P01 / Theories and Dynamics of Ethnic Violence in Public Policy

Topic : POLICY, POLITICS AND POLITICAL REGIME

Chair : Hamid Ali (Doha Institute for Graduate Studies)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

The complex dynamics of ethnic diversity, inclusion, and multiculturalism in public policy play a central role in either fostering stability or exacerbating intergroup tensions. This call for papers seeks contributions that advance understanding of policies for ethnic management, examining how government policies impact both inclusion and exclusion in multicultural contexts. In particular, we aim to explore how policies addressing ethnic diversity affect the successes, challenges, and failures in achieving a cohesive and just society.

Building on theories of ethnic violence, this issue will explore how marginalization, resource allocation, and state behavior contribute to intergroup tensions. Ethnic violence is seldom spontaneous; it often stems from deep-rooted socio-political and economic disparities. Consequently, public policy shaped by dominant power structures can either mitigate or intensify these inequalities, impacting how resources are allocated and how diverse communities engage with state mechanisms.

Key Research Areas and Questions:

We invite papers that address the following critical areas:

1. **Ethnic Marginalization and Conflict in Public Policy**
How do power structures in public policy formulation influence ethnic inclusion or exclusion, and to what extent does ethnic marginalization trigger societal conflicts? This theme invites contributions that analyze how policies shaped by central powers impact ethnic groups, exploring whether these policies promote inclusiveness or foster marginalization and conflict.

2. **Decentralization as a Tool for Inclusion**
What role does decentralized governance play in managing ethnic diversity? Decentralization has been a key strategy in mitigating ethnic conflict by providing local autonomy and power-sharing opportunities. Papers under this theme should explore whether and how local democratization, autonomy, and inclusive incentives contribute to peace and unity in multi-ethnic societies.

3. **Comparative Perspectives: Global North and Global South**
How does the relationship between public policy access and ethnic conflict vary between the Global South and the Global North? We seek studies that examine ethnic marginalization in public policy access across these contexts, exploring whether patterns differ between and within these regions. Special attention will be given to case studies from the Global South to understand unique approaches to ethnic diversity and conflict management.

4. **Policy Frameworks for Inclusion, Successes, and Failures**
What strategies and frameworks have shown success or failure in managing ethnic diversity within governmental and organizational settings? Papers that analyze the implementation of multicultural policies, inclusion and exclusion tactics, and their social impacts are particularly welcome. Additionally, we encourage case studies that shed light on both effective and problematic approaches to multicultural governance.

Submission Focus and Expectations:

We welcome contributions from diverse disciplines—including political science, public policy and administration, and economics—that analyze the interaction of public policy and ethnic diversity. Submissions should offer empirical research, comparative studies, or theoretical insights into how policies around ethnic diversity shape social cohesion, ethnic management, and conflict dynamics. The issue aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of ethnic diversity policy, informing policymakers, scholars, and practitioners about the impacts of inclusion, exclusion, and decentralization on social stability and peace.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Theories of ethnic violence provide critical insights into the intricate interplay of factors that lead to

intergroup conflicts. Rather than being spontaneous, ethnic violence often results from deep-rooted socio-political and economic conditions. Scholarly literature identifies key determinants of ethnic violence, including deprivation, inequalities, resource allocation, and state strategic behavior. Each of these factors plays a crucial role in either mitigating or exacerbating ethnic tensions, often serving as catalysts for violence. Together, they form a theoretical framework that helps explain the complex dynamics leading to ethnic violence. This multidisciplinary perspective draws from political science, economics, and sociology to explore why and how ethnic conflicts emerge.

Ethnic Marginalization and Public Policy

Public policy, frequently shaped by the dominant ethnic majority, often reflects the power structures that govern resource allocation. Disenfranchised communities, in response, may advocate for equitable treatment or self-determination, either peacefully or violently. The proximity of ethnic groups to centers of power influences how public resources are distributed, exacerbating marginalization for some communities. Understanding the impacts of marginalization on public policy access is essential for guiding reforms toward inclusiveness, stability, sustainability, and social peace.

Decentralization has been a focal point in the study of ethnic conflicts. Research suggests that local-level democratization and autonomy can strengthen national unity in diverse societies by balancing the interests of various social groups. Decentralized governance provides inclusive incentives and can reduce the risk of violence at different stages of conflict through power-sharing and greater inclusion of minority groups.

Key Research Questions

This call for papers invites contributions that address the following pivotal questions:

1. To what extent does ethnic marginalization in public policy formulation trigger societal conflicts?
This question aims to explore how central power structures utilize and consolidate power, examining variables such as the empowerment or marginalization of ethnic groups. The role of these entities in either promoting inclusion or fostering exclusion will be a key area of focus.

