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NATIONAL UNITY AND ITS RISKS

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ABSTRACT

Mongolians have a long history of prioritizing the growth of their nation, enhancing the well-being of their citizens, and safeguarding the independence of their country through unity. Values such as democracy, freedom, and solidarity are essential for the people to uphold. Despite strong nationalism, without unity, it is ineffective. Experts in politics and social sciences warn that our nation is in danger of losing its national unity and descending into division. This division can be seen in various aspects, including ethnicity, geography, social status, standard of living and education, political and religious beliefs, perspectives, wealth, income, and influence. Therefore, an analysis of the risk factors that threaten national unity is conducted, comparing them to the current challenges facing Mongolia's unity, and some findings are presented.

This article highlights the importance of safeguarding our Mongolian national identity from external influences and establishing a cohesive national identity that can withstand present and future challenges.

This underscores the immediate need to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the underlying causes, external and internal threats, and influencing factors through the lens of internal security, in order to formulate an effective strategy to counter these threats.

KEYWORDS

Unity, Values, Risks to Unity, Factors Affecting Unity, National Security

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INTRODUCTION

National unity is crucial for social stability and progress as it creates a feeling of belonging, cooperation, and shared responsibility among citizens.

Factors that play a role in fostering national unity encompass shared traditions, territory, and socio-cultural cohesion (Jilani et al., 2012). This concept has expanded to encompass language, economics, culture, and psychology over time (Gu, 2021). As a result, national unity serves as both a symbolic and practical demonstration of collaboration and mutual understanding among the diverse ethnic groups within a nation (Gu, 2021), crucial for enhancing security, advancement, and a collective sense of identity among a country's populace.

National unity is the process of bringing together diverse groups with varying social and cultural backgrounds into a cohesive social system and a unified entity, supported by state policy. The primary objective is to integrate groups with different origins, characteristics, and interests into a unified social system based on shared norms, values, and interests.

National unity fosters the establishment of a social order and the development of fundamental concepts and values, contributing to the stability, prosperity, and cohesion of the nation. It is rooted in the national interest of forging a robust and united states through the promotion of social and cultural cohesion.

National unity is crucial for maintaining national stability, which in turn facilitates the successful implementation of social and economic development initiatives.¹ Researchers have identified four key benefits of strong national unity within a country:

1. Decreased conflicts between nations and ethnic groups, fostering harmony among diverse groups residing within the same nation.
2. It fosters a feeling of patriotism. Instead of identifying with various ethnicity, individuals recognize themselves as citizens of a single nation and have a deep love for their country.
3. Peace is established, allowing everyone to work and reside harmoniously in all parts of the nation.
4. Various ethnicities and communities are encouraged to intermarry, promoting and reinforcing national unity.

The primary challenges to national unity stem from a variety of conflicts, disputes, and crises. Modern conflicts are often fueled by factors such as ethnicity, religion, economy, and demographics. Additionally, the rise in natural disasters like water scarcity, air pollution, earthquakes, and ecological issues may also contribute to future conflicts worldwide. "Mongolia's Foreign Policy Concept, 2010"²

These factors include: territorial boundaries, distribution of natural resources, religious conflicts, traditions and customs of life, extreme nationalism, economic interests and the battle for dominance over information sources will persist.

These crises and struggles are either instigated by foreign influences or stem from internal issues within the country. The external threats to national unity are diverse and far-reaching.

RISK FACTORS ARISING FROM THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The primary entities involved in external political conflicts are sovereign states, their alliances, and unions. Additionally, organizations that represent states, such as socio-political organizations, trade unions, and ideological and religious movements, can also be considered as subjects in these conflicts. **These include:**

1. Conflicts between states and their alliances with different socio-political systems, seeking to weaken and ultimately impose their own way of life on the opposing system. These conflicts often have an ideological basis and were particularly significant in the 20th century with the existence of socialist and capitalist systems.
2. State conflicts, whether within the same socio-political system or different ones, aiming to establish political and economic dominance in specific regions of the world.
3. International conflicts between nations with the goal of either enslaving or liberating other nations.
4. Conflicts arising from territorial disputes, where one party seeks to annex foreign territory or liberate previously occupied territories.
5. Interreligious conflicts, which can manifest in internal political relations or on an international scale throughout history, driven by various real reasons and conditions that provoke such conflicts.

Ethnic and religious conflicts and crises are the root causes of the country's national unity breaking down, the decline of the national economy, and the disruption of social stability.

Conflicting ethnic groups are vying to elevate the status of their own nation within a society, leading to conflict.

In addition to the external risk factors mentioned earlier, there are internal risk factors stemming from the country's own conditions.

These include:

Risks arising from political crises: This is a situation within the socio-political system that occurs when an ongoing conflict intensifies and the state's instability (anxiety) significantly rises. Crises stemming from international disputes and conflicts are categorized as external political crises, whereas those originating domestically are classified as internal political crises. Internal crises present a more significant risk to national unity compared to external factors. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs L. Purevsuren made this observation in an interview with "Daily Newspaper."

