TYPES OF CONFLICT (A.P. SCHMIDT'S TYPOLOGY)

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The typology of conflicts given by A.P/ Schmidt is by far the most encompassing, and it includes all types of contemporary armed or violent conflicts. They are discussed below.

1. **Political and ideological conflicts or anti-regime wars:** These include situations where states are confronted with insurrection, such as liberation movements fighting against a colonial power and social revolutionary movements seeking to bring down an authoritarian state. It constitutes about 19.6% of contemporary armed conflicts.

2. **Ethno-nationalist conflicts:** This type of conflict assumes many diverse forms though they are mostly intra-state conflicts (state versus nation) and inter-state conflicts. Such conflicts are generally long-lasting. It constitutes 44.1% of contemporary conflicts.

3. **Inter-state Conflicts or State versus State conflicts** constitute the classic type of contemporary warfare and makeup 11.8% of the wars in the world between 1985 and 1994. They include the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988 and the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2002.

4. **Inter-ethnic conflicts:** These are often fought without a state actor taking part. Also, the issues are often sectarian and sectorial, that is, particular interests, ethnicity, clan conflicts, chauvinism, and narrow nationalism. The frequency of occurrence is 13.7%.

5. **Gang Wars:** This type involves predominantly non-state (mixed with criminal elements), especially in a situation of state collapse. Those involved are often village militants, demobilized soldiers or mercenaries. Others include dead quads, professional killers, mafia, syndicates or professional groups. The frequency of occurrence is 3.9%

6. **Genocide:** This refers to state-sponsored mass murders and crimes against humanity. It is often characterized by the intention to exterminate a particular national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. This was the case in Ruanda where the majority but marginalized Hutu killed about 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu. The conflict in Darfur, Southern Sudan, falls within this type of conflict. The frequency of occurrence is 2.0%

CAUSES OF CONFLICTS

The prevalent patterns and causes of armed conflict over the years include the following:

1. Resources
2. Psychological needs
3. Values
4. Management of information
5. Historical animosities

Resources

Conflicts between parties could be the result of either scarcity of natural resources or the over-abundance and over-availability of such resources. When two or more parties struggle to access and exploit mineral resources, violent conflict becomes largely inevitable because the interests of the parties in the conflict are usually divergent. In Liberia, Sierra Leone and Angola, the exploitation of diamonds was one of the principal objectives of the warring factions. Control over resources financed the various factions and gave them the means of funds to sustain the conflicts. Similarly, the protracted difficulties in the peace process in these countries owed much to the importance of control over the exploitation of the lucrative diamond fields of the countries in question.

Conversely, the over-abundance of crude oil in Nigeria's Niger Delta and the revenue-sharing formula which the oil-bearing communities consider unfair, has fueled youth restiveness in the region. Furthermore, the competition for scarce land and water resources in densely populated areas of third-world countries are cause of conflicts.

Psychological Needs

As causes of conflicts, psychological needs are not seen. Rather, they are psychical in nature because they involve a mental phenomenon within an emotional framework. Different people have different levels of perception, and one person's perception determines the direction of his/her relationship with other parties. A wrong perception is bound to generate conflict. Thus, there are different dimensions of conflict. One of these is intrapersonal conflict, that is, the way an individual sees himself at a given time. There is also interpersonal perception or the way an individual sees other people. Having a negative perception of other people could lead to conflict. For instance, if a member of a particular ethnic group sees his own-ethnic group as superior to others, there is a tendency that he will look down on people from other ethnic groups. This, of course, could lead to conflict.

Finally, there is the perception of the situation/environment which is informed by happenings around us. For instance, when workers feel insecure in their places of work, this creates psychological torment which may make them develop a habit of hostility. More often than not, this could result in conflict situations between them and innocent citizens who often deal with government agencies. This kind of psychological need usually affects the input of an average worker because he/she has lost faith in the entire system where labour is disarticulated.

Values/Ideology

As used in this context, values refer to beliefs about what is right and what is important in life. They include philosophy, religion, and ideology, among others. The values describe individual personalities, potentials, and shortcomings. Ideologically, for instance, some political elites who believe in state-based economies will find it difficult if not impossible, to acknowledge an individual's or private organization's control of the means of production. For instance, during the Cold War (or the ideological warfare between capitalist countries and communist countries between 1945 and 1991), the United States of America and the former Soviet Union each led a military alliance, namely, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact. The conflict between the blocs aligned with the global system. It also pitched the U.S. against her next-door communist neighbour Cuba, not on resources but on ideology. Thus, ideology plays an important role in the generation of conflicts.

Management of Information

Information is the nerve of government both at the national and international levels. If not properly managed; information could generate a conflict situation. As the case of the U.S. invasion of Iraq shows, if the U.S. had adequate information about the alleged stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, she and her allies would probably have avoided a military invasion by adopting diplomatic means to address the issues at stake. But the way it is today, the U.S. and her allies have won the war but are finding it difficult to survive the peace.

At the national level, if appropriate mechanisms/agencies are not put in place to properly manage information, misinterpretation and misperception of the government's intentions could result in communal crisis, sectarian, armed conflicts, and insurgency.

Historical Animosities

When two communities or groups have a history of violent conflicts, there might be periods of respite and periods of renewed hostilities. In many African countries, colonial legacies such as boundaries have continued to generate conflicts between countries. Also, a history of marginalization of one ethnic group by the other could result in violent conflict, especially when the marginalized group is a majority who is disadvantaged both politically and economically.

For instance, the genocide in Ruanda was accentuated by the fact that the minority Tutsi ethnic group had dominated the politics and economy of the country for several years, and the first Hutu presided over was assassinated by Tutsi elements. In the same vein, the intractable Itsekiri-Urhobo ethnic conflict in Warri, Nigeria, is traceable to historical animosities dating back to the colonial era when the British administration favoured the minority but more enlightened Itsekiri over the more populous but relatively backward Urhobo. The rise to self-assertion by the Urhobo

created apprehension among the Itsekiri who naturally sought to protect their advantages over the Urhobo.