

# The colonialism: a brief review



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Walker Connor's article titled 'Eco- or Ethno- nationalism?' addresses an oft discussed issue, namely the impulse underlying ethnic conflict. Connor asserts that attributes such as race, language, religion, etc, which comprise an individual's ethnic identity are at the heart of an ethnic conflict only so far as there is evidence of tangible discrepancy in these attributes among the groups involved. The author further points out that far too often measures of economic disparity between the conflicting groups is not paid attention to. A closer scrutiny would lead to the conclusion that economic stature of the two groups is a significant factor. The reason why economic factors behind ethnic conflict are not obvious at the outset is due to the fact that comparative studies of ethnic conflicts show a near-universal relationship between ethno-national conflict and economic causation. Further, " analysts have been beguiled by the fact that observable economic discrepancies are near universal concomitants of ethnic strife. A comparison of the per capita income figures and occupational status of groups involved in such an issue will quite consistently show that a substantial variation exists between the groups."

The author peruses statistics from ethnic conflicts in regions such as Quebec province in Canada, Belgium and erstwhile Czechoslovakia to present a nuanced understanding of the economic underpinnings of conflict. Connor's study of conflicts in these regions leads him to the conclusion that the role of economic disparity between groups is usually an indirect influence, acting as a catalyst that exacerbates the simmering unrest. In the most devastating ethnic conflict in Rwanda, data seem to reinforce underlying class disparities between the warring Tutsi and Hutu communities. Whereas in the millennia

long rivalry between the English and the Scots, there is an opposite correlation, meaning that the aristocracies of the two former kingdoms were more vehement in their mutual dislike when compared to the emotions of the large majority of their subjects. Hence, while admitting the prevalence of economic disparity in many cases of ethnic conflict, Walker Connor qualifies this apparent ‘causal’ relationship by presenting examples that contradict this view, as well as presenting examples where the economic aspect is coincidental to the ethno-national conflict.

Reference:

Connor W, “Eco- or Ethno- Nationalism?”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 7, 3, 1984 pp. 342-359

In the readings, different perspectives were given regarding ‘the scramble for Africa’. Colonial scholars of the period propagated the idea that native Africans were somewhat barbaric and backward, and that they need guidance from a more civilized people. This assessment is not totally untrue, for Africa (then and now) remains technologically backward, although cultural backwardness is a subjective call. But colonial scholarship will have to be viewed with skepticism, for often it tends to be propagandistic. The internal dynamics of Europe during the period lends credence to the theory that Africa was just another theatre for European power politics. The ‘scramble for Africa’ happened at a time when advances in Naval technology enabled Britain, Germany, Netherlands, France, Belgium, Portugal, etc to set imperial sights on far off lands. Hence the view that ‘benevolence’ was the

basis of European motivations with respect to Africa is factually and logically feeble. To the .