Relative deprivation theory of conflict pdf

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Academia.edu uses cookies to personalize content, tailor ads and improve the user experience. By using our site, you agree to our collection of information through the use of cookies. To learn more, view our Privacy Policy. How can states in sub-Saharan Africa better provide for the needs of their populations and reduce inter-group violence? This article from the Journal on Science and World Affairs examines poverty and conflict escalation in Niger and Senegal. The partiality of some state policies regarding resource distribution promotes inter-group inequality and conflict escalation in Niger and Senegal. The partiality of some state policies regarding resource distribution promotes inter-group inequality and conflict escalation in Niger and Senegal. the post-colonial period, the sub-Saharan region has witnessed a substantial number of violent conflicts, mostly within states between contending ethno-political entities manipulated by rival political entities manipulated by rival entities manipulated by groups and constituent ethnic communities, which leads to political fragmentation. This is exacerbated by the interaction of diverse social, ethnic and resource exploitation-related issues. In sub-Saharan Africa, many states lack the capacity to extract sufficient resources to be able to provide a minimum level of services to the population at large. The economic dependency of many such states has increased because of structural macro-economic limitations. Furthermore, the state apparatus and the population, annihilating the embryonic legitimacy of the state as an impartial arbiter. The Tamajag rebellion in Niger and the Jola insurgency in the Casamance region of Senegal show that poverty is only a possible mobilising factor for conflict where it is perceived as resulting from a conscious political process of marginalisation. Other findings include the following: In Niger the political crisis resulted from a combination of ecological crises, land pressure, loss of response mechanisms and the desire to maintain a proper cultural identity within an unsupportive state. In Senegal violent conflict is the result of various socioeconomic factors, including the impact of the new constitution on land distribution and the expansion of modern economic activities (fisheries and tourism) mainly by immigrants, which ignore local entitlements. The Casamancais' sense of marginalisation facilitated the escalation into civil war of political mobilisation by disenfranchised Jola intellectuals. In order to stem the tide of violent political confrontations, the state in sub-Saharan Africa needs to address resource-related problems and the crucial issue of impartiality in resource distribution. Issues highlighted include: Inter-group inequality: Structural inequality between urban centres and the countryside has been exacerbated by inadequate compensation to the peasantry for cash crop production and uneven service provision in rural areas. Selective resource exploits a resource exploits to compensate its traditional inhabitants, the Jola, adequately. Structural limitations to resource extraction: With sufficient resources, the state might reduce the potential for inter-group inequality to result in conflict. However, access to resources is limited by reliance on the export of single products and lack of extractive capacity through tax collection. The fragility of the state system in sub-Saharan Africa: The impact of external intervention aimed at supporting minimal governance conditions through financial support has, at best, only temporarily halted the process of state disintegration and the power struggle between contending elites. Relative deprivation is formally defined as an actual or perceived lack of resources required to maintain the quality of life (e.g. diet, activities, material possessions) to which various socioeconomic groups or individuals within those groups have grown accustomed, or are considered to be the accepted norm within the quality of life considered typical within a given socioeconomic group. Relative deprivation of absolute poverty is a potentially life-threatening situation that occurs when income falls below a level adequate to maintain food and shelter. In simpler terms, relative deprivation is a feeling that you are generally "worse off" than the people you associate with and compare yourself to. For example, when you can only afford a compact economy car but your co-worker, while getting the same salary as you, drives a fancy luxury sedan, you may feel relatively deprived. As defined by social theorists and political scientists, relative deprivation theory suggests that people who feel they are being deprived of something considered essential in their society (e.g. money, rights, political voice, status) will organize or join social movements dedicated to obtaining the things of which they feel deprived. For example, relative deprivation has been cited as one of the causes of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, which was rooted in Black Americans' struggle to gain social and legal recognition of their marriages enjoyed by straight people, In some cases, relative deprivation has been cited as a factor driving incidents of social disorder like rioting, looting, terrorism, and civil wars. In this nature, social movements and their associated disorderly acts can often be attributed to the grievances of people who feel they are being denied resources to which they are entitled. Development of the concept of relative deprivation is often attributed to American sociologist Robert K. Merton, whose study of American soldiers during World War II revealed that soldiers in the Military Police were far less satisfied with their opportunities for promotion than regular GIs. In proposing one the first formal definitions of relative deprivation, British statesman and sociologist Walter Runciman listed four required conditions: A person does not have something. That person wants to have the thing. That person wants the thing. The thing relative deprivation is driven by an individual's feelings of being treated unfairly compared to others in their group. For example, an employee who feels they should have gotten a promotion that went to another employee may feel egoistically relatively deprivation is more often associated with massive group social movements like the Civil Rights Movement. Another more common example of fraternal deprivation is the feeling of envy felt by middle-class driving luxury cars and wearing designed clothes. According to Runciman, fraternal deprivation also affects voting behavior, especially when appealing to extreme right-wing political candidates or movements, Another viewpoint on relative deprivation was developed by American author and professor of political science Ted Robert Gurr. In his 1970 book Why Men Rebel, Gurr explains the link between relative deprivation and political science. that the frustration-aggression mechanism, triggered by feelings of relative deprivation, is the primary source of the human capacity for violence. While such frustration does not always result in violence, Gurr contends that the longer individuals or groups are subjected to relative deprivation the more likely it is that their frustration will lead to anger and ultimately violence. Relative deprivation has a counterpart: absolute deprivation in which household income falls below a level needed to maintain the basic necessities of life, such as food and shelter. Meanwhile, relative deprivation describes a level of poverty at which household income drops to a certain percentage below the country's median income. For example, a country's level of relative poverty can threaten one's very survival, while relative poverty may not but is likely to limit one's ability to participate fully in their society. In 2015, the World Bank Group set the worldwide absolute poverty level at \$1.90 per day per person based on purchasing power parities (PPP) rates. Critics of relative deprivation theory have argued that it fails to explain why some people who, though deprived of rights or resources, fail to take part in social movements meant to attain those things. During the Civil Rights Movement, for example, Black people who refused to participate in the movement were derisively referred to as "Uncle Toms" by other Black people in reference to the excessively obedient enslaved person depicted in Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin." However, proponents of relative deprivation theory argue that many of these people simply want to avoid the conflicts and life difficulties they might encounter by joining the movement with no quarantee of a better life as a result. Additionally, relative deprivation theory does not account for people who take part in movements that do not benefit them directly. Some examples include the animal rights movement, straight and cis-gendered people who march alongside LGBTQ+ activists, and wealthy people who demonstrate against policies that perpetuate poverty or income inequality. In these cases, participants are believed to act more out of a sense of empathy or sympathy than feelings of relative deprivation. Curran, Jeanne and Takata, Susan R. "Robert K. Merton." California State University, Dominguez Hills. (February 2003). Duclos, Jean-Yves. "Absolute and Relative deprivation and social justice: a study of attitudes to social inequality in twentieth-century England." Routledge & Kegan Paul (1966). ISBN-10: 9780710039231. Gurr, Ted Robert (1970). "Why Men Rebel." Routledge, November 30, 2011, ISBN-10: 9781594519147.

