

Strategic Sources of Intergroup Violence

- Previously... violence can follow mass or elite provocation of conflict for personal ends
- But what does violence solve? Can't a deal be reached that both parties would prefer to violence?
 - If groups could perfectly anticipate the outcome of violence, it would be less costly to agree to that (or some similar) outcome *ex ante* & skip the war
- Outcomes are not perfectly foreseeable
 - *ex ante* uncertainty about outcome of violence, undermines political deals that would avoid violence
- Uncertainty can be exacerbated by defensive behavior... *another "strategic" cause of violence*

1) “Information Failures”

- For security, groups have incentives to lie
 - not disclosing military capabilities, weaknesses, strategies
 - exaggerating willingness to fight
- Undermines trust, increases uncertainty about potential outcomes, and prevents deal

- Same is true with respect to deal-making:
 - Both sides have incentives to not reveal the full extent to which they would be willing to compromise....
- widens impasse, making political resolution less likely

2) “Credible Commitment” Problems

- Both sides may wish to make an agreement to non-violence, compromise, weapon reductions, etc.
- But each might be able to improve their situation by renegeing on such deals

→ Commitment to deal is not credible

<i>Prisoner's Dilemma</i>	Defect	Cooperate
Defect	-10, -10	5, -20
Cooperate	-20, 5	0, 0

- Together, they do better if they both cooperate, but both have incentives to defect
- If groups were to make a deal (pre-violence), could each expect the other to stick to the terms?
- Agreements must be enforced by third party or be self-enforcing: where mutual cooperation is better than cooperation + defection

2) “Credible Commitment” Problems

- Prisoner’s Dilemma is a “one shot” simultaneous game
 - The more that other’s actions can be observed (relates to information failure) and the more time consuming it is for defection to “pay”, the more likely is mutual cooperation
 - “Confidence measures” will help promote cooperation
- Can be undermined by future changes in distribution of power & payoffs
 - If these are known in advance, deal must take them into account
 - Institutions can help enforce : power-sharing agreements, minority control over certain areas of policy, ethnic balances in military, etc.
- Cooperation more difficult when payoffs are probabilities, not known

3) “Security Dilemmas”

- “Security Dilemma” is a defensive arms race which, though done for defense, increases chance of violent conflict. Especially prominent when:
 - Offensive and defensive military forces are more or less identical
 - Offensive operations are more effective than defensive operations
 - Gives incentives for preemptive attacks (for defensive purposes)
- Related to both information failure & credible commitment problem...
 - Both sides want only defense, but cannot tell for certain that the other side only wants defense
 - Both sides could commit to not increase arms, but because each has a security threat, its commitments may not be credible
 - Depends on how much defecting improves security & how well it can be concealed

Commitment & security threats

- Note that deals only apply when issue is security or resources
 - Not when conflict is more sinister
 - How to explain genocide?
- Some causes of ethnic conflict
 - Structural: geography, discourses, economic environment and inequality
 - Within-group:
 - Antagonism provoked deliberately for strategic ends (not conflict per se, but personal ends)
 - Between-group
 - Antagonism provoked non-deliberately out of security concerns
 - Antagonism provoked deliberately by those preferring conflict (“extremists”) for justification (perhaps also personal ends)

Wars during the breakup of SFR of Yugoslavia:

1. War in Slovenia ('91)
2. Croatian War of Independence ('91-'95)
3. Bosnian War ('92-'95) NATO bombing in Bosnia ('95)

Wars in Albanian-populated areas:

1. Kosovo War ('98[5]-'99) NATO bombs FR Yugoslavia ('99)
2. Southern Serbia conflict (2000-01) & Macedonia (2001)



Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

- Federal state run by one party League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY).
- Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
 - 9-member body, one from each region and leader of the LCY, elected for 5 years.
 - Tito was de facto leader. After his death in 1980, leader rotated among regional representatives on annual basis.
- Federal Assembly
 - Appointed members from the LCY compiled from the Leagues of Communists of each republic
- 1974 constitution devolved significant power to regions (central banks, police, education)

Sub-national governments

- Socialist Republic of Serbia (and other regional governments):
- Controlled by League of Communists of Serbia (i.e., the Serbian Communist Party), which chooses:
 - Members of Federal Assembly
 - Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
 - President of the Presidency of the Socialist Republic of Serbia (Head of State)
 - President of the Executive Council of the Socialist Republic of Serbia (Prime Minister and head of government)
 - And, it's own membership: party leaders “choose” the members that choose them
- Control of the regional party gives lots of power

Some players



- Ivan Stambolić – President of Socialist Republic of Serbia



- Slobodan Milosevic – Chair of Serbian Communist Party



- Dragiša Pavlović – Chief of the Belgrade Communists