent conflicts in
Africa from 1946 to 1976, concluded that of the three types
of potential conflict, internal anti-regime, internal
tribal, and border wars, internal conflicts were the most
frequent and deadly. Most of the internal anti-regime and
all of the internal tribal conflicts involved groups
differentiated by ethnic identity.[4]

In recognition of the world-wide importance and the
complexity of ethnic violence, numerous authors have

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[3]Rita Jalali and Seymour Martin Lipset, "Racial and
Ethnic Conflict," <u>Political Science Quarterly</u> 107 (Winter
1992): 586-87.

[4]Istvan Kende, "Wars of ten years," <u>Journal of Peace
Research</u> 15 (1978): 231-32. in T. David Mason, "Ethnicity
and Politics," <u>Encyclopedia of Government and Politics</u> vol
1, Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan, eds. (New York:
Routledge, 1992): 570.

attempted to understand this problem. Several schools of
ethnic conflict addressed the issue of persistent violence
between groups organized along ethnic lines or between such
groups and their respective states. Even until the 1960's,
theorists assumed that modernization and economic
interdependence would erode the pre-modern ties to
ethnicity. These Marxist and Liberal theorists, the
integrating modernizationists, expected the demise of
ethnicity as a means of political organization and the end
of ethnic conflict.

When the integrating modernizationists' predictions
failed to come true by the end of the 1960's, scholars quit
assuming that ethnic conflict would decrease, and they tried
to discover the causes of violent ethnic conflict. Three
schools of theory have arisen to examine the phenomenon of
ethnic conflict. The first of these schools, the
conflictual modernizationists, argues that the economic
competition and social disruption of modernization increases
ethnic conflict. The second school, the primordialists,
argues that ethnic conflict results from the assertion of
and the defense of psychologically-valued identities. The
third school, the constructivists, argues that ethnic
conflict results from the construction of national
identities that exclude ethnic groups within the states.

The purpose of this project is to examine the different schools of ethnic conflict and the relevance of their theories to a specific example of persistent, violent ethnic conflict-- Kurdish ethnonationalism in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. Chapters II, III, IV, and V review the different schools of ethnic conflict. Chapters VI and VII discuss Kurdish ethnonationalism.

Chapter II begins the review with a discussion of the Marxist approach to ethnic conflict and the competition theories that developed from Marxist ideas. These theorists portray ethnic conflict as a reflection of the class conflict. Whereas Marxists assume that loyalties to archaic ethnic ties would fade with modernization, competition theorists believe that the increased economic competition of modernization results in ethnic conflict. They believe that a cultural division of labor, with class lines approximating ethnic lines, causes violence between ethnies. However, these monocausal theories fail to address important issues, such as why ethnic groups choose to organize by ethnicity rather than class. Other, more complex theories of the relationship between modernization and ethnic conflict arose to address their shortcomings.

Chapter III discusses the other conflictual modernizationists. They argue that modernization radically

alters societies. It destroys traditional social structures and replaces them with modern economies and expanded polities. As the people within colonies and new states that are modernizing try to organize their society, ethnic elites utilize ethnic identities for their own economic advantage, and promote ethnic conflict.

The sophisticated conflictual modernization theorists addressed many issues ignored by the Marxists and the competition theorists, but they lacked explanations for the apparent irrationality of ethnic conflict. Conflicting ethnic groups destroyed the economies and the polities along with the material goods over which conflictual modernizationists assumed they were fighting. Furthermore, members of ethnic movements willingly sacrificed not only their economic well-being, but their lives for their ethnic identity. The destructiveness, deadliness, and apparent irrationality of ethnic conflict defies the material, rational assumptions of these theorists.

The primordialists, whose theories are discussed in chapter IV, emphasize the "irrational" elements of ethnic identity.[5] Primordialists examine the psychological value

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[5]This project uses the term "irrational" to refer to nonmaterial, non-political, personal needs (as opposed to tangible material resources or political power assumed to be the "rational" goals of modern people). As shall be discussed, modern nation-states rely heavily upon

and emotional meaning of ethnicity. They argue that people

draw a sense of worth and belonging from their ethnic

identity. Furthermore, unlike class membership which

theoretically can be changed, ethnicity is an identity which

people have for their entire lives and pass on to their

descendants. Thus, they will sacrifice their immediate

economic interests for their ethnic group.

At the present time, the conflictual modernizationist

and the primordialist approaches dominate discussions of

ethnic conflict.[6] Chapter V examines a third school, the

constructivists, which has arisen recently and examines the

"irrational" loyalties for their popular legitimacy.
Likewise, modern people have an "irrational" need to belong
to a understandable order. This term is included to
demonstrate that conflictual modernizationists' definitions
of "modern" and "rational" inherently denigrate "irrational"
behaviors which are necessary to societies. The term
"irrational" is not intended to denote inferiority or
dysfunctionalism and any confusion caused by its use is
unintended.

[6]Saul Newman, "Does Modernization Breed Ethnic
Conflict?" World Politics 43 (April 1991): 451-78. argues
for the inclusion of primordialist considerations in the
modernizationist discussions of ethnic conflict. Paul R.
Brass, Ethnicity and Nationalism (London: Sage Publications,
1991). covers both the conflictual modernizationist approach
and the primordialist approach on these issues at an
international approach to ethnic violence. See especially
pages 69-75. Milton J. Esman and Itamar Rabinovich, "The
Study of Ethnic Politics in the Middle East," in Ethnicity,
Pluralism, and the State in the Middle East, eds. Milton J.
Esman and Itamar Rabinovich (Ithaca, New York: Cornell
University Press, 1988), 3-24. takes a regional approach
to ethnic conflict and includes the conflictual
modernizationists and the primordialists.

relationship of ethnic identity to the process of "constructing" national identities. Constructivists argue that ethnicity and nationality are imagined identities. They explain ethnicity as a argumentative discourse that legitimizes or delegitimizes the state.

Constructivists find the roots of ethnic violence in the promotion of national identities that threaten other identities within the state. Constructivists argue that, often, the ethnic group that controls the state promotes its ethnic identity as the national identity, and excludes other ethnicities from the national community. Since a state's claim to legitimacy often rests upon its claim of a culturally homogenous citizenry, it perceives alternate identities as a threat. Excluded ethnic groups resist what they perceive as oppression, and states defend themselves through violence, promoting conflict along ethnic lines.

Chapter VI discusses the Kurdish people in Iran, Iraq and Turkey, and the history of Kurdish ethnonationalism. Kurdish leaders, in the name of the Kurdish people, have fought the central governments of these states since their formations. In Iran and Iraq, Kurdish groups have demanded cultural autonomy from the governments. In Turkey, Kurdish ethnonationalists have fought for cultural rights and even a separate state for Kurdish-speakers. Violence between

ethnic Kurds and their respective governments have flared up as recently as the Iran-Iraq War and the Gulf War. The armed conflict continues as the declaration of the Kurdish Federated State in Iraq has destabilized the region.

Chapter VII examines how well each of the major schools of ethnic conflict describes the conditions in Kurdistan. This project argues that while the two dominant schools, the conflictual modernizationists and the primordialists, provide insight into the forces that exacerbate the conflict, the constructivists best describe the causes of Kurdish nationalism. Kurdish nationalists rely upon the traditional structures of authority that remain largely intact. Also, they resisted the central authorities prior to modernization. Thus, modernization did not destroy social order among the Kurds and did not cause ethnic conflict.

Furthermore, the existence of psychologically-valued identities, proposed by primordialists as the source of ethnic conflict, does not necessitate interethnic violence. The Kurds, Persians, Arabs, and Turks have well-developed cultural identities. However, attachment to one's identity does not, in itself, require conflict with other groups. For example, an affinity for one's "Turkishness" does not require animosity towards others' "Kurdishness."

Primordialists misinterpret the origins of ethnic conflict in Kurdistan.

The constructivist theory identifies the source of violence between the Kurds and their ethnic neighbors. The root of the problem lies in the national self-perceptions of the Kurdish nationalists and the leaders of Iran, Iraq and Turkey. Although economic forces, social disruption and well-established ethnic identities exacerbate the ethnic conflict, the unifying mechanisms of the three so-called "nation-states"-- Iran's suppression of threats to Islamic unity, Iraq's Ba'thist's aspirations to lead Arab nationalism and Turkey's insistence that the Kurds are "mountain Turks"-- necessitate conflict. Their presumed "unifying mechanisms" are dysfunctional and must be moderated or ethnic violence will continue.

Since the example of Kurdish ethnonationalism reveals the weaknesses of the dominant schools and shows the value of constructivism, future studies of ethnic conflict must account for constructivist assumptions. Scholars should quit focusing on the effects of modernization or the residual effects of loyalties to pre-modern ties for the sources of ethnic conflict. While these approaches enhance the understanding of conflicts, the problematical construction of national identities causes of conflicts.

CHAPTER II

CONFLICTUAL MODERNIZATION: COMPETITION THEORISTS

As recently as the 1960s, theorists of ethnic conflict assumed that modernization would reduce ethnic consciousness and ethnic violence. These integrating modernizationists predicted that the pre-modern ties of ethnicity would recede, replaced by ties to the modern state. The interdependence of modern economies and the social structures of modern polities would overwhelm ethnicity as a means for social organization. Despite their optimism, ethnic conflict continued in developing societies and even spread into the developed world.

By the 1960's, most theorists abandoned the idea that "nation-building" would replace ethnic loyalties with loyalties to the centralized states. Modernization and economic interdependence seemed to intensify ethnic differences. Something was fundamentally wrong with the dominant paradigm. Saul Newman writes, "as (ethnic) conflicts increased in number and scope, they were perceived as more than just stubborn relics of a bygone era."[1] As

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[1]Newman, 454.

political science reevaluated the assumptions of

modernization theory, it re-examined the issue of ethnic

conflict, attempting to explain the rise in violence.

The conflictual modernizationists picked up where the

integrating modernizationists had left off-- examining the

relationship of economic forces to ethnic upheavals. They

decided that the causes of ethnic conflict could be found in

economic forces, and that "the relationship between

ethnicity and class constitutes a key to understanding

ethnic conflicts."[2] The changes associated with developing

economies, according to the conflictual modernizationists,

caused ethnic conflict.

The competition theorists are the most straightforward

of the conflictual modernizationists. Simply put,

competition theorists believe ethnic conflict is the result

of economic struggles. They argue that modernization

increases the competition for scarce resources, jobs,

housing, and economic opportunities, causing conflict to

occur along "ethnic boundaries"[3] as citizens perceive that

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[2]Pierre van den Berghe, "Ethnicity and Class in
Highland Peru," in Ethnicity and Resource Competition ed.
Leo Depres (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1975), 71.

[3]Fredrik Barth, "Introduction", Ethnic Groups and
Boundaries, ed. Fredrik Barth (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969),
9-38. Barth's term "ethnic boundary" emphasizes that the
important feature in ethnicity is not the actual
phenological trait, but the perception of identity. He

their interests are linked to those of their ethnic kin.[4]

Competition occurs either because of a cultural division of

labor, according to the dependency subschool, or because of

a split labor market, according to the ecology subschool.

Competition theory evolved from Marxist principles.

Marx believed that the social disruption caused by

capitalist modes of production creates dissatisfaction and

revolutionary zeal. However, when class lines coincide with

ethnic lines, organization and conflict occur along ethnic

lines rather than class lines. According to competition

theory, ethnic collective action and competition occur most

often when ethnically distinct populations are exploited.

Modernizing societies' increased competition for valuable

resources ignites ethnic action.

Economic competition creates relative depravity between

ethnies and the economic disparity leads to strife. Ethnic

conflict in a society results from more than inequalities

and scarcity of resources. According to Chong-do Hah and

Jeffrey Martin, conflict is most likely when ethnic groups

assumes that ethnic boundaries are politically and socially
constructed, and can not be objectively determined. "Ethnic
boundaries," thus, can be and are crossed, created, and re-
created.

[4]Susan Olzak and Joane Nagel, "Introduction," in
Competitive Ethnic Relations, ed. Susan Olzak and Joane
Nagel (Boston: Academy Press, 1986), 2.

sense that what is has is incongruous with "the goods and conditions they think they are capable of attaining or maintaining."[5]

Marxists

Karl Marx was one of the early theorists to address the issue of ethnic nationalism. However, Marx saw ethnic and nationalist sympathies as distractions from the class struggle. He portrayed the economic forces of capitalism as forces that would promote universalism over particularism. Socialism would end ethnic tension and consciousness, replacing pre-modern kinship loyalties with modern class loyalties. Ethnicity, as a relic of a bygone era, would disappear during modernization.

Marx's eurocentrism resulted in his failure to anticipate the persistence of ethnic conflict. Marx accepted state boundaries as co-extensive with the boundaries of the societies and economies that he studied. To Marx, language and sympathies determined nationality or ethnicity. He saw the world as clearly delineated national groups. Although relatively clear delineations between national groups described conditions in the Europe during

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[5]Chong-do Hah and Jeffrey Martin, "Towards a Synthesis of Conflict and Integration Theories of Nationalism," <u>World Politics</u> 27 (April 1975): 373.

the post-French-Revolution era to some extent, it did not describe ethnic relations in the rest of the world.[6]

Marx accepted nations as pre-existing "givens" to such an extent that he believed that the class struggle would occur along national lines. In the Communist Manifesto, he wrote that: "The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie."[7] His assumption of a national bourgeoisie conflicts with his assumption of international revolution. One can not assume international worker unity defined in material terms, but organized along non-material, national lines.

To the extent that Marx predicted the persistence of ethnic nationalism, it was as a tool of the ruling class to distract the proletariat from the class struggle. Like religion, ethnic nationalism was an integral part of the superstructure of society that was created by the dominant economic and political class to justify and legitimize its rule. It used ethnic and national identities to bind together different classes through the creation of a false

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[6]Even in the era of the British, Habsburg, and Czarist empires, map makers and diplomats identified regions and peoples within Europe with commonly accepted terms.

[7]Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto, in the Selected Works, I,45 quoted in Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London: Verso, 1991), 4.

a concept of national interest that concealed horizontal class divisions.

According to Marx, ethnic conflict is a mask for class conflict. He wrote that ethnic prejudice is "artificially kept alive and intensified by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes (and) is the secret of the impotence of the English working class."[8] He treated ethnic nationalist discontent as a disguise for real material discontent and aspirations for class liberation. In this sense, ethnic conflict is more than just a tool of the aristocrats. It is a symptom of a greater struggle. Energies that would be channelled into communist revolutions fuel nationalist movements.

This is not to say that Marx was wholly negative about the effects of ethnicity upon the political realm. Since some ethnic conflicts could hasten the onset of a socialist utopia, Marx supported or repudiated specific nationalist struggles according to his determination of whether their success would advance the proletarian revolution. On the one hand, Marx supported some instances of Irish nationalism, and, on the other, chastised Bohemian and

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[8]Karl Marx, "Letter to Meyer and Vogt of 9 April 1870," in Hall Draper, <u>Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution</u> vol. 2 (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1978), 237.

Croatian nationalists for seeking freedom from Austrian rule.[9]

Marx assumed that nationalism would fade with modernization. As economic competition caused by capitalism increased the hardship experienced by the proletarians, and the revolutionary vanguard educated them, they would recognize their material interests and be less susceptible to appeals to archaic ethnic loyalties. By the 1960's, however, the advances of capitalism and the spread of Marxist ideology in modernizing societies had not reduced the effectiveness of appeals to pre-modern social ties. Marxists could no longer assume that modernization would end ethnic conflict.

Marxist theorists since Marx have addressed some of his oversights concerning ethnic conflict. They argue that it is understandable that Marx, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, underestimated the appeal of ethnicity and nationalism among the working class. According to French Marxist Regis Debray, horizontal class divisions formed later in history than the cultural divisions of ethnicity.[10]

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[9]Marx's views on nationalism are scattered throughout his writings. See Mayall, 161. and Jalali and Lipset, 593.

[10]Regis Debray, "Marxism and the National Question," New Left Review 105 (September-October 1977):25-41.

Thus, ethnicity persists at a deeper psychological level and demands greater subconscious loyalty from people.[11]

Debray identifies a historically necessary link between ethnic movements and workers' movements. He sees ethnic and national ties as essential elements of communist revolution: "All modern history demonstrates that proletarian dictatorships have only taken root where they fused with a national liberation struggle, or where they have defended a national identity."[12] Revolutionary leaders can utilize the strength of ethnic ties along with calls for proletarian revolution to advance their cause. Where they have neglected to incorporate ethnic and nationalist loyalties, Debray blames this oversight for their failure.

The enduring legacy of Marxist literature on ethnic nationalism is its emphasis upon the economic sources of conflict. The economic upheavals of the conversions from feudal societies to capitalist societies strained social order. Marx mistakenly believed that the conflicts caused by these strains would occur along class lines instead of ethnic lines. However, later theorists pursued his notion that economic forces lay behind ethnic and national conflict.

[11]In this sense Debray agrees with Emile Durkheim.

[12]Ibid, 33.

Much academic research into ethnic conflict supports the case that economic competition between ethnic groups results in conflict. Teodor Shanin notes that the variables usually associated with economic class mobilization also correlate with ethnic mobilization.[13] Displeasure with one's occupation, differential rates of urbanization, geographic mobility, educational opportunity, and choice of profession correlate with involvement in ethnic nationalist movements.

John Markakis demonstrates how economic forces resulted in conflict among ethnies in Ethiopia.[14] The Amhara, an Amharigna-speaking, predominantly Christian people of Abyssinain descent, dominate the economic and political life of the country. During the reigns of Menelik and Haile Selassie, Amhara elites consolidated their rule over an ethnically heterogenous, predominantly Muslim peasantry that was expropriated from the land. As a result, leftist nationalists movements arose among other ethnic groups. In Ethiopia's poorest province, Tigray, oppressed ethnics formed the Tigray People's Liberation Front. Other groups

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[13]Teodor Shanin, "Ethnicity in the Soviet Union," Comparative Studies in Society and History 31 (July 1989): 415.

[14]John Markakis, "Nationalities and the state in Ethiopia," Third World Quarterly 11 (October 1989): 118-30.

included the Western Somali Liberation Front, the Somali and Abo Liberation Front, and the Afar Liberation Front.[15]

Conditions for Competition and Conflict

Competition theorists offer two models of the conditions that cause the most marked ethnic conflict: the ecology and the dependency models. The ecology model proposes that different prices for labor between ethnic groups explains persistent, severe ethnic conflict.[16] When one group undercuts the wages of another ethnic group, the higher-paid, threatened group will seek to protect its advantaged position. According to ecology theorists, this process of threat and defense explains ethnic conflict. Dependency theorists offer a model of a modernized "core" region and less-developed "periphery" regions.[17] The ethnic group at the rich core exploits the poorer periphery ethnies, thereby raising ethnic tension between the core and periphery groups.

[15]Ibid., 124-25.

[16]Edna Bonacich, "A Theory of Ethnic Antagonism: The Split Labor Market," American Sociological Review 37 (October 1972): 547-559.

[17]Michael Hechter, Internal Colonialism (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1974)

Ecology Theory

The ecological theorists borrow their ideas from the science of biology, which shows that species can peacefully coexistence (provided one does not prey upon the other) when they do not depend upon the same sources of food to survive. When, however, multiple groups occupy the same niche in an ecosystem, they are forced to compete.

