

ETHNIC AND RACIAL IDENTITIES IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

I. From Ethnic Conflict in World Politics - Gurr and Harff

Chapter One: Ethnic Conflict and the Changing World Order

- A. Contemporary Examples of Ethnopolitical Conflict - What are the desired outcomes of Ethnopolitical mobilization?
1. Autonomy or Independence: Sometimes autonomy can be an end in itself or it can be seen as a means to the end of Independence. What is desired is informed, in part, by existing constraints and opportunities.
 - a. East Timor - Autonomy, maybe independence
 - b. South Africa - Independence
 - c. Indigenous populations in the US, Canada, and Australia,
 2. Civil Wars - When groups within an existing or disintegrating country fight violently to obtain their desired ends.
 - a. "Ethnic cleansing" is a common tactic of conflict.
 - b. Genocide is an extreme form of warfare.
 - c. Revolution - Complete overthrow of political system. Usually has a strong political ideological component, but ethnic dimensions are usually present as well, even if not up front.
- B. Defining and Mapping the World of Ethnic Groups.
1. Identity groups is Gurr's preferred term.
 - a. Fighting against Discrimination (Economic and Political)
 - b. Nationalists - Want their own State
 - c. Protracted Communal Conflicts (Northern Ireland, Southern Sudan, etc.)
 - d. Sometimes, "Pan" groups have developed to fight for a common cause, if not against a common foe. (Pan-Arab, Pan-Indigenous, Pan-African)
- C. The Timing of Ethnic Conflicts
1. The End of Colonialism - The beginning of wars as countries' won independence and had to redistribute political, economic, and public goods. The conflicts either happened in societies where there was a clear majority/minority (e.g. India, Nigeria, Rwanda) or in Angola, where groups were more evenly distributed.
 2. The End of the Cold War - With the ending of proxy regimes that had the backing of the U.S. or USSR, state power decreases, and war begins. Example: USSR, Ethiopia, Angola, Former Yugoslavia.
 3. Some ethnic conflicts are neither directly connected to the end of Colonialism or the Cold War, but have more to do w/ the political ambitions/greed of domestic political elites.

Chapter Two: The World of Ethnopolitical Groups

- A. The World Historical Background to Contemporary Ethnic Conflicts

1. Stratified Societies - Stratified along ethnic lines in post-colonial world. Ethnic groups that were privileged under colonialism usually attempt to maintain their privileges upon independence.

a. New World Slavery

b. Removal/ Extermination of Indigenous Populations

In short, colonialism, slavery, and conquest have all left their imprint on contemporary politics, in that the stratification that continues to see has deep historical roots.

B. The Types of Groups and their Grievances: (These groups are not always mutually exclusive.)

1. "Ethnonationalists" - We Want Our Own State (Basques in Spain)

2. "Indigenous Groups" - We Want Our Land and Autonomy Back

3. "Communal Contenders" - Political aim is to share power in the central gov't of modern states.

4. "Ethnoclasses" - are ethnically or culturally distinct minorities who occupy distinct social strata and have specialized economic roles in the societies in which they now live. Most ethnoclasses in advanced industrial societies are composed of descendants of slaves or immigrants who were brought in to do the hard and menial work the dominant groups would not perform (e.g. Lebanese in Africa, Turks in Germany, etc.)

5. Sometimes, the relationships b/w/een indigenous groups and ethnoclasses can overlap. For example, Indians in Fiji.

6. "Visible Minorities" - People who can not easily fit in. For example, Somali in Norway and the Netherlands.

7. Dominant Minorities - Tutsi in Burundi, White Afrikaaners of South Africa.

8. Politically Active Religious Minorities

C. Matching the Types with the Cases

1. Ethnonationalists - Their demands pose the greatest dilemma for states and the international system; they are the source of some of the most deadly and protracted conflicts of the last 50 years. (The Kurds in Iraq).

2. Communal Contenders- Groups seek a place in the existing states. (The Chinese in Malaysia).

3. Ethnoclasses - Turks in Germany. Usually, their demands and actions are not a major threat to regional or international security, but they are a matter of political concern, both nationally and internationally.

4. Indigenous groups - The Miskito of Nicaragua. They demand autonomy, based on their claims as the original inhabitants or owners of the land.