POL 339: Ethnic Mobilization and Conflict

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Lecture: Monday 4-6pm; MS 4279;
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Themes: The class is devoted to understanding the role of ethnicity in violence and conflict regulation. The class takes students through some of the main theoretical families used to understand the political dynamics of ethnic identification and nationalism. In particular, we will address the following questions: Are national or ethnic political stances adopted for rational or non-rational reasons? Is ethnic war rational? Do elites manipulate masses, or does nationalism and ethnic conflict grow from grass roots sentiments? If the elites sell it, why do the masses buy? Are ethnic conflicts different from non-ethnic ones? Why people fight for their ethnic group? When ethnic loyalties in conflict are betrayed? Is it better to partition a war-torn multiethnic territory like Syria or to try to reintegrate it into a single, unified, multicultural state?

Requirements:
(1) active, informed participation in class (10%);
(2) review of a journalistic article on ethnicity and conflict (10%), 1 page, due October 1;
(3) final paper proposal (15%), 1 page, due October 29.
(4) review of an academic paper on ethnicity (15%), 1 page, due November 12.
(5) final paper – 10 pages max (50%) due December 6.

Useful Resources:
- The All Minorities at Risk Project https://cidcm.umd.edu/research/all-minorities-risk-project
- Ethnic Power Relations Dataset https://icr.ethz.ch/data/epr/
- Correlates of War Dataset (COW)
- Peace Research Institute Oslo Armed Conflict Dataset
- Political Violence at Glance http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/
- The Association for the Study of Nationalities
- Nations and Nationalism Journal
Class 1 – September 10: ETHNIC MOBILIZATION AND CONFLICT TODAY

Readings:
- Maeysha Alam. “5 things you need to know about Rohingya Crisis.” The Monkey Cage.

Class 2 – September 17: THEORIES OF ETHNICITY

Readings:

Class 3 – September 17: HOW TO MEASURE ETHNICITY?

Readings:

Class 4 – October 1: NATIONALISM

Readings:
- Benedict Anderson. Imagined Communities. (Introduction, Chapter 2)

Class 5 – October 15: ETHNIC IDENTITY: MALLEABLE OR PERSISTENT

Readings:
- Daniel Posner, “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi,” American Political Science Review, 98, 4
- David Laitin, Identity in Formation, chapters 1, and 5, 6.
Class 6 – October 22: ETHNIC VOTING

Readings:

Class 7 – October 29: ETHNIC GROUPS IN CONFLICT

Readings:

Class 8 – November 12: IS ETHNIC CONFLICT RATIONAL?

Readings:

Class 9 – November 19: ETHNIC ENTERPRENEURS

Readings:
- Steven I. Wilkinson, Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Ethnic Riots in India, chapters 1, 2.

Class 10 – November 26: FACTORS OF ETHNIC MOBILIZATION

Readings:
- Georgi Derluguian, Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus, chapters 1 & 6.

Class 11 – December 3: DEMOCRATIZATION, NATION-BUILDING, AND CONFLICT

Readings:
- Jack Snyder, From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict, chapter 1.
Class 12 – December 6: INSTITUTIONS TO REGULATE ETHNIC CONFLICT

Readings: