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Characteristics of Political and Social Conflicts

Abstract

Political conflicts are a special type of social relations, it is revealed through their functions. It should not be forgotten that the place and role of conflict in the life activity of this or that person, social group, organization and society as a whole is of great importance. Ultimately, the fate of democracy is determined by whether it can create a modern mechanism for solving development problems, in other words, it is necessary not only to ensure economic development, but also to realize the principle of fair distribution of public goods. The article discusses the problems of implementing political modernization in the context of various crises and conflicts, the objective and subjective factors that determine this process. First of all, the essence and characteristics of institutional crises and crises of political participation are revealed, a comparative analysis of the concepts of political and social conflict is attempted, and the parties and subjects of the conflict are revealed. The author also tries to determine the relationship between political conflicts and political modernization in the article.

Keywords: *Modernization, Political Conflicts, Social Conflicts, Participation Crisis*

Siyasi ve Toplumsal Çatışmaların Özellikleri

Öz

Siyasi çatışmaların toplumsal ilişkilerin özel bir türü olduğu, işlevleriyle ortaya çıkmaktadır. Çatışmanın şu veya bu kişinin, sosyal grubun, örgütün ve bir bütün olarak toplumun yaşam aktivitesindeki yeri ve rolünün büyük önem taşıdığı unutulmamalıdır. Nihayetinde demokrasinin kaderi,



<https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/atdd>

kalkınma sorunlarının çözümü için modern bir mekanizma yaratıp yaratamayacağına göre belirlenir, başka bir deyişle, sadece ekonomik kalkınmanın sağlanması değil, aynı zamanda kamu mallarının adil dağılımı ilkesinin gerçekleştirilmesi de gereklidir. Makale, çeşitli krizler ve çatışmalar bağlamında siyasi modernleşmenin uygulanmasına ilişkin sorunları, bu süreci belirleyen nesnel ve öznel faktörleri tartışmaktadır. Öncelikle kurumsal krizlerin ve siyasal katılım krizlerinin mahiyeti ve özellikleri ortaya konulmakta, siyasal ve toplumsal çatışma kavramlarının karşılaştırmalı bir analizi yapılmaya çalışılmakta, çatışmanın tarafları ve özneleri ortaya konulmaktadır. Yazar makalede ayrıca siyasal çatışmalar ile siyasal modernleşme arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemeye çalışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Modernleşme, Siyasal Çatışmalar, Toplumsal Çatışmalar, Katılım Krizi

Introduction

The process of establishing a new political order reveals that the power structure lacks a representative mechanism to accommodate the dynamically evolving social interests. Consequently, political structures are still viewed as monolithic entities; they have failed to establish an effective political direction and have shown their inability to integrate the increasing social, economic, and political diversity. Modernization becomes evident in the context of various political crises and conflicts. Crises of political participation at the institutional level are of this nature. The current institutional crisis is largely a result of the political system's formation, where there was a strong focus on clearly defining the distribution of power. However, the mechanisms for how different branches of power interact were largely overlooked. The inadequate development of the social structure also significantly contributes to the deepening of the institutional crisis. The modernization of the political system reveals a crisis in political participation that is inherent in political development. Addressing the participation crisis necessitates the ongoing inclusion of new interest groups in political life. There is a necessity to develop enhanced political representation and communication through these groups. This allows the elite to respond promptly to interest groups. The ruling elite also face another challenge that must be addressed to foster political stability and protect against the risk of an unforeseen political modernization scenario. It is essential to validate the opposition's legitimacy and include it in the decision-making process. This highlights the opposition's accountability for its own decisions.

