Week 8: Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict

What is the big outcome variable?
Ethnicity. However, need to be clear on the different types of outcomes examined in different works. In general, in these two weeks we ask: Where does ethnicity come from? Why does ethnicity become politically salient at some times but not others? Why/when does such ethnic salience lead to violence?

What is ethnicity?
Levitsky: rooted in subjective belief in shared ancestry group, based on ascriptive traits (e.g., race, language, religion, region)
Overarching theories of where ethnicity comes from? Primordial, Instrumentalist
Readings:
Horowitz: established at birth for most members, based on myth of collective ancestry, which usually carries with it traits thought to be innate; some notion of ascription and deriving from it
Bates: use of symbolism distinguishes ethnic groups from other kinds of groups; collective myths of origin; assertion of ties of kinship or blood, mythology expressive of the cultural uniqueness or superiority of the group; and a conscious elaboration of language and heritage

*For **Horowitz**, where does ethnicity come from?* He doesn't really discuss this much. For him ethnicity seems pretty fixed and salient, and it's more a matter of when/how it turns into conflict.

Horowitz's main question is when ethnic conflict is most likely to erupt. He focuses on two general societal structures; what were these? Ranked vs. Unranked, Dispersed vs. Centralized

Descriptively, what is a ranked ethnic system? Ethnic groups are hierarchically ordered; ethnic groups align with socioeconomic position; subordination of groups; logical impossibility of an acknowledged upper class among the subordinated group(s); leaders of subordinate groups chosen in terms of acceptability to subordinate group

Where do the ranked ethnic systems come from? Produced by conquest or capture; also need to spatial proximity of groups in order to enforce this hierarchy. *Historical examples?* Apartheid South Africa; pre-civil rights era US; Burakumin in Japan

What are ethnic relations like in ranked systems? In terms of behavior, see ritualized modes of expressing the lower status or contamination of subordinate groups; more social cement and predictability (why would this be the case? Shared expectation in addition to coercion/conflict, religion often legitimizes hierarchy, subordination often seen as trade for protection). However, when this stability does crack, it is more prone to total collapse and fundamental transformation/revolution

Descriptively, what is a ranked ethnic system? Parallel ordering of ethnic groups, with upper and lower strata within the ethnic groups; ethnic identity not strongly tied to position in socioeconomic hierarchy; groups act like states in the international context; groups find ways of reaffirming their own cultural superiority while conceding the superiority of other groups in limited spheres; each group has its own elite strata and internal stratification

Where do unranked ethnic systems come from? Produced by invasion that results in less than conquest, voluntary migration, encapsulation within territorial unit of groups that had little contact before. Spatially, these groups can be intermixed or discrete.

What does he mean by dispersed ethnic conflict? Group loyalties are parochial, ethnic conflict is localized; conflict takes place in dispersed pockets of society; "compartmentalized" context; relation between groups mediated by relation between locality and center

Where does it come from? Both this and centralized due to group size relative to state

What does it lead to? Lower levels of overall conflict; conflict less likely to engulf political system because conflict "compartmentalized"

What's centralized conflict? Fewer cleavages than dispersed, but they run through entire society and have greater magnitude; these cleavages are at the focal point of competition; when groups do control the center, it is more of an actor than an arbitrator

What does it lead to? More of a zero sum game, claims of one group at the expense of other groups; greater conflicts (can relate this to Posner)

Bates:
Bates points to the relationship between modernization and ethnic violence; what is it about modernity that leads to conflict? Modernity (as cluster of goods) and distribution of spoils of the modernization process; competition over land, markets, jobs, etc; (Why are these goods so desired?) people begin to be evaluated along this new dimension of modernity

This issue of modernity is tied to the issue of space, why is this so important for Bates' theory? These goods and services coming from modernity cannot typically be spread equally across a society; Process of modernization not uniform through space; things like schools, factories, hospitals, roads, markets, help local areas more than the entire nation