Similarity, not cultural differences, explains interethnic conflict in ecology theory. "Niche overlap" increases the likelihood of conflict and forces a struggle to the death, or disappearance in the case of an ethnic identity.

> when two or more interspersed groups are in fact in at least partial competition within the same niche one would expect one such group to displace the other, or an accommodation involving an increasing complimentarity and interdependence to develop.[18]

When separate ethnies attempt to live in the same region, gain the same housing, and compete for the same jobs, ecology theory contends that one must absorb or eliminate the other.

Split Labor Markets

Ecology theorists view a split labor market, one in which members of different ethnic groups whose price of

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[18]Barth, 20.

labor differs[19] compete for the same jobs, as the source of conflict. Split labor markets reflect the existence of two or more groups competing for the same niche. "The more alike are the occupational distribution of two groups, the greater the competition between them."[20] A split labor market is the place, according to Edna Bonacich, where "ethnic antagonism first germinates."[21]

Several variables, which differ between ethnic groups, determine the price of labor of the workers belonging to an ethnic group. Price of labor is not simply wages, but also a group's resources and motives. For example, some groups consist primarily of members who lack the education and job skills to demand higher wages. Other groups consist primarily of members willing to accept a lower standard of living, or fortune-seeking "sourjourners" that intend to work only to return home. Such groups will accept lower wages, seek fewer rights, and are less likely to organize.

[19]Bonacich, 549. She describes a split labor market. "To be split, a labor market must contain at least two groups of workers whose price of labor differs for the same work, or would differ if they did the same work."

[20]Michael T. Hannan, "The Dynamics of Ethnic Boundaries in Modern States" in National Development and the World System, eds. John W. Meyer and Michael T. Hannan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 272-3.

[21]Bonacich, 549.

Thus, they present a lower price of labor to employers and threaten higher-priced groups.[22] .

These factors, according to ecology theory, determine whether ethnic conflict is likely to occur and be persistent. Different ethnic groups usually "have lived relatively separately from one another are likely to have developed different employment motives and levels of resources," and, thus, different prices of labor.[23] If two ethnies have the same price, there is not a conflict. However, it is more likely that one group will have a lower cost of labor than the other and threaten its position.

When a politically powerful ethny feels that it is threatened by another group undercutting its wages, it has two options. Its members may attempt exclusionary tactics or attempt to develop a caste-system. An exclusionary movement tries to deny a threatening ethny physical access, "thereby preserving a non-split, higher priced labor market."[24] A second possible tactic is the creation of a

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[22]Ibid., 548-553 for a detailed discussion of Bonacich's formulas and consideration. She is mainly concerned with immigrant ethnic groups, but also implies that these same variables are active in other ethnic relations.

[23]Ibid, 554.

[24]Ibid, 555.

caste system, or an "aristocracy of labor."[25] To create

such a system, the higher paid ethnic group legally

restricts the undercutting group from certain types of work,

limiting them to low esteem, low pay jobs.

Ecological theory explains the occurrence of ethnic

violence between subordinate ethnic groups, such as that

between blacks in South Africa or between African-Americans

and Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles. Such violence results

from one group threatening to displace another ethny. Also,

it explains ethnic conflict in relatively prosperous

regions, since it explains ethnic conflict in terms of a

loss of position rather than as a reaction to poverty.

People at any income level will resist attempts to undermine

their and their family's standard of living.

However, employers and landlords of the dominant ethnic

group, presumably the most influential members of a society,

should desire a split labor market with new ethnic groups

continually undercutting the wages of existing groups. If

ethnicity is a rational, economic issue as ecology theory

supposes, they would always resist exclusionary or caste-

creating measures. At times, however, dominant-culture

elites, like subordinate-culture elites, have promoted

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[25]Ibid.

ethnic differentiation. Ecology theory fails to account for economic elites that promote ethnic conflict.

Dependency Theory or Internal Colonialism

The central concept of dependency theory is the core-periphery relationship between ethnic groups. Dependency theorists posit a concept of a modernization that originates in "nodes" or central places and then "spreads or diffuses into more remote regions."[26] This results in different levels of modernization within the same country. The ethnic groups that occupy the "core" have higher educational and income levels.

> The result of this correspondence in spatial
> orderings is that those ethnic groups which are
> most proximate to the locus of the impact of
> modernity tend to be the most modernized; and thus
> the competition for the benefits of modernity and
> for status position in the modern sector can become
> organized on ethnic line.[27]

The "core" ethny, generally, has the most influence within the state and promotes its culture and identity as the most modern. Resistance to the dominant culture is viewed as anti-modern and backwards.

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[26]Robert H. Bates, "Ethnic Competition and Modernization in Contemporary Africa," Comparative Political Studies 6 (January 1974): 464.

[27]Ibid.

Dependency theorist, Michael Hechter argues that capitalist forms of production create economic disparities between core and peripheral regions that approximate class lines and cause:

> a cultural division of labor: a system of stratification where objective cultural distinctions are superimposed upon class lines. High status occupations tend to be reserved for those of the metropolitan culture; while those of indigenous culture cluster at the bottom of the stratification system.[28]

The division of labor results in the persistence of regional inequality and ethnic solidary. Divided societies suffer from rebellious ethnic movements among periphery groups and reactionary nationalism among the metropolitan groups.

The cultural division of labor exacerbates the class conflict. Such a society is especially oppressive to the subordinate ethnic group's proletarians an peasants. Pierre van den Berghe argues that in a culturally divided society, "the inequalities of class and ethnicity become CUMULATIVE, and the system of domination becomes doubly oppressive and exploitative."[29] The class struggle becomes complicated and worsened by ethnic differences as subordinate ethnics must overcome the barriers of both class and ethnicity.

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[28]Hechter, 30.

[29]van den Berghe, "Ethnicity and Class in Highland Peru," 75.

Summary

Competition theorists can use the ecological or dependency models for ethnic conflict to assess differing instances of ethnic conflict. The ecological model provides reasons for ethnic tensions among disadvantaged groups competing for resources in the same regions without explaining interregional disputes. The dependency model provides reasons for ethnic movements in the periphery against the core without addressing conflict between impoverished ethnies in the periphery.

Competition theorists fail to account for the motives and actions of ethnic elites. If, for example, ethnic lines roughly coincide with class lines, then it makes more sense for the leaders of ethnic movements in subordinate groups to make their appeals based upon class loyalties rather than ethnic loyalties. This tactic has the advantage that it might induce proletarians among the dominant group to aid the movement. Also, if the grievances of ethnic groups are primarily economic, then the competition theorists must account for their emphasis upon cultural rights and autonomy. They do not.

Also, competition theories fail to account for instances when ethnic groups experience economic disparity but do not conflict. Why, in some instances, do ethnic

groups with different prices of labor not experience ethnic violence? Why, under other circumstances, do ethnic groups experiencing regionally-differentiated modernization peacefully coexist? Both competition models are too simplistic to answer these basic questions.

Monocausal theories, whether they address intraregional or interregional competition, lack the sophistication to explain the complexities of ethnic conflict. Competition theory fails to deal with important questions concerning cases of ethnic conflict. It offers insight into the economic dimension of ethnic conflict, but its conclusions pertain only in specific cases. Other, more sophisticated theories arose to address the shortcomings of the competition theories.

CHAPTER III

OTHER CONFLICTUAL MODERNIZATIONISTS

The competition models left important aspects of ethnic
conflict unaddressed, such as the motivations of elites who
politicize ethnicity or conflicts between groups
experiencing economic parity. Other conflictual
modernizationists developed a more sophisticated view of the
process of modernization and its effects on ethnic
relations. They enhanced competition theory by proposing
that the process of modernization, which destroys
traditional orders and replaces them with 'modern'
structures, entails more than just the increased economic
competition. Conflictual modernizationists view
modernization as a process with many aspects that affect
ethnic relations.

Conflictual modernizationists emphasize that
modernization itself entails changes that cause ethnic
conflict. It upsets ancient societies and creates a social
system where some groups enjoy the elements of modernity
that give them advantages over competing groups. Also,
formerly isolated groups, because of improved transportation

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and communication, find themselves in a broadened, complex polity in which they must compete with other ethnies. The conflictual modernizationists believe that ethnic competition is an inevitable result of modernization and increased group interaction.

According to an early conflictual modernizationist, Karl Deutsch, modernization causes social mobilization, involvement in mass politics, among the citizens of changing societies.[1] The social integration and the economic interdependence of modernization promote assimilation into the new polity. If social mobilization outraces assimilation, then the society will disintegrate.[2] According to Deutsch, ethnic ties cause:

> consolidation of states whose peoples already share the same language, culture, and major institutions; while the same process may tend to destroy the unity of states whose population is already divided into several groups with different languages or cultures or basic ways of life.[3]

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[1]When he wrote <u>Nationalism and Social Communication</u> (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1953), Deutsch proposed that modernization would decrease ethnic conflict. For his changing views on this issue, see Walker Connor, "Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying," : 319-28.

[2]Karl Deutsch, <u>Nationalism and Its Alternatives</u> (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1969), 27. By assimilation, Deutsch implies either the destruction of one culture, or the amalgamation of both cultures into one homogenous group.

[3]Deutsch, "Social Mobilization," <u>American Political Science Review</u> 55 (September 1961): 501.

Thus, Deutsch accounts for the consolidation and persistence
of some states and the disintegration of others.

Low rates of social mobilization, as occurred in the
creation of modern England and France, or high rates of
assimilation, as witnessed when immigrants flocked to the
United States, coincide with integrating modernization.[4]
High rates of mobilization, as occurred during the sudden
creation of many of the Third World states,[5] and low rates
of assimilation, as occurs among "secluded populations of
villages close to the soil," result in differentiation and
disunity.[6] Countries in which assimilation had not occurred
prior to the rapid social mobilization of twentieth century
industrialization are unlikely to resolve their ethnic
problems and differentiation, because modernization worked
against them.[7]

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[4]Deutsch, Nationalism and Its Alternatives, 73 and 126.

[5]Ibid, 73. Deutsch specifically names the formations
of Tanzania, Zambia, and Malavia. He writes, "We have seen
that the more gradually the process of social mobilization
moves, the more there is time for social and national
assimilation to work. Conversely, the more these processes
are postponed, the more quickly its various aspects--
language, monetization, mass audience, literacy, voting,
urbanization, industrialization-- must eventually be
achieved. But when all these developments have to be
crowded into the lifetime of one or two generations, the
chances for assimilation to work are much smaller.

[6]Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication, 126.

[7]Connor, "Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying," 326.

The Destruction of Traditional Social Order

According to the conflictual modernizationists, the destruction of traditional social order during colonization or modernization constitutes a key element in understanding ethnic conflict. Whether or not they experienced colonization, modernizing societies construct new economic and political orders out of the existing conditions. Citizens, who organize their lives within family or tribal structures, must learn to cope with and assimilate to a new polity of expanded size and complexity.

Traditional status and authority lose their meaning in the changing society. Jobs that once commanded esteem, such as those of the hunter or tribal leader, become outmoded. In a society that increasingly values the goods that money can buy, those in traditional positions of authority can not purchase the products of modernity, and their wages are shameful compared to those of modern clerks, lawyers and teachers. As the structures of old societies fade, people re-establish social relations of status, reward, and power. According to conflictual modernization theory, this reworking of relationships and values is reflected as ethnic conflict. The interplay between the old and the new

stratifications is "crucially significant in explaining the emergence of ethnic groups in the modern era."[8]

Colonization necessitated disrupting social order and indelibly left its mark upon the ethnic and social stratification of colonized regions. Colonial states created new centers of political activity, attracting diverse members into unfamiliar types of social regulation. European and bureaucratic mentalities rejected loose, vaguely defined, small-scale identities. They were "an anathema to administrative rationality, which demanded a physical map with discrete, bounded units."[9]

Colonizers created colonial borders with little or no concern for the ethnic makeup of the indigenous populations.[10] Colonial states, once created, "radically altered existing patterns of social stratification and ethnicity."[11] Binding culturally distinct, small populations together under administrative rule, the colonizers created the conditions of later ethnic conflicts.

[8]Bates, 462.

[9]Crawford Young, "Patterns of Social Change," Daedalus 111 (Spring 1982): 79.

[10]Ibid.,75. When colonizers did take ethnic identities into account, it was often with the intent of dividing groups and recombining them with dissimilar groups as a "divide-and-rule" tactic, thus aggravating conditions.

[11]Ibid., 76.

Europeans fundamentally disrupted ethnic relations in most regions. Except in Islamic regions, pre-colonial life was characterized by smallness of scale and isolation from competing groups. Ethnic and religious communities lacked large-scale political structures. Social organization took place around small scale units like the family, tribe, or village. Thus, cultural affinities were in their essence 'interlocking, overlapping, (and) multiple.'"[12] This fluidity of social and ethnic boundaries, meant an absence of "crystallized ideologies of identity."[13] With the onset of modernization, ethnic identities were characterized by larger scale identities with more distinct boundaries.

Modernization and colonization destroyed traditional structures and ways of life. Social status and values lost their meaning in disrupted societies. Small-scale identities were lost in an expanded social order. Modernization replaced ancient patterns of isolation with a system of unequal competition between groups that had experienced differential modernization.

A weakness of the conflictual modernizationist approach is its need for an outside influence to explain conflict within a society. It assumes that an outside force, such as

[12]Ibid. 79.

[13]Ibid. 78.

colonization or a central state, destroys traditional social structures and sets in motion the struggle for status and wealth in the new order. However, while ethnic conflict occurs in societies that have experienced the disruption of traditional structures, it also has flared up in industrialized states and in societies whose traditional structures remain largely intact.[14] Lacking an external source of the destruction of traditional order, conflictual modernizationists have difficulties accounting for conflict.

Differential Modernization

Differential modernization is central to the assumptions of the conflictual modernizationists. They believed that different ethnic groups modernized at different rates. Europeans favored some groups, coopting them as collaborating indigenes. These groups, for cultural reasons or because conditions forced them, elected to deal with the colonizers on their own terms by acquiring European educations and competing for jobs in the colonial administration. Other groups, though not necessarily favored by the colonizers, inhabited regions closer to the colonial capitals and, thus, were exposed to modernizing

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[14]As is the case in Kurdistan, especially Iraq where much of the violence has taken place. See Chapter VII.

forces earlier. Still others resisted colonization and assimilation or inhabited remote regions and, thus, were seen as backwards or unintelligent ethnic groups.

The most modernized groups held the prestigious jobs and the positions in the administrations of the colonies and newly independent states. They gained a headstart vis-a-vis other groups in the competition for the political and economic rewards of the modern world, thereby creating objective class differences between formerly classless ethnic groups. The emerging social classes tended to reinforce ethnic differences, creating "more naked confrontation and greater likelihood of secessionist and other movements of communal nationalism."[15]

Inequality between ethnic groups persisted and the effects of colonization outlasted the colonial period. Conflictual modernization theory argued that both the advantaged and disadvantaged groups develop new, economic grievances against other ethnies during modernization. "The seemingly inevitable, uneven economic development of regions triggers animosities among both the benefitted groups and the unfavored ones."[16] Unlike group competition in

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[15]Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism" American Political Science Review 64 (December 1970): 1116.

traditional societies, which occurred between small-scale groups perceived of as equals, ethnic competition during modernization implies an unequal race between large-scale groups for advantages within an increasingly pervasive society. Often, those with economic and political advantages under colonialism, used their power to further enhance their advantage.

Increased Interaction

Conflictual modernizationists argue that many of the non-economic forces of modernization impact ethnic relations. During modernization, formerly isolated ethnic groups come into contact with others who are different from themselves, with different values, different languages, and different levels of modernization. The larger polity of the modern society intrudes upon their isolated world, regardless of their desires, and they are forced to adjust their lifestyles. Different groups respond to the forces of modernity in different ways. Some assimilate, others resist assimilation, and others attempt to assimilate, but can not. Ethnic groups' reactions to modernity's alterations of social structures determine the likelihood of conflict.

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[16]Walker Connor, "The Politics of Ethnonationalism," Journal of International Affairs (1973): 21.

Conflictual modernizationists blamed increased group

interaction of modernity for ethnic conflict. With

modernization, societies experience increases in the

quantity and quality of transportation and communication.

Trains, automobiles, roads, radios, television, and

telephones decrease the cultural isolation and autonomy that

ethnic groups enjoyed in previous eras.

> (Modern forces) curtail the isolation in which an
> ethnic group could formerly cloak its cultural
> chasteness from perverting influences of other
> cultures within the same state. The reaction to
> such curtailment is very apt to be one of
> xenophobic hostility.[17]

People became aware of others who shared their ethnic

identity and others who did not. Conflictual

modernizationists believe that this awareness leads to

discord more often than understanding.[18]

Modernization expands each individual's potential

economic competitors. Modernization "penetrates markets for

labor, turning local markets into industry-wide markets."[19]

Skilled laborers, unskilled laborers, and job-seekers,

whether they choose to remain in their traditional homes or

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[17]Connor, "Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying," 329.

[18]Connor, "The Politics of Ethnonationalism," 20.

[19]Susan Olzak, The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and
Conflict (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press,
1992), 18.

move to the urban centers, find themselves in competition with vast numbers of culturally different people. In a modern economy and polity, tribal and kinship organizations are not powerful enough to compete.

To compete and survive, individuals must seek the help of a broader collective, such as an ethnic nation. For the person remaining in his or her traditional home, the tribal or kinship group has little influence upon political decisions made far away or upon economic forces that can render entire villages jobless. For the immigrant to industrialized cities, the tribal or kinship group is powerless to assist in providing food, shelter and employment. The result is a tendency to broaden their "ethnic boundary." Thus, the "spread of modern economic structures causes a decline in ethnic diversity"[20] and fosters a population activated "on the basis of larger scale identities."[21] Loyalty to and dependence upon family and tribe are replaced by loyalty to and dependence upon a larger ethnic identity.

Ethnic groups play an important role in helping people gain urban employment, income, and education. In Uganda, competition for jobs in the Railway Africa Union formed

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[20]Hannan, 254.

[21]Ibid; 272.

along ethnic lines.[22] Since high office in the union often

meant promotion, employees fiercely sought these positions.

Often, they appealed to the tribal loyalties of those in

charge of hiring. In other parts of Africa, "less favored

members of an ethnic group place immense pressure on their

more advantaged brothers to share the benefits from their

advanced positions."[23]

In a multi-ethnic state, the economic stakes of one's

ethnic group losing its position are high. Often ethnicity

determines the allocation of government positions and

middle-class ethnics owe their livelihoods to jobs in the

government bureaucracy.

> The state bourgeoisie has little autonomy relative
> to the state; its standing in society is not rooted
> in the control of property, wealth, or productive
> facilities. An individual's class membership is
> contingent upon remaining within the orbit of
> established political authority.[24]

The cost of one's ethnic group's political downfall might be

unemployment and poverty. In such a polity, identity and

victory, or at least stalemate, in the ethnic conflict

becomes a life and death matter.

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[22]R. D. Grillo, "The tribal factor in an East African
trade union" quoted in <u>Tradition and Transition in East
Africa</u>, ed. P.H. Gulliver (Berkeley, California: University
of California Press, 1969), 297-321. in Bates 469.

