

# **POLI 120N: Contention and Conflict in Africa**

## **Professor Adida**

**Explaining civil conflict: ancient hatred vs. rational origins**

# What is a civil war?

Correlates of War: internal conflicts that count more than 1,000 battle deaths

Fearon and Laitin:  $> 1,000$  battle deaths overall and yearly average  $> 100$

PRIO: civil conflict is internal conflict that counts more than 25 battle deaths in a single year

Sambanis: tries to resolve all these issues with extensive coding rules

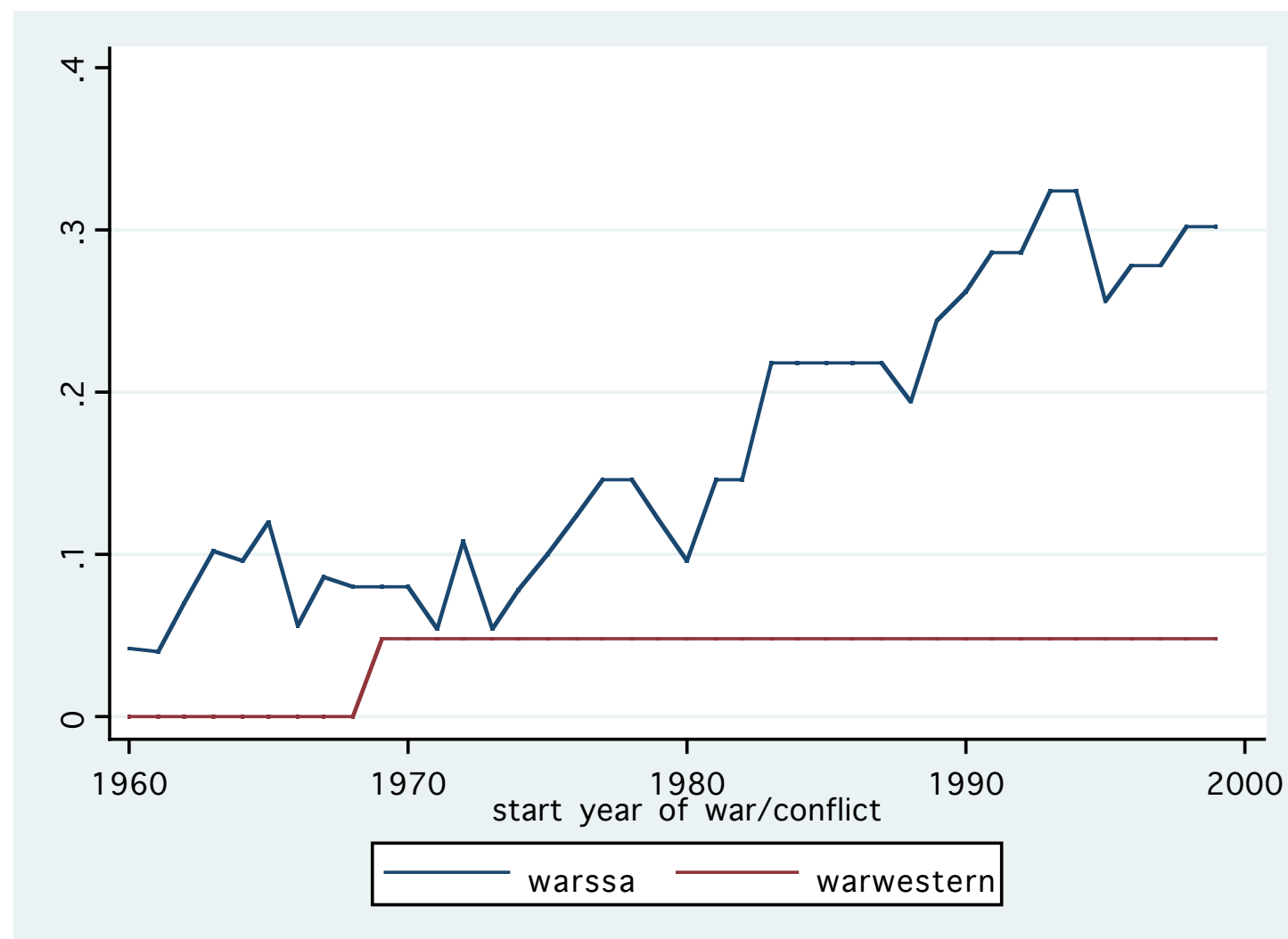
# Why do definitions matter?

