

Week 8 Lesson Plan: Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict
Rakeen Mabud

Debate – Primordialism, Instrumentalism, and Social Constructivism

You will be divided into three teams: the primordialists (refer to Geertz), the instrumentalists (refer to Bates, Posner), and the social constructivists (institutionalists) (refer to Nagel). Each team will read the [article](#) about the conflict in Sri Lanka. Students should use the authors and examples from the text to explain why their team's theory best explains the conflict between the Sinhala and the Tamils.

Each team should...

- Define the theory that they are representing in a clear and concise way
- Refer to the readings and cases presented in the readings – think about how examples presented in the text parallel the Sri Lankan case
- Consider potential attacks on their theory, and decide how to respond to those attacks

Format of the debate:

Opening Statement (6 minutes)

Each group will get 2 minutes to present their opening statement. Opening statements should be limited to advocating for your team's own explanation for the conflict. Teams should explain/define their team's theory, and draw from the author, examples from the text, and examples from the Sri Lanka article to explain why their theory best explains the conflict.

Rebuttal (9 minutes)

After each team has presented their opening statement, each team will have an opportunity for rebuttal. Remember, you want to explain why the other two theories don't explain this conflict, and continue to make a strong case for your own theory.

Conclusion (6 minutes)

This is your opportunity for any final rebuttals after hearing everyone else's responses, and to conclude with a forceful statement of your position

Bates argues that ethnicity becomes salient when ethnic groups become a rational means for organization. This implies that ethnic groups will last only as long as they serve the interest of leaders. Do you think Bates' account explains what we see in real life? Do cleavages really turn on or off so quickly?

For Wilkinson, Bates, Posner: Why is ethnicity more salient than other cleavages? Why do politicians choose to activate ethnicity rather than some other cleavage such as socioeconomic class, etc.?

What does Wilkinson say about the conditions under which ethnic violence occurs? Does his theory explain ethnic violence in Sri Lanka? Why do some politicians want to incite ethnic violence while others want to quell it?

Midterm Info:

- Essay: ½ or 1/3 ~30 minutes
- Short Answer: choose 4-5/10
 - o From terms to know
 - o Make sure to know definition, significance, examples
- Will cover all of week 8 – week 9 will not be covered, but you can use cases we discuss next week in your essay if you want.
- Get there early! Exam will start promptly at 10:07; never enough seats