[23]Bates, 468.

[24]Young, "Patterns of Social Change," 81-2.

Politicizing Ethnicity

The conflictual modernizationists examined forces
beyond those of simple economic competition. They also
attempted to explain when elites will actively promote
political organization along ethnic indentities, or
politicize ethnicity. The broadened polity of the
modernizing society increases the effectiveness of the
"ethnicity card" in the politics of the new state. The
rapid social and economic changes in modernizing societies
create the "optimal conditions" for politicizing ethnic
identity.[25] Crawford Young writes, "The surest way for
aspiring leaders to build their constituencies was to
mobilize their ethnic clientele."[26] Appeals to ethnic
identity attach a real interest to a pre-existing affective
tie.[27] The politics of modernizing societies sets ethnic
groups against one another for the rewards of modern
economics, and energizes the political strength of ethnic
ties by attaching them to even larger constituencies.

The political competition between ethnies takes place
in an environment of higher stakes and fear. For the

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[25]Joseph Rothschild, Ethnopolitics (New York: Columbia
University Press),248.

[26]Young, "Patterns of Social Change," 89.

[27]Young, "The Dialects of Cultural Pluralism," 22.

citizen of an ethnically divided society, while he or she is being appealed to on the basis of ethnicity, he or she is also aware that other ethnic groups are being similarly courted. Even if he or she is not inclined to mobilize around ethnic identity, he or she may be forced to out of fear of the loss of position in the social stratification system or fear of domination by other ethnic groups.

For elites that politicize ethnicity within a society, the advantages of mobilizing one's ethny holds a second important advantage. Ethnicity is "distinct from all other multiple and secondary sources of identity people acquire because unlike all others, its elements are what make a group a 'candidate for nationhood.'"[28] Thus, politicized ethnicity becomes a "crucial principle of political legitimation and deligitimation of systems, states, regimes and governments."[29] Ethnicity is so potent as a legitimizing principle that, as Joseph Rothschild points out, people prefer bad rule by their ethnic brothers over good rule by aliens, occupiers, or colonizers.[30]

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[28]Harold Isaacs, "Basic Groups Identity: The Idols of the Tribe," in Ethnicity, eds. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1975): 30.

[29]Rothschild, 2.

[30]Ibid, 14.

While earlier theorists had emphasized the "nation-building" potential of ethnic national identities, the conflictual modernizationists emphasize its "nation-destroying" potential.

> The nation itself, the object of every nationalism's endeavors, is artificial, a concept and model of social and cultural organization which is the product of the labours of self-styled nationalists bent on attaining power and reaping the rewards of the political struggle.[31]

Ethnic elites ask, if a nation is founded upon one ethnicity, then why not found another upon another ethnicity. Ethnicity could be created and re-created for political purposes-- used to defend the creation of a nation or promote its independence, on the one hand, and used to attack its existence by supporting separatism or irredentism, on the other hand.[32]

Elite Motivations

Conflictual modernizationists emphasize the role of elites in ethnic conflict. Elites, they argue, are those who have the most influence within a society, and it is

[31]A. D. Smith, "Nationalism and Historians!" _International Journal of Comparative Sociology_ 33 (1992): 59.

[32]This is the fundamental assumption of 'instrumentalism,' the way that most conflictual modernizationists portray the formation of ethnic identities. See Chapter IV.

elites that choose to politicize ethnic identity. The
conflictual modernizationists look at elite motives in
politicizing ethnic identity as a factor in explaining
ethnic conflict.

The conflictual modernizationist A. D. Smith, in his
book The Ethnic Revival, advanced a thesis that disgruntled
elites, the professional bureaucrats, are prime instigators
of ethnic strife.[33] The intellectuals conceptualize the
arguments for any given ethnic group's nationalism, but the
intelligentsia, from the upper and middle classes,
politicizes ethnicity and carries the message to the
masses.[34] He writes, "If the intellectuals are the
spearhead of the ethnic revival, the professional
intelligentsia form its habitual infantry."[35]

In Smith's scenario, the disappointment of potential
bureaucrats fuels ethnic movements. Educated, would-be
elites seek employment in metropolitan areas and fail to
become employed commensurate to their training. They blame
prejudice and ethnic differences for their inability to
succeed. They return, disgruntled, to their ethnic groups

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[33]A. D. Smith, Ethnic Revival (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1981)

[34]Smith, The Ethnic Revival, 108-12.

[35]Ibid., 108.

and lead ethnic movements against the existing system of social stratification. They demand special cultural rights, which they as the elites of the cultural group can use for political and economic gain, or determine that a separate society is necessary for their success.

Jyotirindra Das Gupta theorized that some conditions decrease the advantage of politicizing ethnicity and, thus, make it less likely that elites will promote it as an organizing principle. Examining the complex cultural divisions of India with its countless ethnic identities, he argued that when the cultural markers of ethnicity were "cross-cutting" instead of "cumulative," ethnicity lost its usefulness for political leaders.[36]

In India, major religious communities are split into many language communities which in turn are stratified into castes and class formations. Cross-cutting identifiers reduce the temptation for leaders to employ ethnicity to gain an easy constituency because it decreases the potential political returns. However, when ethnic identifiers are cumulative, with linguistic, religious, regional, or racial

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[36]Jyotirindra Das Gupta, "India: Democratic Becoming and Combined Development," in Politics in Developing Countries eds. Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (Boulder, Colorado: Lynn Reiner, 1990.): 241-43.

cleavages overlapping, ethnicity is a powerful instrument of advancing political demands.

In the twentieth century, Indian elites have attempted to organize collectives along linguistic ties. Intellectuals created literary societies, cultural organizations and political associations to advance the cause of their respective language, but have been thwarted because language communities often included members of different races, religions, castes and regions.[37]

For example, in the resource rich, but poverty stricken region of Assam in the 1980s, Assamese ethnic leaders articulated a notion of the "unjust deprivation of the Assamese people."[38] Earlier notions of Assamese authenticity had forwarded a concept of a language-based community. Later, however, the movements leaders sought to exclude many Muslim speakers of the language because they were immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh. Other non-Hindi speakers and Muslims from the region drifted away from the movement and were used by Rajiv Gandhi's government to force the Assamese to mitigate their demands.[39]

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[37]Das Gupta, "Ethnicity, Language, Demands, and National Development in India," in Glazer and Moynihan, 466-88.

[38]Das Gupta, "India," 241.

[39]Ibid. 241-42.

Ronald Rogowski used rational choice theory to predict
when elites will politicize ethnic identity. He proposed
two types of systems: "plural" systems, the classical
cultural division of labor "in which one culture monopolizes
the elite positions and skills," and "pillarized" systems
"in which both cultures have ample numbers of persons with
both elite and nonelite skills."[40] He believed that
"pillarized" systems experience the highest probability of
ethnic violence.[41]

In the rational choice model of ethnic relations,
elites employing ethnic ideologies consider their potential
benefit from the course of action, the anticipated cost of
that action and the likelihood of success.[42] Elites,
whether supporting existing state policies or questioning
them, choose to politicize ethnicity to "maximize net
benefit."[43] According to Rogowski:

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[40]Ronald Rogowski "Causes and Varieties of Nationalism:
A Rationalist Account" in New Nationalisms of the Developed
West eds. Ronald Rogowski and Edward A. Tiryakian (Boston:
Allen and Unwin, 1985), 91.

[41]Ibid. 90.

[42]Ibid., 88-89. He proposes the formula $\Delta p*B-C$, where
B is the benefits of a course of action, C is the
anticipated cost of the action, and Δp is the change in the
probability of receiving the benefit if the actor takes the
course of action.

[43]Ibid. 88.

> Nationalism is always rational in the sense just given, that is, embraced by the given individual because, and to the extent that, it offers him a greater net benefit (or _mutatis mutandis_ a lesser net loss) than do other possible investments of effort.[44]

He believed that rational choice explains how individuals from each type of ethnic group within a state react to ethnic group dominance-- whether by assimilation, isolation, apathy, or radical nationalism.

Thus, according to Rogowski, elites espouse ethnic nationalism most often in "pillarized" systems. This occurs because only groups whose elites believe they can supply all essential skills, or believe that they can compensate for any skills that they lack, will seek the destruction of the status quo.[45] Elites will advocate ethnic nationalism when they expect that the future autonomous nation will have a favorable supply-demand ratio for their particular skills. In "plural" societies, on the other hand, upwardly mobile elites face strong pressure to assimilate and will do so, taking the path of least resistance, if mobility is allowed.

By arguing that the economic motives of elites cause ethnic conflict, conflictual modernizationists like Smith

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[44]Ibid. The benefits sought, according to Rogowski, are economic gain and political authority.

[45]Rogowski claims that the frequent rise of nationalism in regions that suddenly acquire great wealth or valuable resources, such as oil, proves this thesis.

and Rogowski ignore the cultural aspects of ethnic conflict.
They account for mobilization along ethnic lines, but not
the emphasis by ethnic elites upon cultural symbols. Why,
for example, do marginalized ethnies fear for the
destruction of their culture, or the loss of their
historical and religious traditions? Also, they do not
answer why language and educational policies concerning it
play such an important role in the demands of ethnic
movements.

Summary

The conflictual modernization theorists view
modernization as a process that exacerbates ethnic tensions,
creating conditions that are likely to result in ethnic
conflict. Societies evolving from traditional economic and
political structures undergo radical change. An
interdependent economy with a centralized authority and a
society which increasingly values the rewards that modernity
brings replaces traditional means of survival, small scale
social organizations, and traditional values.

The differential impact of modernization affects ethnic
groups in different ways. As the modernizing, expanding
polity incorporates more ethnic groups, some adapt,
modernize, and cooperate with colonizing powers, while

others resist the effects of modernization, unable or unwilling to alter their traditional lifestyles. Advantaged groups use their power to improve their position, both economically and politically, vis-a-vis other groups. Economic competition between members of different ethnic groups and a sense that one's fate is inextricably linked to one's ethnic kin energize the importance of ethnic ties.

Elites, armed with the potent ideologies of ethnicity and ethnonationalism, compete for advantages within the changing society, where citizens increasingly rely upon larger ethnic identities as a modern support system. Elites try to gain important economic positions, and those who fail use ethnic ideologies of organization to contest the legitimacy of the status quo. These forces result in large-scale ethnic groups competing with each other for economic and political gains in starkly divided polities.

For conflictual modernizationists, ethnic conflict is essentially the result of rational, materialist interests. Modernization provides the underlying conditions for effective ethnic mobilization. Ethnicity is politicized by elites when it is advantageous, and it is used for rational goals. If conditions favor organization along ethnic lines, elites activate their own ethnic identities to gain positions of economic advantage or political power, or fight

for a separate society in which they can hold these positions.

The conflictual modernizationists enhanced competition theory by addressing the motivations of elites and the reasons for organizing along ethnic lines. However, their reliance upon rational, material interests to explain ethnic conflict result in their theory's inability to answer some important questions about ethnic conflict. While their theory attributes rational motives to the elites, it assumes that nonelites are irrational, willing to sacrifice their jobs, and lives for the advancement of elites. Also, it disregards the "irrational" elements of ethnic conflict. It does not explain why those organizing around ethicity are willing to destroy the economies and political structures from which they hope to gain the goods of modernity. Nor does it explain the persistence of conflict over several generations, long after the original goals are forgotten.

CHAPTER IV

PRIMORDIALISTS

The primordialists emphasize the uniqueness of
ethnicity as a social identifier. Primordialists argue that
ethnic identity is unique because, unlike class membership,
which can change with economic and occupational changes,
people can not alter their ethnic identity. The powerful
appeal of ethnicity, understood by "poets, artists, and
historians," had been lacking from the social scientist's
understanding of ethnic identity.[1] Each person has pre-
modern, historical, and cultural ties to those who share his
or her ethnicity and, thus, regardless of economics, his or
her fate is inextricably linked to that group.

The primordialists explain two aspects of ethnic
conflict that the conflictual modernizationists left
unexplored. Whereas the conflictual modernizationists
examined the rational, material motives of groups organizing
along ethnic lines, the primordialists account for their
irrational motives and the importance of ethnic or national

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[1]Isaacs, 30-31.

identity to an individual's sense of worth. The conflictual

modernizationists theorize about the motives of elites, and

characterized nonelites as irrational or easily manipulated

by ethnic elites. Primordialists account for nonelite

involvement in ethnic movements and why they sacrifice

personal benefit for the sake of their ethnic group.[2]

Instrumentalism and Primordialism

Primordialism is best viewed as a theoretical response

to instrumentalism. Instrumentalism and primordialism

examine how individuals and groups create their ethnic

identities. Most conflictual modernizationists followed the

instrumentalist concept of identity creation and believed

that ethnicity was a created identity, manufactured as a

political tool for the advantages of the elites.

Primordialists argue that ethnic identity is deeply rooted

in the socialization process and the human sense of self

worth.

Instrumentalism originated with the Marxists and found

a large following among early scholars of ethnic conflict in

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[2]Donald Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict (Berkeley,
California: University of California Press, 1985), 147. He
writes: "the willingness of group members to sacrifice
economic gains for comparative advantage is redolent of
ethnic group behavior that casts doubts on materialist
theories of conflict."

the 1950's and 1960's. The instrumentalists stressed the creation and re-creation of ethnic identity as a tool or weapon in political and social competition. Marx, and successive Marxists, emphasized the uses of ethnicity to incorporate competing classes within a given nation, for the advantages gained by the ruling classes.

Most conflictual modernizationists, in the tradition of the Marxists, emphasized the value of ethnicity as an organizing principle in social competition for political and economic resources. They argued that ethnic identity has an advantage over other potential organizational principles, because, "it can combine an interest with an affective tie."[3] For instrumentalists, ethnic identity may be somewhat situational, circumstantial and transitory identity, but it provides a pre-existing constituency for those seeking power or those already involved in competition for power. Instrumentalists portray ethnic groups (or at least ethnic elites) as calculating, self-interested actors attempting to maximize their gains through the use of ethnic identity.

Primordialism has experienced three different phases during the study of ethnic conflict. Its roots can be

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[3]Daniel Bell, "Ethnicity and Social Change," in Glazer and Moynihan, 169.

traced back to the simplistic notions of the Liberals, who

saw ethnicity and nationhood as a given, a self-evident,

natural principle of human organization. It enjoyed a

resurgence in the writings of Durkheim and the "strain"

theorists, who portrayed individual humans as incomplete

animals that fulfil themselves through their social

organizations.

Later, primordialism was revived as a critique of

instrumentalism. Primordialism, "renovated by its dialogue

with instrumentalism," re-emerged to explore ethnicity's

psychological and cultural dimensions that explain the often

irrational nature of ethnic conflict.[4] Fredrik Barth

presented ethnic identity as a set of cues, symbols, and

values (ethnic markers) that provided a person's

distinctiveness; separating his group from the "others."[5]

Van den Berghe related ethnicity as "an extended form of kin

selection," and an almost instinctual loyalty.[6]

Ethnicity, in its capacity as a psychological link to

the ancient past of ancestors and the unknown future of

[4]Crawford Young, "The Dialects of Cultural Pluralism," in The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism, ed. Crawford Young (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 22.

[5]Barth, 9-38.

[6]Van den Berghe, "Race and Ethnicity: A Sociobiological Perspective" Ethnic and Racial Studies 1 (1978): 401-11.

descendants, has a uniquely emotional charge. By examining

the emotional side of ethnicity and the "irrational" needs

it fulfills for those emphasizing their ethnic identity,

primordialists explain the deep-seated anxieties, the fears

for the loss of a valued past, the insecurities about the

future, the horror of cultural extinction, and the levels of

aggression witnessed in ethnic competition, which are

unexplainable in terms of material interests.

Durkheim

Emile Durkheim's wrote that the moral unity of a

society is based upon a collective consciousness of "shared"

experience, represented by and celebrated in common sacred

symbols and "primordial" identification.[7] These symbols,

which can include anything from religious traditions to

common physical traits, are the indispensable glue which

holds society together. Durkheim believed that these sacred

symbols worked best at unifying primitive societies.

With modernization, societies experience specialization

of labor. Durkheim expected economic interdependence to

gradually replace primordial symbols as the source of unity

in advanced societies, and the primordial ties of ethnicity

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[7]Emile Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society,
George Simpson, trans., (New York: Free Press, 1933).

to disappear with modernization. He thought that the
emotional strength of the "sacred symbols" would fade as
they became less necessary for the unity of a society.
Durkheim, like Marx, misinterpreted ethnicity as a relic of
bygone eras.

Strain Theorists

Strain theorists, like Neil J. Smelser[8] and Clifford
Geertz,[9] borrowed from Durkheim's theories and concluded
that ethnic conflict would surge as a problem for societies,
but would eventually disappear.[10] As societies evolve from
a reliance upon primordial ties to a reliance upon economic
interdependence for social unity, strain theorists believe
that many will suffer from "isolation combined with general
'culture shock.'"[11] These unintegrated citizens cling to
archaic ethnic identifiers for psychological security until
their society achieves levels of structural integration high
enough to include all of its members.

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[8]Neil J. Smelser, Theory of Collective Behavior (New
York: Free Press, 1963).

[9]Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System" in
Ideology and Discontent, ed. David E. Apter (New York: Free
Press, 1963),47-77.

[10]see Newman, 454-5.

[11]Smelser, 326.

Strain theorists posit the chronic malintegration of society. Social friction is persistent and will always require unifying ideologies like nationalism or ethnicity.

> No social arrangement is or can be completely
> successful in coping with the functional problems
> it inevitably faces. All are riddled with insoluble
> antimonies: between liberty and political order,
> stability and change, efficiency and humanity,
> precision and flexibility, and so forth.[12]

To maintain social unity, societies, leaders and people, resort to ideologies, like ethnicity. These ideologies hold the society together until their inherent inconsistencies cause them to lose their power as symbols of unity.

In Old Societies and New States, Geertz outlines the pattern for pre-industrial, modernizing state's attempts to maintain social unity.[13] According to him, primitive societies rely exclusively upon ethnic kinship ties for social unity. The strains of colonization can be reduced by a continued emphasis upon race, language, religion, and customs.[14] Often societies in contact with colonizing powers experienced a resurgence in religion and xenophobic adherence to ancient customs. Ethnic ties become

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[12]Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System," 54.

[13]Geertz, Old Societies and New States (New York: Free Press, 1963).

[14]Smelser, The Theory of Collective Behavior, 354.

politicized between colonized and colonizing populations.[15]
Eventually, the strain theorists believed, ethnicity loses
its unifying authority. Kinship, tribe, language, region or
custom lack the unifying power necessary to maintain order
in a modern society.

Strain theorists believe that unity in a modern society
can only be maintained by calls to loyalty to a civil state.
In a heterogenous colony or new nation, elites politicizing
ethnicity would more likely emphasize factors of
dissimilarity than factors of commonality. Since appeals to
ethnic loyalty are divisive, societies must foster loyalty
to the civic state. Geertz wrongly assumes that, since
ethnicity becomes dysfunctional, societies will no longer
utilize it as a mechanism of unity.