- Determines your universe of cases
- Symbolic and political meaning
- Affects which explanations have empirical leverage

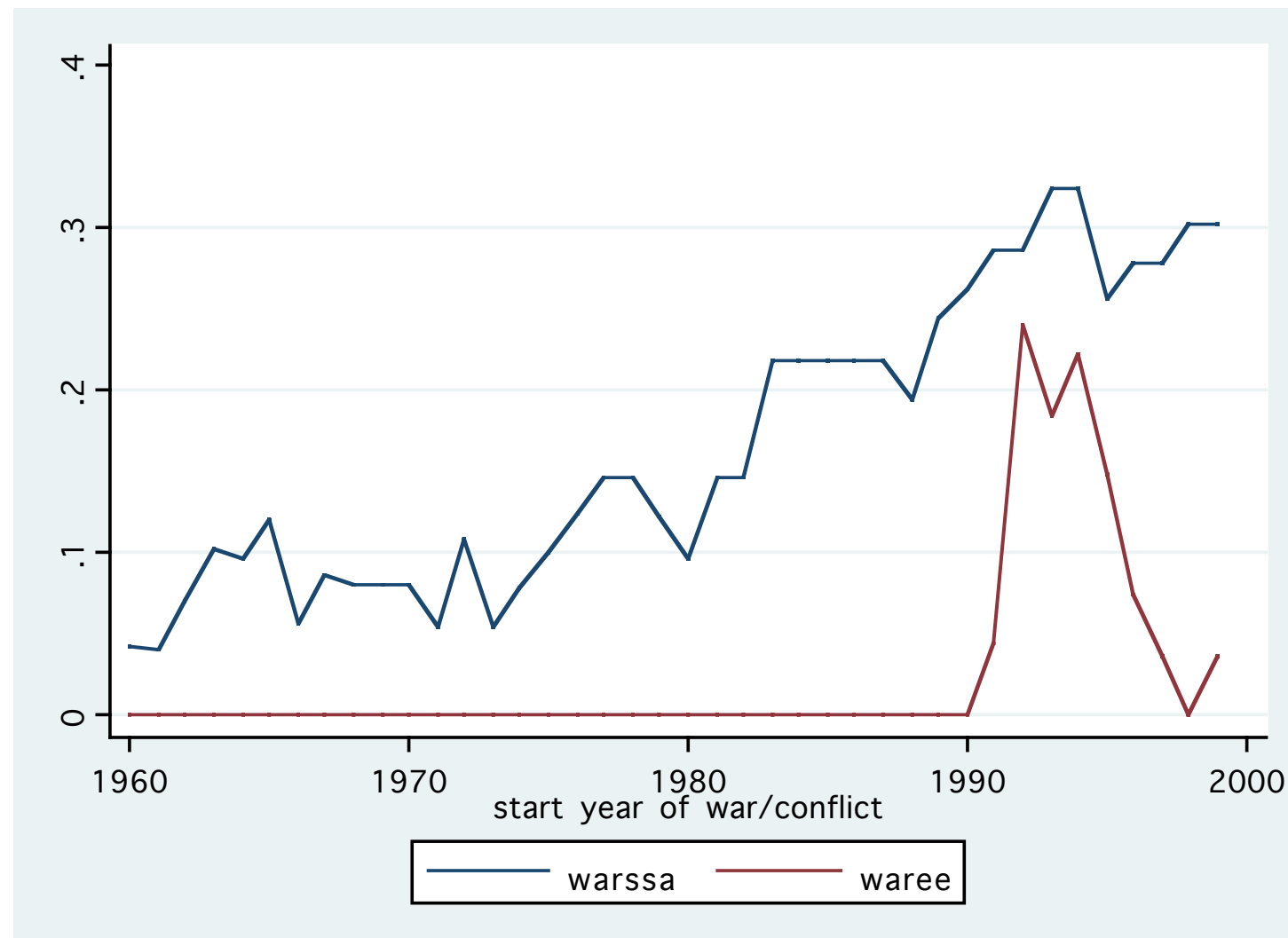
# Civil wars vs. Interstate wars

1945-1999	Civil war (F&L)	Interstate war
Number	127	25
Total dead (million)	16.2	3.33
Median duration	6 years	<3 months
Number of states	73	25