2. How does the relationship between public policy access and conflict differ between the Global South and the Global North?
This second question seeks to examine whether ethnic marginalization and public policy access follow different patterns in the Global South compared to the Global North. Additionally, it will explore the heterogeneity within the Global South itself, challenging the assumption that democratic governance universally guarantees the non-violent resolution of ethnic conflicts.

Research Focus and Contributions

We particularly invite research that explores the structure of ethnic marginalization, including ethnic exclusion, separatism, and the role of junior partners in the executive branches of government as drivers of public policy implementation. While a broad range of topics and regions are welcome, special analytical attention will be given to case studies from the Global South to better understand the varied approaches to managing ethnic diversity and conflict in this context.

This call for papers aims to advance the understanding of the dynamics of ethnic violence and the role of public policy in either mitigating or exacerbating these conflicts. By exploring the intersection of ethnic marginalization and public policy, we hope to foster dialogue on how governance can be reformed to promote inclusiveness, stability, and peace.

For questions and submissions, please reach out to [email Hami.Ali: hamid.ali@dohainstitute.edu.qa or Faical Mansouri: faical.mansouri@dohainstitute.edu.qa].

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Session 1

Friday, July 4th 16:00 to 18:00 (B3)

Power Domination and Civil War in Sudan: A Power-Sharing Perspective

Almalaz Osman (Doha Institute for Graduate Studies)

Power Domination and Civil War in Sudan: A Power-Sharing Perspective

The overly centralized rule in Sudan has led to the marginalization of ethnic groups, unequal distribution of the nation's resources, and the perpetuation of violence. Areas on the periphery such as the Darfur and South Sudan regions have suffered from political neglect, and slow economic development as well as cultural detachment that has often resulted in grievances leading to violent conflict or attempts at secession. There are some attempts towards decentralization such as the federal system that were introduced during the Bashir regime, but such efforts were plagued with high levels of politicization, local fiscal dependence, and restricted self-rule making it difficult for society to have faith in the system and propelling them further apart.

This research attempts to investigate the way Sudan can use decentralization as a tool to conflict resolution, as well as a way to foster the citizen's loyalty towards their country. The impact of centralization on ethnic relationships has been extensively studied and there are lessons to be drawn from previous efforts at decentralization and their impact on ethnic tensions. The research aims to address the need to cultivate a culture of pluralism and social justice by analyzing the ways in which decentralization can facilitate better and more fair allocation of resources, greater political participation of the marginalized groups, and a more responsive government to different perspectives.

Bureaucratic Representation, Ethnic Marginalization and Conflict

Faical MANSOURI (Doha Institute for Graduate Studies)

Hamid Ali (Doha Institute for Graduate Studies)

Abstract: The theory of representative bureaucracy seeks to promote diversity and inclusion by ensuring representation across various levels of bureaucracy. Ethnic marginalization, rooted in deeply entrenched socio-political and economic inequalities, is often exacerbated when bureaucratic representation fails to address the diverse needs of ethnic communities. Such neglect reinforces marginalization and fuels tensions, undermining the potential for governance and social cohesion. Using a comprehensive dataset spanning from 1945 to 2020 for an in-depth analysis of long-term trends and cross-regional comparisons between the Global North and South, this study addresses two critical inquiries: the extent to which ethnic marginalization within bureaucratic system acts as a catalyst for societal conflicts, and whether the dynamics of bureaucratic access and conflict manifestation differ between the Global South and North. In our analysis, while dominant ethnic groups have underscored the significance of power-sharing through governance, they have concurrently restricted other groups from fully realizing these governance rights. Such states, particularly in the Global South, exhibit a fragility that exacerbates their vulnerability to violent upheavals from marginalized ethnic groups, often met with stringent state resistance. We highlight the critical role of inclusivity and representation of marginalized voices within bureaucratic system as fundamental to fostering peace and stability.

Systemic discrimination of Muslims in Amsterdam and how to combat it. Governmental and civil society initiatives.

MEZIANI Yamina (University)