So, Bates views ethnic groups as coalitions aiming to bring in the spoils of the modernization process; why do they organize these coalitions along ethnic line? Members of ethnic groups tend to cluster in particular areas; they have uniform preference for modernization in this area and thus incentive to organize along these ethnic lines; administrative and ethnic groups align; colonial administration along tribal lines made it in the interest for subjects to organize ethnic groupings to gain control over administrative mechanism
So, why evoke ethnicity, and not just build coalition based on local area? This allows not only to have a coalition to bring in the spoils of modernization, but also to exclude others and not have to share these spoils as broadly; ethnicity as minimum winning coalitions

He argues that there are interests for the 'moderns' of society to sponsor growth of 'traditional' ethnicity; why?
A good way to organize support in political competition for spoils; elite use these groups to maintain access to administrative apparatus; can unify support where other issues might be divisive
Also pressure from less privileged back on these elites; what does this look like?
They also exert pressure on their elites to satisfy demand; get things like jobs
This, in turn, is viewed by members of other groups and makes ethnic competition as zero-sum game

Why do these ethnic groups persist? Because this organization have capacity to extract goods and services; also tends to reify

*How does **Nagel** differ from any of these previous theories trying to explain ethnic conflict?* Focus on political institutions; when "structure of political access and participation is organized along ethnic lines"

What types of national political organization are more likely to produce ethnic mobilization?
When ethnic boundaries correspond to geographic political and administrative boundaries (political authorities' choice to use existing ethnoregional boundaries can be interpreted by all groups as recognition of these divisions); this can create new identities as well, example of Nigeria
When ethnic boundaries are officially recognized bases of participation, through de jure recognition of ethnicity as a basis for political representation, or defacto through regionalization of representation
Also when parties are implemented that recognize and institutionalize ethnic differences; this more likely when ethnic boundaries coincide with official language boundaries, with allocated land, or designated for special treatment

Posner:
Posner compares relations between Chewas and Tumbukas in Zambia and Malawi, what makes them such good cases for comparison? Groups similar on most variables, but differ in level of politicization of ethnicity

What reason does he give for the groups being allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi? Size of group relative to country as a whole; larger groups more viable machines/coalitions for parties and politicians, and potentially for locals to gain spoils from center (Bates); in Malawi, mobilize by ethnicity, in Zambia, all mobilized together as "Easterners"
Posner points to the fact that despite being politicized, the ethnic relations in Malawi have not led to violence; this is a nice transition into Wilkinson

Wilkinson *argues that it's important to analyze at two levels when trying to understand ethnic violence; what are they?* Local politics and politics at state level (or wherever policing is administered)

What does analysis at the local-level tell us? When likely to see ethnic polarization and conflict

What local circumstances are likely to lead to ethnic conflict? Why? Where local elections are hotly contested, candidates from majority parties more likely to turn to polarizing strategies, hoping for a minority counter-mobilization. Do this in order to rally support from coethnics, especially when parties are dominated by elite of ethnicity, this allows others to overlook potential policy differences on economic or policy agenda-- ethnic "wedge" issues. Violence breaks out closer to elections that are expected to be tight races; rally supporters without financial cost

However, this may or may not lead to high levels of violence; why? Escalation of violence depends on incentives of state-level politicians to use the police to put down violence/riots; use force for law and order.

What determines whether state politicians are more likely to send in police to quash violence? More competition and fractionalization leads to higher likelihood of intervention. Electoral incentives to protect minorities when they are potentially useful/necessary to be elected. This happens when minorities are either a part of their support base or coalition, or when elections will be so hotly contested that minority votes more important; 3+ parties mean more fractionalization

How might cleavages in the majority affect this calculation? More cleavages mean more willing to reach out to minorities

How might composition of minority group affect these state-level calculations? More votes minorities can deliver, more potential value to protection; leaders who can assure majority that minority not a threat lessens risk; areas in which minority is in demographic majority could make them seem more of a threat to local majority