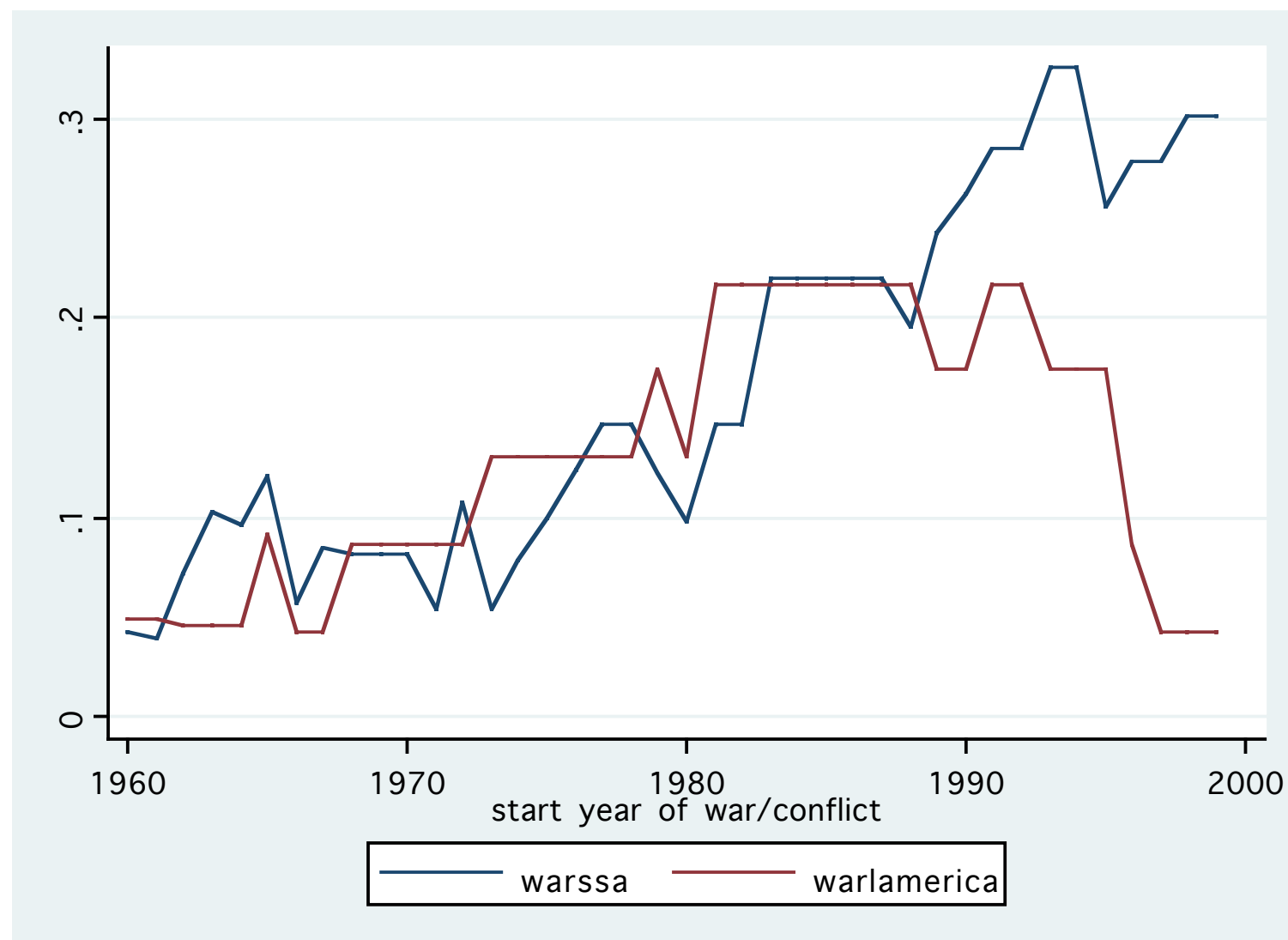
# Frequency of civil war: SSA vs. Western Europe



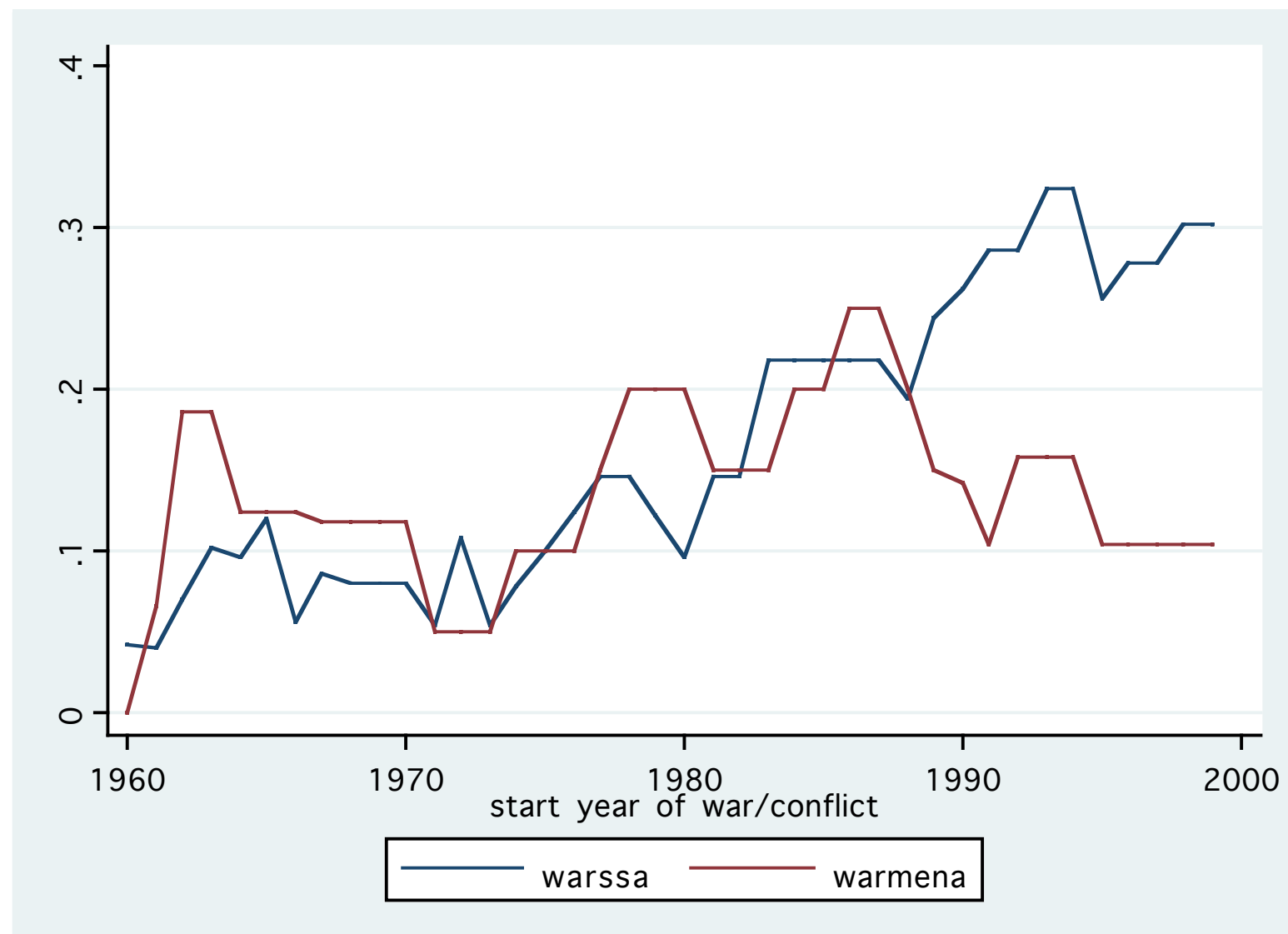
# Frequency of civil war: SSA vs. Eastern Europe