1.Conflict and Cooperation in the Process of Social Development

In the context of modernization, specialized interest groups vying for control of power are intensifying. In the process of modernization, specialized interest groups are intensifying their competition for control of power. The political system should encourage participation by enhancing the roles of both new and traditional power institutions, stabilizing the relationship

between leaders and citizens, and through other methods (Sirota, 2024) To address this issue, all outdated methods of expressing and consolidating interests must be completely eliminated. The crisis of participation is primarily exacerbated by the weak development of the representation system for social interests, the mismatch between political structures and institutions and the needs and aspirations of the population, and the authorities' lack of decisiveness in dealing with political radicals and terrorists. Obstructing the regulation of these types of relationships creates opportunities for the opposition to strengthen its resistance, increases separatist tendencies and national territorial conflicts, and leads to the bureaucratization of the elite. To overcome the participatory crisis, the ruling regime should avoid provoking potentially explosive reactions from large segments of the population and should adhere to the principle of equal political participation for all groups in society. To summarize, the government must rigorously follow the proposed rules of the political game. Another crisis that emerges during political development is the crisis of distributing material and cultural goods (Ivanov, 2023). The volume and type of consumer goods are key factors that determine whether the population will support or oppose reforms and the government implementing them. During the transition period, also known as the modernization process, the government may struggle to ensure sustainable material well-being. The transitional government often encounters public opposition. A country transitioning to a market economy refers to nations that are addressing or preparing to address complex challenges. These challenges include ensuring property rights and entrepreneurship, regulating the economy through laws, reducing unemployment, ensuring citizen representation in government, meeting the material and moral needs of the population, expanding the public sector, and implementing consistent social reforms, among others. The government is currently confronted with the following situation:

- 1) Those who support the previous principle of state social control but find the new consumption standard appealing for themselves;
- 2) Individuals who view the previous principle of division positively and the new one negatively are evaluated as such.
- 3) Those who hold a negative attitude towards the established norms and methods related to the acquisition of the previous product.

The primary issue of political modernization is the presence of political elite that can implement rational, targeted reforms and establish an effective and optimal political system (Mukhtasarova, 2018). The political elite, known for its effective engagement at every stage of

political modernization, serves as a proponent of an instrumental strategy aimed at achieving economic development. Political conflicts are an inevitable part of modernizing political systems. These conflicts and political confrontations are a daily reality in our lives. Therefore, analyzing modernization in the context of political development is both a scientific and practical necessity for understanding the essence of political conflicts. Conflicts occur in different areas of society and lead to various forms of confrontation (Glukhova, 2000). Conflict and cooperation have always been interconnected in the process of social development. As A.V. Glukhova pointed out, *"as long as unlimited power functions solely as brute force, the role of power in determining politics and political conflicts should be understood in the context of specific political events"* (Glukhova, 2001, p. 24).

Conflict involves a clash or struggle between opposing interests, opinions, and views, resulting in serious disagreements, sharp disputes, and hostile interactions among different parties. The theoretical foundation of conflict dates back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, primarily within the field of sociology. In contemporary social science, it is widely recognized that conflict is a permanent and unavoidable aspect of social life. Political conflict refers to a confrontation between two or more entities, such as groups, states, or leaders, over the distribution of power and resources. These conflicts can occur either between different political entities or within a single entity, and they can take on various forms. The root of these conflicts often stems from the differing interests of social groups. Conflicts within political associations often emerge as a contradiction between the political elite and the rest of society. Political life develops under the influence of various conflicts and contradictions—some open and visible, others hidden and subtle, some peaceful and others violent. Conflict is not an independent phenomenon; it cannot exist on its own and is always linked to other factors. It represents a state of particular social relations and serves as both a foundation for these relations and a universal aspect of all social life (Glukhova, 2001). Conflict is a fundamental aspect of human behavior, influencing both individuals and groups. It plays a significant role in changing power structures and enhancing the effectiveness of political processes. As a crucial socio-political phenomenon, conflict contributes uniquely to the political modernization of society. Conflictologist Lewis Cosech argues that different internal conflicts can complement one another, helping to prevent the fragmentation of society. He emphasizes the importance of political conflicts, stating that "conflict prevents stagnation in society, encourages renewal among individuals, and poses certain risks regarding the violation of legal norms." However, it's essential to recognize that conflict can also have a positive impact on the dynamic

