

## The Dynamics and Drivers of the Creation of New Federating Units: A Global Perspective

Azhar Mahmood Abbasi\* Abid Hussain Abbasi† Salma Rahim‡

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### Abstract

*Cultural diversity has been the moving spirit behind identity politics which characterizes the multi-ethnic states. The socio-economic and political marginalization engenders sub-nationalism underpinned by the ethnolinguistic plurality of that society. Many countries, notably India, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Switzerland, the Philippines and South Africa, have had to face sub-nationalist movements. To eliminate the sense of alienation and deprivation, a number of the countries took a corrective measure based on the reconfiguration of federating units along ethnic lines. Ethnic multiplicity has to be managed by the promotion of unity through diversity. This academic endeavour seeks to analyze the dynamics and drivers of the creation of new federating units by different countries across the globe.*

**Key Words:** Sub-Nationalism, Politics of Identity, Re-Organization, Re-Demarcation, Ethno-Nationalism, Ethnic Group, New Provinces, Federating Units

### Introduction

Since the early 1970s, the growth of ethnonational movements as a global phenomenon has attracted a lot of attention from politicians and social scientists. The Quebec movement in Canada, the Biafran struggle in Nigeria, the Walloon movement in Belgium, and the Pashtunistan movement in Pakistan are just a few of the notable cases of ethnic-nationalist movements around the world ([Amin, T. 1988](#)).

Religious or linguistic issues, as well as conflicts over economic or social progress, have been described as indicators of ethnic nationalism. On the other hand, it is thought that "national identity" may continue to alter despite significant changes in religion, language, economic status, or other physical, cultural indicators. Even transformation-inspired social aberrations could not eliminate ethnic group identity but simply modernize it.

Such civilizations, which were divided by two identities (ethnic versus national) that could cut beyond modernity and tradition could cause significant political pressure in the new state because they could not operate through established political channels or internalize national principles. This frequently resulted in internal political crises, raising concerns about the state's political viability. These kinds of examples abound in various parts of the world, with one particularly egregious example occurring in South Asia, wherein in

\* Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Email: [azharabbasi@numl.edu.pk](mailto:azharabbasi@numl.edu.pk)

† Assistant Professor, Department of Pakistan Studies, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan.

‡ Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan.

1971, a single state (Bangladesh) emerged from a state (Pakistan). ([Hussain, A. 1976](#)).

In general, one can be defined the ethnic-nationalist movements as "ideological movements based on conjoint meanings of common descent, real or imagined that elites inside the appropriate group eloquent in order to unify political support for numerous objectives extending from secession to statehood to the autonomy. A typical distinction between a nationalist and an ethnic movement is that an ethnic politician's goal is to acquire an advantage within the current state, but a nationalist seeks to preserve or protect his own state ([Amin, T. 1988](#)).

In fact, a province or federating unit is a major administrative division within a country. The terms like 'region', 'state', 'territory' or 'unit' are also alternatively used for a province in various countries across the world.

There could be a variety of reasons for the development of new states or provinces in various parts of the world. There are numerous examples available which successfully demarcated the states or provinces on ethnic or linguistic lines, on geographical or administrative, and on a cultural or economic basis; the current example is India, which had created 15 new states both on an ethnic or administrative and lingual basis. There was a major territorial reorganization on geographical grounds of Lander in Germany." Furthermore, the Philippines is another excellent example, having established 30 new provinces based on cultural, linguistic, geographical, and administrative factors. Nigeria, South Africa, Iran, Ethiopia, Switzerland, Afghanistan, and the United States of America all drew their borders on the same lines.

Similarly, many of the world's nascent federations have had difficulties in establishing a federal region. With the development of new states or regions, there are two types of opposing "objectives at play...: (a) to protect the rights of an ethnic group (b) the wish to limit a maximum number of states for the resources of economic, financial, administrative affordability. History is replete with many examples of re-demarcation of states after a few years after their independence by young federations. India, Ethiopia, South Africa, Nigeria and Philippines are some examples" ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)).

