Horizontal Inequalities, Political Stability and Conflict: some Policy Implications

by

Frances Stewart
• ‘Remove the secondary causes that have produced the great convulsions of the world and you will almost always find the principle of inequality at the bottom. Either the poor have attempted to plunder the rich, or the rich to enslave the poor. If, then, a society can ever be founded in which everyman shall have something to keep and little to take from others, much will have been done for peace’ (de Tocqueville 1835, quote from 1954 edition,: 266)
Structure of talk

• What sort of conflict?
• Causes of conflict
• Focus on Horizontal Inequalities
• The Kenya example
• Policy implications
Centre for Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity

• DFID funded Centre, established 2003.
• Oxford HQ, and partners in
  – West Africa (Cote d’Ivoire; Ghana; Nigeria)
  – Latin America (Bolivia, Guatemala, Peru)
  – South East Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia)
• Book: *Horizontal Inequalities and Conflict: Understanding Group Violence in Multiethnic Societies* (Palgrave 2008)
Conflict

• Talk about ‘organised political violence’.
• Many types of conflict:
  – Non-violent
  – Violent:
    • Domestic
    • Criminal
    • ‘Organised’ political.
• Despite significant reduction from end 1990s, such conflict still very high
Number of conflicts by level: all types

The conflicts shown in Figure 1.1 resulted in at least 25 battle-related deaths a year. They are of three types: interstate (fought between states), extrastate (colonial wars) and intrastate (civil wars). In all cases one of the warring parties was a state. The graph does not include ethnic or other conflicts where neither warring party was a state, nor does it include cases of one-sided violence such as genocide.

Figure 1.1 is a ‘stacked graph’, meaning that the number of conflicts in each category is indicated by the depth of the band of colour. The top line indicates the total number of conflicts of all types in each year. Thus in 1946 there were five extrastate conflicts, two interstate conflicts, ten intrastate conflicts and 17 conflicts in total.

Trends in ethnic conflict, 1945-2004
Fundamental causes of conflicts – alternative views

• Cultural: ‘Age old enmities between ethnic groups’ ‘Clash of civilisations’.
• Economic: individual greed/grievance; group motives
• Political – particular events; political power and political systems.
• Each conflict is unique: cannot generalise
Cultural causes: Conflicting identities, arising from fundamental differences between people

• Too much emphasis on cultural differences. Often no major conflict despite numerous cultures (Tanzania; Malaysia; Brazil).
• Only 0.01% of potential cultural conflicts in Africa are actual conflicts.
• Identities constructed, not given. Constructed and accentuated by leaders to achieve objectives – e.g. economic (Cohen); political/administrative (colonial governments); conflict – as mobilising agent.
For conflict, other elements needed as well as perceived differences in identities

- Need to look for political or economic elements.
- Cultural differences only become important – a source of mobilisation, when OTHER factors present.
- Cohen

  ‘Men may and do certainly joke about or ridicule the strange and bizarre customs of men from other ethnic groups, ...they do not fight over such differences alone. When men do.. fight across ethnic lines it is nearly always the case that they fight over some fundamental issues concerning the distribution and exercise of power, whether economic, political, or both’
Economic explanations – motives for violent political mobilisation – war, two main approaches

1. **Individualistic greed**: profits and jobs from wars Case studies. One element, but ‘Economic incentives have not been the only or even the primary causes of these conflicts’ (Ballentine and Sherman).

2. **Group differences** – Most conflicts organised by group: hence political and economic differences among groups, or **Horizontal Inequalities**
Perspectives on inequality

- Most economists measure and evaluate VERTICAL inequality – among individuals or households.
- And most attention paid to income inequality.
- Policies (efficiency/poverty…) generally in terms of individuals.
Horizontal Inequality

• HI is inequality between groups.
• What groups? – groups with meaning to members, viewed by people themselves, or others as important aspect of identity.
• Group boundaries vary in different societies (and over time)
• Examples of salient identities:
  – Ethnic/’tribe’: African
  – Religious: most regions – notable N.Ireland; Middle East; Indonesia; Nigeria
  – Race – e.g. South Africa; Malaysia; Fiji
  – Regional (overlaps with other identities) – E.Timor; Eritrea, Bangladesh.
  – Caste (S.Asia)
  – Class
• Often overlaps.
Multidimensional

- Dimensions are those that matter to members – affect well-being, sense of injustice, actions.
- Salient dimensions vary according to nature of society/economy, and to position (leaders/followers).
- Important dimensions include:
  - **Politics** (political participation, power, at all levels).
  - **Economic** resources and outcomes (access to assets, employment, incomes).
  - **Social**, including services (health/education/water..; and social networks).
  - **Cultural recognition**.
- Should also be true of vertical, but despite lip service rarely included.
Use of identities for mobilising support for conflict

