

Week 9: Ethnic Violence in Yugoslavia and Rwanda
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Is ethnic violence planned or spontaneous? How does fear play a role? Leaders? If it's spontaneous, then why was violence so organized, particularly in Rwanda? Or is it really about power, as Straus suggests?

What are some instances of how institutions played a role in cementing ethnic divisions in Rwanda and Yugoslavia? What was the role of the church in Rwanda? How were institutions coopted for different purposes, e.g customary obligations?

What is the difference between a cultural community and a political community? Why is it important to distinguish the two? What role do state institutions play in developing/defining political communities?

Does the level at which orchestration of violence (or the decision to quell violence) matter? What would Wilkinson say? Does Wilkinson's theory that ethnic violence happens when politicians at the state level don't send in the police to quell violence hold in Rwanda? What does Wilkinson say about the incentives that politicians at the state level need to prevent violence? Do these incentives hold for the state in Rwanda, or did the state not matter at all? What would Straus's response be? Was it the absence or presence of state power and authority that made the Rwandan genocide more likely?

Does it matter where Hutu and Tutsi come from? Should we be focused on the origins of differences or the contemporary political implications of these differences? In other words, is it crucial to examine history when studying ethnic violence? What are some plusses and minuses to doing so? Should we put the same emphasis on the historical origins of ethnic groups in all cases?

What role did democracy play during the Rwandan genocide? Does democracy always have a positive influence in quelling tensions when ethnic conflict is high?

Would the violence in Rwanda or Yugoslavia had occurred at such a large scale had there been more international intervention?

Are differences such as linguistic differences in Yugoslavia a driving force behind ethnic conflict, or do linguistic differences just become highlighted as an ethnic divider? If the latter, who is doing the dividing? What other differences from the cases became important symbolic differences that contributed/led to conflict?

Why does ethnic violence come in bursts? Why have we seen relative peace in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia since the "end" of their respective conflicts?