The Politics of Ethnic Violence: The Cases of Rwanda and Yugoslavia

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Ethnic identity recap

- Primordialism: “Man is a national animal”
- Instrumentalism: Ethnicity is a mask. Real interests are political or economic
- Constructivism: Ethnicity is the product of a social process. “Nationalism created nations” [Gellner]
- Institutionalism: institutions shape and consolidate ethnic identities
The menu
Some questions

- Is the Hutu-Tutsi difference primordial or constructed?
- What explains participation in ethnic violence?
- What is the role of the state in genocide?
- How does a country recover from such a catastrophe?
- What is the relationship between ethnic diversity and conflict?
- How does Rwanda compare to Yugoslavia?
Rwanda: Explaining participation

- Historical construction of Tutsi as invaders [Mamdani]
- State capacity, coercion [Straus]
- Culture of obedience [Prunier]
Yanagizawa-Drott (2014): Propaganda and conflict

Figure I. Genocide violence in villages

Figure II. RTLM radio coverage
Yanagizawa-Drott (2014): Propaganda and conflict

Flexible Estimates on Militia Violence and Individual Violence

- Estimated Coefficient on Militia Violence vs. Radio Coverage in Village
- Individual Violence

Graph A

Radio Coverage in Village

- >0 - 0.2
- 0.2 - 0.4
- 0.4 - 0.6
- 0.6 - 0.8
- 0.8 - 1.0

Militia Violence

Individual Violence
Heldring (2016): State history and violence

Figure 2: Map of the Nyiginya expansion

Figure 4: Map of violence during the genocide
Reconciliation

- Portraits of reconciliation, New York Times, April 2014
We are all neighbors

- Documentary: We are all neighbors
Genocide in the 20th Century

Sources: Rummel, 1997; Political Instability Task Force, Marshall, Gurr, & Harff, 2009
The Big Picture

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The 100 Worst Wars & Atrocities, 500 BCE – 2000 CE

Source: White, 2011
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Proportion of Years Great Powers Fought Each Other, 1500-2000

Source: Levy & Thompson, 2011
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Deaths in War, 1900-2005

Source: Lacina, Gleditsch, & Russett, 2006
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Number of Wars, 1946-2008

Source: UCDP/PRIO; Human Security Report Project
Motion Pictures in which Animals were Harmed, 1972-2010

Source: American Humane Association, 2010