



Perspektiven auf globale Politik

AFK-EUPRA – 1: ETHNIC DIVIDED SOCIETIES

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AFK-EuPRA – Panel 1: Ethnic Divided Societies

Chair: Johannes Vüllers (University of Konstanz, Germany)

Presenters:

Mitja Sienknecht (Viadrina University of Frankfurt/Oder, Germany): Strategies of Inclusion – International Organizations as Part of Intrastate Conflicts

The paper deals with the communicative construction of conflicts and uses a system-theoretical approach that helps to understand intrastate conflicts as social (parasitic) systems in World Society. Based on the theoretical assumption that the conflict-specific “logic of operation” tends to perpetuate and to integrate more and more actors, topics and resources into the conflict system, the paper analyzes the communicative de- and rebordering of ethno-political conflicts. Of special interest are the relations between non-state conflict parties and International Organizations (IOs) – a structural relationship, often initiated by the non-state group and aiming for a normative or institutional inclusion of the IO in the conflict system. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how politically excluded (ethnic) minority groups do address international organizations (UN, EU, etc.) of the world-political system and thereby try to overcome the blocked communication channels on the national level. On the basis of the Kurdish conflict in Turkey, the communicative



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inclusion of the EU into the Turkish-Kurdish conflict system will be explained. It is concluded that IOs are not located outside of the conflict system – as it is often conceptualized in peace and conflict studies – but rather, that they are part of the conflict system due to the emergence of structures of expectations between the local (minority group) and the global level (IOs).

Nils-Christian Bormann (University of Exeter, UK): Power-Sharing Coalitions and Ethnic Civil War

How do coalition governments affect the risk of civil war onset in ethnically divided societies? Existing research argues that power-sharing coalitions decrease the risk of civil war because they redress grievances. Building on a formal model of coalition formation, we predict that ethnic elites are most likely to form oversized rather than minimum-winning coalitions in anticipation of future challenges to the regime. Put differently, we expect most power-sharing to occur where the risk of regime-threatening civil war is highest.

Rational group leaders would prefer to build minimum winning coalitions to increase their own payoffs. However, in the context of civil war ethnic groups are frequently prone to fragmentation and division into competing factions. It is well understood that this makes it hard to achieve stable peace agreements and prolongs fighting. Our key insight is that the uncertainty surrounding group coherence induces a risk-return trade-off for the formateur in coalition bargaining. Coalitions that are close to a minimum winning coalition maximize the formateur's bargaining power, but potentially are unstable. In contrast, larger coalitions reduce the formateur's gain but decrease the risk of a coalition failure due to group fragmentation. We identify the costs of fighting and the risk of internal divisions as driving forces for oversizing coalitions. As the costs associated with bargaining breakdown decrease, for example in the presence of peace keeping troops, realized coalitions approach the winning coalition ideal. Similarly, as group coherences increases, coalition sizes decrease. When the approximate power and internal coherence of ethnic groups cannot be accurately gauged, ethnic elites operate in an environment of incomplete information. Uncertainty is reduced as actors learn more about other groups. Following this logic, we make a prediction about the time of civil war onsets: Power-sharing coalitions are more likely to face violence initially when uncertainty about their true capabilities is high. This risk decreases over time when only capable governments have survived.

Relying on the latest version of the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) data, we construct all possible ethnic coalitions between 1946 and 2013 in 135 ethnically divided societies. We employ a novel two-stage statistical model that first estimates the likelihood of coalition formation and then

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the risk of civil war onset and find support for our hypotheses. We find that oversized coalitions are the most likely type of government in ethnically divided societies but they are very vulnerable early on in their tenure. Finally, there is no evidence that commonly considered institutional arrangements such as democratic rule, proportional representation, or authoritarian institutions impact either ethnic coalition formation or civil war risk.

Sebastian Schutte (BICC, Germany): Politics or Prejudice: Explaining Individual-Level Hostilities in India's Hindu-Muslim Conflict

Understanding the dynamics of identity-based conflict remains a central challenge of contemporary peace research. A crucial case that has received decades of scholarly attention is the Hindu-Muslim conflict in India. While there is no shortage of theories explaining the causes of the continuing hostilities, empirical research has faced a trade-off between broad geographic coverage and highly disaggregated data. This paper contributes to overcoming the trade-off by combining data from an electronic survey with event-data on religious riots and tests three prominent theories of why groups go to war. The results show that individual-level exposure to negative experiences with the out-group are a strong predictor of a confrontative stance towards the out-group, which is in-line with social-psychological expectations. Concerns for future violence are also positively correlated with hostile attitudes, which lends support to the logic of a security dilemma.

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