# Frequency of civil war: SSA vs. Latin America



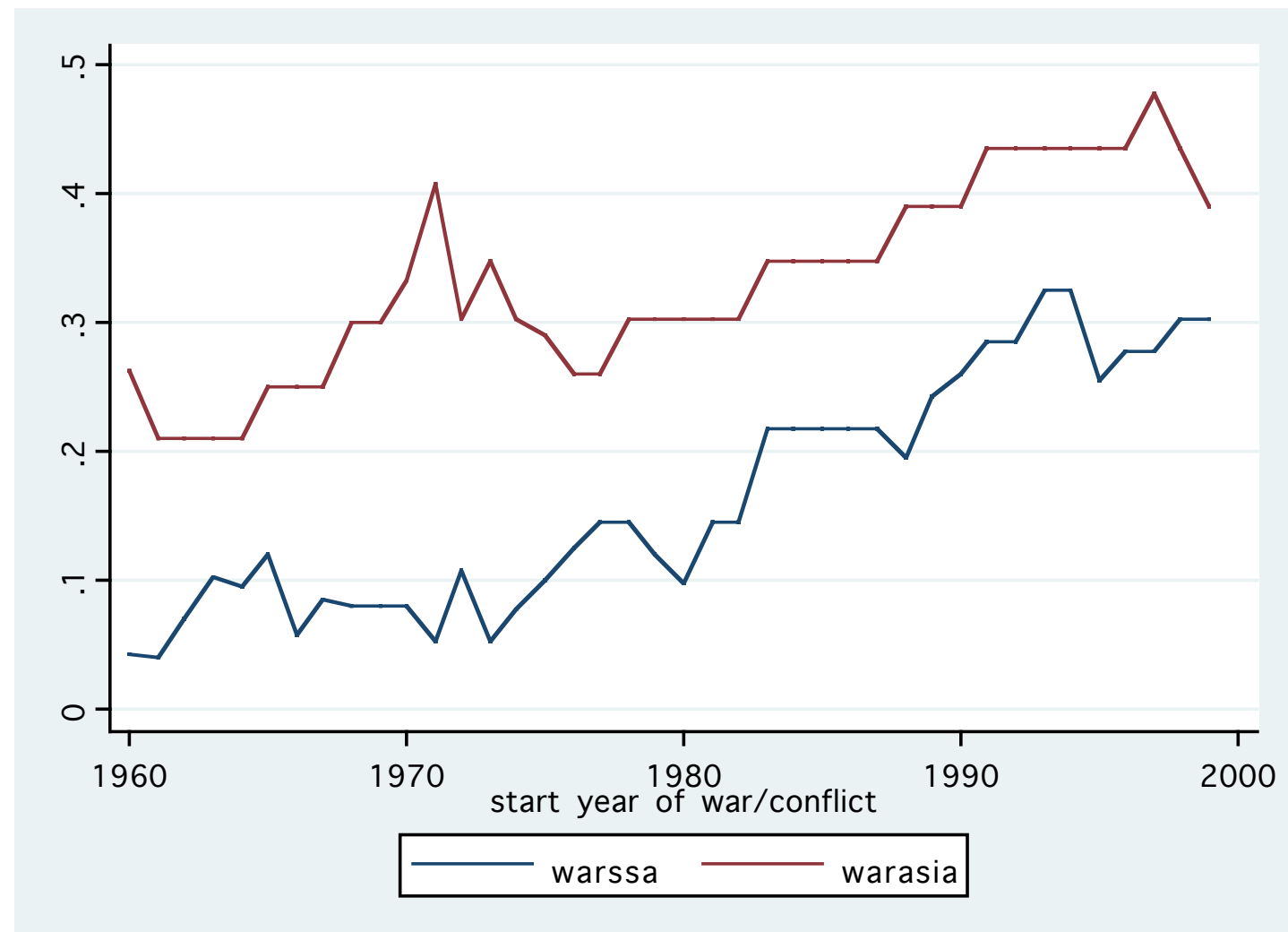
# Frequency of civil war: SSA vs. MENA





# Frequency of civil war:

## SSA vs. Asia



# Ancient tribal hatreds

February 21, 2008

OP-ED COLUMNIST

## Machetes and Elections

By [NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF](#)

KISUMU, Kenya

Until he was circumcised with a machete in front of a jeering mob and then dragged off to be beheaded, Robert Ochieng had been a symbol of modern, post-tribal harmony in Kenya.

