

Evolution and International Politics
Lecture 4, Part One
Evolution and Ethnic Conflict



Objectives

- ★ Implications of the Evolutionary Understanding of for Ethnic Conflict
- ★ Nation and Nationalism
- ★ Ultimate Cause of Ethnic Conflict
- ★ Xenophobia, In-Group/Out-Group Distinctions, and Ethnocentrism as Human Traits



Nation and Nationalism

- ◆ Nation and Nationalism
- ◆ Nation—Members Believe that They Are Ancestrally Related, Sense of Pride, Recognize Others as Compatriots
- ◆ 202 states and major principalities, 27%(54) are nation-states; 18%(36) 1 nation is 75-89%; 20% (41) 1 nation=50-74%; 35% (71) 1 nation=less than 50%



Nation and Nationalism

★ Nationalism

- ★ Political ideology that each nation aims to attain and/or maintain the political autonomy of the nation
- ★ Each nation should have its own state



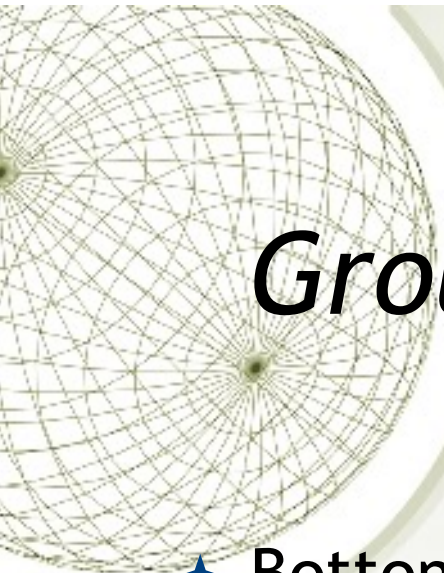
2 Schools of Thought— Primordialists and Modernists

★ Primordialists

- ★ People have strong, primordial attachment to their nation, and when nation is invoked for unity, defense, aggression, people respond vigorously

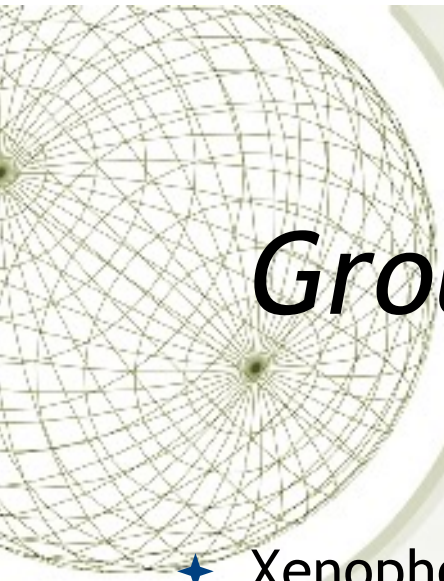
★ Modernists

- ★ Nation and Nationalism the products of economic and political modernization
- ★ Ethnic conflict is caused by political or economic reasons
- ★ “Nation” a myth, and used for cynical purposes by political leaders



Evolutionary Origins of In-Group/Out-Group, Xenophobia, and Ethnocentrism

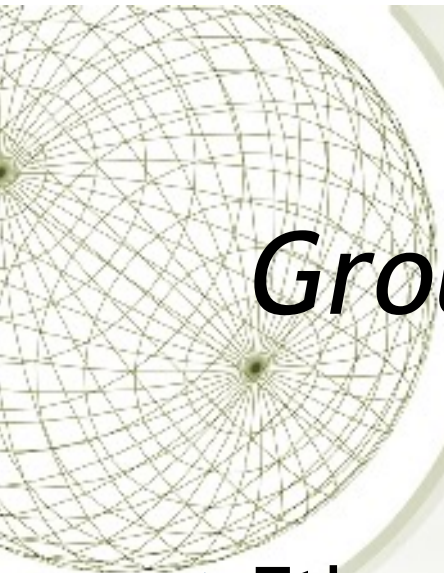
- ◆ Bottom Line: Make Distinctions among People because Resources Scarce—Share with Those Like You
- ◆ Animal Reaction: Fight, Flee, Hide
- ◆ For Humans, 1 More: Cooperate
- ◆ Option of Cooperating Is a New Option Due to Expanded Resources
- ◆ In-Group/Out-Group Distinction
 - ◆ Humans Wired to Make Such a Distinction
 - ◆ Trait, and so innate reaction
 - ◆ Outsider: Judged quickly, threat to resources? Threat to family, extended family, tribal group?



Evolutionary Origins of In-Group/Out-Group, Xenophobia, and Ethnocentrism

★ Xenophobia

- ★ Humans Wired to Make Such a Distinction
 - ★ Amygdala, brain's most ancient neurological structure
 - ★ Xenophobia present in humans, ants, mice, or baboons
 - ★ Of course, human territorial
- ★ Few Inherited Phenotypes Used to Indicate Relatedness, Race
 - ★ Skin Pigmentation
 - ★ Eye, lips, shape of the nose, hair color and texture, physical stature
 - ★ All result from greater intergroup than intragroup heterozygosity
- ★ Defense against disease
- ★ Defense against weaponry as killing at a distance becomes easier
- ★ Stranger is potential rival in dominance hierarchy
- ★ Jared Diamond “Xenophobia comes especially naturally to our species...cultural differences” make it easier to be xenophobic because we tell differences at a glance by clothes or hair style



Evolutionary Origins of In-Group/Out-Group, Xenophobia, and Ethnocentrism

★ Ethnocentrism

- ★ Humans Wired to Make Such a Distinction, Trait
- ★ Preferences for groups with closest affinities to the self
- ★ Sense of common kinship and pride
- ★ “Ancient Hatreds” Not Necessary, In-Group/Out-Group, Xenophobia, Ethnocentrism are Causes



Toward Solutions

- ★ Culture, Ideas, Media, Educational Systems
- ★ The Role of the Public Sphere
- ★ Exogamy for 3 or 4 generations Will Typically Erode Ethnic or Even Racial Differences, but Humans Expert at Making Ever-Finer Distinctions (Norwegians and Swedes, Czechs and Slovaks?)
- ★ Do You Want to Make the “Other” the “Self”