

APPROACHES TO SOCIAL DIVERSION AND CONFLICT SOLUTION THROUGH THE LENS OF BEDOUIN TRADITION

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Abstract. Social diversion is a non-conformist behavior that leads to violation of moral behavioral norms specific to a cultural community. One of the most widespread forms of social diversion is interpersonal conflict, which often expands and negatively affects the entire community. This study gives an overview of the conflict and how to solve it from a Bedouin perspective.

Key words: social diversion, conflict, behavior, Bedouin society.

ABORDĂRI ALE DIVERSIUNII SOCIALE ȘI SOLUȚIA CONFLICTULUI PRIN OBIECTIVUL TRADIȚIEI BEDUINE

Rezumat. Diversiunea socială reprezintă un comportament non conformist, care conduce la încălcarea normelor morale de comportament specifice unei comunități culturale. Una dintre cele mai răspândite forme de diversiune socială este conflictul interpersonal, care deseori se extinde și afectează negativ întreaga comunitate. Studiul de față prezintă o privire de ansamblu asupra noțiunii de conflict și analizează modalitățile de soluționare a acestuia din perspectivă beduină.

Cuvinte-cheie: diversiune socială, conflict, comportament, societatea beduină.

A norm is a way of conduct perceived as appropriate and accepted in accordance to the values of a certain culture. Hence, among different cultures and societies, there are heterogenic and different norms that are compatible to that specific society and culture. A norm is not necessarily a legal law or an indisputable rule, it is context related similarly to moral. In this manner, a social norm expresses a partial or a complete consensus, that can be expressed formally or informally. The perception of a certain thing as moral or as socially accepted highly depends on its cultural context. In this aspect, norms are context and place related, or what is normative in one society, is not necessarily normative in another. In a social situation, such as work meetings, the norms are not apparent but are represented as informal rules that control the individual's behavior. The norm is visible when it is broken by individuals or groups. This is especially obvious when there is a meeting between people of different cultures that are not familiar enough with the norms and customs of the other culture.

In the key of this idea, *social diversion* should be defined as a non conformist behavior. The determination of what behavior should be defined as a diversion, is not obvious since it changes from one culture to another. Nonetheless, it always revolves around the breaking of normative and moral rules of culture. Edwin Sutherland's approach, "The Differential Connection", presents *delinquency as a learned phenomenon*. A diversion is formed when the pressure to break the law is stronger than the factors that encourage following the law [1, p.19]. Diversion is a relative term, it is hard to set regularities or absolute standards in relation to it: a behavior that is considered as a diversion in a certain society is not necessarily a diversion in another. In a functionalist perspective, diversion marks who belongs to the society and who is not.

How would we know what is normal and what is deviant? According to the *conflict approach*, the premise should be that someone gains something from having a diversion in society. Society is a battleground, and there are groups that battle each other, and try to create a monopolization of resources and force the social order that maintain it for the other groups, so it will gain legitimacy and control.

The *Impulse Theory* suggests that the first explanation to diversion and aggressiveness bases on the individual's frustration. We can expect a violent event in an environment creating conditions that evoke within the individual feelings of insecurity, a sense of deprivation or concern. Other theories explain violence as one of the behaviors learned by the individual. According to the "Role Model" [2, p 3-13], the individual learns to respond to violence as a normative expression in the environment he lives in. The *Impulse Theory* or the *Impulse Reduction Theory* refers to various theories in psychology that address motivation. These theories base on the concept that a person or an animal are born with biological impulses and needs, which they want to satisfy, and if they are not satisfied – a negative condition of stress is created within them. When the impulse is satisfied, the stress reduces, and the organism returns to homeostasis, internal balance and relaxation. According to this theory, the impulse inclines to intensify with time, and is activated, among others, in accordance to feedbacks received from the internal condition and the environment. The internal condition is that which directs the organism to act for a certain target, to satisfy the impulse.

Following the Acculturation theory, there is a connection between cultural patterns and wellbeing and health, hence the culture processes were found as main factors in the explanation of health conditions among minorities. The researchers Organista & Kuraski [6, p. 139-160] note that sometimes minority groups that live in a collectivist frame express suspicion and distrust of foreigners and foreign cultures. People of collectivist cultures are distrustful of social changes occurring in their collective as a result of meeting with other societies, especially when being a minority society living among an individualist and dominant majority society perceived as oppressive and discriminative.

