Where do group conflicts come from?

Esther Duflo

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- So far we have considered both group identity and the intensity about which people feel about their group identity as given, and we looked at the consequence of group (ethnic, religious, class) heterogeneity on public good provision and economic performance.

- In fact, we chose the group in some specific way: for example we do not regress heterogeneity in the type of car people own as a potential determinants of low public action.

- Basques and Catalans feel strongly about their identity (on the Spanish side in particular). Bretons and Provencals much less. While ethnic genetic make-up is given, ethnic belonging is constructed. Need to think about where this is coming from.

Politics/Policy

- Miguel (2003) "Tribes or Nation"
- Observes that Kenya and Tanzania are close, share similar ethnic make-up and geographic conditions and got a arbitrary boundary after independence.
- However, Kenya and TZ leaders followed very different policies after independence, especially with regards to ethnic groups.
  - Kenya: Kenyatta favored the dominant Kikuyu group, and then Moi favored small groups from the Rift Valley. Both played ethnic groups against each other to conserve power. Moi was implicated in ethnic clashes before the 1992 and 1997 elections.
  - Tanzania: Nyerere followed a "pan-africanist" nation building policy, along with centralized economic policy. Swahili was promoted. Nation building in curriculum

Hypotheses and Results

- If nation building matter, ethnic diversity should have less of a deleterious impact in TZ.
- Collect very similar data (schools and wells) to that used in the MG paper, in Meatu district, right across the border, similar ethnic composition and diversity, but slightly poorer.
- Expect that when running the same regression as in MG (same identification strategy based on residential settlement), the results would be significantly different.
- In practice run a regression of public goods on ethnic diversity in the zone/village and ethnic diversity interacted with Kenya dummy.
- Results in table 2. Main effect (effect of diversity in TZ) insignificant, interaction negative in 4 specifications out of 5, and significant only in one (however, coefficient are jointly significantly negative).
- Other social capital measures given mixed results: some show no effect, group membership (Alesina La Ferrara style) is negative.
- Interpretation is not obvious: only 2 data points. Lots of difference between these countries, other than just the ethnic policy (e.g. socialist economic policy and centralization –till recently).

Economics

- Post September 11, question of whether poverty lead people to extremism has been hotly debated...

- Collier and Hoeffler (2000) "grief and grievance", world bank research WP, and Fearon and Laitin (2003, APSR) run cross country regressions of civil war on growth in Africa, and find negative and significant coefficient. Collier and Hoeffler argue that "greed" is stronger than "grievance" in spurring ethnic conflict. Opportunity cost of time argument.

- Krueger and Maleckova (2002) use micro data to make the opposite point: Use a sample of 129 Hezbollah militants dead in actions (killed in encounters, suicide bombers, etc…). Biographies are recorded in the news paper. This sample is compared with a sample of Lebanese of the same age. Hezbollah militants are not poorer than the rest of the population. If anything they are better educated.

Problems

- Problems with Cross-country regressions:
  - Reverse causality.
  - Omitted variables driving both at the same time
- Problems with Krueger and Maleckova:
  - Sample selection (fighters who died).
  - Level effect: Richer people may be more likely to become militants, but the popular basis for extreme action may be lower when things are going well.
  - Show that support for terrorism also seem to increase with education
  - Paxson's comment on the paper: Lebanon and Palestine situation very specific, since it is already a conflict (with camps clearly marked out).
  - Northern Ireland in 1968. Support for terrorism negatively correlated with education (and income for protestant).
- Results are not necessarily incompatible: civil war is not the same thing as terrorism.

Improving the Cross country regressions

- Miguel, Satyanath, Sergenti (2003), try to find an instrument for GDP growth in the African context.
- Use density of vegetation (obtained from satellite data) as a proxy for rainfall in this year.
- Growth in vegetation (between t-1 and t) correlated with GDP growth (between t-1 and t) (since African economies largely depend on Agriculture).
- Growth in vegetation (t, t-1) correlated with occurrence of civil conflict at date t.
- Use growth in vegetation as instrument for GDP growth to estimate the impact of growth on ethnic conflict.
- Potential problems:
  - Does low growth lead to slashing and burning, or generally less growing?
  - Group conflict leads to lower public goods, so perhaps less irrigation and less vegetation?
  - Harsh conditions may make policing of conflicts more difficult.

Improving the individual regressions

- Do shocks to individual or household incomes lead to:
    - Stronger identification to a (potentially radical) group
    - Propensity to religion-justified violence justified?

Witch Killing in Tanzania

- Witchcraft beliefs are held widely in SSA.
- Most witches are elderly women, though recently children have been also called witches.
- Village level data in 71 villages
  - Retrospective data on calamities (including floods or droughts)
  - Any murder in the village in the past 10 years (and type of murder)
  - Satellite vegetation data (same as before)
- About 1 witch murder per village every 10 years, and the same number of non-lethal attacks.
- Results:
  - More with murders in drought or flood year
  - No more other murders; no more witch murders when epidemics
  - Results not very robust to fixed effect or NDVI data

Interpretation

- Author's interpretation: Das Gupta-Ray framework: Convex (or S shape) nutrition-productivity relationship: as income declines, it is efficient to sacrifice some people.
- Alternative interpretation: Witches cause bad weather, and witch killing solves the problem. Because weather is mean reverting, it will be very difficult to learn the right model (same mechanism as in Piketty's paper).
- Ashforth (2002): AIDS in South Africa has led to recrudescence of belief in witchcraft (mean reverting –temporarily--,not well understood), and to a corresponding erosion in the political fabric (neighbor suspicions, etc…)
- Separating the two interpretations is difficult
  - Many equilibria in models where learning is difficult—so the fact that there is no witch killing in reaction to epidemics is not sufficient.
  - If murder is a normal bad, effect will be stronger for poor household –so the fact that witch killing is concentrated in rich households is not sufficient

Religious intensity in Indonesia

- Does economic insecurity lead to greater intensity of religious feelings (which can then translate in more support for religious violence)?

- Indonesian crisis: August 1998.

- Price of rice went up significantly, government salary went down a lot in nominal terms: instruments for impact of crisis

- First stage: Change in consumption (pre-post crisis) related to wetland ownership, government ownership

Impact on religious intensity

- Measure: participation to Koran Study group. Preaches/lecture conducted in Arabic.

- Koran study increased more slowly for wetland owners, faster for government workers.

- Control experiments: it seems to be limited to the crisis period. It seems to be limited to group that lost less (or more) during the crisis (as opposed to social groups).

Interpretation

1. Opportunity cost of time: Not likely

    - Other activities do not go up

    - Labor supplies go up more for people more affected by the crisis.

2. Religious groups as social insurance:

    - Effect reduces when credit is available

    - People who participate claim being less credit constrained after the crisis

    - Standard deviation of village change in consumption is lower than predicted in places with more places of worship.