While Durkheim and the strain theorists identified the
deep psychological roots of ethnicity, they exaggerated the
ability of governments to foster loyalties to the civic
state. Although appeals to ethnic loyalties are often
divisive within a state, many states have persisted in such
appeals, equivocating loyalty to the ethnic nation (most
often the dominant ethnic group's identity) with civic
loyalty, and politicized ethnic identity among subordinate
groups. The results are destructive because ethnic

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[15]Geertz, <u>Old Societies and New States</u>, 112-7.

identities were not as malleable as predicted. The state leaders did not create loyalties to the centralized state as strong as those that remained attached to ethnic identity.

Like later primordialists, Durkheim and the strain theorists essentially viewed ethnic identities as dysfunctional. While the instrumentalists portray ethnicity as a tool of elites to combat a civic unity that is disadvantageous to them, primordialists portray ethnicity as a psychological force that causes the same sort of disintegration. However, if one views ethnic identity as only a persistent relic of antiquity that complicates modernization, one implicitly criticizes those employing ethnic ideologies as disintegrationists. Primordialists and instrumentalists alike do not take seriously the demands of ethnic movements for cultural rights (except as obstacles to modernization).

The Source of Conflict

The group drive to increase or maintain status relative to other groups is the dynamic that causes ethnic conflict, according to the primordialists. For both rational and irrational reasons, the fates of individuals are attached to their ethnic groups. They gain economic advantages or suffer disadvantages according to group membership. Their

ethnic identity will be passed on to their descendants, so they worry that their ethnic group might be relegated to the position of "hewers of wood and water drawers."[16] Thus, primordialists argue, they worry about their group's position within society.

Individuals also receive a sense of psychological worth from the status of their ethnic group. R. Paul Shaw and Yuwa Wong argue that humans have an inherent survival mechanism that connects them to their group. This mechanism, which developed in the prehistoric past for the protection of kin and tribal groups, is misplaced in the modern world.[17] Individuals, through a process of channelled cognition, commit loyalties to their ethnic groups that evolution designed for smaller groups.[18]

Shaw and Wong envision this identification process as a system of concentric circles of potential loyalties, with the individual at the center and the civic state at the outside ring.[19] The factors that influence at which level an individual chooses to commit his or her loyalties are the

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[16]Horowitz, 175-76.

[17]R. Paul Shaw and Yuwa Wong, The Genetic Seeds of Warfare (New York: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 23-40.

[18]Ibid., 65-68.

[19]Ibid. 107. They note that identity with all humanity is also possible.

same as those that are associated with ethnic group

boundaries: phenotypical characteristics, common language,

common homeland, common religion, and the belief in common

descent. Thus, an identification mechanism for the defense

of the prehistoric tribe creates a sense of altruism and the

tendency for self-sacrifice within individuals that identify

with their ethnic nation.[20]

William Bloom, another social scientist that related

theories of identification to examine nationalism, explained

the importance of the group identity to the sense of

security of individuals. A change of "historical

circumstances," which threaten a "generalized identification

(such as ethnicity)" will also threaten the "identity of

each individual within that group."[21] Sometimes,

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[20]Shaw and Wong imply that the primary location for these loyalties of modern people is the nation-state. William Bloom, Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990) argues that nation-states have an advantage even over ethnicity, clan, tribe or sect, because they monopolize the use of force and are considered the norm in modern societies. However, in a modernizing society, this "norm" is not universally accepted and, thus, some states are unable to direct the loyalty toward themselves and the loyalties of their citizens remain committed to identities represented by circles nearer the center, like ethnicity.

[21]Bloom, 39.

individuals are prepared to die rather than "betray the belief and negate an identity."[22]

Portraying ethnic and national identities as mechanisms of prehistoric social unity that have lost their meanings in the modern era presents several problems. For example, the primordialists need to account for why individual loyalties shift focus from the small group or tribe to the nation or state. The former are collections of personally known people, while the latter imply a vast community of unseen strangers. To postulate that such a shift has occurred on an international scale, primordialists must provide a reason for it. Alternatively, if one assumes that archaic kinship ties are transferred to modern nations, why are they not transferred to mankind as a whole?

The Importance of the Ethnic Group

As a consequence of the unique quality of ethnic identity, the status of an individual's ethnic group when compared to other groups is often more important to that individual's sense of belonging or self-esteem than his or her relative status when compared to other individuals in a society.[23] People derive a sense of self worth from two

[22]Ibid, 72.

[23]Isaacs, 34-36.

sources: their value as an individual and their value as a member of a group. Individual worth, however, is meaningful only within an enclosure of a homogenous group, comparing oneself to one's comparable equals. An individual can derive his or her worth from his or her personal achievements, but such "sources of belongingness and self esteem serve only where basic group identity (ethnicity) differences do not get in the way."[24]

Thus, the Chinese feel pride in their great past, and ex-untouchables of India do not escape feelings of negativity. People can derive self worth from different sources, and the relative esteem of ethnic group identity is of utmost importance, but most people need all they can get from all sources.[25] This aspect of ethnic identity accounts for its political authority and the stakes involved in loyalty to one's group.

The Invidious Comparison Model

Donald Horowitz provides a model of how ethnic groups formulate their identities, and their evaluations of their ethnic identities. He portrays it as a confused and complicated process that occurs during colonization. As

[24]Ibid., 34.

[25]Ibid., 35.

Europeans sought to govern their vast new territories, they evaluated indigenous cultures, favored groups that cooperated, and sought the aid of these indigenous groups in rule. Groups that more easily adapted to European domination became identified as "advanced," "civilized," and "reasonable." Groups that resisted were seen as "savages," and those who failed to adapt as "backwards."[26] This process created tensions among indigenous ethnic groups, pretension among successful groups, and resentment among unsuccessful groups.

These ethnic evaluations were used by colonizers for their own purposes, to divide and conquer the indigenous peoples. Colonizers selected certain groups to assist in administration, staff the bureaucracy, and fight in the army. They relegated others to menial tasks and manual labor, more fitting their presumed capabilities.

With time, the presumed cultural differences among ethnic groups became magnified in intensity. The experience of success or failure as measured against European standards strengthened the meaning of ethnic affiliations. Those favored by Europeans, viewed as advanced and intelligent, succeeded in a Westernized society and those viewed as backwards and ignorant failed.

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[26]Horowitz, 151-54.

> The colonialist thus set in motion a comparative
> process by which aptitudes and disabilities imputed
> to ethnic groups were to be evaluated. Those evalu-
> ations, solidly based in groups disparities that
> emerged, could not be dismissed as the irrelevant
> invention of a foreign overlord. Like the new
> polity and economy in which the disparities were
> embedded, the evaluations took hold.[27]

Ethnic evaluations became self-fulfilling prophesies.

Ethnic groups' presumed differences, imposed by their

colonizers, became real to the indigenous ethnies.

As a result of this process, ethnic groups developed

assumed cultural traits. Positive and advanced attributes

included: enterprising, aggressive, industrious, arrogant,

intelligent, pushy, cunning, ambitious, and coarse.

Negative and backwards attributes included: lazy, indolent,

lacking initiative, polite, ignorant, submissive, dependent,

easygoing, and proud.[28] These traits became an important

element of each colonized person's ethnic identity.

According to the invidious comparison theory, the

members of each ethnic group collectively choose which pre-

modern traits to value and maintain (a society may view a

part of its identity as simultaneously backwards and, yet,

invaluable because it differentiates their group from

others). Other ethnic markers and customs fade, victims of

[27]Ibid., 164.

[28]Ibid., 169.

modernity.[29] The remaining group attributes determine the

success or failure, advanced-ness or backwardness of the

group.[30] An individual identifies himself or herself as a

member of an ethnic group, his or her group's evaluations of

itself and the group's comparison to others becomes vital,

and he or she fights for the relative advancement of his or

her group.

The demand to catch up to other groups or maintain

status in this system of "invidious comparison" between

ethnic groups creates ethnic conflict. As Horowitz

imagines, colonization broadens the polity for an ethnic

community, bringing it into contact with ethnic strangers

who have mastered the skills of modernity better than

itself.[31] Backwards groups, with severe anxiety about the

threats emanating from other groups, push to catch up or

face habitual subordination.[32] Advanced groups perceive the

threat to their position and seek to maintain the advantages

they have achieved from modernization.

[29]Ibid., 172.

[30]Ibid., 151-54. Horowitz includes discussions of how
location, natural resources, and educational opportunity
also determine a group's status. However, it is the
resulting evaluations of advanced-ness and backwardness that
causes conflict.

[31]Ibid., 165-66.

[32]Ibid., 173-76.

In addition to the pressure caused by the presence of ethnic strangers, members of ethnic groups are pushed to catch up by their own elites. The sentimentality for backwards traits often exhibited by former colonizers for the "dignity, politeness, and nobility" of indigenous peoples, finds no counterpart in the urges of their leaders to modernize, and assume advanced attributes, customs and habits.[33] The pursuit of group status, along with the power and prestige that accompany it, assumes primary importance to group members.

Individual identity and group fate are inextricably linked. Members of groups strive to associate that group's presumed attributes to a positive identity.

> Since the individual "sense of identity is the feeling of being a worthy person because he fits into a coherent and valued order of things," ego identity depends heavily on affiliations. A threat to the value of those affiliations produces anxiety and defense.[34]

Thus, the struggle for status among the various ethnic groups in a society takes on a deeply personal meaning to the members of ethnic groups.

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[33]Ibid., 174.

[34]Ibid., 181. Horowitz cites Alan O. Ross, _Ego Identity and Social Order_ (Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association, Psychological Monographs, no. 542, 1962), 27.

The stakes are high for ethnic groups trying to catch up to their advanced counterparts. Members of ethnic groups fear subordination. They do not want themselves, their descendants, and their fellow group members to become relegated to low-esteem, low-paying jobs. Likewise, they do not want their ethnic identity to suffer low prestige in comparison to other groups. They tend to view conciliatory leaders as excessively generous and even traitorous. Every issue becomes a survival issue. The fear of extinction is a powerful threat and a rationale for hostility.

Once ethnic evaluations, verbalized and delineated, sink in and take on a subconscious role in a society, they are an important determinant in ethnic conflict. These evaluations, based on stereotypes, become culture. Following independence, political events highlight and politicize these stereotypes. Conflict between groups erupts in a struggle for pre-eminence in the society.

Summary

The primordialist approach to the study of ethnic conflict keeps scholars attentive to the power of ethnicity to overwhelm economic and class considerations. Ethnic identity links humans to their ancestral past as well as their descendants' future. As such, it holds a

psychological meaning that surpasses the importance of a single life or lifetime. Simultaneously, it links people to a group whose collective social status holds deep, subconscious relevance to the ethny member. The social strain of modernization increases the need for both self-worth and finding emotionally-linked allies.

Primordialism also demonstrates that ethnic conflict becomes so murderously intense and destructive beyond the economic goals of the elites and persistent beyond its uses by the elites, because of the "unique" meaning it holds for individuals. Those motivated by ethnic ideologies compete not only for economic advancement, they also act out of pride in identity, a fear of subordination, and a horror for the extinction of a valued affiliation. This nonmaterial, "irrational" element of group identity in ethnic conflict explains why elites and nonelites willingly destroy the political and economic structures over which they fight.

Primordialists account for the emotional power of the "affective ties" of ethnicity that instrumentalists see as a useful organizing principle. Roughly speaking, elites employ ethnic ideologies, which they may or may not feel emotional attachment to themselves, for their own purposes, as an instrument of political organization. The psychological strength of ethnicity, the implication of the

individual's shared fate with his ethnic kin, explains why the masses follow.

While instrumentalists tend to exaggerate the malleability of ethnic identities, primordialists downplay the political manipulation of ethnic boundaries. The invidious comparison model assumes that groups, as they adjust to modernity, choose some primordial traits to value and maintain as group identifiers, while other traits fade. With the fading of traits, ethnic boundaries broaden to expand the size of the group. Which traits are maintained and which traits are dropped determine which people are included and which are excluded from the identity. If this is a conscious political act, it begs the question of who politically gains from the resultant inclusions and exclusion.

Also, the primordialists rely upon some force to upset the pre-modern social relations among ethnies. In the absence of an obvious influence, such as colonization or modernization, the primordialists must explain what sets in motion the process of conflictual ethnic group comparison. They account for the onset of the invidious comparison process when colonization causes groups to jealously compare themselves by the colonizers standards of "advanced-ness" and "backwardness." However, how does this occur in

industrialized countries which experience ethnic antagonism?
Whose values determine the relative positions of groups?
Lacking their own explanations for the initial causes
of conflict between ethnies, the primordialists must rely
upon the theories of the conflictual modernizationists.

Finally, the existence of strong identities in itself
does not necessitate conflict. A strong sense of loyalty to
one ethnic identity does not require animosity towards
another ethny. Primordialists can not account for well-
developed ethnic identities, which suffered from colonialism
and are established in the primordial past, but do not
experience violence.

CHAPTER V

CONSTRUCTIVISTS

The third important school of ethnic conflict, the

constructivists, challenges the basic assumptions about the

formulation of ethnic and identity of the conflictual

modernizationists and the primordialists. Other theorists

see ethnicity as a demarcation of conflicting groups or as

an instrument of political manipulation, but the

constructivists believe that the creation of national

communities, using ethnic identity as a basis for

legitimation, results in conflict.

The conflictual modernizationists and the

primordialists share certain basic beliefs about ethnic

identity. They both believe that identity is created and

re-created, sometimes consciously by ethnic elites or state

authorities (as instrumentalists usually emphasize), and

sometimes unconsciously among masses and elites alike,

limited by ascriptive ties (as primordialists usually

emphasize). Often, according to instrumentalists and

primordialists, ethnicity is politicized, created or re-

created in anticipation of competition, during competition, or in response to competition.

Constructivists, however, identify the source of conflict as the way in which ethnicity is imagined. They agree that ethnic identities are created and re-created during conflicts. However, while others portray this creation and re-creation as the result of the conflict, constructivists portray the conflict as the result of the creation and re-creation.

The question of the relationship between conflict and the manipulation of identity is more than a simple "chicken or the egg" debate. Others assume that some other force (modernization or colonization for the conflictual modernizationists) starts conflicts that set in motion the creation and re-creation of identities (by expanding or contracting "ethnic boundaries") for advantages in the conflict. However, constructivists believe that the cause of the conflict is the political attempts to establish, create, and re-create national identities.

The constructivists argue that nations must develop, or construct, identities that explain the unity of their members beyond the simple legitimation of the civil state. To persist in modernity, nations and ethnic nations must create a consciousness of the greater nation such that the

members of the group perceive a common bond with others that they never have met or never will meet. Social ties, such as common culture, language, race, ethnicity, religion, or sense of history foster unification. When individuals are excluded from the national identity, or drawn to alternative identities, the divided society suffers competition or conflict.

According to the constructivists, modern ethnic identity is an ideology that results from intentional political efforts and accidents of history. Standardizing languages, drawing maps, taking census and writing national histories constructs the social reality of a nation. The viability and attraction of the constructed nation depends upon its ability to establish its legitimacy in history.

Nations and ethnic identities define themselves, in a sense, by what they are not-- what is outside the identity. Thus, some identities base themselves upon opposition to outsiders. Nineteenth and twentieth century colonial nationalists, for example, identified themselves and their nations as "not European." The outside-inside identity relationship plays an important role in constructivist theory of ethnic conflict.

The National Myth

Constructivists assert that a nation-state must create a national culture at some level if it is to survive. "Nations need myths to live by," according to James Mayall and Mark Simpson.[1] Ethnicities, like ideologies, contain varying capacities to attract followers. Ethnicities and nations must establish themselves in the mythical past to achieve legitimacy among their potential adherents. The communality of the group is celebrated in rituals and symbols that are deliberate political inventions to create the essence of nationhood.[2]

The ability to construct a useable national myth determines a nation's or an ethnic identity's viability. For a nation-state, the inability to create a national culture and focus loyalties upon the centralized state results in conflict and secession. Likewise, the existence of an ethnic culture, or any competing identity that attracts strong loyalties counter to the central authority, causes a competition for legitimacy. Strong identities

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[1]James Mayall and Mark Simpson, "Ethnicity is not Enough: Reflections on Protracted Secessionism in the Third World," International Journal of Comparative Sociology 33 (1992): 10.

[2]Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: University Press, 1983).

challenge a state's legitimacy and offer potential ethnic

nationalisms that weaken its authority.

The works of Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, and Terence

Ranger discuss how ethnicity and the nation are imagined.

They write that the "historical" traditions of nations are

invented. Nationalists promote symbols and historical

traditions that create a sense that the nation has existed

since the prehistoric past. The nation and patriotic

loyalty to it, thus, are defensible as respect for the past

and the practical acceptance of a historical "given."

According to Gellner, "nationalism is not the awakening

of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where

they do not exist."[3] The nation-state system and modern

economies require nation-states. They are necessary for

international legitimacy and are the mechanisms for legal

regulation of modern economies. The imperatives of

industrial society, which necessitate homogeneity, pressures

societies to become homogenous. This pressure "eventually

appears on the surface in the form of nationality."[4]

Nationality, then, is a fabrication, created by nationalists

to justify statehood.

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[3]Ernest Gellner, Thought and Change (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964), 169.

[4]Gellner, Nations and Nationalism (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 39.

In <u>The Invention of Tradition</u>, Hobsbawm and Ranger emphasize the artificial nature of national identity. Hugh Trevor-Roper[5] points out that many Scottish customs, such as the kilt, were actually the invention of late nineteenth century nationalist.[6] Falsified pasts were fabricated in many ways and symbols of so-called national traditions were presented as respect for the past and respect for the historical roots of the nation.

Historical continuity had to be invented for nationalism. This was achieved through:

> semi-fiction (Boadicea, Vercingetorix, Arminus the Cheruscan) or by forgery (Ossian, the Czech medieval manuscripts). It is also clear that entirely new symbols and devices came into existence as part of national movements and states, such as the national anthem, the national flag, or the personification of 'the nation' in symbol or image, either official, as with Marianne and Germania, or unofficial, as in the cartoon stereotypes of John Bull, the lean Yankee Uncle Sam and the 'German Michel.'[7]

In the age of nationalism, Europeans invented many of the public symbols associated with the nation.

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[5]Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland," in Hobsbawm and Ranger, 15-42.

[6]The kilt was imposed by eighteenth century English Quakers who wanted their scantily clad Scottish factory workers properly dressed. It was later revived among the British gentry by those who wanted to advertise their highland roots.

[7]Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in Hobsbawm and Ranger, 7.

The invention of tradition was not limited to Europe. Ranger describes how Africa imported the concepts of "the tribe" and "the nation" from Europe.[8] Before the "false" Africa of the colonialist era, Ranger claims that there was an Africa where tribal identities were radically different.[9] In another work, Ranger describes how people speaking dialects referred to as Shona were divided into hundreds of tribes by the Rhodesian government, and how Methodist Episcopal, Dutch Reformed, Jesuit, and Trappist missions created the Manyika, Karanga and Zezuru languages.[10]

The French National Identity

The dominant way for nations to imagine or define their nationality, the French model, necessitated problems for the ethnically heterogenous imitators that followed it. French nationalists, during the French Revolution, formulated a

[8]Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in Hobsbawm and Ranger, 211-262.

[9]An important debate rages among constructivists. They argue whether, amid the constructed identities, there ever were "genuine" nationalities. Anderson criticizes the usefulness of the "genuine-ness" paradigm, while Hobsbawm and Ranger imply that "genuine" nationalities would not be as problematical as the constructed ones.