Therefore, Sulha tradition of reconciliation, typical of Bedouin community from Israel appears as a means of settling conflict both at the level of individual and community. It has at its basis five important principles: 1. *reflective thinking*; 2. *tolerance*; 3. *empathy*; 4. *human rights*; 5. *conflict resolution skills*. These principles significantly contribute to the formation of values encouraging inclination to search for a way to deal with tensions and conflicts with procedures of Sulha mediation, and thus they have to be part of every educational system that cherish these values. Conflict resolution skills can be seen as one of the main elements in educating to reconciliation and mediation. The meaning of the main concept in educating conflict resolution is promoting conflict understanding and developing a constructivist, non-violent approach for their resolution [5, p. 280-292]. Changing the students' perspective regarding different kinds

of conflicts, from gain-loss struggles to a mutual problem that can be solved only cooperatively, constitutes an important element in peace education .

Reflective Thinking raises questions regarding dominant beliefs and assumptions, and arouses skepticism in relation to the dominant current understanding of the issues. This kind of open-mindedness constitutes a prerequisite for change, and thus, open-mindedness means “freedom of prejudices and similar habits from others that block the mind and prevent thinking about issues, ideas and alternative and new solutions. The ability to a reflective thinking raises the awareness to the complexity of situations and improves the ability to judge complex challenges. In relation to reconciliation and Sulha, *reflective thinking* prevents intellectual stagnation of the student regarding the reasons of the conflict and the solutions available to him to solve the conflict, thus leading the student to to a more profound choice, reasons, solutions and self-examination of his misconceptions that distort and maintain the continuation of the conflict within school.

Tolerance refers to the recognition of all people and groups’ right to have different thoughts, opinions, wills and different manners of conduct, as well as to an acceptance of these phenomena. Tolerance relates to the willingness to hear different opinions (thoughts or positions) that conflict with those which a person or an affiliation group holds. People who are basically not tolerant are not interested in social interaction, except when the words and behaviors of others approve their own conceptions and judgment. To be tolerant means to reject stereotypes and participate in a dialogue about controversial issues.

Empathy is an emotional reaction stemming from understanding the other and it is similar to what the other feels or are supposed to feel in his situation. Hoffman [4], argues that empathy relates to two elements of interaction: 1) a cognitive empathy that includes conscious awareness to the other’s thoughts, emotions, perceptions and intentions. 2) an emotional empathy representing an indirect emotional reaction to another human being, meaning the capability to experience indirectly other’s emotions and feelings. One of the ways that assure empathy promotion is cultivating the ability to embrace the other’s point of view, which means to see the world through the eyes of the other, to feel his emotions and behave as the other would behave in a given situation.

Human rights can be defined as rights imbedded in our human nature, and without them we cannot live as human beings. They address the human’s dignity, to his political, social, economic, cultural, environmental and developmental rights. The main purpose of human rights education is reinforcing the respect that the young generation acquires for the sake of human rights and fundamental freedom.

Conflict resolution. Acquiring conflict resolution skills includes the ability to negotiate, mediate and solve problems collectively in the context of conflict situations and do it via peaceful means. The goal of conflict resolution methods is developing the

following main capabilities and skills, and *understanding that confrontation is not a necessary and natural part of life*.

- Acquiring better skills of conflict management, so as to know what kind of attitude is the most compatible in solving a specific conflict.
- Developing awareness to the extent of vitality in understanding the point of view of the other party and in leading a conflict resolution process in constructivist ways.
- Acquiring the ability to distinguish between positions and needs or interests.
- Cultivating the ability to express feelings in non-aggressive manners.
- Defining conflicts as a mutual problem that needs to be resolved collectively while reaching compromises through negotiation and/or through a third party.
- Creating a diversity of peaceful solutions that will upgrade and improve conflictual situations.