development of society, serving as a primary source of social change (Kozech, 2000). Political conflict encompasses large-scale confrontations among various forces, including revolutions, counter-revolutions, state confrontations, wars, and partisan movements. It represents the entire spectrum of interactions among conflicting parties. To fully understand political modernization, it is essential for theories on modern political conflicts to explore and identify relevant ideas and concepts. Firstly, this necessity underscores that political conflict is a normal phenomenon—an inherent aspect of political development and modernization. Secondly, political conflicts play several positive roles in the process of social development. As R. Dahrendorf has aptly noted, the beneficial aspects of conflicts deserve particular attention in our modern era. Conflicts play a crucial role in the progressive movement of social life by creating opportunities to establish norms and social values that are widely recognized. Additionally, they help maintain the unity of socio-political associations. Furthermore, it is important to understand the relationship and interdependence between political conflict situations and the type of political structure in place. Finally, functional conflict is often a result of changes in the economic, political, and moral spheres of society. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate the underlying causes and functional direction of conflicts (Kubinov, Vorozheukin, Zakharov & Konovalova, 2008). When compared to the concept of "social conflict," there are relatively few scientific approaches to understanding "political conflict." This is largely because social conflict, in a broad sense, can occur in all areas of human life, while political conflict typically arises and evolves specifically within the political sphere. However, researchers examine political conflicts from various perspectives. They consider the nature and content of these conflicts, as well as their structure and types, along with the subjects and objects involved. This has become a focal point for contemporary researchers. Ralph Dahrendorf, the renowned German sociologist and a leading researcher on conflict issues, argues that social inequality and the contradictions it generates lead to social tension and conflict situations. The interests of individuals significantly influence the emergence of conflict. Dahrendorf states, "In general, each conflict takes on its definitive form when the participating elements establish their identity." Similarly, L. Kozier defines conflict as a struggle for values and an effort to claim a certain status, power, and resources, as well as to neutralize or eliminate opponents. K. Boulding concludes that *"we believe all conflicts share common elements and follow a general pattern of development. By studying these common elements, we can better understand the phenomenon of conflict in all its specific forms"* (Netsiporenko, 1982, p. 39-41).

Political conflict, as a specific form of political interaction, highlights how the actions of one party depend on the actions of the other. This mutual dependence compels the conflicting parties to identify and define their partially overlapping interests. T. Schelling notes that "pure conflict is a special case that represents the complete opposition of interests between two opponents." Thus, "winning" in a conflict doesn't carry a meaningful significance; it isn't simply about defeating the enemy. What truly matters is achieving victory through negotiation and compromise while avoiding actions that could harm both parties. Schelling refers to this approach as a strategy that reflects the principle of mutual dependence (Sheling, 2007). Conflict is fundamentally understood as one of the potential ways political subjects can interact. Despite the unsatisfactory conditions experienced by individuals due to societal diversity, varying perspectives, and differing interests, conflict often serves as a catalyst for change in individual and group behavior, the transformation of power structures, and the evolution of political processes. Political conflict represents a form of interaction rooted in significant competition among groups, states, and individuals. The desire of various political entities to manage and control these conflicts necessitates an understanding of their key structural elements and parameters. This understanding allows for greater influence over the attainment of their goals. This element structures the intentional activities of individuals in the political sphere, providing a distinct form and content. Although there are some differing opinions among researchers studying political conflict, they generally agree on the key elements that define it (Samoilenko & Simmons, 2024). Conflict can arise in both horizontal and vertical dimensions. Horizontal conflict refers to tensions that develop within the social and political structure itself, while vertical conflict involves the dynamics between higher authorities and those they oversee, including the relationships between different groups and organizations, leaders and their followers, as well as supervisory bodies and the individuals under their authority. The nature of the conflict is defined by its level, scale, and severity within society's social and political framework. In political science, a significant conflict is one that simultaneously affects all levels of the social and political structure and includes all participants involved. A conflict of lesser importance is characterized by its focus on only a specific part of the social structure. Internal conflicts can disrupt stability within society. However, society maintains its integrity by continuously resolving these internal conflicts, which are fundamental to its existence. The negative, dysfunctional consequences of such conflicts include a lack of collaboration among individuals, a refusal to address long-standing issues, increased hostility in interpersonal and intergroup relations, and a weakening of cooperative unity, among others. In this context, all

