

17.523: Ethnicity and Race in World Politics-Fall 2005

Prof. M. Nobles

Lecture 5: What are the Political Dimensions of Ethnicity and Race?

Recent and Current Examples of Ethnic Conflict

- Bosnia
- Somalia
- Former Yugoslavia
- Iraq
- Sudan (In the news a lot this summer)

Political Autonomy

- Defined as wanting some freedoms, but not full secession from the country. (e.g the Kurds)
- Typically means greater local control with less central control
- Autonomy is sometimes seen as a precursor to independence and secession (Example, Southern states of U.S. wanted to secede. South claimed to be exercising and protecting states rights.)

As an example, what do minority indigenous groups of the United States want?

- Recognition and protection of their culture
- Autonomy and not independence because they depend on U.S. protection
- Native Americans are an indigenous group with a structure governing system.
- Trying to maintain their cultures because they can't undo the settling of others on their land
- Canada and New Zealand have also worked out substantial political autonomy with their respective indigenous population.

One tactic of war is ethnic cleansing where one group forces out another.

- Genocide is an extreme form of ethnic cleansing and that is eliminating a group by killing them.
- In these cases, the oppressive group tends to use some type of propaganda machine to dehumanize the other group in order to justify killings.
 - Nazis did it to the Jews in Germany.
 - The Hutus did it to the Tutsis in Rwanda.
- Ethnic cleansing requires the dehumanization to rationalize the killing of another group of people.

Northern Ireland

- Unionists (Protestants) vs. Nationalists (Catholics)
- Unionists supported staying in the UK and the Nationalists want to become part of the Republic of Ireland.
- This conflict is organized along religious lines
- Ireland is independent and mostly Catholic
- IRA waged war on the U.K. for years
- IRA finally put down arms to settle and entered into peace talks recently
- Unionists have a slight majority in Northern Ireland

Kashmir

- India and Pakistani both claim and want to control this region.

Pan Groups

- United by virtue of the fact that they are a particular ethnicity
- Are typically unsuccessful in securing long term political goals.
- Encounter nationalistic interests
- Diverse interests due to the fact that a particular ethnicity resides in multiple countries