USING SYSTEMS THINKING STRATEGY INMITIGATING SOCIO-POLITICAL CONFLICT

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Abstract - This paper focuses on mitigating socio-political conflict within communities via using systems thinking. The first part is specified for the cost of conflicts and consequences of violating conflict. The second part elaborates on strategies that could be used during complex conflict environments. The strategy is the systems thinking with reflecting on the theory of change. A portion of the study is dedicated to negotiation as the subject is on human beings in where negotiation is used to manage the logical and emotional aspects of the parties. Overall, the paper is designed based on theoretical study and a socio-political conflict mitigation project that have been implemented last year by an international agency in Iraq.

I. COSTS OF CONFLICT

Conflict is an issue that spreads vertically and horizontally. It has an impact on the current situation and future direction. Violent conflict has multiple costs such as human and economic costs. Mitigating conflicts usually don't mean mitigating the effects of the conflicts. Landmarks of the conflicts actively reflect on the future of the communities and their neighboring's.

II. ECONOMICAL COST

Based on the World Bank, the budget of war and conflicts comes from the budget of public services, and this has an effect on decreasing the country's economic progress, by losing 2% to 8.4% in the gross domestic product (GDP). Annual Economists often call conflict and violence in the opposite direction, every seven years conflicts cause an increment in poverty levels by 30 percent. To end the consequences of war, each country affected by the conflict for 7 years, needs stability and reconciliation for 14 years to erase the footprint of the conflict as mentioned in the World Bank (Anderson, 1999)

III. There is strong competition among countries worldwide for income increases. The economic side is one of the main aspects of each country. Countries use their energy to increasere venues in a variety of ways, such as tourism projects, archaeological and technology development projects. However, countries, wherepoliticalandsocialconflictshaveswelled, are behindin that competition.

3.1. Humancost

Conflicts impact the whole system, the Country and its neighboring ones. During the conflicts, tension and unemployment levels are increased and human progress and human wellbeing are decreased. Conflict increases the risk of violence, war, displacement, and death. For instance, in Syria, between 2011 and 2016 at least (400,000) people have been killed, another (5 million) have fled the country. Syrian refugees have fled into the neighboring countries, (3,400,000) in turkey, (1,000,000) in Lebanon, and (655,000) in Jordan. This is apart from those who immigrated to America, and Europe (BANK, 2018). Security is a part of the obstacles in front of terrorism. Whenever the country is run by a transparent and unified system, there will be no place for corruption and illegal activities. On the contrary, whenever departments and institutions do not cooperate with one another, or if there are problems, sensitivity, and cultural perseverance between them, the situation will pave the way for terrorist and mafia activities.

IV. STRATEGIES INMITIGATING COMMUNITY CONFLICT

Conflicts create dispersion, blur understanding, accumulate negative feelings, and dissuadestepstowardacceptance.Toachievepeaceandstability,thefirststepistogetoutoftheconflictand look at the issue depending on the six-thinking cap technique(Bono, 2000). Then theissueisanalyzedinawaythatincludesalltheaspectsoftheconflict,suchasproblems,causeofthe problems, key factors and each of connectors and dividers during peacemaking from thebeginning of planning for implementation while considering not to harm principles (Anderson, 1999) Conflictmitigationdescribedas"ResponsibilitytoProtect(R2P)"istheresponsibilityofalllocal,national, and international parties. Governments have a moral and official liability to protecttheirpeoplefromharm.However,ifthestateisincapabletodoso,thatresponsibilityfallsupontheinternation

alcommunity,TheR2Pisalinkagetoallphasesoftheconflictmanagementcycle,which includes prevention responsibility, reacting responsibility, and the responsibility to helprebuildcommunitiesthathavebeendevastatedbythesecrimes(Joseph Nye, 2017)Responsibleactorstakeinitiativeinstrategiesatalllevelsasacomprehensiveapproachtomitigateconflicts.

4.1. Intervention based on Systems

Interventionbasedonmapofthecontextisassistingconflictmitigation.Asystemconsistsofthesum of its parts; within a system each part has two main roles. A role is an independent duty,andtheotherroleisdutyandresponsibilitytowardotherparts.Thisprocessiscalledsystems, asMarcusP.Dawsoninhisbookonthinkinginsystemsandmentalmodelspointoutinteractionandinterdependence. HebelieveswithoutInterconnectionandinterdependencesystemloseitsqualification.

Intervention based on systems means patience with cognizing knowledge and information as much as possible, flexibility with changes, updating conflict map and causality relationships. Innovation in thinking approach and classic problem-solving mechanisms. Multiple skills and efforts are required like emotional, behavioral, spiritual, and cognitive capacities need to become more effective as a systems thinker. Attempting to mitigate a conflict without determining its main cause will be pointless. Based on situational practical problem solving (SPPS) optimal results could come from planning %80 of the time is to identify the real problem and %20 of the time for solving the problem (Dawson, 2020).

Reaching the root factor of the conflicts requires you to find the answer to the main question which is (WHY?). There is the necessity of getting to the bottom of what has been the reason for the problem in the first place. Why related questions assist in discovering invisible problems.

Some essential steps are required during system analysis:

a. Realizing causation among conflicts

Martin Luther King in his efforts on “I have a dream” spent approximately 70 percent ofhis time on drawing the reality and difficulties that exist in it and Just 30 percent todescribe the dream. This means that there are some factors behind any solution, dreamor project, part of which are obvious while others are hidden. Dreams are pointlesswithoutunderstandingthepointsbehindthem (Stroh, 2015).

To understand the context of conflict, a detailed and deep review of the issue needs tobemade,allproblemstobewrittendown,includingsocial,political,religious,economic, and service problems. Each problem should be checked and to be set up indetail.Forexample,whatdosocialproblemsinclude?Isitatribalproblem,gender-basedviolence, domestic abuse or adolescent-related problem? Is the problem related to theeducation sector? Is it due to the lack of school buildings, lack of teachers, teachingmethods, school time, problems with student traffic, problems with student progress, orcohesion? Realizing the history of the problems and how serious they are (Levinger, 2013).

It is important to have a detailed study of the problems, some problems and some socialgroups are completely marginalized and cannot be heard at the same time as part of thecommunitynetworkandproblems.Forexample,in2021,ataconflictmanagementprojectinErbil,theKurdistan RegionofIraq,afterevaluatingtheareaandgatheringinformationonsocialgroupsandtheirproblemstobemitigated. Duringtheanalysisoftheproblems,itwasfoundthatthere wasacommunitygroupthatwaspartoftheproblems, but their names and problems were not mentioned in the previous research.Afterknowingalltheproblemsthroughadetailedstudy,itisimportanttoknowindetailwhichproblemsare relatedtoeachother,relationshipsbasedoncausation,not correlation.Forexample,thelackofschoolsisafactorforthehighnumberofstudentsinone class, and the lack of schools is the reason for the recruiting low number ofschoolteachers, which is called the causation. But the lack of teachers in schools is not areasonformany studentsintheclassroom,which isjustcorrelation.

b. Identifying Key Conflict Factors

Keyconflictfactorreferstothemainfactorthatcausesproblemstohappen.Definingthisterm is a challenge while the point is about systems, causation, and impacts the factorshaveoneach other.

However,theKeyconflictfactorisreferredtoasanissuethathasanimpactonthewholesystem, not just the issues around it. In other words, the conflict map is changed totallyoressentiallywhile thatKeyconflictfactor isdisappeared.

Afteranalyzingtheconflict,determiningthemaincauseoftheproblemsandconsequences, the creator of the conflict will be figured out. The source of the conflictswill be identified. Key conflict source is one of the main important steps. Each conflictcould be seen as a broken sewer, as when a sewer is broken in a house, it causes thewettingofthecarpets,damagingthefooditems,distressing thepeopleinthehouseandmaking them spend a lot of their time to clean the house, sending the carpets for washing,buying new food items, and etc. However, if the family knew what the main cause of theissue was and where the broken part of the sewer was, they could solve the problem injustone dayandwithlesseffortandcost(Stroh, 2015).

Via system mapping, stakeholders together realize why their efforts have not worked inthepast.Whiletheydeterminethekeyconflictfactorsto gether,theyarecapabletothinkbasedonsystems.Assistin gstakeholderstomakeanexplicitchoiceinfavorofwhatth eymost profoundly want and encourage active participation by each actor (Joseph Nye, 2017).

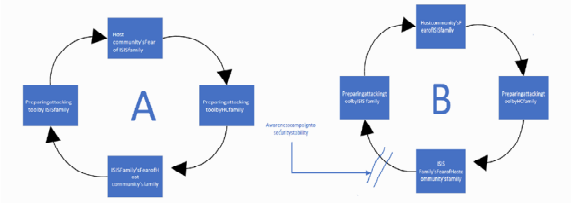
c. Painting out leverage points to mitigate conflicts

Leveragereferstoapowertodirecthumanbeingoracompl excircumstance.Thispowerusuallyisunaffordableandhi gheffective.However,identifyingleveragepointisnotan easyduty within acomplexsystem.Sometimesitcouldbefoundnext to the key conflict creatorandsometimesistotallyoutofthesystem.

An accurateconflictmapcanhelpwithidentifyingleveragep ointstochangetheconflict map, to seek amplifying success or strives to improve an existing situation. Leveragepointsaredescribedaspowerfulresourcesthatc animpactthekeydriversoftheconflictdirectlyorindirectl y(. Mandl, 2019).

Bearinmind,conflictscouldbemitigatedby shapingdifferentpathwaysasconflictscan resultinonepartywinningandotherslosing.First,theissue shouldbeinvestigated;ifthegoods are private and belong to a party, they must be returned to their owner.