• Increasing since end of Cold War.
• Identities constructed and emphasised by leaders to get support.
• Not plucked from air – constrained by history, language etc.
• Powerful mobilising agent.
• Differences real to participants.
HIs and Political stability

• Ethnic or religious boundaries powerful source of mobilisation in general, but
• Especially where there are blatant HIs. Used by ‘ethnic entrepreneurs’. Many examples:
  – Rwanda;
  – N.Ireland;
  – Kosova.
  – Sri Lanka
  – Darfur

Also riots:
  – City riots in India
  – US cities in 1970s

• Also applies internationally: Moslem/Western divide.
Empirical support for hypothesis that high HIs predispose to violent conflict

- Statistical work across countries; and within countries
- And numerous case studies.
- But connection NOT automatic – depends on particular conditions.
Conditions in which HIs are likely to generate conflict

• Political as well as economic HIs.
  – Contrast Cote d’Ivoire and Nigeria. Pre-Apartheid S. Africa and post.
  – Cities in Nigeria: Warri and Calabar.
• HIs widening – especially sharp change.
• A few large groups, not fragmented.
• Government rigidity: contrast Ghana with Cote d’Ivoire. State actions in Aceh, Indonesia, and Guatemala fueled and prolonged conflict.
How does the Kenya story fit?

• Previous work noted that Kenya did have sharp socio-economic HIs, but conflict avoided by:
  – Shared growth under Kenyatta so most areas benefited.
  – Difference in political and economic HIs under Moi (Kikuyus economic privileges but not political).

• Revisited evidence since elections and unrest.
KENYA

• No one ethnic group demographically dominant in Kenya as a whole.
• Particular ethnic groups dominate different regions.
• Each region becoming more mixed over time.
• Strong Kikuyu and Luhya presence in Rift Valley, along with Kalenjin and Masai, due to post-colonial land settlements and purchases.
KENYA : Ethnicity and region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Ethnic groups</th>
<th>% of total population (DHS 2007)</th>
<th>Major location</th>
<th>% of pop. of region, 2003</th>
<th>% of Rift valley pop.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kikuyu</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>Central</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luhya</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luo</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>Nyanza</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalenjin</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>Rift Valley</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Performance relative to Central Province

- Under 5 mortality
- Health facilities
- Sec enrol boys
- Sec enrol girls
- Expend. on roads per cap.
- Asset ownership

Provinces:
- Nyanza
- Rift Valley
- Western

Kenya
Inequalities in regions in domestic assets, among ethnic groups

- Rift Valley: Kikuyu/Kalenjin: 2.0
- Western: Kikuyu/Luhya: 3.0
- Nyanza: Kikuyu/Luo: 1.6
### Political HIs in Kenya: Representation in cabinet relative to population share

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kenyatta (Kikuyu)</th>
<th>Moi (Kalenjin)</th>
<th>Kibaki (Kikuyu)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kikuyu</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luhya</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td><strong>0.35</strong></td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luo</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalenjin</td>
<td><strong>0.46</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.44</strong></td>
<td>1.02</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
KENYA

Political HIs

• Mostly fairly inclusive cabinets
• Presidents start inclusive and then increase own group representation.
• Corrected by change of regime (Kenyatta-Moi; Moi-Kibaki).
• Nov. 2005 sharp drop in Luo and Kalenjin representation in cabinet.
• Would have been corrected by elections, but not respected.
• Hence from November 2005 socio-economic AND political HIs: high potential for violent mobilisation
## Votes in election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of votes cast in region (‘official’)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kibaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odinga</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion: ‘Explaining’ the violence by HIs

- In situation of severe socio-economic HIs, political participation can effectively keep peace (cf. Nigeria).
- Elections provided a potential way of overturning the political exclusion of Kibaki. Hence rejection of elections occasion for mobilising for violence.
- People were ready to be mobilised because of socio-economic HIs; plus general poor economic performance; land issues; weak employment situation.
Reducing the risk of conflict by correcting HIs: policy conclusions

- HIs can be serious: policy needs to address them, in all economies with marked inequalities (not only conflict-affected ones).
- Important for general wellbeing and poverty reduction as well as political stability
- NOT included in normal economic or political policies.
- Policies similar to those towards ‘exclusion’
Neglected in International policies

- HIs neglected, in international policy:
  - Aid, often worsens HIs.
  - Structural adjustment
  - PRSPs
  - Also multiparty democracy
  - But more included in ‘Human rights approach’; and Social exclusion approach.