[10]Ranger, "Missionaries, Migrants, and the Manyika," in The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa, ed. Leroy Vail (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1989), 118-50.

concept of nationhood that envisioned the legitimate nation as a state governing an ethnically homogenous, sovereign people.[11] Others that tried to adhere to this model discovered that the ethnies that were excluded from the national culture within their states claimed to be separate peoples deserving their own state.

Benedict Anderson traces the formulation of the French model of an ethnic nation.[12] The leaders of the French Revolution advanced a concept of the nation that included those of European descent who spoke French as their first language. Adherence to this linguistic standard was enforced throughout the regions formerly under Bourbon control. "Frenchness," speaking standardized French and recognizing Paris as the central authority, was violently imposed by the Revolutionary government.

The French model of the homogenous and linguistic "nation" entails a mythical attachment between the native-born speakers of the language that dominates a geographic region and the land of that region. Dominant-language speakers came to presume that ethnically and linguistically

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[11]Liah Greenfield, Nationalism: Four Roads to Modernity (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), 91-188. Greenfield discusses the formation of French ideas of nationalism. She discusses the role of Rousseau's philosophy on pages 172-77.

[12]Anderson, Imagined Communities, 67-82.

different people did not belong and that even learning the language did not entitle one to enter into the national community. One needed to be born into it.

> The lexicographic revolution in Europe, however, created and gradually spread, the conviction that languages (in Europe at least) were, so to speak, the personal property of quite specific groups-- their daily speakers and readers-- and moreover that these groups, imagined as communities, were entitled to their autonomous place in a fraternity of equals.[13]

Other nationalisms of the same era, such as those that arose in Germany as a response to the French invasion, also asserted the French model of an imagined nation. Germans, for a large part, defined their nationality in terms of opposition to France.[14] Important nationalist songs like "Wacht am Rhein" emphasize that Germany arose in military struggle against the French. Despite this, or possibly because of it, Germans imagine their ethnic nationality in a fashion similar to the French-- people of European descent, born in a land called "Germany," and who speak German as their first language.

According to constructivist theory, the imposition of ethnic homogeneity, implied by the French model of a legitimate nation, and the demands for nationhood by those

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[13]Ibid., 84.

[14]Hobsbawm, "Mass Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in Hobsbawm and Ranger, 277-278.

who argue for the existence of their ethnic nation cause ethnic violence. States attempt to integrate and homogenize their diverse populations to meet international standards of nationhood and to eliminate potential threats of separatist or irredentist movements. Ethnies, whose elites created a strong enough "imagined community" to survive, resist integration.

Other Models

Although the French model dominated throughout the twentieth century, Anderson outlines other versions of nationalism that existed. The North American model, the first nationalist movement, pre-dated the French model. Additionally, the regions affected by the collapse of the Spanish Empire between 1810 and 1830 experienced a style different from Europe. These models defined their respective nations without ethnic descent.

North American nationalism was qualitatively different from the French model. Although the leaders of the American Revolution were predominantly Protestants of English descent, inclusion in the nation was not based upon ethnic descent.[15] Black slaves and indigenous peoples were excluded, as were Catholics, and later Southern European and

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[15]Anderson, Imagined Communities, 47-65.

Asian immigrants. Inclusion in the constructed national

community was not based upon one's ancestors' presumed

inhabitance in the country since supposedly everyone's

ancestors had immigrated at some time.[16] Unlike in France,

the descendants of immigrants could readily assimilate to

the dominant culture (much more easily provided they were

white Protestants). While white Protestants enjoyed many

social advantages, Americans lacked a sense that being

"American" was rooted in a historic connection to the land

or the dominant language.

Those of European descent in Latin America imagined

their nations in a similar fashion.[17] The nations

associated with the despotisms, rebellions, and civil wars

that followed the collapse of Spain shared with North

America that, so long as one could speak the language of the

economic elites (English in North America, Spanish or

Portuguese in Central and South America), ethnicity was not

a barrier to inclusion within the nation. Generally,

governments in the Western Hemisphere ruled in the name of a

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[16]Note, however, that there is prestige attached to
one's family having long-term residence in the new world.

[17]Anderson, Imagined Communities, 47-65.

sovereign people (though not necessarily democratically)
that was not ethnically exclusive.[18]

The nationalities of the following eras were imagined
in two different ways: the anti-colonial version and the
French version.[19] The nationalisms of the early twentieth
century, those that followed the collapse of the Habsburg,
Ottoman, Russian, and Ch'ing empires, and the nationalisms
of the post World War II eras, following the collapse of the
bourgeois empires of France, Britain, Holland, Belgium, and
Portugal often followed the anti-colonial model of
nationalism. However, the leaders in these newly
independent states eventually forwarded the French,
linguistic, ethnically homogenous model.

The usually temporary third version of nationalism,
developed among ethnic elites who had been discriminated
against by Europeans, was essentially anti-European in
nature. The "nation" in many post-colonial states consisted
of all non-Europeans. Ethnic elites, who had attempted to
assimilate to Western culture, competed for jobs in the

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[18]van den Berghe notes that indigenous peoples and
those of European or part-European descent are visually
indistinguishable. Pierre van den Berghe, "The Ixil
Triangle," in State Violence and Ethnicity, ed. Pierre van
den Berghe (Niwot, Colorado: University Press of Colorado,
1990), 253-288.

[19]Anderson, "The New World Disorder," New Left Review
193 (May- June 1992): 3-4.

colonial bureaucracies. Like the North American and Latin American creole pioneers of earlier eras, these indigenous elites found that they were limited to lateral movements within the bureaucracies, and denied the prestigious promotions to the European capitals.[20] In their frustrated "journeys" from post to post within the colonies, these elites met fellow ethnic "sojourners" who shared their fate. Among these elites, the new form of nationalism arose.

Anderson relates the story of Bipin Chandra Pal of India in 1932.[21] He was educated in England and subjected to the same civil service exams as his England-born competitors. However, regardless of how well he performed within a supposed meritocracy, his ethnic identity restricted him to work within the Indian subcontinent. Thwarted elites, like Bipin Chandra Pal, imagined a community of "thousands and thousands like themselves," similarly frustrated.[22] The social barriers against the members of their imagined community convinced the elites that they needed and deserved a nation of their own, independent of the Europeans.

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[20]Anderson uses "creole" to denote native-born people of European descent.

[21]Anderson, Imagined Communities, 92-93.

[22]Ibid., 77.

To create the new "nationalities", elites not only
first imagined the community, they formulated the
definitions of it. The attitudes of these nationalist
elites ("culture-brokers")[23] shaped what ethnic markers--
language, culture, religions-- became included within the
boundaries and textures of the new identity. Early on, the
definitions were broadly inclusive of non-European ethnies.

Following independence, however, nationalisms that were
essentially anti-European evolved in the face of pressures
from ethnonationalisms among groups that forwarded a French
model of nationalism. Former colonies lacked a "usable pre-
colonial past from which a modern national myth (could) be
constructed."[24] Separatist groups, advancing an "ethnic
homogeneity" concept of the nation forwarded competing
claims to legitimacy. Many of these groups were capable of
creating a national myth for their ethnic identity that
questioned the legitimacy of the central governments. The
governments that survived often were captured by groups that
enforced a linguistic, ethnically homogenous model of
nationalism, despite the reality of the ethnic identities
within the populace.

[23]Vail, 11.

[24]Mayall and Simpson, 10.

Problems For The French Model

The imposition of linguistic and ethnic homogeneity along the French style of nationalism causes the repression of dissident ethnicities. For example, Anderson places the blame for the bloody, genocidal policies of the Khmer Rouge less on the cruelty, paranoia, and megalomania of its Khmer-speaking leadership than on their efforts to follow the models of the French and their national revolution. The inherent conflict between the Khmer Rouge's vision of Cambodia and its ethnic reality resulted in a genocidal campaign to prevent a challenge to nationalist rule.

The conflictual modernizationists and the primordialists that follow instrumentalist or primordialist concepts of ethnicity often have difficulty explaining instances of ethnic cooperation. They can not account for why and under what circumstances ethnic groups co-exist. Their theories fail to explain economic disparity and competition between ethnic groups without conflict. Nor do they explain cases of well-established identities within the same state that enjoy peaceful relations.

Constructivism accounts for these cases by examining the ways in which identities are constructed. Inclusive nationalisms, which do not exclude groups on the bases of language, religion, culture or race, experience less

violence, because separatism and anti-state ethnic violence develops "in a large part in reaction to insensitive policies of the central authorities."[25] Exclusive societies foster dissent among those that do not share the identity propagated in the national myth.

Constructivists propose that national identities, those formed to legitimize the state, must be inclusive enough to incorporate the potential ethnic identities within the state. Elites and collectives, for reasons outlined in instrumentalist and primordialist literature, may seek to establish their legitimacy counter to the state's. The interplay between the national state's proposed identity and those alternatives to it determines the forces of ethnic conflict and whether the different sides pursue violent resolutions. Constructivist literature is rich with examples of community identity formation and how those formations affect the viability of states, ethnies, the levels of violence in ethnic conflict, and the probability of conflict resolution. Multiple or powerful ethnicities, whether imagined or not, and inflexibility by dominant or subordinant groups are a constructivist's recipe for persistent violence.[26]

[25]Mayall and Simpson, 15.

[26]Ibid., 14-18.

Inclusive Nationalisms

Juan J. Linz offers a developing form of communal identity that suggests inclusiveness.[27] He studied surveys from the Spanish and French Basque regions, Catalonia, Galicia, and Valencia and determined that traditional nationalist movements offer primordialist conceptions of nationalism, rooted in common ancestry and language. However, often ethnic political movements use a territorial definition of identity in their drive for regional autonomy. These nationalists shed their ties to their supposed historical past, reducing the "tensions imbedded in their ethnic ideology," and including "alien" ethnics for political expediency.[28]

Considering the odds against India, with its numerous, established ethnic groups, its leaders have succeeded because, "since 1947, there has been a tacit understanding that if the Indian state is to survive, the government has no alternative but to come to terms with-- indeed to accommodate-- diversity."[29] India abandoned its early

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[27]Juan J. Linz, "From Primordialism to Nationalism" in New Nationalisms of the Developed West, eds., Edward A. Tiryakian and Ronald Rogowski (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1985), 203-53.

[28]Newman, 471.

[29]Mayall and Simpson, 14.

attempts to establish Hindi as its official language,
particularly due to Tamil pressure.[30] Indian "nationality"
has come to be based upon commitment to a secular state with
a vast majority of Hindus. Thus, a large part of the Indian
image of its nationality rests upon the "most flexible (and
least overtly political) of the great world religions."[31]

Efforts to create inclusive national communities often
fail. Ethiopia might reduce ethnic and separatist violence
by forming a more coherent Ethiopian state, rewriting its
history to show the common "Hamatic" tradition of Somalis,
Oromos, Amhars, and Eritreans.[32] David Laitin points out
the advantages of various possible identities, but concludes
that the colonial experience of the region has rendered them
impossible.[33]

The worse case scenario, in constructivist theory, is
the control of the state by a mono-cultural, intolerant
authority. In these cases, the dominant culture, in its
"nation-building" efforts, is insensitive or deliberately

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[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., 15.

[32]David Laitin, "The Ogaadeen Question and Change in
Somali Identity," in State Versus Ethnic Claims, eds. Donald
Rothchild and Victor A. Olorunso (Boulder, Colorado:
Westview Press, 1983), 339-40.

[33]Ibid.

belligerent to alternative ethnic cultures and tries to

enhance the security of the state by eliminating

"alternative foci of loyalty."[34]

> Dominant cultural elites in the society have been
> able to preserve their dominance through the instru-
> ment of state power, and, to varying extents, the
> process of the formation of the state has encouraged
> the close link between the ethnic nationalism of the
> dominant group and state nationalism: the cultural
> symbolism of the dominant group thus forming the
> basis for the articulation of state-national
> identity. The ethnic attachments of the dominant
> community in such states is strengthened and trans-
> formed by its translation into state nationalism.[35]

This leaves other ethnies with the choice between

assimilating or resisting. However, as the primordialists

argued, people sacrifice and die for their ethnic identity.

The determination of the dominant culture to absorb or

exterminate minorities creates antithetical ethnic

nationalisms to oppose its efforts.

Summary

Often, inflexible, mono-cultural regimes fall into the

trap of seeing themselves as forces for modernization and

integration. They perceive that their concept of the nation

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[34]Ibid.

[35]David Brown, "Ethnic Revival," Third World Quarterly 11 (October 1989): 8.

is the advanced or modern version.[36] Alternative ethnic and national identities, consequently, must be fragmenting and disintegrating forces of primitiveness. Anderson cites Indonesia's "bloody integration" of East Timor between 1975 and 1980.[37] The regime in Jakarta perceived and portrayed its battle as one against "disintegrationist," "separatists," and "anti-Indonesian elements." Such ideologies encourage leaders to believe that they stand for progress and peace, while their adversaries represent narrow nationalism, sectionalism and terrorism.

Two trends emerge from the constructivist school's theories on ethnic nationalism and ethnic conflict. First, ethnic nationalism arises in opposition to an oppressing force. Second, exclusive national identities, those legitimizing, defining, and enforcing the nation-state as an ethnically homogenous community, promote ethnic conflict.

The history of nationalism shows that opposition movements often develop ethnic nationalist ideologies in response to oppression. As Heribert Adam wrote, "People establish their identity in opposition to oppressors as the

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[36]This may in part be because of the role of the social sciences in examining ethnic conflict and nationalism in terms of modernity.

[37]Anderson, "The New World Disorder," 5-6.

first step to real resistance."[38]   Americans developed a

nationalism based upon a revolution against the British

monarchy.   German nationality defined itself in military

opposition to Napoleon's France.   Early nationalists in

African and Asian colonial territories organized themselves

as anti-European identities, and, later, disenfranchised

ethnicities within these states formed in opposition to

their central governments.

Constructivist theory emphasizes that nation-states

must recognize strong identities and accomodate diversity.

Regardless of the "falseness" or "genuineness" of an

identity, forceful attempts to homogenize societies create

resistance.   Ethnic identities opposed to the national

identity will be reinforced or created in response to

oppression.

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[38]Heribert Adam, "The Manipulation of Ethnicity." in
State Versus Ethnic Claims, eds., Donald Rothchild and
Victor Olorunso (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1983),
139.

CHAPTER VI

KURDISH ETHNONATIONALISM

Violent Kurdish ethnic nationalism threatens the
stability and territorial integrities of Iran, Iraq, and
Turkey. In these states, Kurdish nationalists claim to
represent a people that are linguistically and culturally
distinct from the dominant national groups-- Persians,
Arabs, and Turks, respectively. Thus, they conclude that
they deserve their own ethnic state or, at least,
recognition of their ethnic nationality as distinct.

In each of these states, the Kurdish peoples represent
a significant portion of the population. Estimates of the
numbers of Kurds are highly controversial, with states
undercounting and Kurdish nationalists exaggerating.
Nonetheless, estimates place the Kurdish population between
18 and 20 million people. Between 4 and 6 million people of
Kurdish descent live in Iran (out of 50 million citizens),
and roughly 4 million of Iraq's population (12 million) are
Kurds. Turkey, with between 8 and 11 million Kurds (in a
population of 55 million), has the largest population of

ethnic Kurds.[1] Despite the numbers of Kurdish residents within these states, neither Iran, Iraq, nor Turkey are prepared to grant statehood or even cultural autonomy to their Kurdish population.

In spite of long-term efforts by these three states, Kurdish nationalism persists as a threat to their stability and unity. Since the formation of the Turkish national state, its government has brutally suppressed its Kurdish people, outlawing their language and using the army to enforce martial law throughout the region. Iran has crushed several Kurdish rebellions and employed state terrorism against Kurdish nationalist writers and elites. Iraq has also used state terrorism, including the recent genocidal chemical warfare tactics employed in 1988 against the town of Halabja where 5000 died.[2] Nonetheless, the Kurdish resistance movements defy the state authorities.

The Kurds

According to most accounts, the Kurds descended from the Medes, an Indo-European population group that moved into

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[1]Joel Krieger, ed., The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 518.

[2]Nader Entasser, Kurdish Ethnonationalism (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1992), 138.

the Iranian plateau before 600 BC.[3] Like Persians, Pushtus

and Tajiks, the Kurds are an Iranian people. Historically,

the term "Kurd" denoted non-Arab nomads, but, by the seventh

century BC, it referred to all peoples inhabiting the Zagros

Mountain regions of northwestern Iran.[4] The Kurds

intermingled with other tribes and ethnic groups in the

area, but their culture has remained distinct from those of

the surrounding regions.

The region's geography has kept the Kurds separate from

the Arabs, Persians, and Turks. Kurdistan sits on the

rugged and mountainous boundaries of the former Ottoman and

Persian Empires. Historically, both cultures viewed it the

natural boundary between them.[5] Neither culture penetrated

Kurdistan long enough to assimilate the various tribes that

lived there, and the Kurds remained separate.

Their mountains, according to the noted scholar Mehrdad

Izady, define the Kurdish people's identity and culture.[6]

The Kurdish saying "Level the mountains and the Kurds will

be no more" demonstrates how the mountains have protected

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[3]Mehrdad Izady, The Kurds: A Concise Handbook
(Washington D.C.: Taylor and Francis, 1992), 3-4.

[4]Charles MacDonald, "The Kurdish Question in the
1980s," in Esman and Rabinovich, 234-35.

[5]Entasser, 3.

[6]Izady, 186-191.

the Kurds from outsiders and sustained them throughout their history.[7] Kurds who have left the mountains are seldom considered to be Kurds, while members of other ethnic groups that have settled in the mountains have become "kurdified beyond all recognition."[8]

However, just as the mountains have shielded the inhabitants of Kurdistan from outside influences, they have prevented easy communication among the Kurds themselves. There is little communication or trade between Kurdish communities. Organization has tended to remain tribal, and the Kurdish language is divided into numerous dialects, the speakers of which can not communicate with other Kurdish speakers. Thus, culturally and linguistically, the Kurdish society is fragmented and diverse.

The Kurdish Language

Most modern nationalist movements recognize common language as an important ingredient to the development of an ethnic nation. The Kurdish language belongs to the Iranian branch of the Indo-European languages and, thus, fundamentally differs from the Semetic Arabic and Altaic Turkish, and is similar to Persian. It is, however,

[7]Ibid., 188-89.

[8]Ibid.

distinct from Persian and unintelligible to speakers of that
language. The mountainous terrain that isolates Kurdish-
speaking groups and the lack of a central authority to
standardize the language have reinforced linguistic
diversity among Kurdish speakers.

Although there exist scores of subdialects, there are
two main dialects of the Kurdish language: Kurmanji and
Pahlawani (Dimili-Gurani).[9] Kurmanji, some subdialect of
which is spoken by most Kurds, consists of two main groups
of subdialects: North Kurmanji (Bahdinani), of which there
are 15 million speakers in Turkey, Syria, and the Caucuses;
and South Kurmanji (Sorani), of which there are 6 million
speakers in Iran and Iraq. North Kurmanji is arguably the
literary language of the Kurds and is considered the most
prestigious. Versions of Dimili, also known as Zaza, are
spoken by roughly 4 million Kurds throughout Iran, Iraq, and
Anatolia; and Gurani is spoken by the roughly 3 million
speakers of its two subdivisions, Laki and Awramani.[10]

These dialects are mutually exclusive and
unintelligible to speakers of other dialects of Kurdish.
Writers of the Kurdish dialects even disagree about a common

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[9]Some scholars refer to the major divisions of Kurdish
as languages within a Kurdish family of languages, rather
than as dialects of a single language. See Entasser, 4-5.

