

Government 20: Week 9, Ethnic Conflict
Section 8
Jon Weigel

PBS documentary:

<http://search.alexanderstreet.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/work/2191061>

2:00-3:35

7:25-9:20

21:30- 23:00

41:00-46:00

49:38-54:46

Discussion questions:

- Is the **Hutu-Tutsi** ethnic difference primordial or constructed? (Mamdani)
 - o Tutsi as ethnic group that migrated gradually over time; Hutu as constructed “political identity” for residual under the Nyiginya Kingdom;
 - o Words in Kinyarwanda for “a Hutu who becomes a Tutsi”; intermarriage
 - o Belgian reification and racialization: the ten-cow rule, ID cards, exclusively Tutsis in colonial state posts and education, which erodes the precolonial local “balance of power” between pastoralist chiefs, agriculturalist chiefs, etc
- **Explaining participation.** Why did so many people participate in the killings? (SL: fear; Straus: state capacity, coercion; Prunier: culture of obedience; Mamdani: historical construction of Tutsi as invaders) What determined whether individuals participated? (Straus: state capacity in region, presence of militias who solve CAP and threaten people; Yanagizawa: radio and information)
 - o David Yanagizawa-Drott’s paper on Radio Milles Collines:
<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/dyanagi/Research/RwandaDYD.pdf>
- **State capacity and the genocide.** Why did places with a longer history of state capacity have higher rates of killing? How can we reconcile this with the fact that the state was run by Tutsis until 1959 and then the Hutus took it over? Is it actual institutions and physical structures (roads, government buildings, government programs, offices, chains of command) or some kind of socialization effect (norms of obedience)? Straus on mandatory labor institutions.
 - o Leander Heldring’s paper taking the state capacity argument to the data: places incorporated for longer period of time into the Nyiginya Kingdom had more killings. Show scatter plot.
 - o <http://www.csae.ox.ac.uk/workingpapers/pdfs/csae-wps-2014-08.pdf>
 - o Example of Hutu refugees in Goma organizing themselves according to traditional hierarchies (district/sector/cell).
- **Recovery.** How does a country recover from such a catastrophe?
 - o Gacaca courts: NYT article showing killers and victims:
 - http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/04/06/magazine/06-pieter-hugo-rwanda-portraits.html?_r=0
 - o Migration and housing: return of diaspora, imidugudu
 - o Authoritarianism: surveillance/police state; story about meeting Kagame
 - o Asian tiger model? Kigali as a tech and finance hub—“leapfrogging the industrial”; Rwanda easier than the US to start a business; 8% growth due to increased

agricultural productivity, tourism, and government spending on housing, infrastructure, and healthcare; foreign aid?; sovereign debt

- Health care: largest drop in mortality figures in history (even using the pretrend)
- **Ethnic diversity and conflict.** Is ethnic conflict more likely in places of high ethnic diversity? Or is having two major ethnic groups more likely to trigger conflict, as in Rwanda? As a country of “condensed diversity”, was Yugoslavia doomed to fail? How did this ethnic security dilemma in Yugoslavia start? How could the wars have been prevented?
- **Neighbors attacking neighbors.** What leads neighbors who had lived together for all their lives suddenly to turn on each other? (e.g. the PBS documentary) Does this mean that latent ethnic divisions are as powerful as primordialists think? How does the ramp up work? Why are these ethnic differences that have never mattered suddenly so primary? Can we understand really understand local participation as originating from the strategies of elites?
- What is the **role of leaders** in the Yugoslav conflicts? If we buy Gagnon’s argument that breeding ethnic conflict is a deliberate strategy of imperiled communist elites, how might we understand their success in making these previously latent divisions salient and a cause for conflict? Why not some other cleavage? (Urban rural? Ottoman versus Hapsburg?)
- What is the **role of the international context** in the Yugoslav wars? Why did these ethnic conflicts break out in the early 1990s? (Gagnon: End of communism: nationalism is saving grace for elites; US no appetite for intervention; different sides playing to international favor: shelling of Dubrovnik; Bosniaks making Serb atrocities look worse)
- **Intervention from outside.** Should the international community intervene? What should they do? (Ensure neutral media?)
- Where does the **blame** lie? With leaders, or with the people who carried out the atrocities on the ground? “Intentionalism” (Milosevic/Mladic/Karadjic to blame) versus “functionalism” (the various players down the chain of command)? Is it surprising that the Bosnian Serbs—an ethnic “minority” within BiH—did the worst ethnic cleansing?
- **Yugoslavia vs. Rwanda** comparison. Are the ethnic differences in Rwanda comparable to those in the Yugoslav region? (Ranked versus unranked; numbers of groups; linguistic and religious differences) How does the role of leaders compare across the two cases? Can we understand Hutu hard-liners’ attempts to stoke ethnic hatred as an example of Gagnon’s argument of threatened elites clinging to power? How analogous is the role of militias as extremist wings of state actors?

Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 41-59; 73-75; 87-102; 184-218.

