

17.523: Ethnicity and Race in World Politics-Fall 2005

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Lecture 9: The Sources of Discontent: The Intersections of Race and Class

Ethnic Mobilization

- Gurr and Harff come up with seven theories of the likelihood of ethnopolitical mobilization
 - The greater the discrimination that the group experiences, the higher the likelihood that they will mobilize
 - Notion of discrimination requires further definition
 - What is meant by discrimination
 - Student: someone is denied an opportunity because of something this person can't control, e.g., race
 - Student: can be based on culture.
 - Student: if it's legislated like the Jim Crow laws, it occurs on a much larger scale
 - Student: if you look at unemployment rates across class lines, you can look at where everyone falls.
 - Abercrombie and Fitch hiring practices
 - What do you think about when you think of the company? Typically think of white people. Has marketed itself as an "All American" company.
 - Stores in California were not hiring non-white people because they didn't look like the models featured in the Abercrombie and Fitch catalogs.
 - Student: it's more taboo to discriminate against race, but the stores obviously discriminate based on age. They only hire younger people.
 - A major store will attract more attention and people will examine your hiring practices more closely than say at a mom and pop store.
 - Consumers have a fair amount of power and can decide to withhold dollars to protest.
 - But this, a hiring practice such as this one, doesn't often result in group mobilization.
 - Basis of ascription, you can't control it, and it's measurable. Employment rates, job opportunities, forced segregation, sub-standard education, etc. Certain patterns can be observed, which may be construed as discrimination.
 - Two types of discrimination
 - Political-rights. Can you vote? Are their discriminatory laws on the books? Are there social and cultural mores that discriminate? Caste system are perfect examples of hierarchy. Discrimination is justified because of the caste's system's rules and beliefs.
 - Women experienced discrimination in the U.S.

Subordination of women was rationalized as “natural.”

What was the king’s justification for ruling? Divine right.

- Economic-in the market place. Job discrimination. Not hired for certain jobs and only hired for certain jobs.
- The more people identify with the group, the more motivated they are to protest.
 - Why would someone not identify with their racial/ ethnic group?
 - Student: Multiracial.
 - Student: Could have stronger identification with something else. Political, etc.
 - Student: Don’t care about the group even though experiencing discrimination.
 - Student: Condoleeza Rice is viewed as not identifying with African Americans because she doesn’t agree with some previously supported policies.
 - The greater number of traits common to the group, the stronger the affiliation.
- Have widely accepted autocratic leadership
 - Why would leadership and grievances lead to group cohesion?
 - Leadership keeps all factions in order
 - Prohibits ideological splits.
- The more democratic the environment, the more the group can voice their opposition nonviolently.
 - Student: not afraid to voice opinion for fear of violence against them.
 - Women’s suffrage in U.S. used nonviolence.
 - Civil Right movement largely nonviolent with some violence.
 - A case in U.S. history when violence was used.
 - Student: civil war.
 - White southerners thought that slavery’s abolition was forthcoming. The union’s response was that the establishment of the confederacy was unlawful. You can’t secede. The union was going to fight to force them back into the U.S.
 - U.S. was a developing democracy until the 20th century when African Americans received the right to vote in 1965.
 - Many countries have had a checkered history of democracy.
 - Countries that experienced civil wars without secession
 - Somalia
 - What would explain why a group will use violence?
 - Student: the state will only take notice if violence is used.
 - If the state uses violence to suppress dissent, the group is less likely to use violence in its dissent.
 - Student: becomes a problem of resources. Can get the firepower.
 - Student: fear of torture.
 - Student: could be a sense of hopelessness.

- International pressure
 - Sometimes keeps states from being extremely violent
 - There are governments that are violently repressive, but where the world is doing nothing,
 - The country doesn't have anything of value (e.g. resources, strategic location, etc.)
 - If you're a major player, the world won't seriously question your internal repression.
- The greater the international state, the less likely that challengers will be externally supported
 - No one is giving opposing groups inside the U.S. money to fight. For example, the U.S. Civil Rights movement was not externally supported.