[10]Izady, 167-75.

alphabet. Kurds in Turkey and Syria publish in the Latin alphabet, and many Iranian intellectuals support this practice. Most literate Kurds in Iran, however, use the Arabic. Additionally the Kurds in Armenia and the Caucuses have published in the Armenian alphabet since the 1920s, and some Kurds in the former Soviet Union use the Cyrillic alphabet.[11] Despite the heterogeneity of their language, there exists, among Kurdish nationalists, a sense of a common language.

Religion

Prior to the influence of Islam, most Kurds followed the Persian religion of Zoroastrianism. Now, the majority of Kurds are Muslims, three-fifths of whom are practicing Sunnis. The Shi'a sect of Islam, Judaism and Christianity also have significant followings among the Kurdish people. There are followers of the Alawite sect of Islam, considered heretical to the orthodox Muslims. Also, there are a number of Sufi orders. Additionally, a renewed interest in Zoroastrianism developed among intellectuals at the beginning of the twentieth century.

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[11]MacDonald, 238.

Yazidism, an ancient religion of unknown origins, also
has a significant following among the Kurds.[12] Yazidism,
referred to as "devil worship" by orthodox Muslims, actually
professes to be one of several "cults of angels." It is
exclusive to Kurdistan and has only nominal roots in Islam,
Christianity, Judaism, and eastern religions, but its rights
and practices are wholly foreign to Muslims.

The History of Kurdish Nationalism

The modern Kurdish movements in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey
have persisted as problems for the central governments, but
only posed serious threats to them when historical
circumstances or external forces weakened the states. The
heterogeneity of the Kurdish language, regionalism due to
Kurdistan's terrain, political divisions among Kurdish
leaders, and the Kurds' inability to unite at opportunistic
times have allowed the central governments to recover and
stabilize their regimes. After infighting among the Kurds
or the withdrawal of outside support further weakens them,
the threatened state usually responds with brute force
against Kurdish civilians and soldiers.

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[12]for discussion of the angel cults among the Kurds see
Izady, 137-58.

Kurdish nationalism began with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century.[13] The 1920 Treaty of Sevres envisioned a Kurdistan granted local autonomy with the prospect of independence within a year, if the local population desired it and the League of Nations Council recommended independence. Though the Treaty of Sevres was never ratified, the aspirations that it aroused persist today, represented in violent ethnic conflict in Kurdistan.

Under Ottoman rule, Kurdish rebellion existed as resistance to the central authority, rather than as ethnic nationalism. The revolts of the Baban (1806-8), of Badr Khan (1843-47), and Mir Muhammad (1883-6) against the Turks, and the revolt of Sheikh Ubaidella against the Persians were "essentially revolts of traditional rulers who resented the increasing encroachments on their authority."[14] Although Ubaidellah tried to use nationalist rhetoric to find allies, all these conflicts arose from indignation caused by

[13]Martin van Bruinessen, "Kurdish Tribes and the State of Iran," in The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan, ed. Richard Tapper (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 370-76. He discusses the relations of Kurdish tribes to the Ottoman state as the beginnings of Kurdish separatism.

[14]Arthur Campbell Turner, "Kurdish Nationalism," in Ideology and Power in the Middle East, eds. Peter Chelkowski and Robert J. Pranger (London: Duke University Press, 1988), 387.

taxation, conscription and Kurdish leaders being treated as lesser partners.[15]

Nationalism is a Western concept and was alien to the cultures under Ottoman domination. The Ottoman Empire based its unity upon the common religion of Islam, or "Ottoman Harmony," a "view of the world and of history which was shared by different religions and linguistic communities of the empire."[16] However, some intellectual Kurds, exposed to European ideas, promoted nationalism as a means to preserve their culture. The newspaper, Kurdistan, began publication in 1898 and Kurdish political and literary societies and clubs were formed.[17] Some secret societies called for Kurdish independence, but had little effect without the support of the powerful tribal chiefs.[18]

The close of World War I offered an opportunity for an independent Kurdistan that ended with the disappointment of the new Kurdish nationalist movement. The influences of the

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[15]Ibid.

[16]Yves Besson, "Identity crisis as a paradigm of Middle Eastern conflictuality," International Social Science Journal 43 (February 1991): 137. Nationalism was a threat to the Ottoman Empire and was the primary force responsible for its collapse.

[17]Izady, 59.

[18]Marion Farouk-Sluggett and Peter Sluggett, Iraq Since 1958 (London: I.B. Taurus, 1987), 178.

defeated Ottomans and the occupied Persians over Kurdistan
evaporated and encouraged Kurdish nationalists to push for
autonomy. However, Reza Shah took over the Iranian
rulership in 1921 and Mustafa Kemal's successful war of
independence re-established authority in Istanbul.

Kurdish hopes for an independent Kurdistan were further
damaged when the British created the Arab-dominated state of
Iraq and included the oil-rich province of Mosul. They
incorporated the largely Kurdish region within the new
state. The Baghdad government would have had to respect the
Kurdish autonomy mandated by the Treaty of Sevres, but the
Allies and Kemal renegotiated the treaty and dropped the
issue of Kurdish independence in the Treaty of Lausanne.

In the post-war period, there were numerous small-scale
Kurdish revolts against the central governments in Iran,
Iraq, and Turkey. The fighting was most brutal in Turkey,
where the Turkish government attempted to "turkify" its
Kurds and mold the new state into an ethnically homogenous
nation-state, fitting the internationally legitimate
standard. Although the Treaty of Lausanne required the
Turkish government to guarantee the religious rights of non-
Muslims and the freedom of speech for non-Turks, the Turks
declared their nation the Republic of Turkey.[19] They banned

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[19]Izady, 61.

all Kurdish organizations, including religious organizations, and Kurdish publications.

Sheikh Said led the first major revolt against the central authorities in 1925, and was crushed by the Turkish Republican Army. Other major resistance efforts by the Kurds occurred during the Khoyboun revolt, which was crushed in 1932, and the rebellion in the region of Darsim in 1937. It was also put down with great ferocity.[20]

Two revolts in Iraq demonstrate the difficulties for Kurdish nationalist movements during this period. In 1922, Shayk Mahmud declared himself the king of an independent Kurdistan under the banner of the "Free Kurdistan Movement." For the most part, though, he was unable to assert his rule outside his home district of Sulaymania.[21] Besides fighting British and Iraqi forces, he had to deal with Kurdish tribal chiefs that opposed his authority, and Kurdish intellectuals who denounced him as "feudal."[22] Shayk Mahmud's revolt resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Sadabad, in which Iraq, Turkey, and Iran agreed to coordinate defense policies against internal and external threats.[23]

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[20]Sluggett, 180.

[21]Sluggett, 179 and Entasser, 52-54.

[22]Izady, 64.

[23]Entasser, 54.

In 1927, Shayk Ahmad, a religious leader, began a rebellion against British, Turkish, and Iraqi forces. He too faced the resistance of Kurdish dissenters. He promoted a new religion, which combined Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as a mechanism to unify the Kurds, but was unsuccessful.[24] Eventually, British and Iraqi troops chased him to Turkey, where Turkish forces captured and arrested him. Leadership of the Barzani clan's military forces passed to Ahmad's brother, Mustafa Barzani.

The Republic of Mahabad

The 1945 Republic of Mahabad, backed by the Soviets, offered another chance at a Kurdish ethnic nation.[25] After the occupation of Iran in 1940 by the British and the Soviets, the Iranian Kurdish movement seized the opportunity of the government's weakness to declare its independence. President Qazi Muhammad assumed the republic's civilian leadership, and Mustafa Barzani travelled from Iraq to join as its military leader.

The republic, however, lacked the ability to survive without Soviet backing. When Moscow withdrew its support, in exchange for promises of oil concessions from Teheran,

[24]Izady, 64.

[25]Sluggett, 183-86.

Iranian national forces attacked and crushed the Kurdish resistance.[26] They captured and executed Qazi Muhammad and Barzani fled to the USSR.[27] The republic had lasted only one year.

The Post Republic Era: The KDP in Iraq

Barzani returned to Iraq in 1958 after a group of army officers led by Colonel Abdul Karim Qasim overthrew the monarchy in Baghdad. The new government had a uneasy truce with Barzani and his Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP). It used the Kurds against its foes, the Arab nationalists, the Ba'thists, and the communists. Barzani used the truce to increase his authority among Iraqi Kurds.[28] Qasim, who was rumored to be an arabized Kurd, consolidated his power and began to perceive Barzani as a threat to the regime.[29] He negotiated with Barzani's Kurdish rivals, most notably Jalal Talabani and his Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and

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[26]Edmund Ghareeb, The Kurdish Question in Iraq (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1981), 12.

[27]Turner, 400.

[28]Entasser, 59.

[29]Izady, 67. The officer's rebellion leaders were originally friendly, if not openly sympathetic to the Kurdish cause. However, the arab nationalists among them could not have supported any change that would have weakened the Iraqi state. Sluggett, 188.

sought to neutralize the KDP. The two sides fought to a standstill until they signed a cease-fire in 1963, agreeing to cooperate against the Ba'thists and Arab nationalists.

In 1963, an alliance between the Ba'thists and other anti-Qasim forces overthrew Qasim. The new president, Abdul Salam Aref, a non-Ba'thist, promised the KDP Kurdish autonomy within the framework of an Iraqi state, in order to gain time to put down the communists. Leftist elements within the KDP, accusing Barzani of being too "feudal," thwarted attempts to improve relations with the shaky regime.[30] Aref, accusing the KDP of making impossible demands, sent the Iraqi army north to attack. Barzani, to strengthen his authority within the KDP, accepted arms from the Iranian government.[31] Because of this tactic, Barzani was viewed as a stooge of the Shah. After he established close ties with Iran, it became less likely that Kurdish rights could be recognized "within the framework of an Iraqi state."

When the Ba'thists overthrew Aref's government in 1968, they also sought a truce with the Kurds in order to consolidate their power. As happened during Aref's rule, the Iraqi government and the Kurds could not agree upon

[30]Entasser, 65.

[31]Turner, 401.

terms and returned to armed struggle.[32] The Ba'thists had the backing of the Soviets, while the KDP received weapons from the CIA, Israel and Iran.

Unfortunately for the KDP, their powerful allies only supported them as a means to destabilize the Iraqi government.[33] They considered outright Kurdish victory undesirable, since it would incite nationalist sympathies among Iranian Kurds. After the Shah signed the Algiers Agreement in 1975, he stopped supporting the Kurds. The Ba'th government, bolstered by its rapprochement with Teheran, attacked the unsupported Kurds.[34] It destroyed Kurdish villages, arresting and killing civilians and began a policy of "arabization" of its Kurdish regions. Once again, Kurdish hopes had been raised, only to end in brutality against civilians.

The Iranian Revolution

The 1979 Iranian revolution presented the Iranian Kurds with their first opportunity for independence since the

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[32]Although they signed an agreement that the Kurdish language would have the status of a national language alongside Arabic and that there would be a Kurdish Vice President, neither side took this agreement seriously. Entasser, 70.

[33]Entasser, 71.

[34]Izady, 68.

Mahabad Republic. The long-suppressed Kurdish Democratic

Party of Iran (KDPI) and the Komala took advantage of the

chaos in Teheran to create a local autonomous zone for

Iranian Kurdistan. Once the Islamic Republic re-established

order, it moved against the Kurds.[35] Claiming that the KDPI

and the Komala were attempting to dismember Iran, it

discredited them as anti-Islamic.[36] It allied with other

Kurds, including Barzani and some tribal chiefs, and

attacked. Teheran was willing to accept minority rights for

religious groups, but unwilling to grant rights based upon

non-Islamic principles.

The Iran-Iraq War

Although it brutally suppressed its own Kurdish

nationalists, the Iranian government supported Iraq's Kurds

against Baghdad during the Iran-Iraq War. After Iraq

attacked Iran in 1980, the KDP, with its headquarters in

Teheran, received arms and the support of the Iranian army.

Although the war bogged down in the south, Iran's most

successful offensives were aided by Kurds in the North.

In desperation, Saddam Hussein promised the KDP's rival

Kurdish group, Talabani's PUK, terms that were more generous

[35]Izady, 69.

[36]Ghareeb, 16-17.

than those Barzani had been given in 1970-- regional
autonomy in northern Iraq and a budget equivalent to 25-30
percent of the Iraqi state budget.[37] It is doubtful that
Hussein planned to keep his promise, but the alliance helped
him counter the Iranians.[38]

After the war ended in 1988, Hussein sought revenge
upon the Kurds. Iraqi troops fought the KDP, employing a
"scorched earth" policy against its Kurdish regions. They
bulldozed and dynamited buildings, poured cement down wells,
and used chemical weapons. In the most gruesome use of
chemical weapons since World War I, the Iraqis killed 5000
civilians in the city of Halabja in 1988.[39] The Kurdish
insurrection collapsed within a year.

The Gulf War

The Allied victory during the 1991 Gulf War, began the
most recent era of Kurdish nationalism. Following the
Ba'thist's defeat, a coalition of Kurds, including the KDP
and the PUK who were tentatively allied, seized control of
the Kurdish regions of Iraq, while the Iraqi Republican
Guard was busy suppressing a Shiite rebellion in the south.

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[37]Izady, 69.

[38]Entasser, 132.

[39]Ibid., 138.

As soon as it finished, however, it attacked the Kurds. It crushed coalition forces, while nearly 1.2 million refugees fled to Iran and 500,000 fled towards Turkey.[40] The Allied forces, mostly British and American, tried to stop the mass retreat and genocide, establishing a no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel. Within this region, the Kurdish coalition declared a Kurdish Federated State under the leadership of the PUK and the KDP.

To the chagrin of the West and its ally Turkey, the declared Kurdish Federated State has encouraged Kurdish nationalism in that state. In Turkey, Turgot Ozal had reversed the government's lifelong policy of oppression towards its Kurds. It no longer insisted that Kurds were "Mountain Turks," and, in February of 1991, it granted them linguistic rights.[41] Also, it recognized the celebration of the Iranian New Year (Newroz), the most important Kurdish holiday.

Despite the relative relaxation of its Kurdish policy in the state, the main Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey, the PKK (Partiya Karkaren Kurdistan--Kurdish Worker's Party) grew. Formed in 1979, the PKK gained strength from Turkish government suppression. Ankara,

[40]Izady, 70.

[41]Christian Science Monitor (February 7 1991), p.5.

hoping to destroy the Marxist guerilla movement, raised
local Kurdish militias against it. The brutality of the
police and the militia, forced local civilians to chose
between the government and the PKK. Many chose the PKK.[42]

The post-Gulf War rise of Kurdish ethnic nationalism
has proven to be a greater challenge to the Turkish
government than to the war's loser, Saddam Hussein.[43] The
existence of a de facto Kurdish state in northern Iraq has
aroused nationalist sentiments among Turkey's southeastern
Kurdish populace. Also, PKK guerrillas have used the no-fly
zone as a hideout from which to launch attacks against the
Turkish government. The Turkish army has repeatedly had to
send forces into northern Iraq after them.

While the foreign ministers of Turkey, Iran, and Syria
(a long-time supporter of the PKK) agreed to coordinate
their policies toward Kurdish nationalism, the leadership of
the Kurds is not unified.[44] Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of

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[42]Eric Rouleau, "The Challenges to Turkey," <u>Foreign Affairs</u> 72 (October 1993): 124.

[43]James Brown, "Turkey's Kurdish Imbroglio," <u>Annals</u> 541 (September 1995): 116-29. Brown argues that Turkey ultimately may suffer more from post-Gulf War changes than Iraq.

[44]Robert Olson, "The Kurdish Question and Geopolitic and Geostrategic Changes in the Middle East after the Gulf War," <u>Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies</u> 17 (Summer 1994): 46.

the PKK has denounced both Masoud Barzani (Mustafa's son)
and Talabani as traitors to all Kurds.[45] The leaders of the
Kurdish Federated State, for their part, have cooperated
with the Turkish government in its fight against the PKK,
disdaining the use of their autonomous zone for use against
Turkey, whose Incirlik Air Base is essential to the
maintenance of the protection zone.[46]

Summary

The history of Kurdish nationalism has been the
repetition of a pattern which is not likely to end. Kurdish
nationalists have only had success in Iran, Iraq, or Turkey
during periods of instability for the central government.
During chaotic periods, the governments in Teheran, Baghdad,
Ankara, or Istanbul have used different tactics to reduce
the threat of Kurdish nationalism. They have negotiated
temporary truces with Kurdish movements, which the Kurdish
leaders accepted in order to strengthen themselves within
Kurdistan. The Kurds have been unable to unify and the
central governments have reasserted their authority. Also,
they have fostered feuds among the Kurdish leaders. Kurdish
interests have fought among themselves or allowed themselves

[45]Christian Science Monitor, 13 August 1991, 4.

[46]Olson, 48-49.

to be used by outside powers against whichever group appeared to lead Kurdish ethnic nationalism. When the central governments re-established authority, they renege upon any promises made during times of instability and take revenge upon Kurdish groups and civilians.

CHAPTER VII

THE KURDS AND THREE APPROACHES TO ETHNICITY

The two dominant schools of ethnic conflict, the
conflictual modernizationists and the primordialists,
provide insight into the forces that exacerbate the ethnic
violence in Kurdistan. Conflictual modernizationists
identify the economic disparities between the peoples of the
Kurdistan and their respective economic centers in Iran,
Iraq, and Turkey as factors that deepen ethnic hatred.[1]
Likewise, the primordialists make a case for strong, valued
Kurdish, Persian, Arab, and Turkish identities that command
deep, psychological loyalties.[2] Although they have
identified forces that worsen the conflict and hinder its
resolutions, neither school isolates the root causes of the
conflicts.

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[1]Joane Nagel, "The Conditions of Ethnic Separatism: The
Kurds in Turkey, Iran and Iraq," Ethnicity 7 (September
1980): 279-97.

[2]Throughout Ethnic Groups in Conflict, Horowitz
portrays the Kurds in Iraq as a prime example of a
stigmatized "backwards" identity and a prime candidate for
secessionism.

The constructivist approach to ethnic conflicts reveals the source of violence in Kurdistan and accounts for factors that thwart the unification of the Kurds. The inability of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey to create national communities that include the Kurds, and these states' suppressions of the Kurdish identity caused Kurdish nationalism. However, the Kurds have been unable to unify because of their linguistic and religious diversity, and their divided leadership. The governments have utilized this disunity to counter the threat to their states and ethnic violence has persisted.

An examination of economic variables that influence ethnic conflict illustrates important factors in the persistence of violence in Kurdistan. The dependency model of regionally-differentiated ethnic groups describes the conditions among Kurds. They suffer from economic discrimination along ethnic lines and, thus, justify their demands for autonomy in terms of economic grievances.