A member of the Luo ethnic group, 16-year-old Robert had played and studied with members of another ethnic group, the Kikuyu. They were friends. And then Kenya erupted in rioting after a rigged election, and suddenly Luos were chasing and killing Kikuyus, and a mob of Kikuyus was running down Robert.

He claimed that he was Kikuyu as well, but the suspicious mob stripped him naked and noted that he was not circumcised, meaning that he could not be Kikuyu. That's when his attackers held him down — smashing his arm when he tried to protect himself — and performed the grotesque surgery in the street to loud cheers from a huge throng.

The crowd shouted war cries and was preparing to decapitate Robert with a machete when the police arrived and rescued him. Doctors did some repair work and say he will recover physically, but as he sat in a church shelter for the displaced here in Kisumu in western Kenya, he seethed with hostility that may never heal.

"When I see Kikuyu shops that have been burned down," he told me, "I feel good inside." Never again will Robert be friendly with Kikuyu or have anything to do with them; he is now a symbol of the primeval tribal tensions that threaten Kenya's future.

# Ancient tribal hatreds

TIME

Monday, Apr. 18, 1994

## Descent into Mayhem

By MARGUERITE MICHAELS; Clive Mutiso/Nairobi and Mark Thompson/Washington

Alarming as they were, the first, unconfirmed reports turned out to be understated. "We are lying prone on the floor," Christian Georlette, an aid worker for Oxfam, managed to phone back to the British aid group's headquarters on Thursday. "Every window in the house has been shattered by shrapnel and machine-gun fire, and soldiers are attacking the house next door with grenades. The fighting is really bad." Only later, however, would the full carnage of the latest ethnic violence in Rwanda be confirmed: the streets littered with corpses; the thousands killed in less than three days; the murder of 10 Belgian peacekeepers and groups of Catholic priests. And it would be Saturday before the French air force could land at Rwanda's Kigali airport and most of the country's 255 Americans could be reported as close to joining 330 Marines in the relative safety of neighboring Burundi.

In the two small Central African nations of Rwanda and Burundi, where politics is still dominated by the ancient rivalry between the predominant Hutu and minority Tutsi tribes, pure tribal enmity was behind the bloodshed. Last week's violence exploded after a plane carrying Presidents Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda and Cyprien Ntaryamira of Burundi, both Hutus, crashed Wednesday night on the approach to Kigali airport, killing both leaders. Witnesses reported hearing heavy weapons fire moments before the plane went down. "What happened was not an accident but an assassination," said Jean Damascene Bizimana, Rwanda's ambassador to the U.N. The two leaders were returning from a conference in Tanzania. Its topic: the ending of decades of Hutu-Tutsi savagery.



# Ancient tribal hatreds

## France 'underestimated' Central African Republic hatred



French and African Union troops in the Central African Republic need to work out how to reduce tension, Mr Araud said

France underestimated the level of hatred between Christian and Muslim communities in the conflict-riven Central African Republic, its ambassador to the UN has said.

Gerard Araud told a UN meeting on Wednesday that African Union and French forces were confronting a "nearly impossible" situation.

They were between "two communities who want to kill each other", he said.

Mr Araud said that calls to end the fighting were being ignored.

France, the former colonial power, has deployed 1,600 troops to try to restore peace, along with an African Union force of some 5,000.

"We have to think in terms of tactics: What to do, in very practical terms, to be effective to prevent people from killing each other when they desperately want to kill each other," Mr Araud told an event organised to mark the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide.

"We knew that there was some inter-sectarian violence, but we didn't forecast such deep ingrained hatred.

"We maybe need to work with psychologists or ethnologists on how did it appear, and now, how to cool down the situation."