I held the position of President's National Security Advisor for Foreign Policy for a decade. Throughout my tenure, a common question that arose was, "What are the key factors influencing Mongolia's national

¹ Social Studies by Simiyu Wandibba, pp. 231-233;

² Ibid; (3.3.3.4: We will strongly oppose any form of discrimination against citizens based on ethnicity, religion, or ideology, as well as any promotion of regionalism that violates human rights and freedoms. Such actions can disrupt national unity and cause internal instability, and we are committed to combating them vigorously)

security?' There is a tendency to point fingers externally, with inquiries such as, 'Is Russia or China the greater threat?' However, I firmly believe that the focus should not be on either of these countries."

The first thing that will impact us is the matter of internal unity: In order for our foreign policy to be successful, it is crucial that we are internally united and present a unified voice internationally. Past governments, including the one before the previous one, have made mistakes by not coordinating foreign policy through a single channel. There have been numerous errors and deficiencies, particularly in our interactions with neighboring countries, which could leave us vulnerable to external influences. When ministers and members of Parliament express conflicting views, it weakens our position on the global stage. (Л.Пүрэвсүрэн, 2015).

It can be inferred that internal political crises are more common in Mongolia.

The loss of legitimacy in governance structures, breakdown of communication between different centers, imposition of barriers and restrictions by one center on another, decreased effectiveness of socio-political regulation and control, and gradual expansion of spontaneous forms of political resistance are all indicative of this trend.

Political science identifies various forms of political crises based on their causes and manifestations, such as crises of legitimacy, political participation, and penetration.

Risks stemming from a crisis of legitimacy or legality: It arises when the objectives and principles of the governing regime clash with the public's understanding of good governance norms, political regulation methods, and forms. The crisis is intricately linked to the subjective aspect of the conflict. Therefore, even if there are improvements in reality, if they do not meet the expectations of the majority of citizens, it can result in a crisis that may escalate into social resistance or revolution.

Risks derived from convergence crisis: It stems from the erosion of the values and norms that have traditionally shaped the political culture of a society. This leads individuals to seek spiritual guidance to better understand their role in society and their connection to the government. Identity crises can be particularly intense during times of significant change, as new social and political norms may not offer enough opportunities for individual advancement. The crisis of political participation involves the deliberate exclusion of certain groups by the ruling elite to maintain power, as well as challenges in maintaining territorial integrity, national unity, and political stability amidst growing political participation from conflicting interest groups.

In the context of the growing political landscape, the variety of interests among competing groups is evident. Simultaneously, the inadequate representation of social interests, political structures and institutions that do not fully align with the people's demands, and the authorities' reluctance to address the activities of political dissidents and extremists worsen the political situation and pose unpredictable risks to the government and society.

Risks associated with the access crisis: This is evident in the diminishing capacity of state administration to effectively carry out its decisions across different aspects of social life. This phenomenon arises from the mismatch between the government's stated goals and its actual policies. The breakdown in communication is often referred to as the vertical disconnect between the central government and local authorities. Furthermore, the lack of political knowledge among citizens and limited public awareness also contribute significantly to the emergence of this issue.

Internal political conflict: Internal political conflict is defined by the competition among social classes, political parties, movements, or groups for political power and influence. Strategies to prevent or mitigate such conflicts include social and political maneuvering, manipulation, uniting opposing elites, weakening opposition forces within the system, and resorting to force when necessary (B.Altangerel, 2024).¹

Risks arising from constitutional crises: This is because the primary law of the country has nearly stopped functioning. During times of crisis, the Constitution loses its legitimacy and necessitates a significant revision.

Risks from parliamentary crises: If the decisions made by the parliament do not align with the majority of the country's citizens, the balance of power in the legislature could shift. This could lead to the dissolution

¹ <https://sites.google.com/a/biliginst.edu.mn/ouhzbzsh/ouhbm-rg-ld-n/lekc%D2%AF%D2%AFd>

of the parliament and the calling of new elections. A crisis may arise when the main opposing forces in the parliament are evenly matched, impeding decision-making and undermining the legislature's effectiveness. In such cases, it may be necessary to dissolve the parliament and hold new elections.

Risks arising from government crises: The government's credibility is lost and its executive agencies are unable to fulfill its mandates. If the government is unable to handle the situation, parliament may withhold its support and remove ministers. Government crises may result in a change of leadership and governance structures.

The potential risk factors for national unity are compared with the factors that have a negative impact on Mongolia's national unity in the following analysis.

Table 1. Factors that pose a risk to Mongolia's national unity.

