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Inequality and Political Violence: Explaining Global Trends

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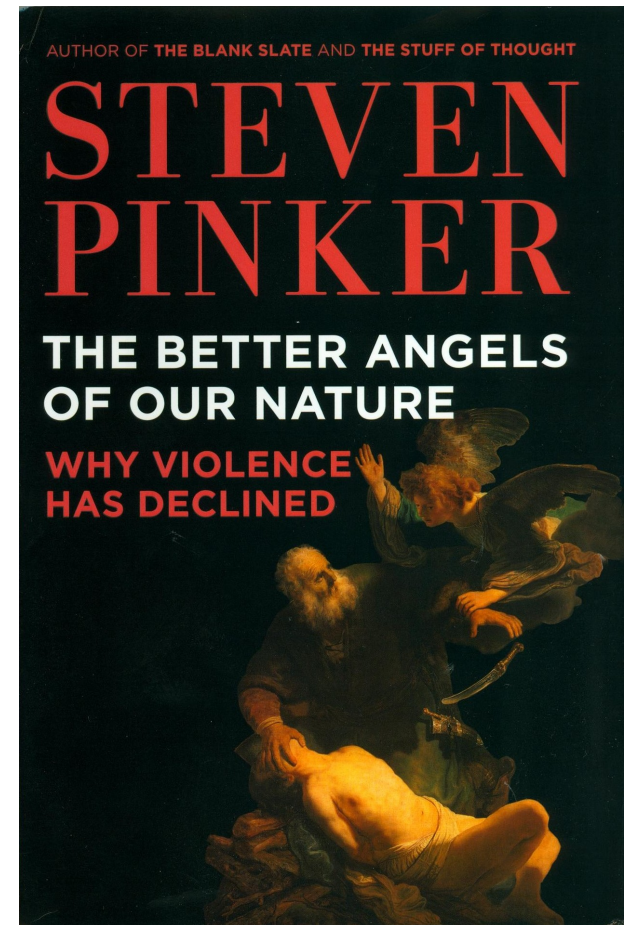
Presentation at the Land and War International Seminar, University
del Rosario, Bogota, November 8, 2014

