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Restoring Dignity of Borderlanders in Conflict Zones by Promoting Cooperation

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Abstract

The paper examines intractable borders in conflict zones and prospects of their transformation through the prism of Dignity, an eclectic term with moral and ethical connotations. A world full of Dignity is a world without violent conflicts and rigid divisions. The paper applies this holistic model of Dignity to conflict zones, particularly to the South Asian conflict of Kashmir. It argues that in the post-cold war globalized world borders have lost much of their characteristics as rigid lines of separation. In the globalized world contact, commerce and cooperation have been the main forces in shaping relations among nations. It is crucial to bring this dynamism to violent conflicts, the process of which can be accelerated by the application of the Dignity approach. The application of this approach to conflict analysis will help transform the violent borders by centrally engaging the humiliation of the people in conflict zones in the resolution process, and by focusing on the urgency of a dignified life for these people. The transformation of borders from violent lines of division into peaceful lines of cooperation will restore dignity of the borderlanders. This new approach will interrogate traditional realistic assumptions about borders and makes the case for its transformation through peaceful means. The evolution of borders as lines of cooperation will not only help address the humiliation of the victims of the conflict particularly the borderlanders but also contribute to the discourse on conflict resolution with practical implications.