Final Project

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Throughout the semester there was much discussion as to what would drive an individual to create situations of political violence or revolt against their government. In our class discussions it was overwhelmingly agreed upon that the absence of, or extinguishing of human rights which are innate to human life and society would cause such reactions in a rational population. Modernly, all individuals have a right as supported by the international community to human rights and basic dignities. These rights which are political, social, economic, and cultural in nature came about in 1948 with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly (OHCHR,1996). This declaration could be seen as the first example of a universal understanding of what every human is entitled to and what human rights are (OHCHR,1996). Since the declaration of human rights occurred many other treaties and peace talks have taken place in the international community leading to the extension of these rights, treaties, and the solidifying of human inherent rights into international law (OHCHR,1996). When governments ratify international human rights treaties they apply said laws within the treaties to their domestic laws; furthermore ratification leads to the spreading of human rights norms and supposedly the betterment of society internationally and intrastate (OHCHR,1996). In the United States previous to the international declaration of human rights, basic rights as ensured by the declaration of independence gave citizens, by simply being born the ability to enjoy life, liberty and
the pursuit of happiness (Declaration of Independece, 1776). Sense it’s founding, Citizens of the United States have enjoyed certain freedoms. In comparison, many third world countries especially those that exist under anarchy do not experience these freedoms. One such example of a country existing under anarchy, and or the lack of clear leadership and order, without inherent freedoms includes the case study of Rwanda, which has been alluded to throughout the course of the semester. This irrational society existing under anarchy experienced one of the worst genocides and revolt against the governing powers of the twenty first century with a clear lack of given human rights (Danjibo, 1994). Human rights assurances differ in the third versus the first world due to the existence of governmental order and control. Systems of anarchy; however as was discussed this semester in our class academic community, often experience a denial of basic human rights as ensured by international normality causing uprisings and political violence’s.

Rwanda, as a nation has a long history of a divide society between two opposing ethnic groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi (PBS, 2014). These two groups are not only divided ethnically by their physical appearances but also politically as Rwanda had a majority Hutu population and a Tutsi political leadership (PBS, 2014). In April of 1994 Hutu extremist overthrew the government by assonating the president, due to a lack of human rights and representation in government, in turn leading to bad conditions for the majority populist (PBS, 2014). With the Rwandan president dead and government fall out the society of Rwanda spiraled down into anarchy as mass violence began to spread between the Rwandan armed forces, the Hutu militias (the interahamwe) and thousands of Tutsi civilians (PBS, 2014). Within the first day thousands of innocent
victims were slaughtered and the fighting continued for another 99 days (Danjibo, 1994). While the United Nations stepped in putting peace keeping troops on the ground, without official sanctioning by the Rwandan government due to its dissolving under a state of anarchy, coupled with peacekeepers lack of firepower they were practically helpless to stop the genocide (Danjibo, 1994). The Rwandan genocide was promoted by a lack of human rights and equality amongst society and quickly slipped into being a mass genocide, one of the most extreme forms of political violence (Danjibo, 1994). This political violence was allowed to occur due to the lack of a formal and strong government being the force to stop an uprising against an outraged population lacking human rights.

In comparison to the situation in Rwanda, which existed under a system of anarchy and did not afford birth given human rights to its citizens the United States, a first world country has allocated human rights from its conception. This allocation of human rights from the revolutionary period in America forward is provided by the multi-branch, power sharing structure of the United States government, which unlike Rwanda leaves this westernized government open to less opportunity for political violence and uprisings. Not only does the bill of rights ensure U.S. citizens have many unique rights such as the right to bear arms and the right to vote, it also utilizes many ideals of human rights including the right to practice religion (Bill of Rights, 1791). The United States has also been a long time supporter, and one of the first nation states to outwardly show support for the Declaration of Human Rights as drafted by the United Nations General Assembly (of which the U.S. is a life time member state) (OHCHR, 1996). Besides the stability (financially, internationally etc.) of the United States government in comparison
to the system of anarchy under which political violence was possible in Rwanda, due in part to assignations based on a denial of basic human rights; the intrastate right to protest in the U.S. makes this type of political violence in the U.S. less common. The right to protest as a first amendment right is yet another feature of an organized governmental system which leads this first world nation away from acts of overthrowing officials and political violence, and towards a protest situation (Bill of Rights, 1791). Protest opposed to acts of violence such as genocide have the opportunity to inspire true change, more rapidly without the need of international intervention and thousands of deaths which leave a nation scarred and often divided. The United States being an organized system of government, not vulnerable to extreme political violence such as genocide has led to the ability to not only ensure intrastate and international rights but also expand on these rights; amending the bill of rights allowing the people to have more freedoms (Bill of rights, 1791).

Over the course of the semester a large topic in political violence discussions included why political violence occurs. Our academic community overwhelming agreed that a loss of basic human rights leads to many acts of political violence. These acts of political violence based on rights being lost are especially prevalent in communities where human rights are not always ensured. One example which came up commonly of this included the third world example of Rwanda in which a loss of, and or lack of human rights led to political turmoil, and a mass outbreak of genocidal violence. In comparison to the first world, western example of the United States which has a government based around ensuring human rights in accordance with international norms leading to less political violence’s and a complete lack of political violence on a
mass scale including genocides during this century. Overall, I have drawn the conclusion that stable governments opposed to systems of anarchy allow for the ensuring of basic human rights and in turn, less political violence including uprisings on a mass and devastating scale.
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