Civil Wars and Weak States

- degree of ethnic diversity fails to explain on-set of civil wars
  o ethnic divisions are common
  o civil wars are infrequent
- feature associated with weak states – low autonomy and capacity – better explain on-set of civil war
  o poor state (GDP/captia)
  o populous
  o rough geography – transportation & communication is difficult
  o oil export dependency – “rentier state”
  o new state – weak institutionalization
  o instability of political institutions
- How to prevent civil wars?
  o Build stronger states, but…
  o Promote economic development
  o Assist in political development (stable institutions)

Motivations Behind Civil Wars

- ideologies to mobilize combatants and supporters exist but they reflect organizational core of members
  o local grievances and social ties matter more
  o ideological commitments often emerge after joining fighters, not before
- people may act rationally: e.g., join rebels if food and housing is better supplied by them

Ending Civil Wars

- Victory v. negotiated settlement
  o Victory is more common
- Difficult to achieve stable settlement without third-party guarantor (Walter, 1997)
  o Hard to find able and willing guarantor
    - 1958 Lebanon settlement had 14,000 US troops present briefly (lasts until 1975)
    - 1989 Nicaraguan settlement had 260 OAS observers and 800 Venezuelan paratroopers
- 1979 Zimbabwe agreement had 1200 Commonwealth troops
  - Guarantor must be willing to use force
    - But El Salvador UN missions 1991-95 succeeded w/out much force available (368 observers; 315 police)

What peace agreements last? (Hartzell, et al 2001)
- prior regime was democratic
- long war at low intensity
- territorial autonomy for threatened groups
- third-party guarantee

Should partition be favored over settlement? (Sambanis, 2000)
- Pro-partition view
  - Enables postwar democratization
  - Prevents renewed war (v. ineffective settlement)
  - Reduces residual ethnic violence
- Anti-partition view
  - Partition in one may encourage violent secession elsewhere
  - Successor states are *not* homogenous
  - Ethnic diffusion will reinforce cooperation
- Debate over partition as agreement v. secession as unilateral action of seceding state
- Statistical study
  - Partition is more likely after costly ‘identity wars,’ after rebel victory or truce, and in countries with above-average socio-economic conditions
  - Partitioned states are as democratic or more so than non-partitioned ones
  - War recurrence is no more or less likely in partition than not
    - Longer war makes peace more likely, but costlier war makes it less likely
    - Treaties produce more stable agreements than truces
  - Negligible effect under most conditions, but helpful under some conditions