- Much more often included in national policies.
3 types of policy

• Direct – targeted. Can be effective. But can lead to opposition and entrench ethnicity.
• Indirect – may be less effective, but also arouse less hostility.
• Towards greater integration – very long term; and has costs.
Indirect Policies

1. Legal policies – outlawing discrimination.
2. Focus on public sector:
   1. Fiscal policies
   2. Expenditure, including beneficiaries, contracts and jobs
   3. Use regional policy, where groups are regionally concentrated; or even district or neighbourhood policies.
3. Economic policies: exchange rates; tariffs.
SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICIES

Categories of direct economic and social policies

• Assets
  – Land (Malaysia; Zimbabwe; Fiji; Namibia)
  – Financial capital (Malaysia; S.Africa)
  – Terms of privatisation – often unequalising
  – Credit (Fiji; Malaysia)
  – Education (Malaysia; Sri Lanka).
  – Skills and training (Brazil, New Zealand)
  – Public sector infrastructure (S.Africa).
  – Housing (N.Ireland).

• Incomes
  – Employment policies;
    • Public sector (Malaysia; Sri Lanka)
    • Private sector (S.Africa)
  – Fiscal policies
SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICIES

Integrationist policies

• Education
• Media
• But
  – Threatens cultural identities (France)
  – May disguise inequalities (Peru)
SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICIES

Main consequences

• Mostly successful in reducing gaps, but rarely in eliminating them.
• Does not seem to reduce efficiency. In fact may increase it.
• Must work on economic as well as social (N.Ireland, Malaysia v. Ghana, US).
SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICIES

Possible negative consequences

– May reduce inter-group inequality, but increase intra-group.

– May ‘entrench’ ethnicity as category. But with sharp HIs these may be entrenched anyway. If changes ethnic division of labour may reduce ethnic salience (US? Malaysia?)

– Can provoke political protest, even violence if insensitively handled, Sri Lanka clearest example. But elsewhere has reduced political violence – Malaysia, N. Ireland, US
SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICIES

Malaysia: a successful case of reducing econ/social HIs.

• 1971, following anti-Chinese riots, 1969. NEP.
  – Restructuring policies:
    o expand Bumiputera share of capital ownership to 30%.
    o 95% of new lands to be settled on Malays;
    o educational quotas in public institutions laid down, in line with population shares;
    o credit policies favoured Malays, with credit allocations and more favourable interest rates.
Figure One: Malaysia mean incomes relative to national average
SOCIO-ECONOMIC POLICIES

N. Ireland: economic changes underlying political ones

• His large, persistent and consistent over all dimensions over a long time period

• no narrowing of gap between the communities from 1901 to 1970s, with Catholics disadvantaged at every level.

Horizontal Inequalities in N.Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Ratio of Catholic to Protestant</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High income HH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% prof and manag jobs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher educ</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Houses with &gt; 3 rooms</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>New appointments in police</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

changes from 1970s to 1990s
N. Ireland: intervention on HIs and peace

Figure B3.2a Community differential in unemployment rates - Men
Catholic rate minus Protestant rate (percentage points)

POLICIES
TOWARDS POLITICAL HIs

• Critical importance; reduces motives for leaders to mobilise; and contributes to correct economic HIs
• Structures to ensure that each group participates in political decision-making and power. Not Westminster majoritarian political system, winner takes all.
• Power sharing is NOT natural consequence of the way many understand democracy.
• NB Participation can be
  – at many levels: central, regional, local
  – activities - army, police, civil service
POLICIES
TOWARDS POLITICAL HIs
Apparently successful types of action

• PR.
• Two chambers, one representing geographical areas. India, Nigeria.
• Federal constitution. Belgium, Ethiopia, Nigeria, India, Switzerland.
• Decentralisation. (Bolivia).
• Veto powers by minorities in government. Belgium, Switzerland.
• Seat reservations. India.
• Job reservations/quotas. Govt., civil service, police, army.
• Strong, ethnically balanced judiciary, plus constitutionally guaranteed human rights.
• Many political policies an outcome as much as a cause of success in multiethnic government. Cf Fiji.
In conclusion

- HIs are important for wellbeing and political stability
- Neglected in much data collection and policy.
- Range of policies available, economic and political, which can be effective without sacrifice of efficiency.
- Policies needed in ANY society with sharp divisions, not only those with recent conflict.
- NB. Focus on HIs does not discount importance of other issues – growth, environment, poverty and vertical inequality