### CAR strife

Gruesome act of vengeance

Fears of genocide

Journey into fear

Clashes in pictures

JANUARY 8, 2015

## CHARLIE HEBDO AND THE "CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS"

BY JOHN CASSIDY

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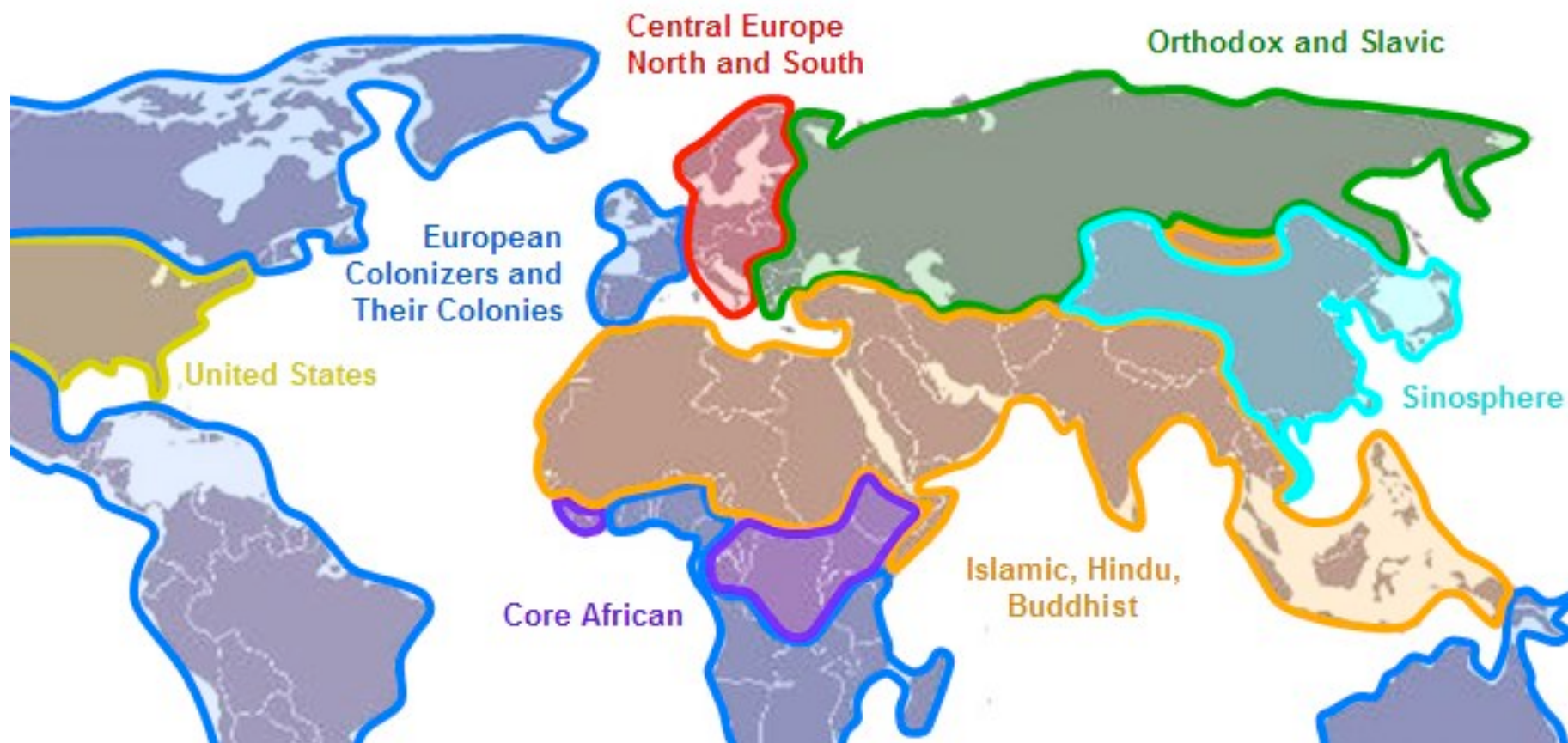
# Even Obama



Associated Press



# Huntingtonian view of the world



“It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation-states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.” Sam Huntington (1993), *Foreign Affairs*

# Popularized after fall of Soviet Union



Vitaly Armand/AFP/Getty Images



Anatoly Sapronenkov/AFP/Getty Images

Q:The “clash of civilizations” view of the world sees cultural divisions as:

- a. Natural
- b. Constructed





# Does “ethnic hatred” story hold up?

1. Ethnic conflict is the exception, not the norm
2. Ethnic/National groups are in constant flux
3. Ethnic/National groups are constructed

# A thought exercise

(Fearon and Laitin 1996)

Independence to 1979	Number of actual incidents	Number of potential incidents	Ratio
Ethnic violence	20	38,383	0.0005
Civil war	52	18,757	0.0028

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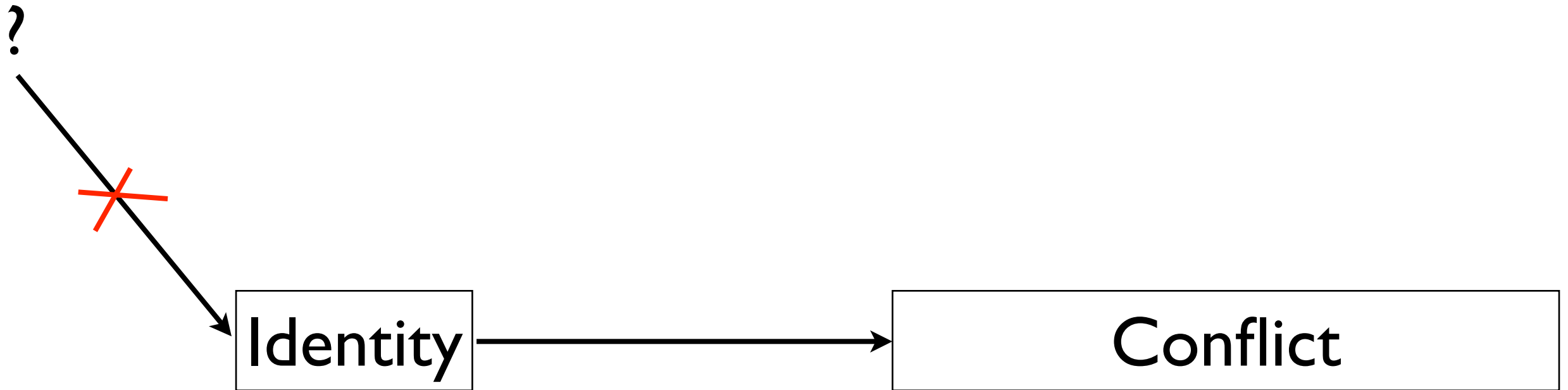
# Not even “French”