## **Review of the Literature**

([Amin, T. 1988](#)), discussing Ethno-nationalist movements in various parts of the world, with a particular emphasis on movements in Pakistan, is the core focus of his study. The writer also discussed the rise and fall of ethno-nationalist movements in various parts of the world. In this research, he provided two sets of assertions: ([Amin, T. 1988](#)) In an algorithmic method; he argued that the nationally and internationally political contexts are primarily responsible for the rise and fall of movements ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)). The political policy of the state elite is the essential factor in shaping both the rise and fall of movements among domestic variables.

The movements are expected to fade if the state elite's policies result in greater power-sharing among ethnic groups. If, on the other hand, the policy attempts to give particular ethnic groups a monopoly on power, the groups left out of the power-sharing arrangements begin to create secessionist ideologies, leading to the rise of the movement. ([Amin, T. 1988](#))

([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)). Discusses the foundations of new states, provinces and counties, as well as sub-nationalisms, in various parts of the world, including South Africa, India, Ethiopia, and Nigeria. He claims that all these countries created new states based on ethnic, linguistic, administrative, economic, and geographical considerations. The author provided a sub-rational example of a different South Asian state.

[Manalo, V. \(2013\)](#) quoted various instances qualifying the social and political identification of ethnic-nationalist movements in different parts of the world. She also discussed the case of the Philippines, the evolution of the ethnic-nationalist movement, and the emergence of a demand for new federating units. In the end, the author concluded that the Philippines established 30 new provinces after 1960 on various grounds such as ethnic, lingual, and administrative ([Manalo, V. 2013](#)).

## Research Methodology

The current study is qualitative, descriptive, normative, and interpretive. Both primary and secondary sources were used to collect data and facts. Primary sources are based on government official reports, archival material, and interviews with politicians, intellectuals, and political activists, while secondary data was gathered from various books, research journals, newspapers, and the internet.

## Ethnic Politics and the Cases of the Creation of New Federating Units

### Nigeria

Similar types of challenges were faced by Nigeria as faced by India. Most of the new states were created under military rule in Nigeria. Nigeria has 140 million people comprising 250 ethnic groups and more than 200 languages being spoken. Nigerian's federation comprises 36 states, and yet the demand for new states is being made. Under the 1999 constitution, the process for the creation of new provinces is very complex. Like India, there is also a commission to reorganize the boundary of the state.

Nigeria got independence in 1960 with just three states but now has 36 states. The new states were created to break the power centre of an ethnic group on financial resources. The "federal charter" was introduced in 1979 in the constitution of Nigeria to dialect the suspicions and fears of ethnic domination in the federation ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)).

Under military rule, the first major state was created on an administrative basis in 1967 to improve the management of the state. The second state was created in 1976. To bring harmony and to minimize the minority conflict, this was also on an administrative basis.

A panel was created in 1976 to deal with the issue of the creation of a new state. It stated:

- a) The administrative and economic justification should be for the creation of a new state which will encourage unity.
- b) Political stability would be achieved with the reorganization of the new state.

There will be more states to strengthen the federation. ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)) From 1984 to 1999, the states were 36 in number under military rule. In fact, the creation of the new state in Nigeria was made on undemocratic means, with no checks and balances, and void of normal public consultation. Thus, the current constitution provided more legal security in order to avoid the creation of undemocratic and unfair means ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)).

There will be four by the fifth majority required in order to create any new state in Nigeria. In Nigeria, there is political fragmentation as three dominant ethnic groups were subdivided into five new states which found themselves competing rather than cooperating. In contrast with each other, India, Nigeria had resolved the minorities issue on state-level rather than by giving them a new territorial region ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)).

### South Africa

In April 1993, a democratic commission was approved by the South African government to deal with the re-demarcation issue. The commission submitted its report in August 1993 with the following criteria, and 9 provinces were created on its recommendation.

- (a) Consideration of historical boundaries
- (b) Economic viability
- (c) Administrative consideration
- (d) Rationalization of the existing structure
- (e) Financial affordability
- (f) Minimize inconvenience to people

- (g) Demographic consideration for future movement pattern
- (h) Cultural and language realities.

Hence, the language and culture was not the basis when the South African provinces were created in 1993. When the final boundaries were mailed, the lifestyle of the people was taken into account, which was actually the base of new states ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)).

