Clashing Civilizations

- Huntington (1993, 1996) argues that nations fight because of ethnic/cultural differences
  - Cold War an aberration (fighting over ideas)
  - Post-Cold War return to normal conflict
  - Lists 7 civilizations (why 7?)
  - Comparable arguments by Kagan, Barber
Clashing Civilizations, cont.

• Quantitative analysis shows no relationship between ethnic/linguistic/religious difference and interstate warfare (Russett, et al. 2000; Chiozsa 2002; Gartzke and Gleditsch 2006)

• Henderson (2004) points out that “ethnic” is usually code language for “third world”.

• Was World War I an ethnic conflict?
War Within

• Different kinds of civil war
  • Revolution -- violence directed at the usurpation of national power
  • Separatist Movement -- attempt to divide existing state into more political entities.
  • Insurrection -- violence designed to force national authorities to alter certain policies
Civil War after the Cold War

• Initial spike in intra-state warfare
  • But this has since declined
• Many argue that intra-state (civil) war is more common today than in the past
  • My view: just better information/data
When global battlefield deaths are measured not in absolute numbers but per thousand of the world’s population per decade, it becomes clear that war in the 1990s was only one-third as deadly as in the 1970s.
Determinants of Civil War

- Paul Collier makes a “demand side” argument about civil war (Collier & Hoeffler 2002)
  - Greed - desire for economic gain
  - Grievance - policy/ethnic/religious differences
  - Findings: “both dependence upon primary commodity exports and a large diaspora substantially increase the risk of conflict”
  - Controversy over findings; debate continues
Determinants, cont.

• Fearon and Laitin (2003) argue for supply side:
  • #1 determinant of civil war is poverty
  • Poor states are more likely to have conflicts
  • Religious/ethnic differences are second factor
  • Also political instability, population, terrain
Determinants, cont. 2

- Interethnic cooperation (Fearon & Laitin 1996)
- Cooperation across ethnic groups is more common than conflict
- Key insight of Fearon & Laitin is that tensions between groups is a deterrent to conflict
  - Two “equilibria”:
    - Self-policing: grouppunishes members that harm members of other group
    - Inter-ethnic violence: extremely costly
Civil War and Information

- Work of Collier & Hoeffler; Fearon & Laitin in contrast with insights of Fearon (1995)
- War as a product of commitment, indivisibility, information.
  - Commitment: Walter (1997)
  - Governments cannot commit not to take advantage of non-state actors (rebels) after peace is achieved/disbanded
Civil War & Info, cont.

- Chain store paradox: governments cannot agree to bargains with rebels because of the reputational effects of such a compromise (breeds new rebels)
- Evidence that governments facing more ethnic groups fight harder (Walter 2003)
Civil War & Info, cont. 2

- Information:
  - A separable issue involves uncertainty about which side will eventually prevail.
  - Unlike interstate war, where power plays an important role, resolve may be more important in civil conflicts.
  - Rebels cannot prove resolve except by enduring for a very long time.
  - Evidence that weak rebellions last longer (Gleditsch and Beardsley 2008).
Conclusion

• Civil war is perennial in history (Masada 66AD, Peasant rebellions in China)

• What makes the situation different today:
  • Absence of interstate war
  • Better information (electronic media)
  • Externalities (unrest affects world economy)

• Room for optimism
  • Civil wars very unlikely in developed countries