

Gov 20: Ethnicity Section 1
Fall 2014

Note for other/future TFs: Because there is so much reading this week and all of these ideas are very new to them, and because this will all be on their midterm in a few days, this section will be a lot more organized around going through readings one by one and less focused on debate or interactive activities/games. I want to make sure they are really solid on the big arguments here and we can zoom out more next week to interactive activities.

XX. Go over midterm format for 2 minutes

1 essay out of 3. 5 IDs from 7 or 8. Explain 3 things you need to say to get the points.

Slide 1: Three big questions for us to discuss today

1. Where does ethnicity come from? And how does it change over time?
2. Why do some ethnic differences become politically relevant while others do not?
3. Why do ethnic differences become violent?

1. Before we start, let's define "ethnicity" quickly so we're all on the same page: what's the definition of an ethnic group we get from Horowitz and from lecture that we're using in this course?

I. First question: Where does ethnicity come from? And how does it change over time? [aim to spend 25 minutes here]

1. Let's use a famous athlete as an example – some of you might know this guy, though his NBA heyday was a little before your time – (**SLIDE 2: Photo of Jason Kidd, then Jason Kidd with his parents**). Long-time NBA all-star, guaranteed hall of famer. Now he's coach of Milwaukee Bucks. What is Jason Kidd's ethnicity, what's his most **relevant** ethnic group in American life? (*note: Kidd looks as "white" as anyone, but within popular discourse he's considered "black"*)

1a. What about this guy? (*switch to photo of Derek Jeter, including photo with his parents... also considered "black" in popular discourse despite being light skinned*)

2. Why did we immediately jump to race? Is it even so obvious from looking at them? (*No! it's incredibly ambiguous*) **Or is it something about American society? What about American politics, institutions, or history has made this the immediately relevant cleavage for us?**

2a. What other ethnic groups could we have said he belongs to instead? (*note: he's Christian, he's from California, his mom is Irish-American. Jeter is Christian, he's from Michigan, his mom is German-American*).

3. Could Kidd and Jeter be "white" in another context? Or is this fixed from birth? Are all ethnic identities fixed, or can they change?

-- Get to idea of a "birth-choice continuum" and idea that *even RACE is constructed (w/ Kidd/Jeter as great examples of this)*.

4. What would “primordialists” say about #3 and who is the primordialist we read today?
5. What would “constructivists” say about #3 and who are the constructivists we ready today?
6. How do “constructivists” believe these identities get constructed? What are some of the key ways Bates, Nagel, and Posner talk about?
 - Get to: individual choice, role of elites / ethnic entrepreneurs, role of the state/institutions/law.

7. Let’s leave the sports world and focus a little more closely on Africa as an example. (**Slide 3: Photo of Igbo/Biafran soldier in Biafran civil war in Nigeria**) In the late 1960s, over 1 million people died in the Nigerian civil war, when Eastern Nigeria tried to secede from the newly independent state and form its own country – Biafra. The Biafran State was meant to be a separate state for the “Igbo nation” – with the Igbo being one of the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria. Yet, if we go back to 1900 – just 60 years -- if you asked people in what became Biafra to point out to you who was Igbo, they wouldn’t have known what you were talking about. Igbo was a common language group that a linguist could identify (with many different dialects in different places) but there was no such thing as a coherent Igbo identity or organized Igbo ethnic group. But this changes with British colonial policy and by 1967, Igbos are fighting a bloody war for independence as a unified group. This is a pattern we see all over the developing world.

-- *Side note: If you’ve ever read **Things Fall Apart** in high school, the book is about an Igbo community and the role of British colonialism in changing Igbo ways of life.*

You don’t need to know anything about Nigeria specifically to answer this question, but using this as a prompt, **how – more generally -- would Bates explain what changed here?** How does the Bates reading explain this sudden growth of Igbo “ethnicity” into a potent political force over a few decades, especially in the independence period?

-- Go through main arguments in the Bates reading.

-- Follow-up: In what ways is this “**instrumental**” or “**instrumentalist**”? *Get into idea of ethnicity as a “means to an end” – what is the end to which ethnicity is the means?*

8. Is Bates’ explanation for the construction of ethnicity in Africa consistent with modernization theory? Why not?
9. Finally is what happened in Nigeria *at all* consistent with “primordialism”? Is this war a result of “ancient hatreds”?

II. Second question: *Why do some ethnic differences become politically relevant while others do not?* (aim to get here by :35 after)

1. Quickly: what would primordialists say? [its always there, just bubbles up in times of crisis]

2. What would Bates say? What roles do politicians play in choosing the identities to mobilize around? Why do they choose one over another? Why are ethnic groups useful to them? *Try to get them to the idea of a minimum winning coalition.*

3. This leads directly into the Posner reading. What is the puzzle he's trying to explain in Zambia vs. Malawi?

4. What's his explanation for this – why is the political competition around language in Zambia and tribe in Malawi even if the content of the ethnicities is the same?

-- *Differences in size group vs. size of political arena*

5. Is the salience of these identities in Zambia/Malawi just about politics?

-- *No, it carries down into intergroup relations. Whether people would get married with each other, etc.*

6. Now, as we talked about in lecture, are these identities ***always fluid***, or are the choices politicians have in which identity to mobilize around constrained by anything? What does Nagel say? Are certain identities institutionalized in society? Why and how?

6a. What role do state policies play in institutionalizing different ethnicities? Can we give examples?

7. Has this kind of “institutionalization” of ethnic cleavages happened in America around race?

8. If this has happened, is it actually possible for politicians or elites to change this – or for individuals to change this? Is this a problem with “instrumental” theories? Or can these be consistent with each other? [*short debate here*]

III. Final question: Why do ethnic differences become violent? [aim to get here by :50 after]

As mentioned in lecture, there are MASSIVELY more ethnic cleavages in societies than there are politically salient ethnic cleavages, and MASSIVELY more politically salient ethnic cleavages than actual cases of ethnic violence. **Key empirical fact overlooked by media: Nearly all ethnic groups coexist peacefully nearly all of the time. This is just an empirical fact.** But sometimes, that's not true and it becomes violent. This is the conversation we'll have next week, but we can start it quickly now:

Final slides: Image of Varshney book cover:

Varshney who read earlier in the course, his most famous book is about ethnic violence in India. You will probably have to read this at some point if you go forward in Gov classes. A big Hindu-Muslim divide all over the country, but he notes that actual ethnic violence has been overwhelmingly concentrated in only **8 CITIES**. **There's been almost no violence between these groups almost everywhere else in India, ever.** Wilkinson's book picks up on this and tries to explain it:

1. Why does Wilkinson believe ethnic violence happens in some cities and not others?
2. What is the role of "ethnic entrepreneurs"? Why would they incite violence?

End with: **FINAL SLIDE – image of Narendra Modi**. As you leave, does anyone know who this is? (*Current prime minister of India*) What is his role in Wilkinson's book? (*he's one of the state leaders who Wilkinson believe intentionally allowed ethnic riots to occur to win electoral support. He's been investigated for this and was the major scandal dogging his rise to power in India.*)