The major ethnic groups were accommodated indirectly within the respective province, where they were in majority, such as Zulus in Kwazulu/Natal in the eastern cap, the Xhosas in the free state of Tswana the Sotho, and the Afrikaans were to accommodate in the western and northern Cape province.

The “soft boundaries” concept was introduced by the commission in its report, which emphasized two important aspects.

- (a) There would be no rigid border among provinces and allow free flow of people to business the goods and services across the country.
- (b) The provinces and government have to support each other economically and financially ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)).

## Ethiopia

The federal system of Ethiopia was introduced in 1995. Ethiopia has around 80 ethnic groups, and with its 80 million people, it is the second-most populous country of Africa. The Ethiopian constitution recognized the ethnic groups as “Nation, Nationalities, and people”. Ethiopian constitution tried to create for each group or nationalities a mother state, but it was practically not possible in the ethnically diverse country. Ethiopian federation has broken new grounds for the reorganization of state: (a) It was princely-territory based (b) emphasize put on ethnicity with the absence of cross-cutting loyalties. (c) To assist dominant and centralized party structure. ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)) As Ethiopia’s constitution assisted ethnicity, the demand for more new states emerged quickly. In 1994, the demarcation of boundaries took place. The major emphasis of demarcation of the state was on ethnic habitation patterns, without knowing the economic viability and administrative boundaries ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)).

## Switzerland

Like other democratic countries, Switzerland also has proper criteria for the reorganization of cantons in its constitution. However, Switzerland did not show haste in declaring to new states as did many other young federations. First, it became economically stable with a strong historical federation, and then it decided to create a new state as Jura in 1979 on administrative lines ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)).

Jura was an ethnic movement started in 1915 which demanded secession from Berne and wanted to create a separate canton of Jura. Jura movement got momentum after World War 2. The Jura was predominantly French-speaking, with a Catholic majority and economically disfavored. On the other hand, Bern’s canton was German-speaking and economically well off. In 1974, the Jura movement again got momentum and asked whether they wanted to create a new canton. However, in 1978 the Swiss people approved an amendment of the federal constitution, and Jura became the 23<sup>rd</sup> canton of Switzerland in 1979 ([Ghai, Y. & Cottrell, J. 2007](#)).

The Swiss nation legitimized the independence of Jura on an ethnic or economic basis. The reorganization in Switzerland took place after a long time but on ethnic lines.

## Philippines

The Philippines is much poorer and smaller than other Asian countries, like China and India. It comprises 80 provinces, and among them, 30 were created after 1960. The demand for new states is not yet complete. In 1995, another demand was made and approved to create Lesbela Del Sur and Lesbela Del

Norte. However, it was rejected in February 1995. Recently, Congress put forward another proposal to carve out Nueva Camarines from Camarines Sur. The demand of Quezon Del Sur and Quezon Del Norte got momentum in 2007 ([Manalo, V. 2013](#)).

However, historians and scholars stated that the Philippines' mitotic situation is approximately higher than Thailand and Vietnam, which have 75 and 63 provinces, respectively. Ilocas split into two regions, Ilocas Sur and Ilocas Norte in 1818. However, Ilocas Sur further split into two more provinces, La Union and Abra. This demand was pure ethnic and based on linguistics which carved out Abra from Ilocas Sur ([Manalo, V. 2013](#)).

Nergos was divided into Nergos Oriental and Nergos Occidental in 1890, on the basis of cultural and linguistic lines. If we have a look at all the created twinned provinces of Philippine such as Del Sur and Camarines Del Norte, Ilocas Del Sur and Ilocas Del Norte, Oriental and Occidental Mindoro, Misais Occidental and Oriental, the Oriental pair and Abra are largely based on cultural and linguistic lines. Nergos Oriental speaks the Cebuano Visayan, and Nergos Occidental speaks the predominantly Ilonggo language. All the other states were created on the basis of economic, administrative, and geographic ([Manalo, V. 2013](#)).

However, Nargos is the only island that was split into two regions, Luzon and Mindanaon, on geographical, administrative and linguistic lines. The two halves of Nergos's island not only have two different administrative regions but also speak different languages. In contrast, southern Leyte province speaks the predominantly different languages as Cebuano and Waray, respectively, on one island, but both live in the same administrative region ([Manalo, V. 2013](#)). Philippine re-demarcated the new states on all ethnic or lingual, cultural, administrative or geographical and economic bases ([Manalo, V. 2013](#)).