Anotherwayiscompromising,whichmeansfindingagre ementamongpartiestodividetheresources amongthem equally.Apublicresourceisanexampleofthecommunity infrastructurethateachpartyhastherighttoenjoyhavingit fairly.Whensomeitems couldnotbedivided,inthatcasethepositioncouldbeshifte dbasedonturntakings.Thiskindofcyclepathway,cultivat erespectforothers,rolesandrights.Anotherpathwayis more challenging, that is to persuade parties to change their directions and preferences.Leverage Points can affect in two directions, either keeping the balance between theloops of their system or working on reinforcing it. For example, when people feel fearfrom the families of ISIS members within the same community or similar families whohave been displaced and settled in their community, they may try to obtain defensivetools to protect themselves from them. On the other hand, ISIS families too may feelthreatened by community residents, so they try to obtain defensive tools to protectthemselves from the host community families. These feelings are due to the lack ofsecurity. To maintain peace, Leverage point needs a point to use and prevent this riskfromspreadingandkeepthesituationbalanced.Forin stance,beenawareofthesecurityintheareaandthelackofa nyrisktothelivesoffamiliesinthecommunity.(Dawson, 2020)BelowgraphAshowsloopofconflictreinforcingan dGraphBshowleveragepointinterventionto mitigate theconflict



4.2Negotiation:

Negotiationisoneofthefecundstrategiesinpolicyandco mprehensiveagreementsworldwide.Thewaytohandlec onflictshasbeenprogressedinpastdecades.Progressisac hievedorresultedfromthemeetingsanddiscussionsdurin gnegotiationsbetweenbothsidesandtheiragreementbas edonwhatwillbeeachparty'sshareinthisnegotiationkno wnasinterest-basednegotiation.Whenthepartiesareclearabouttheissu e,theirowninterestsandadetailedstudyoftheissue is in hand, both sides have the most benefits and the least harm, the possibilities of conflict willdecrease.

Foursituationshavebeenidentifiedbybothpoliticalpsyc hologistsDeanBrutandSunkDiltoquelltheconflict.

1) Eachpartyinvolvedintheconflictshouldbeaccepted asasemi-independentpartywithitsownentity.
2) Eachpartyshouldtakeresponsibilityfortheconflict.
3) Buildingacommongroundbetweentheparties.
4) Thepartiesbelieveinfuturechanges.

Facilitating negotiation is extremely important, as much as the negotiation process itself.Starting with gathering ideas from one another via convergent thinking and encouragingdivergent thinking after establishing a safe environment within the diverse actors, each shouldstep out of their comfort zones while old habits die hard ((Dawson, 2020).Conflict mitigation needs art plus science, and this could be achieved via negotiation ashumankindisacombination ofemotions besideslogic.

a. Seeing the whole picture

Eachintegratedpartyinsystemsconflictmanagementund erstandonlypartoftheproblems,or only has a concern about a specific part of the conflict, they value others responsibility inmitigating conflict. In order for each party to have a view of the entire picture, there are manyways and techniques. One of them has played an effective role in bringing parties togetherand listening to all of them. For example, a project to end community conflict and increaseeconomicopportunity,bybringingtogetherparti esinvolvedintheissue,whetherthosewhowere the cause of the conflicts or those who could be part of the solution to the conflict. Byinviting representatives of all community groups and gathering them around one table andlistening to their problems and analyzing them based on reasoning and understanding theproblems as part of the systems at the same time. At the beginning of the analysis of

theproblemsandconflicts,eachsideconsidersitselfamarginalizedgroupandseestheresponsibilityandrole ofother partiesto solve theconflict.

After presenting the problems on the image of the cause and the systems, they realize thattheythemselvesare partof theconflictsbesideothers.

Itwillbeeasytounderstandthetopicbyseeingallpartsofthepicturecombined.Itwillbeastep towards a strong plan based on the reality of the conflicts, based on the unity andintegrationoftheparties.

Based on theory U - collective sensing mechanism, enabling all stakeholders to an overallview of the picture as a whole and find themselves in a part of the picture. Listening to eachstakeholdertosharepointofviewandunderstandhowthe systemoperates (Stroh, 2015).

b. Responsibility of each part in the issue

Handlingconflictshavechangedcomparedtothepastdecades;themajorityofthemareresolvedpeacefully,justlike what Jesse Jacksonsays

“We might not be responsible for being down, but we are responsible for getting up”Identifyingandinvolvingactorsthatcouldimpactthesystemisessentialsuchaspeoplewithtalent,withformalandinformalpower,peoplewithknowledgeandresources.Establishingcommongroundfordiverseactors,makedifferencesvaluable,createlinksamongresourcesanddifferences.Makingactorsaccountabletodrawleveragepointsaswellastakinganactiveroleinimplementing them (Stroh, 2015).

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