This contribution examines manifestations of inequality and discrimination of Muslim populations in Amsterdam in relation to policies and initiatives aiming to combat exclusion and promote equality and inclusion. The need to combat Muslim discrimination has been articulated in various ways at different institutional levels, notably at the European, national, and municipal levels. In Amsterdam policy strategies are being developed in the context of the broader Vision on Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination that was re-instated for the period 2023-2026 under the political leadership of alderperson Touria Meliani. The municipal policy framework is organized around three main lines of action: combatting and reducing discrimination and related prejudices, strengthening the role of regional anti-discrimination provisions, and addressing the negative impact of the past on contemporary society. In terms of governance approach the goal are for the municipality to act as coordinator and for concrete interventions to be developed by a network of partner institutions, including governmental bodies, civil society organizations, and independent entities such as housing cooperatives, schools, and private companies.
Grounded in fieldwork, interviews, and policy analysis conducted within the UNDETERRED project, this paper analyses the underlying understandings and policy framings as to what Muslim discrimination is, how it is being produced and reproduced, and what actions are helpful to combat it. The urgency for a distinctive strategy towards Muslim discrimination is explained in light of trends over the past 10 years and more recent events such as the riots following the soccer game between Ajax and Macabi Haifa in November 2024. Various campaigns and projects have been developed to challenge stereotypes and hate speech, monitoring acts of discrimination, addressing polarization and hostilities in schools and neighborhoods, and intervening to combat discrimination across sectors such as housing, internships, and policing. However, so we argue, many Muslim civil society actors propose to understand Muslim discrimination as a systemic issue, stemming from processes of racialization and exclusion that impact individuals in multiple domains of life, whether through stereotypes, prejudices, or institutional discrimination. Even though there is some policy and political support for this vision, the interventions developed by the city do not necessarily correspond to these problem definitions. Public policy discussions around the fight against anti-Muslim discrimination thus serves as a lens to explores how competing conceptions exist about how to organize and facilitate anti-discrimination efforts for a specific social group and how to address systemic exclusion across multiple domains.
This study based on a qualitative research in 2024 and 2025 from the Undeterred PROGRAM, offers a valuable perspective on how public policies addressing ethnic diversity can simultaneously mitigate intergroup tensions and promote inclusion in urban settings. Through its analysis, this contribution seeks to provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners aiming to foster stability, equity, and social cohesion.

Barriers to Rights: The Practices of Securitization on Rohingya Refugees in South Asia

Umut Korkut (Glasgow Caledonian University)

Monika Verma (Palacky University)

This paper delves into the complex and evolving intersection of securitization practices and the systematic denial of fundamental rights to Rohingya refugees in South Asia, with a particular focus on Bangladesh and India. The Rohingya, a stateless Muslim minority from Myanmar, have faced decades of persecution, leading to one of the most protracted and pressing refugee crises in the region. As displaced Rohingyas seek refuge in neighboring countries, their plight has been increasingly entangled with state security narratives and domestic political agendas. This paper critically examines how South Asian states and political actors frame the Rohingya crisis through the lens of securitization — portraying refugees not as victims of persecution in need of protection but as potential security threats and burdens on national resources. This framing has shaped policies that prioritize state security and political interests over humanitarian obligations, thereby marginalizing an already vulnerable population. Through an in-depth analysis of the legal, political, and social barriers imposed on the Rohingya community, this study highlights the ways in which securitization justifies exclusionary practices. These include restricted freedom of movement, lack of legal recognition, limited access to education, healthcare, and employment, and heightened surveillance and policing of refugee settlements. By drawing on case studies from Bangladesh and India — two countries at the forefront of the Rohingya crisis — the paper illustrates how these measures perpetuate statelessness and exacerbate social and economic vulnerabilities. In Bangladesh, the initial humanitarian response to the 2017 Rohingya influx has gradually shifted toward securitization, driven by fears of radicalization, resource strain, and political pressures. India, on the other hand, has largely

maintained a securitized approach from the outset, framing Rohingya refugees as illegal immigrants and potential security risks, which has led to deportations, detention, and legal precarity. The study argues that this securitization-driven governance framework not only exacerbating their statelessness (undermining long-term regional stability by fostering social exclusion) but also violating the international principles of refugee protection.

Keywords: Rohingya refugee, securitization, refugee governance, South Asia.

Decolonizing Public Policy Discourse in the Curriculum: A View from the Middle East and North Africa

Ashraf Abdelhay (Doha Institute for Graduate Studies)

Public policy is often perceived as a Western discipline, influenced by the historical contexts and knowledge systems from which it originated and developed. However, public policy as a practice can be traced back to ancient civilizations such as the Kingdom of Kush, Babylon, and the Hammurabi laws. Every society has its own public policy, even without formally constructing a discipline of "public policy." The structural and ideological forces of colonial modernity are entangled in the conceptual categories and meta-languages through which the discipline is institutionalized and universalized, including the very notion of 'the public.'

American universities have spearheaded and shaped academic discourse in teaching public policy. Consequently, many academic cadres trained in Western universities have emulated these traditions in environments that might not reflect the local reality. For example, discussions of the policy process often originate from democratic societies with established checks and balances; however, the policy process and policymaking differ significantly between democratic and non-democratic societies.

Research Questions

To what extent is the discipline of public policy in the Middle East and North Africa westernized?
Is there local content that indigenizes public policy knowledge in these regions?
This research aims to critically examine the extent of Western influence on public policy education and practice in the Middle East and North Africa, and to identify and highlight local content and indigenous knowledge systems that contribute to the field. By decolonizing the curriculum and incorporating diverse perspectives, we can develop a more inclusive and contextually relevant understanding of public policy.