## India

Indian federation has comprised of Six federal territories, administrated by the federal government directly as one national territory and 29 states. India is not only ethnically and in terms of compositions of population and size but also in terms of resources, economic viability, infrastructure and territory. "According to one estimate, there are more than 1600 languages and dialects spoken in India. After a short time of independence, the Indian state started the re-demarcation of its states' boundaries on linguistic basis, which remain in all of the state's cultural, language, and religious minorities" ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)).

The constitution mechanism in the Indian constitution provided a very flexible and simple mechanism for the re-demarcation of the states. The lower house of the Indian parliament (Lok Sabha) had the only authority to reorganize the state's boundaries where and when it was needed and alter/change the name of the states without even consulting the second house of the parliament ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)).

The Indian government has been created more than fifteen new states and provinces after its partition. ([Ayaz, B. 2010](#)). From 1947 to 2000, the ethnic-lingual model was the dominant ground for the creation of the new state in India. "Though, the basis was slightly shifted from ethnic lines to geographical, economic, and administrative grounds after 2000. Indian national party (INP) was the leading party in the Indian constitution. The INP stance was supportive of creating the new states on a lingual basis and cultural identity. Another important development was made by the Indian government in this context was the establishment of the Linguistic Province Commission was in 1948 to re-demarcate the states on a lingual basis." Andhra states were the first new state which was created in 1953 on this basis. This act caused a chain reaction of linguistic state movements ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)).

In fact, the only solution was left to the reorganization of states on an ethnic basis and to accommodate the ethnically very diverse country of India. Bombay was divided into ethnic lines, and Maharashtra and Gujarat were created in 1960. Punjab was divided into linguistic lines by the Punjab Reorganization Act 1966, which created a new Hindi speaking state, Haryana, and a northern district of Punjab was transferred to Himachil Pardaish. Haryana's and Punjab's shared capital was Chandigarh as a union territory ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)).

In India, the course of the formation of new states is not yet over. Many new demands had been forwarded by political elite or nationalist including Telgana in the northern part of territory of Andhra Pardaish. In fact, “the paradigm of creation of new states was slightly shifted from ethno- linguistic line to economic justification and on administrative and political basis. This process of the creation of a new state on ethnic line has put forward India in to civil war, and the creation of new states is partial business for India. Similarly, it is a positive thing which provides flexibility in the Indian federation” ([Villiers, B. d. 2012](#)).

## Turkey

If we give a comparison of both Turkey and Pakistan case as Turkey is basically 37<sup>th</sup> largest state on globe having an area of 783,562 km<sup>2</sup>. Turkey is at 36<sup>th</sup> position after Pakistan with 796,096 km<sup>2</sup> but it is quite amazing to reference that there are 81 provinces in Turkey and only 4 in Pakistan. Turkey is “ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in terms of GDP (PPP) as per 2011 estimates with the total of \$1.073 trillion. While, Pakistan is merely estimated a total \$488.580 billion GDP (PPP) in same period. It shows that division of provinces as per respective requirements and national interest can be beneficial for the nation as in the case of Turkey” ([Manalo, V. 2013](#)).

## Conclusion

Ethnicity and sub-nationalism are terms that refer to a complex blend of cultural, racial, and historical characteristics that split civilizations into diverse and sometimes hostile, political groups. South Asia is the largest continent of the world that is multilingual, multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious. In truth, not only in South Asia but also globally, ethnic politics is tearing apart the social fabric of self-governing countries around the world. Clearly, there is a distinction to be made between ethnic politics in progressive and moderate societies, where it is somewhat at ease due to the overall power of national identity and the relative importance of other basic political issues associated with organizing a creative economy and ethnic politics in the Third World, where ethnic divisions may be unconditionally central to the problems of establishing a functioning political system at all. Globally, some countries have played an important role in accommodating various sub-national ethnic groups by providing them with their own state, maintaining their identity, and providing them with economic, linguistic, ethnic, and administrative opportunities.

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