

Documents

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Escalation of social conflict during popular upheavals: Evidence from Bahrain

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Abstract

Bahrain experienced rapidly growing sectarian strife as a result of the "Day of Rage" uprising organized in February 2011. The aim of this article is to assess the sources of latent hostility as well as to explain why the social conflict manifested itself and why it took on a sectarian dimension. The appraisal is based on the elements of Hocker and Wilmot's conflict assessment model, which focuses on the adversaries' perceptions of the conflict. Through an in-depth examination of created stereotypes we evaluate miscommunication between adversaries and ultimately, rigidity of positions and polarization of society. We conclude that, following this pattern of development, the social conflict ultimately enters into a destructive phase, negatively impacting the prospects of conflict resolution. The social division engulfing Bahrain is representative of the power struggle and confessional tensions in the Gulf region. © 2012 CEU Political Science Journal.

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