



Article Type: Research paper

## The Role of Social Health in the Tendency toward Ethnic-Group Conflicts (Case Study: Men Aged 18–45 in Kabul, Afghanistan)

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Article Info.

Received: 3/12/2024

Accepted: 5/9/2025

Available Online: 11/9/2025

### Extended Abstract Introduction

Group conflicts, particularly in societies with significant ethnic and cultural diversity like Afghanistan, often arise under adverse social and economic conditions such as unemployment and detrimental familial backgrounds. These conflicts not only diminish social cohesion but also escalate intergroup tensions and reduce positive interactions. Thus, strengthening social well-being as a key variable can be an effective strategy to mitigate conflicts and improve social bonds. Considering its importance, examining the impact of social well-being on reducing tendencies toward group conflicts, especially among young men, is crucial. Social well-being can help mitigate aggressive behaviors and enhance social cohesion by fostering social skills and en-

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#### How to Site:

Gapleh, Mohammad and Amini koushk, Jafar. (2025) Thematic Analysis of Power Relations in Politicians' Social Media: A Case Study of Donald Trump's Tweets on Iran, *Fundamental and Applied Studies of the Islamic World*, 7(2), pp.



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couraging positive interactions. Consequently, research focused on the role of social well-being in ethnic conflicts can guide the development of policies and programs aimed at reducing group disputes and promoting social order.

This research is applied in purpose, temporary in time, extensive in scope, and employs a quantitative, survey-based approach. The study population consists of men aged 18–45 in Kabul. A multi-stage cluster sampling method was used to select 384 participants based on Morgan's table and Cochran's formula. Data were collected using Keyes' standardized questionnaire and a researcher-developed Likert-scale questionnaire. The collected data were then classified and analyzed using SPSS software.

The findings revealed no significant relationship between marital status and tendencies toward ethnic conflicts. However, education showed a meaningful correlation with conflict levels. Occupation, as a social status indicator, aligned with Cohen's status frustration theory, demonstrated that mismatches between individuals' expectations and their roles can heighten the likelihood of conflict. Age-related analysis indicated that younger individuals, due to unstable norms and generational gaps, are more prone to disruptive behaviors.

Social acceptance, encompassing self-worth, trust in others, and respect for differences, displayed a negative correlation with tendencies toward conflict. Durkheim's anomie theory suggests that societal normlessness reduces social acceptance and fosters distrust. The theories of Robert Merton and Albert Cohen emphasize that a disconnect between institutional goals and means, coupled with status frustration, diminishes social acceptance, increasing deviant behaviors. Keyes' (1998) research highlights that positive messages and social support enhance social acceptance, while its absence exacerbates ethnic conflict.

Social adaptation, defined as the ability to align with one's environment, also exhibited a negative correlation with conflict. Durkheim's theory of anomie points to a lack of shared values as a barrier to adaptation. Merton noted that contradictions between institutional goals and means create pressures impeding adaptation. Cohen argued that marginalized groups, deprived of opportunities, face challenges in social adaptation. Studies by Keyes (1998) and Blanco & Díaz (2007) affirm that social order and participation provide the foundation

for adaptation, while its weakness amplifies group conflicts.

Social participation, or active involvement in societal activities, negatively correlates with conflict. Durkheim linked weak social solidarity to decreased participation, while Merton and Mayer identified discrimination and inequality as obstacles to participation. Research by Keyes (1998) and Khushfar et al. (2015) suggests that active participation fosters a sense of security and reduces social tensions. Declines in participation are associated with increased ethnic disputes.

Social flourishing, involving a positive perception of societal progress, also negatively correlates with conflict. Putnam's social capital theory and Inglehart's social change theory emphasize the importance of trust and communication networks in enhancing flourishing. Lerner connects flourishing to belief in social justice. Studies by Keyes (2006) and Khushfar et al. (2015) reveal that economic growth and reduced discrimination boost flourishing, while its absence fosters passivity and conflict.

Social cohesion, referring to emotional and ethical bonds within a community, is inversely related to conflict. Parsons' social cohesion theory and Habermas' theory of communicative action highlight the role of institutional coordination and healthy communication in promoting cohesion. Bourdieu identified disparities in social and economic capital as factors undermining cohesion. Research by Iman et al. (2019) and Khushfar et al. (2015) demonstrates that reducing inequalities and strengthening participatory policies enhance cohesion, mitigating conflicts.

Social well-being, as a multidimensional aspect of human welfare, is shaped by social acceptance, participation, adaptation, flourishing, and cohesion. These dimensions play a vital role in fostering belongingness, improving quality of life, and mitigating social conflicts. Social acceptance fosters mutual respect, participation empowers individuals, adaptation resolves conflicts, flourishing promotes justice, and cohesion strengthens emotional bonds. Factors like trust, justice, and robust communication enhance social well-being, while inequality and social exclusion weaken it. Strengthening social well-being requires programs to build public trust, expand social networks, and reduce disparities. Additionally, teaching communication skills, creating equal

opportunities, and fostering a culture of constructive interaction-along with the regular monitoring of social well-being indicators-can aid policymakers in devising effective strategies.

**Key words:** Conflict, Ethnicity, Acceptance, Participation, Adaptation, Kabul City.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in conducting this research study.