Civil wars raging in 2014

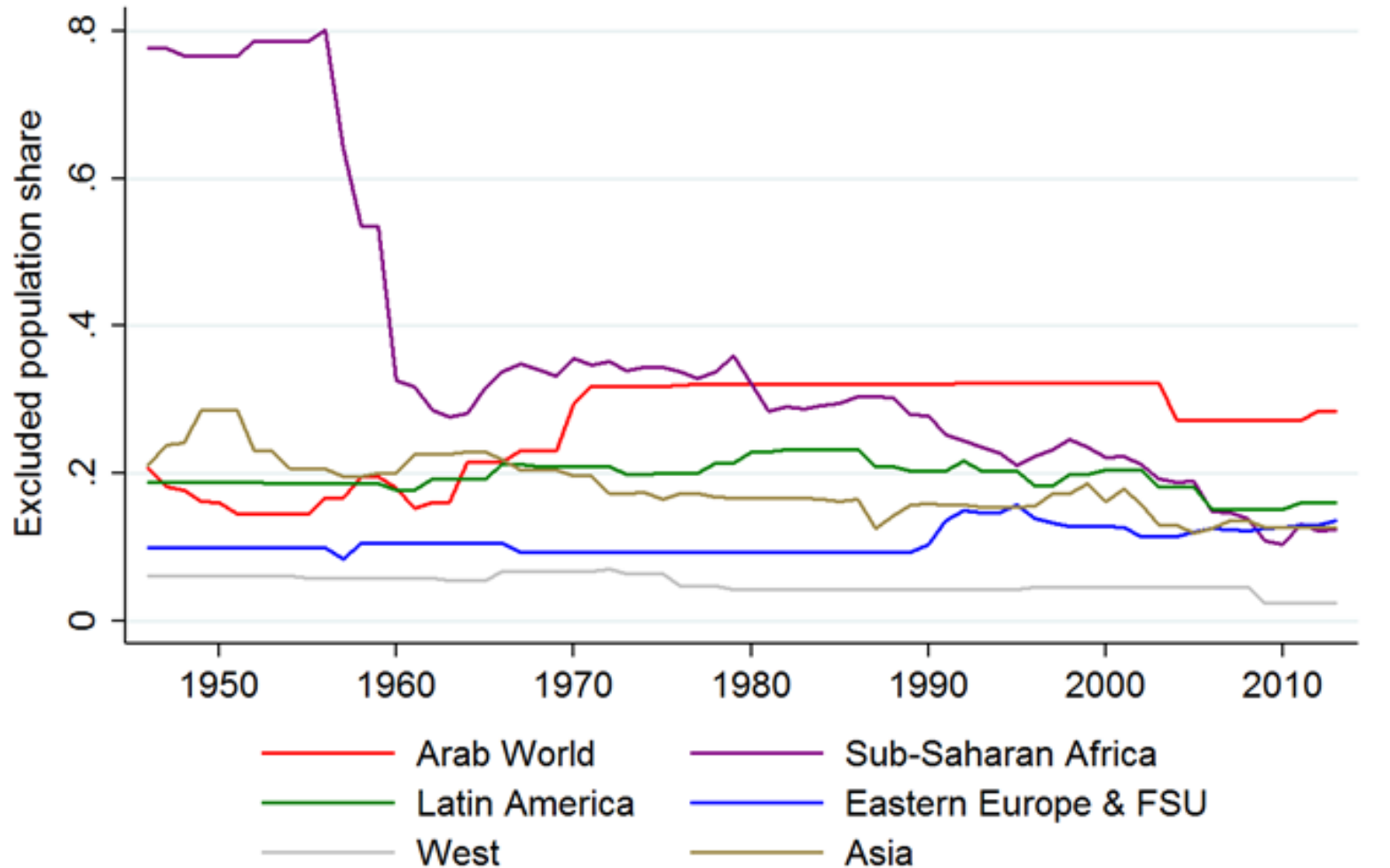


Decline of violence?

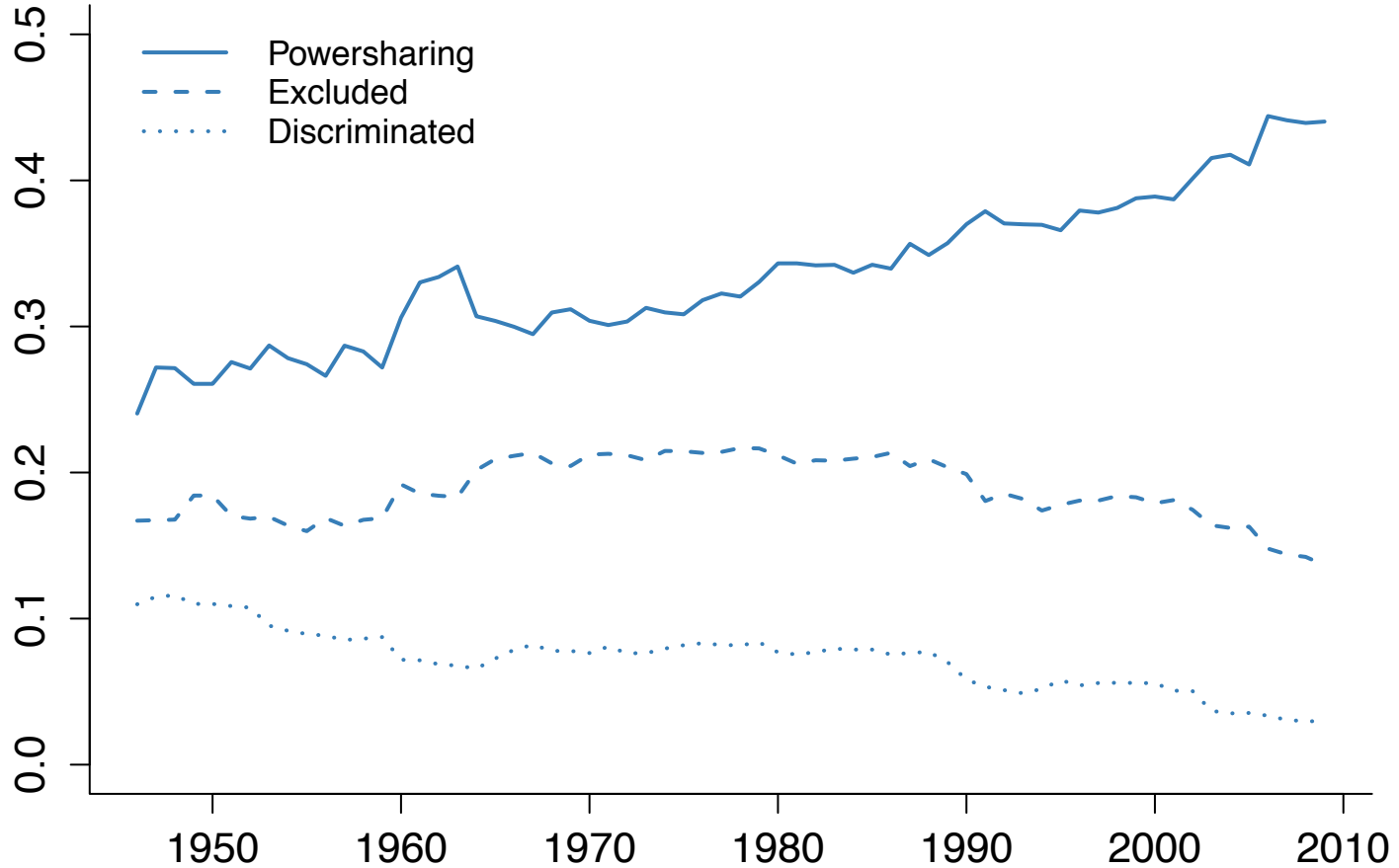
- World seems to be falling apart
- Yet, conflict researchers register decline: Pinker, Goldstein, Gurr etc.
- But explanations broad and unspecific
- Main hypotheses:
 1. Ethnic inequality declining
 2. Political violence declining
 3. Less ethnic ineq. → Less violence