No.	Factors negatively affecting the national unity of Mongolia	Risk quality
1	The phenomenon of political party division	Risks arising from political crises:
2	State instability	
3	Discrepancies in law enforcement	Risks arising from a crisis of legitimacy or legality
4	Social moral decline	
5	Corruption	
6	Unbalanced information from media organizations	
7	Immature patriotism	Risks from the economic crisis
8	Mongolian family crisis	
9	Degradation of the population's genetic base	
10	Disadvantages of the education system	Risks from the access crisis
11	Localism	
12	Globalization and the impact of foreign soft power policies, religion; religious divisions	Risks from the parliamentary crisis
13	Political election distortions	
14	Unemployment and unequal income distribution	Risks from government crisis
15	Uncontrolled flow of information and uncivilized use of social media	
16	Loss of merit principle in civil service	

The primary conflict in the current and future world is the clash between religions and civilizations. Mongolia, a Buddhist civilization, finds itself situated between the dominant civilizations of Orthodox Christianity, China, and Islam, presenting a major challenge to maintaining its national identity (Davaadorj & others, 2014)¹. In this context, Mongolians must strive to safeguard their national identity, shield it from external pressures, and forge a cohesive national identity that can withstand the trials of both the present and the future.

If the national identity is not established and national unity is not maintained, ethnic and group identities will dominate, leading to societal division and disintegration. This historical process has been influenced by both external and internal factors and continues to be a critical national security concern. Establishing national

¹ Davaadorj, Ts. et al. (2014). The unity of the Mongolian national mentality and the influence of foreign languages and cultures. Proceedings of the scientific conference "Foreign languages and the security of the Mongolian national mentality". -UB., vol.6

identity and unity, along with economic development, will secure Mongolia's stability, safeguard its national language, culture, history, genealogy, territory, and resources, and reinforce its sovereignty, independence, and rights to ownership, management, and utilization.

Once a strong national identity is established, partisan divisions fade away and unity is achieved, allowing for consistent state policy. This also enables economic growth through free market competition and a unified stance on key national issues such as strategic resources and infrastructure (Davaadorj & others, 2014).

There are indications that the core principles of internal security, such as national unity, social stability, state capacity, and succession policy, as outlined in the national security concept, are starting to erode.

These include:

- The decline in national security awareness and sensitivity has resulted in social conflicts, struggles, and divisions over power, wealth distribution, and capital.
- The slow progress of political parties and the diminishing importance of interests have contributed to factors that undermine the constitutional system, fostering a growing lack of trust in parliamentary governance. This has led to a tendency to blame and deny the government for any obstacles in the country's development, fueling the internal crisis.
- The prioritization of narrow political and economic group interests over national interests has eroded citizens' confidence in the courts.
- The determination of responsibility for those who harm the state and national interests and violate the law is not based on legal principles, but rather on the agreement of political parties. As a result, law, order, and discipline in society have deteriorated.
- The impact of the election cycle and its political outcomes has had a negative effect on Mongolia's internal security environment. The appointment of positions by the winning party and coalition has emerged as a significant factor in undermining the stability and continuity of the civil service, weakening state operations. The removal of civil servants and policymakers who have consistently upheld national interests from state policies and activities for "political reasons" has resulted in the loss of continuity in state work.
- The overall weakening of the civil service's capacity has devalued scientific and professional recommendations and decisions. State and social policies are now being influenced by political-business interests, competition, and short-term needs.
- The national pride and values of children and youth, who represent the future, have diminished, with patriotic national education and beliefs being overshadowed by negative aspects of globalization, admiration for foreign cultures, consumerism, and a pervasive "electronic mindset."
- The prevalence of negative information has significantly influenced social psychology, leading to a growing tendency to criticize and oppose the government, resulting in ongoing social discord and division, exacerbated by increasing social inequality.
- The development of national resilience, essential for overcoming threats to national security, has been hindered by a lack of cohesive state policy and coordination, causing it to fall behind the evolving security landscape.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis indicates that Mongolia is encountering significant obstacles to its national unity due to both external and internal factors, with internal political crises posing the most immediate danger. The decline in national unity is evident through various aspects such as political party divisions, state instability, corruption, social moral decay, and weakening civil service capacity. The study underscores that these challenges are exacerbated by the impact of globalization, religious differences, and the fading of patriotic values among the younger generation.

The research underscores that maintaining national unity necessitates addressing a range of interconnected issues: strengthening state institutions, promoting political stability, implementing consistent civil service policies, and reinforcing national identity and values. Of particular concern is the tendency to prioritize narrow political and economic interests over national interests, resulting in decreased public trust in government institutions and the judiciary.

The study stresses that establishing a robust national identity and unity is vital not only for Mongolia's internal stability but also for its position between major civilizations. Without cohesive national unity, Mongolia risks heightened social divisions, diminished sovereignty, and compromised management of its strategic resources and infrastructure. To tackle these challenges, Mongolia must devise comprehensive

strategies that enhance national resilience, improve state policy coordination, and instill a renewed sense of patriotic education and national values among its populace.

Future endeavors should concentrate on creating mechanisms to prevent political polarization, enhancing civil service merit principles, and fostering a balanced information environment that fosters national unity rather than discord. This will be crucial for ensuring Mongolia's long-term stability and progress while safeguarding its distinct national identity in an increasingly intricate global landscape.

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