However, evidence shows that the conflictual modernizationists misinterpret the situation in Kurdistan. First, conflictual modernization theory assumes that ethnic conflict results from attempts to re-establish social order after traditional structures have collapsed under the pressures of modernization. In Kurdistan, however, traditional social structures have remained intact, and are

the sources of power for many ethnic elites. Second, the conflictual modernizationists suppose that disgruntled, modernized elites will politicize ethnicity. This assumption ignores the importance of traditional elites who oppose assimilation in Iraq and Iran and who cooperate in Turkey. Finally, the conflict between Kurds and their ethnic neighbors began prior to the modernizing influences of state programs and, thus, could not have resulted from modernization. While the conflictual modernizationist scenario approximates events in Kurdistan, it fails to account for the origins of ethnic violence.

Ethnic identities in the Middle East are ancient and well-developed. Primordialists claim that such identities have a psychological strength that defies rational, economic explanations. The Kurdish, Persian, Arab, and Turkish identities involved in the violence in Kurdistan consist of the ethnic markers that primordialists claim will command loyalty and self-sacrifice. The psychological appeal of ethnic organization in the region and the willingness to die for, or commit atrocities in defense of these identities plays an important role in the violence in the region.

However, while primordialists explain the irrational destructiveness of the violence and its tendency to persist over generations, they offer no suggestions concerning the

cause of conflict. Well-developed, differentiated cultures do not, of themselves, necessitate violent conflict. Thus, theorists that apply primordialist explanations to ethnic conflict must resort to economic explanations to account for the origins of violence. Neither of the two dominant schools reveals the source of the conflict in Kurdistan.

Conflictual Modernization and the Kurds

Of the two competition models, the ecology model and the dependency model, the latter best describes the conditions among the Kurdish peoples in the peripheries of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. Direct economic competition, proposed by the ecology model, does not apply to the Kurds. Kurds who leave Kurdistan to join the central economies of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey usually assimilate to the dominant cultures. According to Izady, "the list of naturally assimilated Kurds is a long one."[3] Karim Sanjabi, the leader of the National Front Party in Iran, President Qasim in Iraq, and General Kenan Evren in Turkey are only some examples of Kurds who have shed their ethnic identity and succeeded within the dominant cultures.[4] Most of the ethnic

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[3]Izady, 110.

[4]Ibid., 110. Saddam Hussein himself is partly Kurdish through his father's family.

violence in the Kurdish conflict relates to the core-periphery relationships between the Persian, Arab, and Turkish centers and the peripheries in Kurdistan.

Dependency theory's depiction of regionally different rates of modernization describes conditions in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey. The Kurdish regions in all three states suffer from economic underdevelopment relative to the regions of the dominant ethnic groups.[5] The policies of the central governments have prevented the Kurds from benefitting from the natural resources of Kurdistan. Petroleum refinement, the most valuable export, has been developed to the advantage of the central economies. At the Kirkuk and Khanaqin refineries in Iraq, and the Batman refinery in Turkey, for example, the only help to the local economy is jobs for unskilled laborers.[6] The exportable, manufactured goods of Kurdistan are limited to souvenir handicrafts and artwork.[7]

In Iran, uneven modernization during the Pahlavi monarchy resulted in ethnic inequality. The government took control of agriculture, pushing Kurds and other peasants off of their land. Periphery ethnies provided the low-paid,

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[5]Nagel, 280-81.

[6]Izady, 232.

[7]Ibid., 231.

unskilled labor force employed in the monarchy's housing-construction and road-building projects.[8] As a result, Kurds have remained poorer and less educated than Persians. Only 20 percent of the homes in Kurdish regions have electricity, compared to 87 percent in Persian regions, and the Kurdish literacy rate is only 30 percent compared to 66 percent in Persian provinces.[9]

The Ba'thist government's main development projects in Iraqi Kurdistan have been limited to the construction of "cluster villages" and roads. Kurdish intellectuals have criticized these projects as self-interested on the part of Baghdad. According to critics, the government built the "cluster villages" of compact housing for the residents of Kurdistan only to isolate the guerrillas from the local populace, and to facilitate the monitoring of the Kurds.[10] The roads ease the mobilization of the Iraqi army against the Kurdish rebels.

The situation is similar in Turkey, where the rapid economic growth that benefitted the cities on the Aegean and

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[8]Entasser, 6-7.

[9]Akbar Aghajanian, "Ethnic Inequality in Iran," _International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies_ 15 (May 1983): 216. in Entasser, 7.

[10]Entasser, 8.

Mediterranean coasts bypassed the rural southeast.[11] The per capita GDP of Kurdish regions is less than half the national average and unemployment is estimated at 25 percent, twice the national average. In a state where the literacy rate is 77 percent, the literacy rate among the Kurds is only 48 percent.[12]

The people inhabiting the Kurdish regions of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey suffer from economic hardship distributed along ethnic lines, a cultural division of labor. The Kurds have few avenues for economic advancement. Their regions are comparatively "backwards" and feudal. These conditions foster the sense of a prosperous center "colonizing" and exploiting the poverty-stricken periphery.

Despite the animosity caused by economic differences between ethnies, the dependency model misinterprets the source of the conflict. Competition theorists assume that economic disparity and competition cause conflict. Once they find a "core-periphery" relationship, they assume that they have found the source of conflict. Joane Nagel, a conflictual modernizationist, tried to explain the ethnic conflict in Kurdistan with dependency theory, but could not

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[11]Philip Robins, "The Overlord State: Turkish policy and the Kurdish issue," International Affairs 69 (October 1993): 663.

[12]Ibid., 663.

account for the persistence of violence there in terms of economic variables.[13] She resorted to citing the level of organization among Kurds, and extra-national involvement in the conflict to supplement the dependency model's explanation of persistent separatism among Kurds.[14] Although economic differentiation provides Kurdish rebels with grievances against the central governments, it is not the source of the conflict.

The Destruction of Social Order

Conflictual modernization theory assumes that modernization destroys traditional social order. Accordingly, old structures of authority recede in importance during modernization. Elites must compete for positions of political power, while economic displacement makes nonelites susceptible to appeals to ethnic identity. Ethnic elites politicize ethnicity for their own purposes, and nonelites follow. However, modernization and the destruction of social order has not occurred in Kurdistan.

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[13]Nagel, 279-97.

[14]Ibid., 289-93. As shall be discussed later, organization (disorganization) among the Kurdish separatists benefits the central governments and militates against persistence by the separatists.

The Kurdish regions of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey remain much as they were before the creation of these states.

The economic infrastructure of Kurdistan has only changed slightly and its pre-modern social structure remains intact. After the 1932 Shayk Mahmud revolt was put down, tribal leaders asserted their political primacy in the absence of local competition. They formed political parties and guerrilla forces. Kurdish leaders use names that imply modern political parties, but their legitimacy as rulers depends upon their authority as tribal and clan leaders.

> Almost anyone of political importance carries a
> tribal surname. Jalal Talabani, Mustafa Barzani,
> Masoud Barzani, Rasul Mamand, and Abdul-Rahman
> Qassemlou all of whom carry the names of their
> respective tribes are only the best known.[15]

The highest focus of loyalty for the majority of Kurds remains the traditional tribal political structures.

The governments of Iran and Turkey have undermined, to some extent, the traditional structures of authority in their Kurdish regions, and the Kurdish resistance movements there reflect the differences relative to the conditions in Iraq. The KDPI in Iran is less tribal than either the KDP or the PUK. It is made up of mostly urban elites, but maintains its ties to the traditional tribal structures,

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[15]Izady, 205.

which remain intact within Iranian Kurdistan.[16] The Komala

is a more modern, socialist organization, but, like other

leftist and moderately leftist organizations, it has also

needed its connections with tribal structures. Although

they are less dependent upon the tribal leadership, the

Kurdish movements in Iran benefit from the intact structures

of traditional order.[17]

In Turkey, the government has supported some

traditional structures while undermining others. The

Kurdish regions of the Turkish Republic remain semi-

feudal.[18] The government backs local Kurdish landlords and

recruits the Village Guards from among clans that remain

loyal to the state.[19] According to a Turkish military

officer, "Half the men join the PKK. The other half move to

the cities where they become militia."[20] Kurdish loyalties

remain divided between their commitment to clan structures

and the appeal of the modern, Marxist PKK.

The PKK is the only Kurdish political party that is

independent of tribal structures. It fights against the

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[16]Ibid., 207.

[17]Ibid., 210.

[18]Robins, 663.

[19]Ibid., 664.

[20]Rouleau, 124.

Turkish-organized Village Guards and its Marxist-Leninist ideology is aimed as much at the defeat of local landlords as the Turkish government.[21] Its leader and founder, Abdullah Ocalan, denounced the feudalism of both Barzani and Talabani in Iraq, calling them traitors to all Kurds.[22] Nonetheless, even in Turkey, the pre-modern social structures play an important role in the conflict.[23]

Nagel notes the difficulties of explaining ethnic separatism in Kurdistan by the destruction of social order through penetration of the periphery. According to their theory, conflictual modernizationists expect that "the greater the degree of penetration of a peripheral ethnic group by the central state, the greater the likelihood the group will engage in separatist action."[24] However, separatist violence in Kurdistan occurs in the absence of penetration.

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[21]Michael Gunter "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey," Middle East Journal (Summer 1988): 392-98. Gunter credits the outlawed status of both Kurdish nationalists and leftist organizations for the leftist leanings of Kurdish nationalism, since both ideologies can alternatively be used to oppose the Turkish state.

[22]Christian Science Monitor, 13 August 1991, 4.

[23]Van Bruinessen, 372. Van Bruinessen notes the importance of the tribal leaders and the maintenance of tribal structures to the government's indirect rule of the region.

[24]Nagel, 285.

It was the moment of greatest weakness, not strong
penetration, that the Kurds chose to launch their
republic (Mahabad)-- a strategically wise move that
indicates the limited usefulness of penetration
(modernization) explanations of separatism.[25]

Conflictual modernizationist assumptions of the

destruction of old order as a pre-condition of conflict miss

the importance of the tribal and clan leaders in the ethnic

violence in Kurdistan. Modernization and the displacement

of traditional leaders has not occurred to the extent

necessary to cause ethnic conflict. Kurdish nationalist

leaders are not vying for new positions of authority within

a enlarged polity. Rather, for the most part, they rely

upon old structures of power as a means to resist the

central governments.

Elites and Their Motives

As shown by the persistence of tribal and feudal

structures, the makeup of the Kurdish ethnonationalist

elites defy the descriptions of the conflictual

modernization theorists. The disgruntled elites of Smith's

The Ethnic Revival, and the economically-motivated elites of

Rogowski's rational-choice model are not present in

Kurdistan.

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[25]Ibid., 289.

Although they are Western-educated, it is inaccurate to portray Kurdish elites as disgruntled bureaucrats. The most important leaders of Kurdish resistance movements all received degrees from modern universities. However, except for possibly Ocalan, they did not fail to find positions of authority within the state and decide to incite ethnic unrest. Rather, they used their familiarity with Western ideas to enhance their existing authority as leaders and to increase their ability to resist the central governments.

Ocalan most closely fits the modernized ethnic elite envisioned in The Ethnic Revival. He formed the PKK after gaining an education in Political Science at the University of Ankara. While he did not fail as a bureaucrat, he apparently felt a sense of discrimination against Kurds while at college and began criticizing Turkish oppression.[26] He was jailed for his opinions and turned to promoting ethnic separatism.

Only the dominant Kurdish movement in Turkey reflects the conflictual modernizationists' portrayal of likely ethnic leaders. The motivations of Kurdish elites do not match the materialist motivations of their scenarios. An insightful comment of Paul Brass applies to the situation in Kurdistan.

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[26]Mango, 988.

> The objective or subjective perception of inequality
> is indispensable to justify nationalism, but it is
> not in itself an explanation for it. The only
> certainty is that every nationalist movement has
> always justified self in terms of existing oppres-
> sion by a rival group.[27]

Kurdish nationalists use economic grievances to justify the

conflict, but such grievances are not the source of the

dispute.

Modernization as an Influential Variable in the Conflict

The changes associated with modernization exacerbate

and promote ethnic conflict in Kurdistan, rather than cause

it. The Kurds suffer from a cultural division of labor, and

the economic disparities between the people of Kurdistan and

their respective economic centers worsen the relations

between them and the Persians, Arabs, and Turks. Kurds from

regions of high unemployment and little industrialization

have had little to lose economically by joining their

traditional leadership or the PKK against the central

governments. Economic oppression accounts for much of the

appeal of the Kurdish movements and, certainly, explains

some of the appeal of the leftist Komala and PKK.

The social structures of pre-modern Kurdistan remain

largely intact and Kurdish nationalists utilize them to

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[27]Brass, 43.

continue their struggles. The PKK fights the feudal landowners and the militia as well as the Turkish government. The KDPI and the Komala rely upon the support of tribal leaders, while the KDP and PUK, despite their modern-sounding party names, consist of traditional leaders.

While economic variables account for important aspects of the ethnic conflict, the Kurdish violence precedes modernization. This fact casts doubts upon its influence as the sources of the dispute. Kurdish leaders resisted the central authorities prior to governmental road building and industrialization. In Iran and Turkey, Kurdish revolts began under the leadership of Ismail Agha Simko[28] and Shayk Said, respectively, before Reza Kahn and Mustafa Kemal had even fully established control over their states.[29] In Iraq, King Faisal, who was installed as the state's first monarch, complained of ethnic sentiments among the Kurds in the Mosul region, and said that there "is not yet an Iraq or an Iraqi people"[30]

The conflict broke out before the modern states were formed and before the differential impact of modernization could have affected ethnic relations. Although the

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[28]See Van Bruinessen.

[29]Entasser, 12 and Izady, 61.

[30]Ghareeb, 2.

conflictual modernizationists identify and analyze economic backwardness and economic disparity as forces that promote persistent ethnic violence in Kurdistan, these are not the causes. Scholars of ethnic conflict must look to the constructivist school to find the sources of the conflict.

Primordialism and the Kurds

Like conflictual modernizationist theory, primordialist theory receives a mixed review for its description of Kurdish ethnic conflict. "Kurdishness" offers an example of an identity that commands the strong, "irrational" loyalties that are prominent in the primordialists discussions. However, the loyalties of ordinary Kurds are not focused upon an ethnic Kurdish nation. Although it enhances the understanding of the persistent, ethnically-motivated violence, primordialist theory lacks explanations for the initial cause of the conflict.

History has left the Kurds a legacy that is characteristic of the stereotypes that are outlined in Horowitz's Ethnic Groups in Conflict. Writers have described them as backwards, or hillbillies, and, yet, fiercely proud. They are portrayed as independent, war-like and rugged.[31] Supposedly, they value self-sufficiency and

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[31] Izady, 186 and 207

disdain civilization. This type of ethnic identity is the kind that primordialists argue encourages powerful, "irrational" loyalties.

Their valued, "backwards" characteristics condition the conflict between the Kurds and their ethnic neighbors. Their independent, warrior lifestyle is reinforced by examples of the resistance of the peshmerga (those who face death) to the central authorities in Teheran, Baghdad, and Ankara. Even the infighting among Kurds, attributable to their reputation as hillbillies with an affinity for feuding, strengthens the "unique" qualities of "Kurdishness," while it weakens their ability to unite.

Kurds perceive the threat to their valued identity, an important source of pride to Kurds who have little economic success to bolster their collective sense of worth, as a threat to themselves. Military success fighting the Persians, Arabs, or Turks is a glorification of "Kurdishness," while economic achievement is a sign of assimilation and submission. Thus, the defense of their Kurdish identity has a psychological imperative that accounts for some the destructive nature of the war and the willingness of the peshmerga to sacrifice their lives.

On the other hand, it is questionable whether the psychological affinity for their "Kurdish" identity is

channelled to an unified, ethnic Kurdistan. Although Kurdish nationalists and intellectuals have promoted the concept of a single Kurdistan, ordinary Kurds have given their loyalties to their tribal leaders, who have often mobilized them against other Kurds. Kurd versus Kurd fighting is as bloody and persistent as any in the region.[32] Far from a common commitment to a unified identity, many refer to greater Kurdistan as "the five parts," lacking an expression for the single whole.[33] Primordialists who study the Kurdish identity may determine that the local Kurds actually demonstrate loyalty to more basic identities, such as a Dimili or Gurani linguistic identity, or membership in the Barzani or Talabani clan.

Regardless of the operational level of the conflicting primordial identities, the existence of psychologically-valued identities does not necessitate violence. The Kurds, Persians, Arabs, and Turks (to name only a few of the many ethnies in the region) have well-developed cultural identities. However, a personal attachment to "Kurdishness" does not, in itself, conflict with the existence of other ethnic groups, such as Arabs. Nor, for example, does an attachment to "Turkishness" require aggressiveness toward

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[32]_Christian Science Monitor_, 24 October 1991, 5.

[33]MacDonald, 237.

Kurds. Thus, primordialism identifies a reason for the defense of one's identity group, without explaining the beginnings of animosities between groups. For lack of guidance from their own theory, the primordialists must rely on the variables provided in other theories.

The primordialists and the conflictual modernizationists identify aspects of the Kurdish ethnic conflict in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey that influence its persistence and violence. The strong, primordial identities of the ethnies involved in the conflict and the economic hardships that Kurds suffer account for the animosities between the Kurds and their neighbors, and for the intensity of the fighting. These influences worsen and complicate the ethnic conflict but did not cause it.

Constructivism and the Kurds

The constructivists school identifies the sources of ethnonationalist violence in the Kurdish regions of Iran, Iraq and Turkey. The national self-perceptions of these three states excludes the Kurds from the imagined national communities. Simultaneously, these states have remained unwilling to part with their Kurdish regions and suffer disintegration. The example of Kurdish ethnic conflict

shows that the constructivist interpretation of ethnic

conflict is a key to the understanding of ethnonationalism.

In addition to discovering the source of the conflict

in the history of the development of the Kurdish, Persian,

Arab, and Turkish national identities, the constructivist

school introduces variables that increase the understanding

of ethnic conflict. An examination of each relationship

between the Kurds and their respective central government

reveals how national identities and their proponents

affected the ethnic conflict.

Exclusionary State Policies: Iran, Iraq and Turkey

In Iran, Reza Shah attempted to mold his state after

the internationally-legitimate, ethnically-homogenous model,

despite the residence of a substantial number of Azeris,

Turkomen, and Kurds in his Persian-dominated state. To

enforce his "artificially imposed Persian consciousness,"

the Shah called upon the Society for Public Guidance, a

police organization that suppressed all non-Persian ethnies

and cultures.[34] The monarchy established Persian as the

official language for its government and education system

and outlawed other languages, such as Kurdish.

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[34]Entasser, 13.

Kurdish leaders and organizations resisted cultural suppression through armed conflict, but the Pahlavi monarchy countered with two tactics, coopting landowning Kurds and crushing all revolts. The shahs offered financial rewards and political offices to gain the cooperation of Kurdish elites.[35] At the same time the Iranian military and the SAVAK applied force against Kurdish nationalists. As a result, the Kurdish movements remained underground until the Iranian Revolution in 1979, which Kurds, except for those who had cooperated with the shahs, supported.

