

What is ethnonationalism and its political role politics essay



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The conclusion of the Cold War in 1991 coincides with the surge of violent civil conflicts and the break of nations based on ethnonationalism. The 1990's witnessed a new surge of violent civil conflicts and the splintering of ethnic wars (graph). Dan Smith, director of the International Peace Research Institution in Oslo (PRIO), has calculated “ that of the 52 armed conflicts of various sizes that took place in 42 states in 1993, 36, in 30 states, had ethno-national characteristics; that is, at least one side could be identified as belonging to a distinct ethnic group” (Tishkov 2004: 72). The term “ ethnonationalism” refers to a politicized group affiliation based on inherent traits - ethnicity, race, clan, tribe, cultural heritage or religion - that define a group of individuals in the minds of its members. Ethnonationalist violence should not surprise, went the common refrain, as they are based on primordial human emotions and centuries of history. There may be a shift were the individual's primary identity and allegiance shifts from the civil state to the ethnation. This shift may or may not result in violent conflict.

As of 2000, fewer than 10% of the world's 191 nations are ethnically or racially homogeneous (Wright 1973: 158).

Such conflicts may involve great violence, such as Bosnia and Rwanda; however in other cases there is little violence, such as Northern Ireland. Ethnonationalism violent conflicts also occur within established democracy, for example, the struggle between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland (Slack and Doyon 2001: 139).

Ethnonationalism

The roots of modern nationalism can be found in late eighteenth-century Western Europe and North America, and it subsequently spread to all of Europe and eventually to all parts of the world (Alter 1994: 18). Ethnicity is the most central and powerful element in the development of nationalism. Ethnonationalism “ denotes both the loyalty to a nation deprived of its own state and the loyalty to an ethnic group embodied in a specific state, particularly where the latter is conceived as a nation-state” (Connor 1994:?). Ethnonationalist believe nationality is inherent, “ one can neither acquire it if one does not have it, nor change it if one does; it has nothing to do with individual will, but constitutes a genetic characteristic” (Guibernau and Rex 2010: 5). Ethnonationalism is rooted in a sense of common origins, primarily ancestral, as manifested in shared linguistic, religious, and racial marker (Riggs 1994: 599).

Nationalism is defined as an extensive aggregation of individuals closely associated with each other by common descent, language or history, as to form a distinct race or people (Slack & Doyon 2001). Nation by the latter

definition becomes equivalent to ethnic group. Nation is a matter of “ self-awareness or self-consciousness” (Connor 1978: 104). This is precisely why it is so difficult to define nation, because it is a self-defining group. Nationalism arises when the members of a nation demand that the nation be organized into a sovereign state (Slack and Doyon 2001: 140). The essence of nationalism is not tangible, but psychological, “ a matter of attitude rather than fact” (Connor 1972: 42). MORE ON PAGE 43. “ Nationalism is likely to be based on ethnic distinctions, rather than the idea that everyone who lives in a country is entitled to the same rights and privileges” (Guibernau and Rex 2010: 96 Reader). Allegations of ethnic supremacy, along with ethnonationalism and retribution for past injustices, are at the center of much of the ethnic violence (Cozic 1994: 93). The causes and implications of ethnic conflict are “ understood as a dispute about important political, economic, social, cultural or territorial issues between two or more ethnic groups” (Guibernau and Rex 2010: 90).

Ethnicity relates to the identification of individuals by language, religion, geographical location, the sharing of common historical experience, or various other elements. “ Membership of the group is based on the presumption of a shared trait or traits that can be anything from genealogy to dressing habits” (Slack & Doyon 2001: 140). An ethnic group is therefore defined by a boundary ascribed by the members of the ethnic group or outsider.

There is a distinction between primary and secondary ethnic groups (Riggs 1994: 592). Riggs asserts that primary ethnic groups tend to function as closed sub-societies within a larger host society, whereas secondary ethnic

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groups, while maintaining their cultural identity, participate directly in a host society at various levels (1994: 592). In modern states members of primary ethnic communities reject the state where they live as a basis for their self-identity, whereas members of secondary ethnic communities accept the state (Riggs 1994: 592). Problems arise in both cases but they are different (Riggs 1994: 592). Members of a primary ethnic community feel like prisoners and they seek to escape the confines of the state (Riggs 1994: 592). This leads them to rebel, to seek autonomy, independence, or unification with another state by boundary changes (Riggs 1994: 593). The members epitomize ethnonationalism. By contrast members of a secondary ethnic community often feel that although they are unfairly treated by the state, it is possible by peaceful means to secure full equality of status as citizens in all matters involving political, social and economic justice (Riggs 1994: 593). Their sense of grievance often leads to political action and non-violent protests or civil disobedience, but not to rebellions (Riggs 1994: 593).