Summary: Tutsi was likely an ethnic group in precolonial times, probably from some migration that proceeded bit by bit over centuries, not in some big sudden move. Hutu, in contrast, did not exist as an ethnic group; it was defined as not-Tutsi and was a strictly political construct. There was mobility before the Belgians, with **words in Kinyarwanda** for “a Hutu who becomes a Tutsi.” Thus, Binyarwanda (speakers of the language, who in sum are one of the largest ethnic groups in East Africa if counted altogether) was a cultural identity, and Hutu and Tutsi became political identities created by the Nyiginya Kingdom. These differences were enhanced and racialized by the Belgian colonials, who were enamored with the **Hamitic thesis**—that Tutsis descended from white people or at least Ethiopians—and set up schools and the colonial administration to give Tutsis power. This perpetuates the myth of Tutsis as outsiders and invaders and as Hutus as indigenous. They abolished the “**balance of power**” of different local chiefs being a mix of Hutu and Tutsi—the agriculture chief, pastoralist chief, etc—and made Tutsis the sole chiefs. After the 1932 Census, they defined everyone as Tutsi, Hutu, or Twa with **ID cards**, using the **ten-cow rule**, though how strictly this was enforced is not clear. The genocide must be understood in the context of the Civil War and the fear of the RPF invading and re-subjugating the Hutu population. When the NRA’s impending defeat was clear, they created “self-defense” units in many villages, arming them to protect themselves when the RPF arrived. These units were the executors of the genocide, along with the interahamwe of course. The assassination of the first Hutu president in Burundi by elements of the Tutsi army there triggered massive exodus of Hutus into Rwanda. This made the threats of Hutu Power groups and Milles Collines Radio seem real.

Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Cornell University Press, 2006), pp. 41-52; 201-223.

Summary: Argues against the prevailing notion that Hutu hardliners had a carefully orchestrated plan to commit genocide. Instead, he sees Hutu hardliner behavior as “**contingency planning**,” ignited by the violence in Burundi, the assassination of Habyarimana, and the ongoing war with the RPF. Furthermore, he argues that the **history of a strong, centralized state** explains the high rates of participation in killing. He points to the continuity of the structures of the state and **forced labor programs** throughout the precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial periods. In his sample, almost 90% of people had done a community work program before the genocide. He also argues that the high population density and deforestation in Rwanda make it like a “**fishbowl**,” in which surveillance and finding people is easy.

Other notes:

- Hardliners had created “**parallel institutions**,” that they used to gain power
- Post colonial **unpaid mandatory labor programs**:
 - o Umuganda: tasks like digging irrigation ditches, repairing roads, etc; 87% of his sample said they were regular participants in this before genocide

- Amaronondo: night patrols near conflict areas; 35% said they did this before the genocide
- Centralized, hierarchical structure of the Rwandan state: Prefecture, Commune, Sector, Cell, Nyumbakumi

Mihailo Crnobrnja, *The Yugoslav Drama* (McGill-Queens University Press 1994),

- Yugoslavia: “country of condensed diversity”
- Historical variation:
 - Eastern and Western Roman Empire
 - Byzantine Empire
 - Hapsburgs and Ottomans:
 - Military frontier was populated with Serbs because the Hapsburgs didn’t think existing populations of Croats would be sufficient
- Serbian nationalism initially based on two key issues:
 - Restrict autonomy of 2 key provinces (Kosovo and Vojvodina)
 - “Equal” republic in Yugoslavia (redistribution, etc)
 - The 1974 Constitution is legitimately unfair to Serbia (in its rules, votes, offices, redistribution strategy, etc)
 - No mention of Bosnian Serbs, despite the importance they would later play
- Redistribution in Communist Yugoslavia:
 - Senders: Slovenia, Croatia, Vojvodina
 - Receivers: Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo, BiH
- Serbs in Croatia subjects to systematic “Croatomania” campaign: ban alphabet, fired from work, houses damaged; so they organize into militias, joined and bolstered by ultra-nationalists from Serbia
- Argues that the number of men who committed the genocidal violence for which the conflict is known were a small subset of “psychopaths or professional murderers” who were opportunistically seeking material gain
 - Chetniks on the Serbian side
 - Neo-Ustashi units on the Croatian side
 - Arkan is the best known example, on Interpol most wanted list for decades

V.P. Gagnon, “Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia,” In Michael E. Brown et al., eds. *Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict*, pp. 132-168.

Summary: Considering the future of multiethnic states as of 1995: is the future doomed to the repetition of the horrors in Yugoslavia and Rwanda? Argues that violent conflict along ethnic cleavages is provoked by elites to generate a sense of threat among ethnic community in order to fend off domestic challengers and direct attention from political and economic problems. The Serbian nationalists created the problems and conflicts; they didn’t respond to them. He documents a series of threats to the established communist elite starting in 1960 up through 1990, noting how in each case the regime played the ethnic card. They used the image of Albanian atrocities (genocide) against Serbs in Kosovo in particular, and generally reinterpreted Yugoslavia as an “anti-Serbia coalition.” This led to the ramping up of tensions and arming of militias on all sides. It proved a self-fulfilling prophecy. He suggests the end of the Cold War has its principle effect not internationally but domestically as old communist elites cling for power.

- Was it “ancient ethnic hatreds”?

- They lived peacefully side by side for hundreds of years
 - Intermarriage
- Leaders bring neo-fascists and extremists into the political realm to effectively shift the spectrum right, such that now the “right” appears in the center