Conditions remained harsh for Kurdish nationalism under the Republic. Although its constitution recognized the existence of linguistic minorities in Iran, the Islamic Republic only offered special status for non-Islamic, religious minorities (Christian, Jewish or Zoroastrian).[36] As Ayatollah Khomeini stated:

> Sometimes the word minorities is used to refer to people such as the Kurds, Lurs, Turks, Persians, Baluchis, and such. These peoples should not be called minorities, because this term assumes that there is a difference between these brothers. There is no difference between Muslims who speak different languages, for instance, Arabs or Persians. It is very probable that such problems

[35]Ibid., 27.

[36]Ibid., 30.

have been created by those who do not wish the
Muslim countries to be united.[37]

The Iranian government banned the KDPI under suspicions that
they were Marxist-inspired and sentenced its leaders to
death.[38]

The universal Islamic identity promoted by the
revolutionary government was incompatible with the pre-
existing secular, cultural identity felt among the Kurds.
The Teheran government politicized religion as an ethnic
marker. It denied other bases of identity, while implicitly
favoring the Persian ethny. The Kurds cooperated with the
overthrow of the Shah whose Persian-based nationalism
threatened a Kurdish identity. They might have supported an
Islamic identity within which they could negotiate Kurdish-
Persian equality. However, they rejected an Islamic
identity that reinforced Persian dominance. Ethnicity had
already been politicized during the Pahlavi monarchy.[39]

[37]Ruhallah al-Musavi al-Khomeini, Kash-f al-Asrar
(Teheran, 1979), p. 109. in David Menashri, "Khomeini's
Policy toward Minorities," p. 216-17 in Esman and
Rabinovich.

[38]A threat they fulfilled when they assassinated
Qassemlou in Vienna in 1989.

[39]Hooshang Amirahmadi, "Middle-Class Revolutions in the
Third World," in Post Revolutionary Iran, eds. Hooshang
Amirahmadi and Manoucher Parvin (Boulder, Colorado: Westview
Press, 1988), 235. Democracy in Iran and resolution of the
Kurdish problem, according to Amirahmadi, suffers from the
legacy of suspicions aroused during the reign of the

In Iraq, two opposing images of the national community failed to accommodate the Kurdish identity. Arab-dominated regimes in Baghdad promoted civic nationalism or pan-Arab nationalism. Leaders, such as Qasim, promoted Iraq-first policies and tried to use the Kurds to counter the Arab nationalists. The Ba'thists, on the other hand, aspired to international Arab leadership and, as such, viewed the Kurds as a threat to their Arab state.

Almost as if he had taken a page out of constructivist literature, Qasim worked to establish an Iraqi national identity. Qasim included a Kurdish sun disc (a yellow disc surrounded by seven red rays) on the Iraqi nationalist flag, as if to invite the Kurds into the national community.[40] The new government, however, could not establish "Iraqi-ness" in the mythical past. Also, simple symbolism lacked the strength to overcome the Kurdish sense of Arab dominance of the government.

The Arab nationalists that ousted Qasim removed the Kurdish sun disc from the flag and asserted Arab dominance of the state. Iraq, for the Ba'thists, is a secular Arab state and the Kurds threaten and weaken it. At the same time, however, the Ba'thists disallow the dismemberment of

Pahlavis.

[40]Izady, 67.

their state. The Kurdish region has to remain a part of
Iraq so that Iraq can exploit its population and resources
for the advantage of Arab nationalism.

In Turkey, Kurdish nationalism also grew as a
resistance to the assertion of a non-Kurdish nationalism.
Since Ataturk, the government has based its legitimacy upon
the claim of ethnic homogeneity. It has denied the
existence of ethnic Kurds, claiming instead the they were
"Mountain Turks." Ankara backed up its insistence with
military force. The infamous Sark Islahet Plani (Plan for
Reforms in the East) placed the region under military rule,
forcibly relocated Kurds and denied them employment in the
civil service.[41] The plan outlawed the public use of the
Kurdish language. Although the police enforced the
prohibition only fitfully, depending on the disposition of
the government in Ankara and local officials, Kurdish
nationalists chaffed under the restrictions.[42]

Through its tactics, the government strengthened the
PKK. In 1984, the PKK consisted of only 200 fighters and
enjoyed little popular support. Based in the Beka'a Valley
of Lebanon, it relied on Syria for support and was
essentially a foreign-subsidized terrorist group. By 1993,

[41]Mango, 983.

[42]Ibid., 982.

15,000 battle-hardened, well-armed PKK guerrillas fought

from their mountain strongholds and enjoyed the support of

375,000 sympathizers.[43] Eric Rouleau, the former French

ambassador to Turkey, comments:

> The surge witnessed by the PKK cannot be explained
> by either its Marxist-Leninist ideology, which is
> alien to the local mentality, or its ultimate goal
> of establishing an independent state-- a goal the
> majority of the Kurdish population does not share.[44]

The hard-line PKK grew after the government suppressed

moderate nationalists.

During the 1990 Newroz celebrations, the PKK made a

decisive change in tactics. It shifted its efforts from

rural villages to urban centers where mass demonstrations

were organized. The battle for local sympathy was won and

the PKK encouraged popular resistance to security forces and

the militia. Journalist Aliza Marcus records a local

comment: "PKK comes to talk to us. It's the government, the

soldiers we are afraid of because they don't talk--they

kill."[45] Prime Minister Turgot Ozal responded to the PKK

threat by granting broad powers to the regional governors to

exile citizens, evacuate villages, and censor the press.

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[43]Rouleau, 124.

[44]Ibid., 125.

[45]Christian Science Monitor, 30 August 1990, 10.

Having grown rapidly in numbers and popularity, the PKK was able to take advantage of the Gulf War and the subsequent creation of a no-fly zone in northern Iraq. They could attack bases in Turkey and then flee into the no-man's land of Iraq. The government allied with the leaders of the Kurdish Federated State and launched attacks into the region, but has yet to end PKK resistance.

Kurdish ethnonationalism in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey is a reaction to Persian, Arab, and Turkish nationalism and not the result of uneven modernization. Kurdish movements arose in resistance to the state-building efforts of the dominant groups in their states. Economic disparity increases the inter-ethnic animosities that have resulted from the assertion of a Kurdish identity that conflicts with the dominant identities of the three states.

While the problems among the Kurds is an identity crisis, it is not a simple matter of four strong ethnic identities which are incompatible. The Kurdish, Persian, Arab, and Turkish identities can each trace their roots far into the primordial past. Nonetheless, Kurdish, Turkish, and Arab groups did not experience persistent ethnic violence under Ottoman rule. The conflicts between the Kurds and the other ethnies results from the inability or

unwillingness of the states to create national identities
that include their Kurdish minorities.

In addition to addressing the cause of Kurdish ethnic
violence, constructivist theory introduces a dimension that
is ignored by the conflictual modernizationists and the
primordialists. Constructivists ask: What barriers prevent
the formation of a Kurdish national identity? This question
confronts the forces that keep the Kurds apart and allow the
governments in Teheran, Baghdad, and Ankara to use them
against each other.

The Question of a Kurdish National Identity

Linguistic, regional, and religious differences among
the Kurds cast doubt upon the likelihood of the creation of
an identity capable of uniting the Kurds and their
nationalist movements. The Kurds lack a common language and
a common religion. Furthermore regionalism and political
differences among the Kurds undermine their attempts to
nurture loyalties to a greater Kurdish nation and
nationalist movement.

The Kurdish language is divided into numerous dialects.
Several of these dialects might better be categorized as
separate languages within a language group, because they are

only as similar to one another as French is to Italian.[46]
The powerful states that divide the Kurds have prevented
Kurdish-speakers from developing some form of a lingua
franca. Linguistic differences have inhibited the formation
of a common Kurdish identity. Lacking a centralized Kurdish
state to standardize their diverse linguistic heritage,
Kurds must base their nationhood upon another source.

Likewise, religious differences among the Kurds hinder
national unity.[47] Most Kurds are Sunni Muslims, but a
significant number are also Shia Muslims, Alawites, and
Yazidis. Kurdish religious communities are often divided
along linguistic lines. Kurds experience the divisions
between the Sunni and Shi'a communities. Additionally, the
heretical Alawites and Yazidis within their communities
divide the Kurds among themselves, as well as worsening
relations with predominantly Sunni Turks, predominantly
Sunni Arabs, and the Shi'a majority in Iran.

Finally, the Kurds suffer from regionalism and a
politically divided leadership. The Kurds lack unity from

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[46]Izady, 170.

[47]Van Bruinessen argues that traditional and religious
structures offered the most promise for unification of the
Kurds at least until the 1950's. Until then, all major
revolts were led by the shayks, whose position as holy men
provided them the authority to unify enough tribes to resist
the central authorities. Van Bruinessen, 371.

one region to another. Even within each of the five states

into which geopolitical forces have divided them, there

exists factionalism. The political leaders within each

state fight each other, their respective central

governments, as well as the Kurdish movements in other

states.

Kurds within each individual state disagree upon a

single leadership even for that region. In Iran, the

leftist Komala has engaged in bloody struggles against the

liberal KDPI, even while government forces tried to destroy

both. The two Kurdish groups in Iraq, the KDP and the PUK,

have recently united to form the Kurdish Federated State,

but have fought feuds in the past. Talabani's PUK even

allied with Saddam Hussein against their KDP ethnic

brothers. In Turkey, although some are coerced into

joining, many Kurds join the Ankara-backed militia against

the rebel PKK.

The Kurds are alienated from the dominant cultures of

their states by their ethnic identity and, yet, not unified

with one another. Culturally and linguistically, they are

distinct from the Persians, Arabs, and Turks. Thus, Kurdish

identity is associated, as has been the situation throughout

most of Kurdistan, with the support of local clan and tribal

leaders who fight among themselves, or the Kurdish identity

is linked to the support of modern nationalist movements like the PKK, with its alien Marxist ideology and whose primary appeal comes from its armed resistance to the Turkish government.

The question of a Kurdish national identity, suggested by the constructivists, points to the value of constructivism as an approach to ethnonationalism. The conflictual modernizationist approach is too ahistorical and focused upon economic variables to illuminate this crucial aspect of Kurdish ethnonationalism. The primordialists begin to address the importance of identity, but stop after examining the psychological appeal of ethnic identity. Constructivist literature opens up the researcher's mind to the role of the argumentative creation of identities in ethnic conflict.

Summary

Modern Kurdish ethnonationalism grew as a response to others' efforts at nation-building. As Reza Shah and Mustafa Kemal enforced the dominance of Persian and Turkish identities upon their multi-ethnic states, Kurdish leaders resisted the expansion of central authority as well as the suppression of Kurdish culture. Similarly, the Arab-dominated state of Iraq alienated its Kurdish minority.

Whether Arab nationalists or others controlled Baghdad, Iraqi governments viewed the Kurds as a threat to their newly formed state. All three states attacked any expressions of "Kurdishness."

State suppression and Kurdish resistance created a cycle of violence that persists. Kurdish leaders mobilized their followers around ethnic identity, claiming that discriminatory policies and economic oppression justified their cause. Ordinary Kurds remained generally loyal to their traditional leaders and supported their defense of their valued identity against threat of the state. For their part, the central governments saw Kurdish rebellions as justification for the suppression of the disintegrating threat of the Kurdish identity.

In this light, the economic disparity between the Kurds and their economic centers is best seen as an outcome of culture-based exclusion from the national community, and not as the source of the violence. The failure to modernize Kurdish regions of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey indicates the frustration of the central authorities. Economic development of Kurdistan could very well enhance the strength of an ethny that has, for the large part, resisted assimilation and demonstrated disloyalty. The sense of a "colonial" rule over Kurdistan by Teheran, Baghdad, and

Ankara worsens ethnic relations and complicates the resolution of the conflict, but did not cause the conflict.

Constructivist theory addresses the important issues of the likelihood of Kurdish assimilation within the three Middle Eastern states or the formation of a Kurdish national identity. Kurds, especially since they are well-armed and mobilized along ethnic lines, are unlikely to accept the legitimacy of a Iraq under the guise of an Arab identity or a Turkey under the guise of a Turkish identity. Similarly, they are unlikely to accept a pan-Islamic identity in Iran that favors the status-quo of Persian dominance. At the same time, the obstacles to the construction of a Kurdish national identity have allowed the central governments to divide and suppress their Kurdish minorities.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Together, the conflictual modernizationist, the primordialist and the constructivist schools offer approaches that enhance the understanding of the ethnic violence between the Kurds and the Persians, Arabs, and Turks. Each identifies variables that influence the creation of ethnic identities, the reasons for conflict along ethnic lines, the persistence of conflict, or the irrational destructiveness of the violence in the Kurdish regions of Iran, Iraq and Turkey. However, the constructivist approach reveals the original causes of the ethnic conflict and introduces attempts to construct nations as considerations in the ethnic conflict debate. Therefore, constructivist considerations must be accounted for in future studies of ethnic conflicts.

The dependency theorists of the conflictual modernizationist school provide a model of regional economic differentiation for the study of ethnic violence. Kurds in the peripheries of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey lack many of the material goods that modernity has brought to those states.

Additionally, they sense that the "centers" have exploited Kurdistan's laborers and natural resources for the benefit of the dominant ethnies. Kurdish nationalists complain that their people suffer from economic oppression under the rule of non-Kurds.

However, the dependency theorists fail to address the role of ethnic elites in the conflict, other than to suggest that they might argue for economic equality for ethnic groups. This ignores ethnonationalist demands for cultural rights and autonomy. Other than identifying a source of grievance between the Kurds and the ethnies in the economic centers, the competition theorists add little to the understanding of the ethnic violence.

Other conflictual modernizationists argue that the destruction of traditional order and elite attempts to gain power in the expanded polity causes ethnic conflict. The minor attempts to modernize Kurdistan have threatened some Kurdish elites, but the most important impact of modernization upon the violence in Kurdistan has been the introduction of the ideology of nationalism. Leaders of the Kurds, Persians, Arabs, and Turks learned the language of nationalism to argue for their respective group's right to nationhood. History denied the Kurds their own nation, placing them under the state authority of other ethnies.

The primordialists examine the psychological aspects of ethnic identities to understand ethnic conflicts. From this perspective, the Kurds offer an example of a strong identity that commands the psychological devotion of its members. Traits associated with the Kurds dictate war-like behavior, disdain for civilization and, even, infighting. These prejudices, which have roots in the subconsciences of Kurds and non-Kurds, increase the likelihood of violence and militate against the assimilation of the Kurdish identity. However, the existence of strong ethnic identities increases the likelihood of violence, but does not necessitate conflict with other established identities.

The example of Kurdish ethnonationalism demonstrates the advantages of including the constructivist approach and its questions to the study of an ethnic conflict. The focus of the constructivists upon the factors involved in creating national identities reveals the initial causes of the conflicts between the Kurds and the Persians, the Arabs, and the Turks, as well as illuminating the difficulties in establishing a Kurdish national identity.

In Iran, the shahs enforced the ethnically-homogenous, French national model. Ethnic minorities, such as the Kurds, that resisted Persian dominance threatened the monarchy's legitimacy and had to be suppressed. The violent

tactics of the government politicized ethnicity in Iran and, when the Iranian revolutionaries overthrew the Pahlavis, the Islamic Republic could not allay Kurdish suspicions that a pan-Islamic state was just another method of continued Persian dominance. Furthermore, the secular principles of the Kurdish nationalists contrasted with the new regime's religious ideologies. Violence and oppression continued as they had during the monarchy.

In Iraq, the Kurds presented the greatest threat to their respective state. Iraqi leaders could neither abide the threat of armed Kurds within their state, annihilate the Kurds, nor accept the dismemberment of their state. The Kurds and Baghdad alternated between open violence, rebellious Kurds seeking outside support from Iran or the United States and the government allying with other Kurdish leaders, and armed peace while the government consolidated its power and the Kurds feuded among themselves.

The Turkish government chose to declare itself an ethnic Turkish Republic that excluded Kurds from the national community. Military and educational policies attempted to enforce an alternative "Mountain Turk" identity upon Kurds within the borders of the republic, but the policy backfired. The Turkish government kept a tight reign upon Kurdish intellectuals and nationalists until the PKK

grew large enough to oppose it. Decades of brutality

against residents of Kurdistan created animosities that fuel

the Kurdish nationalist movement.

Although Kurds resist their respective government,

linguistic, religious, and political differences divide

their nationalist movements. If there was an independent

Kurdish nation, one must ask which of the mutually-

incomprehensible Kurdish dialects would be the official

language for government and education. The divided Kurds

would have to decide within which guerrilla organization's

region the capital would lie. They must determine whether

the form of government would be a liberal republic along the

lines of the KDPI's desires, one that respected the

authority of the powerful clans as the KDP or PUK might

wish, or a modern socialist or communist government favored

by the PKK and Komala. These are all questions that the

founders of an independent Kurdistan would have to address

prior to the first negotiations among the feuding leaders.

Constructivism introduces an important variable into

the study of ethnic violence that is ignored in the

conflictual modernizationist and the primordialist accounts

of ethnic conflicts. Constructivism takes the ideological

and argumentative aspects of ethnicity and nationalism

seriously. Though the claims and demands of

ethnonationalists, whether they call for patriotism, separatism, or autonomy, should not be taken as their honest motives, neither should they be ignored as meaningless. Demands for cultural autonomy or linguistic rights should be taken at face value.

Conflictual modernizationists assume that ethnic conflicts result from the social disturbance of modernization or the interest politics of elites who seek power or economic rewards. Identity is merely a convenient tool around which nonelites more readily mobilize. Demands for cultural preservation, cultural autonomy, and linguistic rights, therefore, are a ruse to mask political and economic interests.

Primordialists assume that ethnic identities are persistent remnants of a bygone era. Ethnicity holds a subconscious meaning to individuals and has proven its psychological value as a mechanism of social unity. Members will sacrifice self interests and even their lives for the group's status and protection. However, the demands of ethnic nationalists, no matter how honestly felt, simply represent irrational attachments and, thus, are not to be taken seriously.

Scholars should take serious the desires of ethnic elites and nonelites for linguistic and cultural rights. To

consider them as mechanisms of manipulation or remnants of prehistoric society misses the imagined and constructed nature of nations. Qasim's flag with the Kurdish sun disc, its subsequent removal, and the Turkish government's arrest and torture of Moussa Anter for authoring a Kurdish dictionary show the importance of these issues. When Kurds seek to standardize "their" language, or write "their" history, or even when they outline the borders of "Kurdistan" on maps, they construct a nation where presently clan loyalties and factionalism persist. Theorists should not hide from these issues behind assumptions that nationalists do not understand their real grievances.

Given its usefulness as an analytical tool of the ethnic conflict in Kurdistan, constructivism should be applied in future studies of this phenomenon. In addition to the questions raised by the other approaches, further studies should ask if the states experiencing ethnic violence have promoted a national community that is inclusive to all significant, potential identities. They should examine the means for fostering regionally-based identities, since nation-states are better defined as regions under a state's control, rather than as ethnic nations under a state's control. For specific cases, political scientists should ask, given past state policies,

what is the likelihood of finding an identity with universal appeal. The answer to the worldwide reduction of ethnic conflict depends upon whether the West, which has promoted the ethnically-homogenous state as both modern and ideal, can peacefully change the international standard, or must the standard change incrementally, through violence.

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