Conflict tends to emerge when ethnic or national identities are in opposition to each other. Additionally, between 1918 and 1945, "nationalism became synonymous with intolerance, inhumanity and violence" (Cozic 1994: 19). "Most ethnic conflicts have a background of domination, injustice or oppression by one ethnic group or another" (Wright 1993: 158). Although ethnic conflict is viewed as a strife based on religion, economic inequality, political, language, or another tangible element, the conflict is fundamentally based on identity "which manifests itself in the 'us-them' syndrome" (Connor 1967: 46). The ethnic conflict could escalate into ethnic genocide.

According to Riggs (1994) about 130 million individuals have been slain between 1900 and 1987 as a result of genocide committed by governments on their own people. “ Many times more people are killed in genocide and mass murder than in all foreign and domestic wars” (Riggs 1994: 583). While most of the deaths reported by Riggs probably cannot be attributed to ethnonational conflicts, however, it is reasonable to presume that ethnic conflict has been an important factor in many of them.

Democracies provide minorities with opportunities for non-violent expression of grievance. Minorities believe they can gain more legitimacy through peaceful political action than by violent rebellions or terrorism. Conversely, in weak authoritarian regimes, where minorities are suppressed and often killed, some will organize rebellions, feeling that only by violence will they gain the autonomy needed to protect their interests. Riggs offers the complementary finding that genocide occurs most often in non-democratic states, whereas democracies are far more non-violent. Among the 169 million victims of democide during the 20th century, Riggs claims that only about 2 million were inflicted on their citizens by democratic states (1994). Of the 167 million, over 110 million took place under communist regimes, about 138 in totalitarian states and well over 28 million under authoritarianism. (Riggs 1994: 584). Ethnonational rebellions, therefore, have several dimensions: they often combine revolt against oppression by hostile but dominate communities with the need to create enclaves of order in a context of disorder (Riggs 1994: 584).

The Troubles (1968-1998)

The conflict of the Troubles dates back the 1600s when Britain began colonizing Ireland, it encouraged Protestants from Scotland and English, to move to Northern Ireland to help maintain and control the Irish Catholics (Healey 2006). The new arrivals began, with the assistance of the English, to own much of the economy, political structures, and land in the northern region of Ireland. The Protestants began to separate themselves from the native Catholics through policies implemented to create separate facilities within the same society for the use of a minority group, similar to Jim Crow segregation in the United States. Difference in laws and customs between Protestants and Catholics were used to reinforce the subordinate position of the Irish Catholics. However, the Irish were not subordinated and attempted to gain their independence through violent rebellions, which ultimately led to their independents. The Eastern Rebellion in 1916, also known as the Proclamation of 1916, led to creation of the Republic of Ireland (Healey 2006). The Republic of Ireland consisted of most of the island, except the province of Ulster. Now, Northern Ireland consisted of Protestant majority and the Republic of Ireland consisted of Catholic majority, which provided the underlying basis for the Trouble.

In Northern Ireland, Catholic and Protestant are terms used to connote two diverse and conflicting cultures (Shivers and Bowmen 1984: 3).

Distinguishing factors between the two are internal, the way one views oneself. However, Most people in Northern Ireland insist that the civic conflict that occurred was not because of religion but sovereignty: “ not Protestantism but Loyalism; not Catholicism but Nationalism or

Republicanism" (Vincent 127). Protestant majority and Catholic minority in Northern Ireland is another way of distinguishing between the two groups. There is no distinct term to explain the minority-majority split, but Northern Irish people have used many other terms: "Insiders/Outsiders; the haves/the have nots; colonials/natives; Scotch/Gales; Protestant/Catholic; Unionist/Nationalist; Loyalist/Republican; British/Irish; the Orange/the Green" (Shivers and Bowman 1984: 4). The attempts by Catholic minority to express through the electoral process their long-standing discontent with political rule by a religiously and culturally distinct people, as well as the attempts of the moderate government to move toward equalization of opportunity for the minority, resulted in a series of violent reactions during 1966, and untimely the beginning of the Troubles (Connor 1967: 12).