conflicts, including political ones, tend to create significant tension that can influence people's behavior or prompt them to protect themselves from the prevailing conditions (Dahrendorf, 1990). E. M. Babosov, a researcher in the field of social conflict, provides a clear and detailed definition of conflict. He writes, "Social conflict (from the Latin word 'conflictus,' meaning 'clash') refers to a sharp contradiction between individuals and various social groups. This contradiction manifests in different forms of struggle aimed at achieving economic, social, political, and moral interests and goals. It involves neutralizing or eliminating a real or perceived opponent to prevent them from pursuing their own interests." Due to conflicts, social relations are more dynamic. The stronger the conflicts, the greater their impact on social processes and the speed at which they unfold. Studying the role of political conflicts in political development—particularly in relation to social development, social management, and the harmony of social relations—has led to the emergence of a new independent field of political knowledge known as "conflictology." A major challenge in modern conflictology is to predict the necessity and inevitability of conflicts, as well as to identify ways and strategies to minimize their negative consequences. Modern political science, particularly conflictology, enhances our understanding of democratic society and the political methods used for conflict resolution. Political conflicts are dynamic in nature and emerge from specific conflict situations. The parties involved in a conflict recognize that their opposing demands lead to contradictions. However, if the needs of the conflicting parties are addressed, these contradictions may not escalate into a full-blown conflict. When a conflict situation escalates into an actual conflict, it typically progresses to an extreme point before it begins to diminish and ultimately concludes. Additionally, political conflicts are characterized as a distinct form of social relations, which becomes evident through their various functions (von Busch & Palmås, 2023). The significance of conflict in the lives of individuals, social groups, organizations, and society as a whole cannot be understated. In today's context, it is essential to strive for the establishment of a conflict-free society. To achieve this, it is important to identify effective methods for resolving conflicts within the framework of political culture and to address them in a deliberate manner. It is important to note that the regulation of political conflicts should not be solely associated with state activities. In developed democratic countries, the majority of conflicts are resolved through various political institutions, such as political parties and organizations, rather than by the state itself. The effectiveness of regulatory influence on the development of a conflict is directly linked to the competition model preferred by the entity exerting that influence. Several distinct models are identified in the academic literature. The authors of the "engineering

approach" model view political conflict as a situation that evolves through changes in the behavior and structure of its participants or other components. In contrast, proponents of the "humanist" approach advocate for a different model. They believe that resolving conflicts can only occur through the ongoing rapprochement of the parties' positions, achieved via consultations, expertise, and collaborative efforts. This method is often referred to as constructive negotiation in the academic literature. Meanwhile, supporters of the "management" model emphasize the importance of presenting conflict issues to the relevant parties. They argue that addressing these issues can lead to the alignment of the parties' positions and goals, ultimately reconciling their interests. In practice, various models are typically coordinated to develop specific technologies for managing and regulating political conflict.

Conclusion

In contemporary political science and conflict studies, significant emphasis is placed on finding effective forms and methods for managing conflicts and developing better technologies for regulation. It is not uncommon for political forces to attempt to control conflicts to ensure effective regulation. Therefore, the subject of conflict management involves not only one of the conflicting parties but also a third party that, while not directly involved, has a vested interest in the regulation of the conflict. For political life, it is particularly important that the governing structures and central state authorities actively work to manage conflicts. It is crucial to minimize social discontent that may arise during political disputes to prevent further instability. In the study of the problem of resolving political conflicts, it is of great importance to touch on the issue of conflict management. Unlike conflict control, conflict management involves purposeful influence on various components of the competitive interaction of the conflicting parties. In this regard, more power and effort are required to control conflicts. Political conflict management mainly refers to the ability to influence the subjects of the conflict. In summary, if internal conflicts during political development disrupt societal stability, international conflicts can escalate into wars, leading to significant destruction of both material and spiritual wealth.

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