The literature data suggest five strategies of managing interpersonal conflicts: *problem solving, compromise, forcefulness, avoidance, and sharing*. These strategies received a renewed interpretation by Raham and Azfour [7, p.368], that presented them through a combination of two dimensions: the first tests the power of the person's need to satisfy his own needs, and the second characterizes the need of the same person to satisfy the other person's needs. The five strategies characterizations were presented as follows: *avoidance, dominancy, obligation, cooperation, and compromising*. According to Raham's model, we can see that the greater the importance that a party of the conflict gives to its needs, the greater the plausibility that it would move from a situation of avoidance or relinquishing to a situation of dominancy or cooperation, and the greater the importance given to the other party's needs, the greater the plausibility that it will move from a situation of avoidance or dominancy to a situation of relinquishing or cooperation.

There are several ways to connect conflict management and personality quality. This connection can be described on three different levels: *personality qualities, behavior and past experience* [ibidem, p.376]. Each of these levels is affected by personal qualities. Past experience bases on analyzing the person via tools that are affected by personal qualities as well. When one wishes to examine the personality's influence on the conflict management style, numerous researchers make use of the model called "the five dimensions model" FDM. These dimensions are not dichotomic, and they actually move on a lined sequence. Different researchers used different adjectives to describe the same dimensions, but it is possible to make use of these five dimensions in examining the implications of location on the conflict management style. We expose below some of the most important qualities that influence conflict management:

Agreeableness. An individual of high qualities of agreeableness is described as an altruistic, self-confident person, who knows how to create a pleasant atmosphere around him, and has the ability to form good connections with the other. Such a person would

rather manage a conflict trustingly, while creating a pleasant and quiet atmosphere that can lead to a fruitful cooperation with the other party [7, p. 311].

Conscientiousness. The influence of Conscientiousness on conflict management will depend on the extent of self-concern and concern toward the other. It is possible to characterize elements with over-conscientiousness that would be a hindrance in reaching a state of cooperation. Such a person will ask questions such as “what is right” and “what it takes”, and will avoid questions such as “what is demanded” and “what is given”. A lack of conscientiousness can also be an obstacle during a conflict. Lack of conscientiousness can be expressed by not caring about others’ needs, and incapability to analyze suggestions to end the conflict fairly to all parties involved. As a result, even if an agreement is formed, in most cases it will be characterized by lacking “social justice”, which constitutes one of the basic elements for having a good prolonged agreement.

Extraversion. An extraverted person, in case he can deliver the aspects considered as trust building, as bringing closer, to the other party and the conflict surrounding, he has the ability to build a system of trust, a visible system, which is essential for creating cooperation. Additionally, he should be aware of the problematic aspects in this way of conduct, and he should repeatedly check how the other party perceives him, and whether it can harm cooperation. A person of low extraversion can be a poorer source for creating a conflict, surely for a visible conflict, but it will be a stumbling block in finding an appropriate solution to the conflict.

Neuroticism. Nervousness is attached to negative elements that stem from unfortunate past experience, or from negative feelings such as sadness, anger, guilt. On the other side of this dimension there is tranquility, relaxation, calm. During the conflict, an agitated person will arouse negative feelings among the other party, will make him want distance, thus creating a lack of motivation to solve the conflict. A peaceful person can contribute to a positive atmosphere of negotiation on the way to solve the conflict, but he is required to pay attention to the fact that he is not perceived as a quitter by the other party.

Openness. People who are defined as open minded can also be described as creative, inquisitive, curious, attentive people. Vice versa, on the other side of this sequence there are people who are defined as close minded, fixated, banal, ignoring. This dimension also has a complex effect on the conflict management style. On the one hand, open minded people can be a focus point for creating a conflict just by being inclined to intellectual debates, focusing on principles, and thus focusing on positions [8]. On the other hand, these people will have the ability and willingness to listen to the other party, and conduct a productive and creative dialogue on the way toward conflict solution. However, close minded people will be also a source for a conflict, just by not being able to comprehend the other party’s needs, and their need to maintain a rigid and fixated frame. In this case, people of this kind will be a barrier to creating cooperation while

solving a conflict. Focusing on themselves and on the need to protect their framework which they formed throughout time constitutes a pattern for obsession and conflict.

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