The struggle predicated on fundamental differences in national identity. The people of Northern Ireland did not homogeneously consider themselves Irish. In a study conducted in 1968 by the University of Strathclyde, 43 percent considered themselves Irish, 29 percent British, 21 percent Ulster, and 7 percent mixed, uncertain, or mixed (Connor 1967: 45). On the basis of ethnic and religious history in Northern Ireland, there is a correlation between those that identify themselves as Irish and Catholicism (Connor 1967: 45).

McGarry and O'Leary (1995) interpret religion as an ethnic marker, a component of ethnonationalism in Northern Ireland, the conflict is about two contesting national identities, Unionist (Protestant) and Nationalist (Catholic). Religion is just a label used to distinguish members of one ethnonationalist group from another.

Religion was used as the basis of separate social structures that keep communities apart. Whyte (1990) wrote about the three ways in which religion and social segregation were seen in Northern Ireland: segregation by religion in education, high levels of endogamy (marriage within one's religious group), and high levels of residential segregation.

The churches worked together with the political parties and the two states, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, to keep people divided and maintain their power (Fulton 1991). Religion has acted as an agent in historical struggles for political power (Fulton 1991). Churches tried to keep their control through influencing political policy and maintaining their grip on the education system.

According to Wright (1973), religion as an ideology is extremely important. Religion was an important source of identity in Northern Ireland, even for Protestants who do not go to church (Wright 1973). Religion can operate as an ideology even for those who are not committed believers (Wright 1973).

Religion is important in many complex ways; it provides meaning and substance to ethnonational identities (Mitchell 2006). Religious ideas inform Protestants' everyday understandings of social relationships and perceptions of Catholics (Wright 1973). The more segregation between communities, the less information each has of the other. Knowledge comes from socialized teachings, ideas, theories, and mythologies, which are often religious in nature (Wright 1973).

Religious ideas overlap with political and economic divisions and this makes them even more important.

Religion, according to Claire Mitchell (2006), derives social and political significance from five overlapping dimensions: 1) relationship between the churches and sociopolitical power (i. e. relationships with nationalist and unionist politicians), 2) role of religion as the dominant ethnic marker (maintained through segregated education, marriage, housing patterns and social networks),

3) religion's role in the construction of communities (esp. Catholicism, the role of the Catholic Church in organising social life and the importance of ritual), 4) religion's role in the construction of ideologies (esp. Protestantism, concepts such as liberty, the honest Ulsterman, and anti-Catholicism), and 5) relationship between theology and politics (esp. for fundamentalists/evangelicals).

The essence of nation being is psychologically important. Members of a particular group feel a sense of being related to one another, or of myths of being from a common descendent. " The turmoil in Northern Ireland between those who think of themselves as Irish and those who do not is facilely explained as a religious struggle, no other readily identifiable distinction, such as language or race, being in evidence" (Connor 1984: 146).

Ethnonational discrimination does occur in a given state, for example, in Northern Ireland discrimination " is a major element in the poorer economic and occupational status of the Irish as contrast with the non-Irish"

(Connor1984: 148).

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The Good Friday Agreement marked the end of the Troubles, which was established in 1998, created a new power sharing agreement for the governance in Northern Ireland (Healey 2006). Thus, both Protestant and Catholic parties would participate in the government.

The Bosnian War (1992-1995)

Yugoslavia was formed in 1918, at the end of World War I (Healey 2006: 479). The country consists of a variety of ethnic groups, including Croats, Serbs, Bosnians, and Muslims. In 1974 Josip Broz Tito turned Yugoslavia into a confederation of six republics, one of which was Bosnia and Herzegovina (Slack and Doyon 2001: 142). Bosnia was the most diverse republic, often described as a “ microcosm of the Balkans, a human mosaic made up of the genes of innumerable” (Slack and Doyon 2001: 141). Before this the Muslims have never been able to assert themselves as a distinct ethnic group, “ with aspirations of statehood, as have the Croats and Serbs” (Slack and Doyon 2001: 141). As a consequence of the newly formed republics, Muslims were going to be the dominant group in Bosnia. During the time that Yugoslavia was led by Tito, Roman Catholic Croats, Orthodox Christian Serbs, and Muslim Bosnians coexisted peacefully in Bosnia.

