

## 4 Three ideal-types of grievances

In the lived experiences of subalterns, grievances are important because they are barometers of their pain and suffering.

(Morris, 2019, p.133)

This chapter uses the analytical grid developed before (Ajil, 2020), which – based on a review of works in a variety of disciplines that have engaged with grievances – proposes three ideal-types of grievances, namely socio-economic grievances, ethno-racial grievances and political grievances. Ideal types are analytical constructs by the researcher built to make sense of individual phenomena in the social sciences. Ideal types do not reflect reality, but a conscious choice of the social scientist who seeks to understand the adequacy of the ideal types for the study of the phenomenon at hand. In that paper, I also argue that grievances tend to relate to the local and the global level, while noting that perceptions of what is local or global are highly dependent on the protagonist's position and orientation. Importantly, grievances may also relate to a situation in the past. These can be referred to as *historical grievances* (Adam, 2018), which are more likely to exist, when there are events or circumstances that continue to nurture grievances in the present and thereby allow for a narrative about past grievances to be upheld. This is especially pertinent if there are current events that simplify the construction of a narrative of continuity

The learning jihadist can easily see a parallel between the colonial domination that oppressed the Muslim world yesterday and today's brutality, such as the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the invasion of Iraq, the military expeditions in Afghanistan. They resonate with the same logic of impunity and humiliation.

(Geisser et al., 2017, p.198)

**Socio-economic grievances** are generated by actual or perceived low socio-economic status, in extreme cases poverty, usually affecting a minority of the population. Relative material deprivation may be experienced if there is a substantial difference between the socio-economic position of certain groups. Economic

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discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation may be involved in the creation and maintenance of the low socio-economic status of portions of the population. They may be characterised by income inequality, hampered access to labour or the housing market and to the education system. At the global level, grievances may be related to the negative repercussions of capitalist neoliberal economic and political systems and trends like globalisation.

The second ideal-type refers to **ethno-racial grievances** that may be due to the presence of an ethnically dominant majority perceived as hostile by a minority, due to systematic ‘othering’, racism or ethnic and religious discrimination, often on a local and domestic level. In the context of the GWOT, these experiences include the securitisation, *suspectification* and misrecognition of citizens associated with *Muslimness*. Kundnani (2014) and Abbas (2019) suggest that racial-culturalist assumptions about Muslims and Islam must be understood as a form of racism or *new racism*. Sharma and Nijjar (2018) argue that Islam becomes racialised through a spectrum of implicit and explicit connotations related to security concerns. The term Anti-Muslim racism is also gradually imposing itself and substituting the term Islamophobia. On a global level, such grievances may result from the actual or perceived systematic or recurring stigmatisation and discrimination of a collective characterised by race, ethnicity or religion. For contemporary forms of PIV, grievances are related to the perception that Islam as a religion and people associated with it are being discriminated against, stigmatised and labelled as dangerous or unwelcome on a global scale. This belief rests upon the idea that conflicts in Algeria, Chechnya, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and Yemen are not coincidental but due to a perception of Islam, majority-Islamic countries and Muslims as the major threat after the demise of Soviet communism (Lakhani, 2014). Daulatzai similarly argues that the figure of the *Muslim* has, since the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, been the major archetypal *Other*, against which the idea of a *West* started to cohere around concepts of ‘whiteness and Christianity’ and that European expansion and colonialism has to be understood through that lens (Daulatzai, 2012, p.8).

**Political grievances** can result from dysfunctional mechanisms of political representation and unequal distribution of political resources, low representation of members of a minority in positions of influence and lack of civil rights for a portion of the population. This may be tied to the alienation and exclusion of portions of society from mainstream political processes. Political grievances may also relate to the lack or loss of trust in the government and perceptions of it being unjust or corrupt. Political repression may foster grievances through the suspension of civil liberties, censorship, and the criminalisation or banning of political parties, groups or movements. Violent political repression may include state violence by police or the military, the persecution of minorities or political opponents. On a global level, political grievances may be related to the geopolitical domination and primacy of the perceived global West and a biased system of international law working in its favour, leading to impunity for war crimes when they are perpetrated by dominant powers, and thus a perception of double standards. Violent forms of geopolitical domination also fuel political grievances.

Formerly, these were characterised by large-scale European imperialist and colonialist projects. Nowadays, they include foreign occupations and invasions, as well as systematic and large-scale violence and persecution of minorities within countries or regions.

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