

Fraternal interest groups and violent conflict management

A social-structural hypothesis

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Abstract. How are social organisation and violent conflict between groups related? One of the key concepts investigated here is that of so called "fraternal interest groups". They are supposed to be responsible for frequent violent conflict management. The components and operationalization of the hypothesis are investigated in order to show its power and its weaknesses and to find a more adequate operationalization of the component variables for statistical cross-cultural testing.

Introduction

Starting point of my investigation is how social organisation and war are related.

I will begin by briefly discussing the main hypotheses connecting aspects of social organisation and violent conflict. Then I will discuss the classical attempts to operationalize the hypotheses. One of the hypotheses will be looked at in more detail.

Review of key concepts of the socio-structural domain for explanation of violent conflict management

A review of cross-cultural studies shows that so far two forms of social organisation have been investigated with respect to conflict management:

1. *fraternal interest groups* and
2. *cross-cutting ties*, resp. *conflicting loyalties*.

The basic idea in both cases is, that in order to wage war men have to form groups that act in concert and that social organisation can either be conducive to the formation of such groups or inhibit it.

The *cross-cutting ties* or *conflicting loyalties* operate in an inhibiting way. If there are *cross-cutting ties* or *conflicting loyalties*, men hardly can form a discrete group to act in concert in case of conflict, because they have strong ties or loyalties to men belonging to different groups. If conflicts arise, the conflicting parties contain men that are opposed to fighting each other and in this way have an interest in peaceful resolution of the conflict.