# Theoretical foundation

- Primordialism: identity is fixed and natural, unchanging
- Ethnicity inheres in human beings: we all search for our ancestry and blood
- Emotional ties of blood supersede rational calculus
- Very popular in nonscholarly circles, but discredited in scholarly world
- Incompatibility of cultures as source of violence

# Primordialism



# In comes Constructivism

- Primordialists suggest that ethnic violence results from antagonisms that are enduring properties of ethnic groups
- But even if A and B are hostile to each other now, this need not be an eternal condition

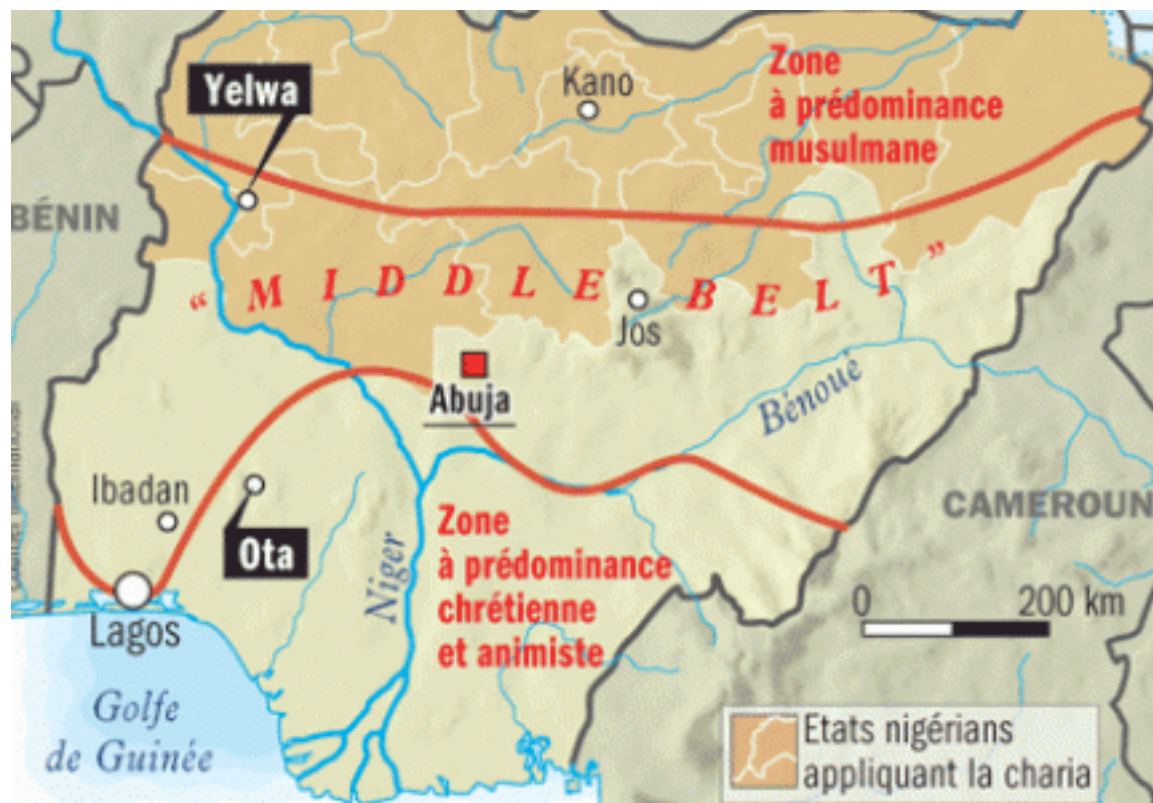


# Constructivism

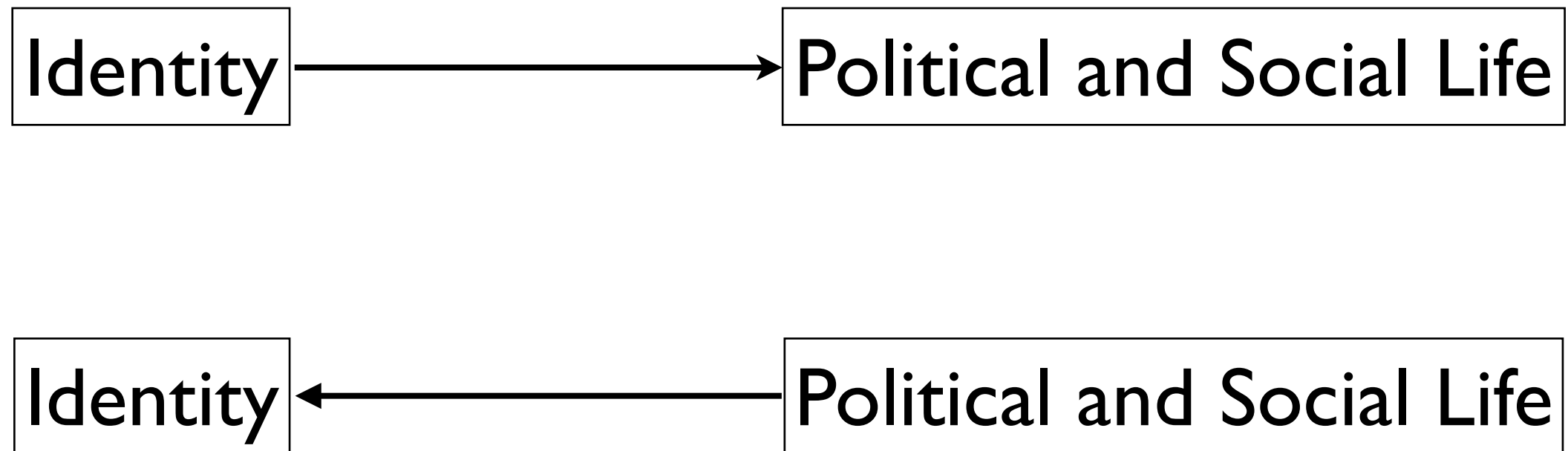
- Identity is socially constructed not a fixed, natural, inevitable reality
- Ethnic identities are the products of human action and speech, and as a result they can and do change over time.
- Shared identity is important because a number of people share a set of symbolic forms, so it can be manipulated for collective action

# Constructivism: examples

## Yorubas and religious conflict in Nigeria



# Primordialism vs. Constructivism



# Theoretical foundation

Primordialism	Constructivism
Identity is fixed, natural, unchanging	Identity is fluid and constructed
Primordial identities compete with the State and each other	Constructed identities need not compete with the State or each other
Nigeria under GB rule: Groups resisted assimilation into the three large categories the British defined	Nigeria under GB rule: The British consolidated multiple groups into three large ethnicities





Gerard Fouet/AFP/Getty Images

Cultural differences



Conflict

# A rational explanation for conflict



“[C]ostly war between ethnic groups can be explained, at least theoretically, as the result of a commitment problem.”

James Fearon (1995)



# Serbs v. Croats

	Ancient hatred	Rationalist
Explanation	Nationalist passions render cohabitation impossible	Tudjman could not commit to the Serbs