However, following Tito’s death in 1980, Yugoslavia began to be breakup. While the Croats tended to view Yugoslavia as a decentralized federation, the Serbs were espoused to a highly centralized system (Slack and Doyon 2001: 142). With Bosnia’s secession from Yugoslavia in 1992, the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Serbs suddenly became apart of the ethnic minorities in the new state of Bosnia instead of being members of the dominant Croat and Serb nations within Yugoslavia. The population Bosnia in 1991 consisted

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of Bosnian Muslims (1.9 million, 44% of all), Serbs (1.4 million, 31%), Bosnian Croats (760,000), 17%, and Others (all remaining ethnicities jointly: 350,000, 8%) (Tabeau and Bijaki 2005: 188).

Demographic conditions can lead to ethnonationalist war when ethnonationalism becomes a political force (Slack and Doyon 2001: 159). The relative numbers of rival ethnic populations within a disputed territory becomes an issue of concern for a civil war. Bosnian Serbs, and later also Bosnian Croats, fought (often through ethnic cleansing and terror campaigns) to take and control territories that otherwise would be subject to the rule of Bosnian Muslims. Ethnic conflict takes place when mobilized identity groups struggle for greater power, whether for power in an already established state or a newly independent state. In 1991, the Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic began to increase the dominance of Serbs in the former Yugoslavia, particularly in three republics, Bosnia, Croatia and Slovenia, felt directly threatened by Serb nationalism and the perspective of Greater Serbia carved out of the territories mainly in Bosnia (Tabeau and Bijaki 2005: 188). The Muslims fought for these territories, as they believed they did not have much choice. Breaking away from Yugoslavia put Bosnian Muslims in a particularly difficult position, as they were left with no support other than the one expected from the international community, which came in April 1992, however, it did not stop the Bosnian conflict (Tabeau and Bijaki 2005: 189).

Due to the mixed ethnic composition of Bosnia, there was an absence of a single ethnic Muslim republic in the former Yugoslavia. The most essential observation of the Bosnian population at the outbreak of the 1990s conflict is <https://assignbuster.com/what-is-ethnonationalism-and-its-political-role-politics-essay/>

that while there were Bosnians in a geographical sense, there were hardly any Bosnians in a political sense. Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats existed as politically distinct groups who happened to live in Bosnia (Tabeau and Bijaki 2005: 188). Political goals of these groups were too distinct to allow for coexistence. Serbs, and later also Croats, fought, often through ethnic cleansing and terror campaigns, to take and control of Bosnia (Tabeau and Bijaki 2005: 188).

The conflicts were not religious wars, but religion and language were important tools of ethnic identification, ethnonationalism. In an effort to distinguish “the other” the ethnic groups stressed subtle differences among the languages. Located in the heart of the former-Yugoslavia, Bosnia found itself locked between two more powerful states, Croatia and Serbia. The wars caused the most destruction in Bosnia, as the country contains sizeable Croat and Serb populations.

The 1990 elections, is an example of growing ethnonationalism in Bosnia, “members of each ethnic group voted in the 1990 election along ethnic nationalist lines, even though they were unimpressed with the party leaders, out of fear that ethnic groups to which they did not belong would gain political ascendancy” (Slack and Doyon 2001: 143). The political construction of ethnonationalism had now begun, and Bosnia was beginning to partition. The Territorial partitions can lead to renewed violence and mass refugee flows, entail an indefinite international peacekeeping presence, and paradoxically can result in new sets of sectarian demands (Wood 2001: 70). An imposed partition only rarely results in a homogeneous territory and often leads to civic wars.

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Signed at the end of the war, the Dayton Agreement was more of a ceasefire agreement than a sustainable, long-term solution for Bosnia. According to this agreement signed in December 1995, Bosnia is a partitioned state divided into two parts. One entity is the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina with a majority of Muslims and Croat population, and the other entity is Republika Srpska, almost entirely populated by Serbs (Tabeau and Bijaki 2005: 189). The borders were determined by the frontlines when the wars ended, resulting in the formation of ethnic enclaves. The three dominant ethnic groups, Muslims, Serbs, and Croats, are represented in all levels of government thus creating excess personnel and slow reform. The country has three presidents, one from each group, and a parliament in which Croats, Serbs and Muslims each have a third of seats. Furthermore, many politicians gain votes in elections through ethnonationalist campaigns that appeal to their own ethnic and religious group. The entire government reports to a High Representative, who is appointed largely by the international community and will remain in Bosnia for an undetermined time.