Cause	Clash of cultures	Anarchy
Policy implications	Survival of fittest Segregation	Role for external third-party

# Why are these explanations so appealing?

- In most cases, the correlations are there: ethnic groups are fighting one another
- Takes blame off of us

# Why are these explanations so dangerous?

- The description is not wrong, the explanation is wrong
- They overlook the legitimate causes



Q: A policy implication of the ethnic hatred argument is the separation of ethno-religious groups. A policy implication of the rational explanation for conflict argument is third-party intervention. Which, in your opinion, is more problematic?

- a. Ethnic hatred
- b. Rational explanation



Burundi		Central African Republic	
Coakley	Alyssa	Aurell	Julia
Kong	Dorcas	Ezedine	Steven
Barrios	Andre	Lee	Clarissa
Chen	Michael	Bernstein	Ethan
Garcia	Adan	Cormier	Michael
Ji	Tiecheng	Kavianian	Stephen
Megerdichian	Serj	Luevano	Justin
Pedri	Hannah	Roderick	Michael
Yost	Jonathan	Young	Josephine
Zepponi	Colette	Zhang	Kenneth

### Democratic Republic of the Congo

Aguilar	Marissa
Harrison	Gary
Hong	Amanda
Kaufman	Brian
Miller	Nate
Nunn	Alexander
Oldakowski	William
Ruiz	Freddy
Seltzer	Tia
Woo-Ermacoff	Lauren

### Nigeria

Aguilar	Sylvia
Badr	Benafsha
Brady	Sean
Browoleit	Aidan
Dunne	Wilf
Fisher	Travis
Hernandez	Sabina
Nguyen	Sabrynah
Blackwood	Sofia
Corpuz	Constance

### South Sudan

Dumouchel	Daniel
Ryu	Brandon
Burciaga	Jose
Endureth	Culanag
Gatewood	Cameron
Kim	Edward
Lopez-Chavez	Ruben
Thornburgh	Bryson
Zabala	Matthew
Zileski	Trisha
Kvinge	Kayle

### Sudan (Darfur)

Cummings	Taylor
Steven-Phillips	Antoine
Cao	Ren
Gomroki	Aurash
Hwang	Kevin
Kim	Heidi
O'Connell	Michael
Smith	Madison
Umerkajeff	Nadja
Wagner	Allison

# **POLI 120N: Contention and Conflict in Africa**

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**Explaining civil conflict: economic explanations**

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