Since the wars, the population of Bosnia in 2009 was 4.6 million according to the CIA World Factbook. Muslims comprise 48% of the population, Serbs are 37% and Croats are 14%. Religious demographics strongly reflect ethnic demographics in the population of Bosnia, with 40% Muslim, 31% Orthodox, and 15% Roman Catholic. With such a strong connection between religion and ethnicity in the former Yugoslavia, it is not surprising that religion became an important tool of identification of ethnonationalism during and after the wars.

Rwanda (1994)

While Rwanda's two ethnic groups, Hutus and Tutsis, experienced a long history of hatred, the conflict escalated in April 1994 when a plane carrying the Hutu President of Rwanda was shot down over the capital, Kigali (Healey 2006). The suspicious deaths of the presidents of Rwanda triggered a sudden and massive bloodletting, primarily by Hutus against Tutsis (Wood 2001: 60). " An estimated 5-10 per cent of Rwanda's population was then killed between the second week of April and the third week of May 1994; one of the highest casualty rates of any population in history from non-natural causes" (Hintjens 1999: 241-2). In all roughly 800, 000 people were killed, and millions fled Rwanda (Healey 2006).

The history of Tutsi and Hutu over the past century is one in which traditional ethnic roles were continually manipulated, fuelling hostility and making recurring mass violence all but inevitable (Wood 2001: 64). Colonization and conquest helped fuel the already intense ethnic conflict between the Tutsis and Hutus in what is now Rwanda (Healey 2006). Traditionally, Tutsis had been the rulers over the Hutus. By 1400, European nations began colonizing Africa, and Germany had established control over the region, which possessed Rwanda, in the late 1800s (Healey 2006). In an attempt to administer and control Rwanda, Germany put the Tutsis in a position to govern the Hutus. The case of " divide and rule," further perpetrated the hostility between the two ethnic groups (Healey 2006: 480). After Germany's defeat in WWI, Belgium took control over the region, and continued the tradition of " the political and economic differentials between the two tribes" (Healey 2006: 480). Colonial support shifted toward Hutus in the 1950s and,

by Rwanda's independence from Belgium in 1962, a new generation of Hutu leaders were able to turn against the Tutsis, expelling several hundred thousand to neighboring Burundi and Uganda (Wood 2001: 62). In 1969, two nations were established in the region: Burundi, which was dominated by Tutsis, and Rwanda, which was dominated by Hutus (Healey 2006).

The Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), led by Tutsi, had been waging an increasingly successful war since its 1990 offensive against the Hutu-dominated government of President Habyarimana (Wood 2001: 60). His government had managed to control ethnic violence in the 1980s and had been pursuing power-sharing talks with the RPF that culminated in the August 1993 Arusha Accords (Wood 2001: 60). At the same time, though, he had also cracked down on political opponents, including moderate Hutus, and had begun to incite violence against Tutsis (Wood 2001: 60). An October 1993 Tutsi military coup against the predominantly Hutu government of neighboring Burundi heightened paranoia among Rwandan Hutus (Wood 2001: 60). Up to and during the April-July 1994 genocide, the RPF continued to take territory away from government troops and finally ousted the government (Wood 2001: 60). Hutu militia (known as the Interahamwe originally a government-sponsored youth movement became an armed anti-Tutsi force in the early 1990s) hunted down Tutsis and moderate Hutus (Wood 2001: 60). The Interahamwe ideology behind the government supported genocide painted Tutsis as an invading force from the north. This inaccurate caricature was reinforced by colonial rulers who favoured the Tutsis as 'natural born leaders', racially superior to Hutus, and imposed

ethnic identity cards, thereby aggravating a tightly controlled political system and an economically interdependent society (Wood 2001: 72).

Officials of the authoritarian regime of President Juvenal Habyarimana, felt as if their power was diminishing so they used their monopoly of media to create a “ finely tuned propaganda machine” that played on Hutu fears of the former Tutsi elite and purveyed false, versions of the history of relations between the two groups (Snyder and Ballentine 1996: 30). In April 1994, the Hutu official group unleashed militias trained in the techniques of genocide. At the same time, Radio-T6levision Libre des Mille Collines, a pseudo-private station established by Habyarimana’s wife, announced that Tutsi rebels were about to rise up and kill Hutu, and consequently that all Hutu should join the militias in a campaign of preventive killing (Snyder and Ballentine 1996: 30).

Unlike Bosnia, where ethnic cleansing dragged on for several years, the “ genocidal frenzy” in Rwanda lasted about three months (Wood 2001: 60). Exhorted by government-sponsored hate broadcasts and leaflets, and often led by officials, many Hutus turned on their Tutsi neighbors with a vengeance. For the most part, Hutu mobs had free reign to shoot, hack, and beat to death men, women, and children hiding in their homes, churches, hospitals, and even orphanages (Wood 2001: 61). Many Tutsi women were raped before being killed and many children, as a means of degrading and terrorizing Tutsi communities. Interahamwe leaders carefully planned the genocide, provided weapons, compiled lists of important Tutsis, and went to each commune to ensure that killings were thoroughly carried out (Wood 2001: 61).

The ideology behind Rwanda's genocide evolved amidst harsh conditions of poverty, arable land scarcity, and income inequity (Wood 2001: 64). Theories of racial struggles and hierarchy enhance during the time of economic struggle. In the mid 1980s the price of coffee dropped (Hintjens 1999). The export of coffee and tea has been important in the region (Healey 2006). As a result of the economic decline, the search began for a scapegoat and the decline became another reason for genocide. In Rwanda conspiracy theories and myths were used to justify genocide. In an impoverished ethnocratic state like Rwanda, ethnicity is also the ruling principle of economic and social differentiation, with ethnic groups then forced to confront each other in the process of competition for material and social resources (Markakis 1993, 236). Such demography-linked pressures as shrinking farm size (an average of less than 1 hectare) and high fertility rates (with a population doubling time of under 20 years and a young population age structure), as well as a stagnant economy, helped increase tensions between Rwanda's 7.8 million Hutus and Tutsis (Wood 2001: 64). Nationalism in effect attempts to squeeze an idealized grouping of otherwise disparate people into a territorially defined state (Agnew and Corbridge 1995). Ethnic segregation through the division of artificially bounded political units becomes a requirement for the preservation of a group's threatened identity and thus a matter of life and death. (Wood 2001: 63).

Comparative Analyze

In both Rwanda and Bosnia, the genocides have been part of an overall socio-economic collapse that has left its perpetrators financially much worse off than they were before. Genocidists justified their actions through an

ideological than an economic view of 'national greatness', while exploiting difficult living conditions to scapegoat minorities (Wood 2001: 64). In addition, they initiate genocidal measures in peripheral areas of the redefined 'living space'; some of the most brutal violence took place in the rural peripheries of northern and eastern Bosnia, eastern Croatia, northwest Rwanda, and eastern Congo (Wood 2001: 64). At the same time, genocidists can go to great lengths to crush heterogeneous and thus politically suspect enclaves within the cultural core of an endlessly purifying homeland (Wood 2001: 65).

In both Bosnia and Rwanda, the belligerent ethnic groups speak the same language and most Tutsis and Hutus even belong to the same religion. Political leaders in both areas exaggerated perceived 'ethnic' differences and old grievances (Wood 2001: 65). They also manipulated violence-inciting propaganda, such as broadcasts by Rwanda's infamous Radio Mille Collines describing Tutsis as 'cockroaches' (Wood 2001: 65).

While not the grand territorially defined strategy that it was in Bosnia, ethnic cleansing was also the goal of Rwandan genocidists. In Rwanda the mechanics of ethnic cleansing were simpler than in Bosnia. Tutsis and some moderate Hutus were killed on the spot or rounded up (either encouraged or forced) in convenient locales, usually church and school compounds, and then massacred by the thousands (Wood 2001: 68). But like Bosnia and other twentieth century genocides, ethnic cleansing could not be contained within Rwanda (Wood 2001: 68).

Bosnia and Rwanda, two radically different geographic contexts, are testimony to how dormant ethnic mistrust and fear can be manipulated into a swift genocidal eruption (Wood 2001: 72). In an increasingly heterogeneous world, genocide will remain a fundamental international security threat. (Wood 2001: 72).

Central to the process of the Bosnian war is the concept of ethnonationalism. The Bosnian war arose out of “ the collapse of totalitarian control of territory producing a political void that, in turn, exposes a deep-rooted rivalry between ethnic groups leading to a struggle for control of territory ending in an attempt at violent resolution” (Slack & Doyon 2001: 140).

Conclusion