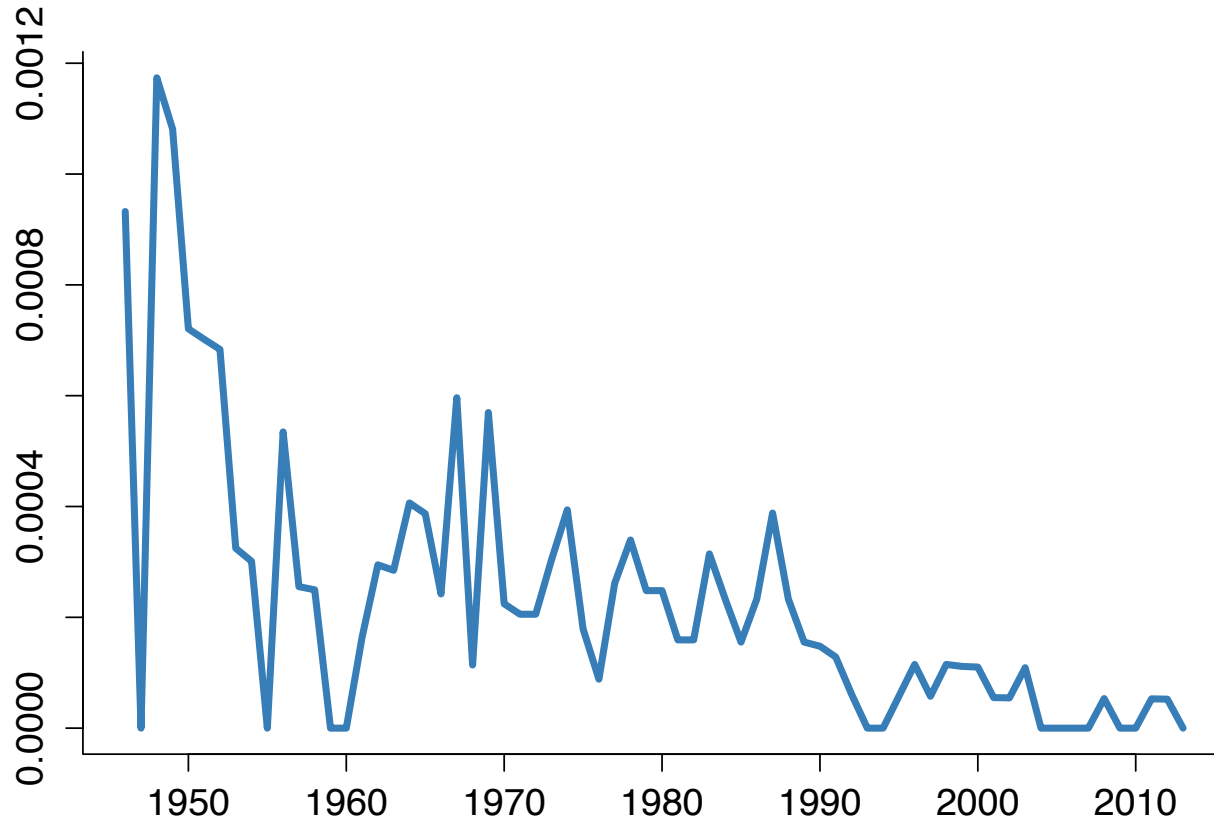
Excluded population over time



Trend toward inclusion

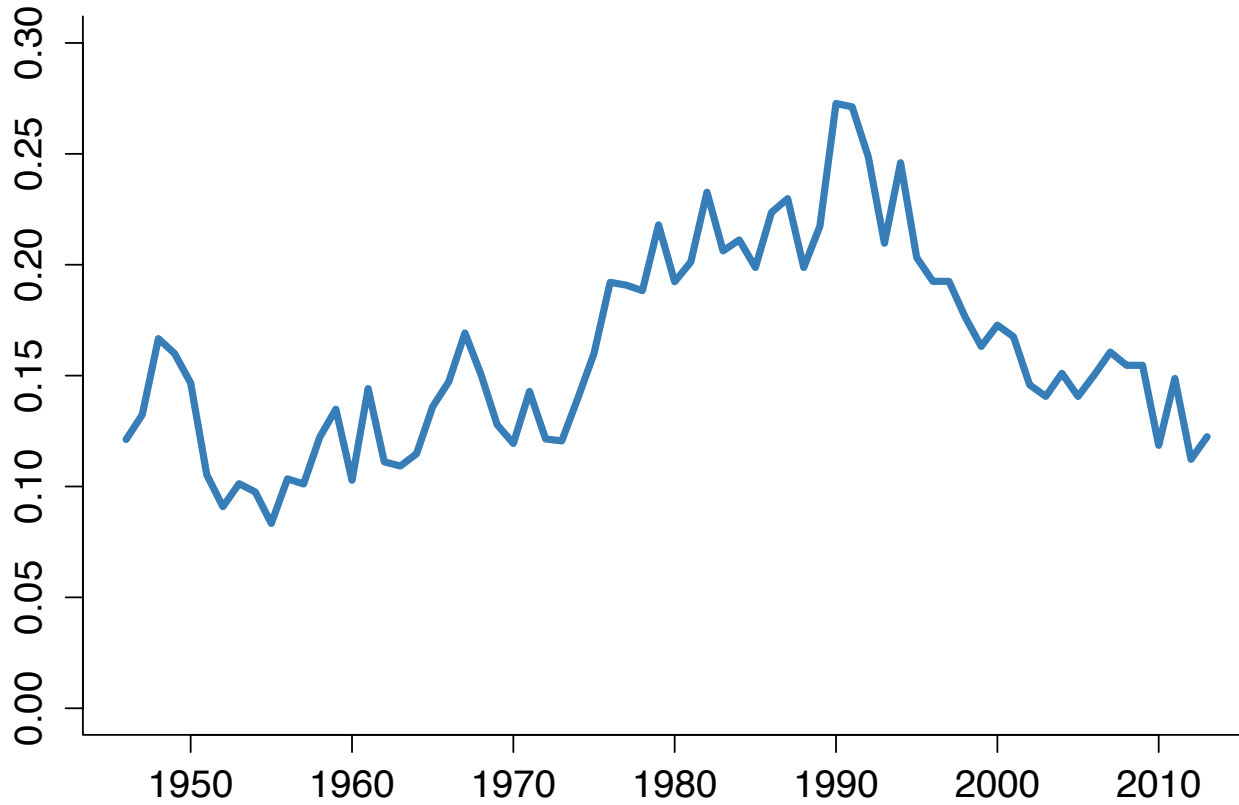


Probability of interstate conflict per dyad



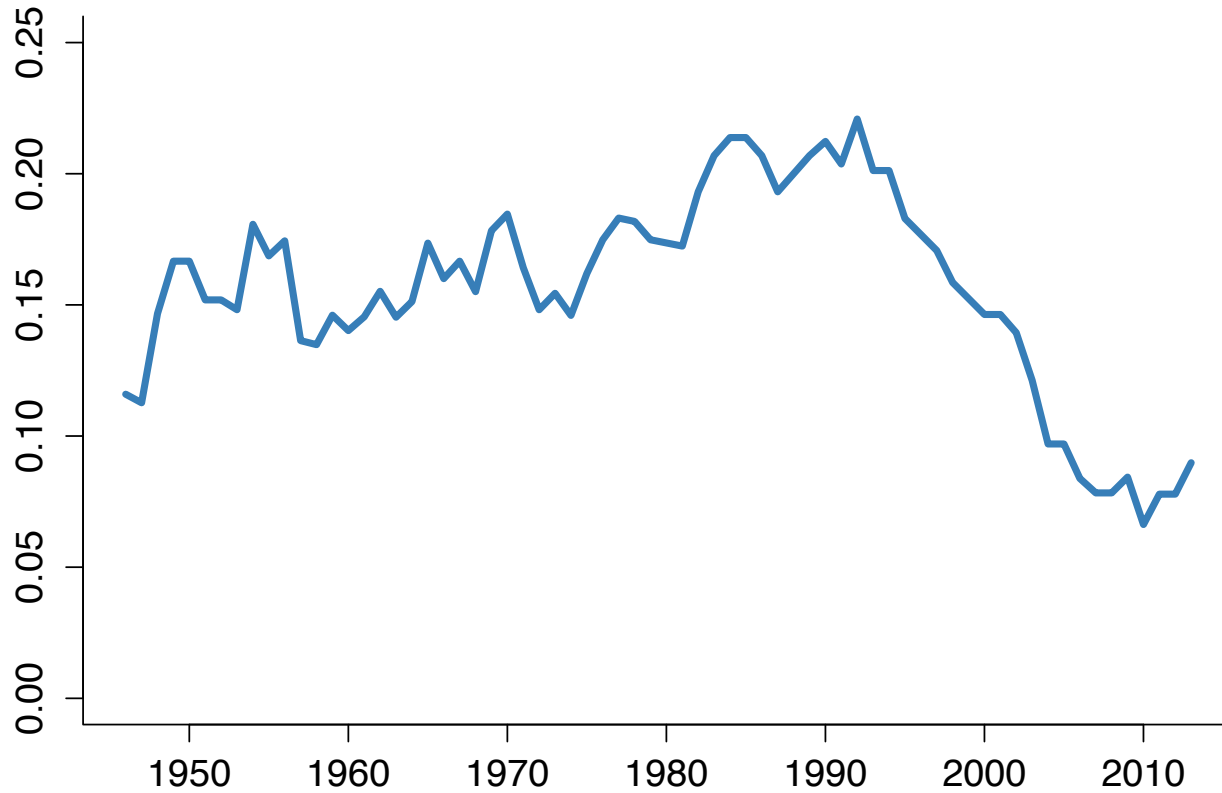
Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program

Probability of civil war per country



Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program

Probability of governmental mass killing per country



Source: Ulfelder and Valentino 2008

Ethnic war on the wane?

- Gurr (2000): Regime of accommodation explains decline in ethnic conflict:
 1. Group rights
 2. Territorial autonomy
 3. Power sharing
 4. Democratization
 5. Peacekeeping
- Cederman, Gleditsch & Wucherpfennig.
“Explaining the Decline of Ethnic Conflict: Was Gurr Right and For the Right Reasons?”

Onset of civil war

	Model 1a	Model 1b	Model 1c	Model 1d	Model 1e
group rights	-0.759 ⁺ (0.425)				
autonomy		0.369 (0.683)			
inclusion			-1.065* (0.516)		
democratization				-2.002 ⁺ (1.022)	
peacekeeping					0.214 (0.340)

(Control variables not shown)

Observations	1208	4097	6206	5645	8968
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Standard errors in parentheses

⁺ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

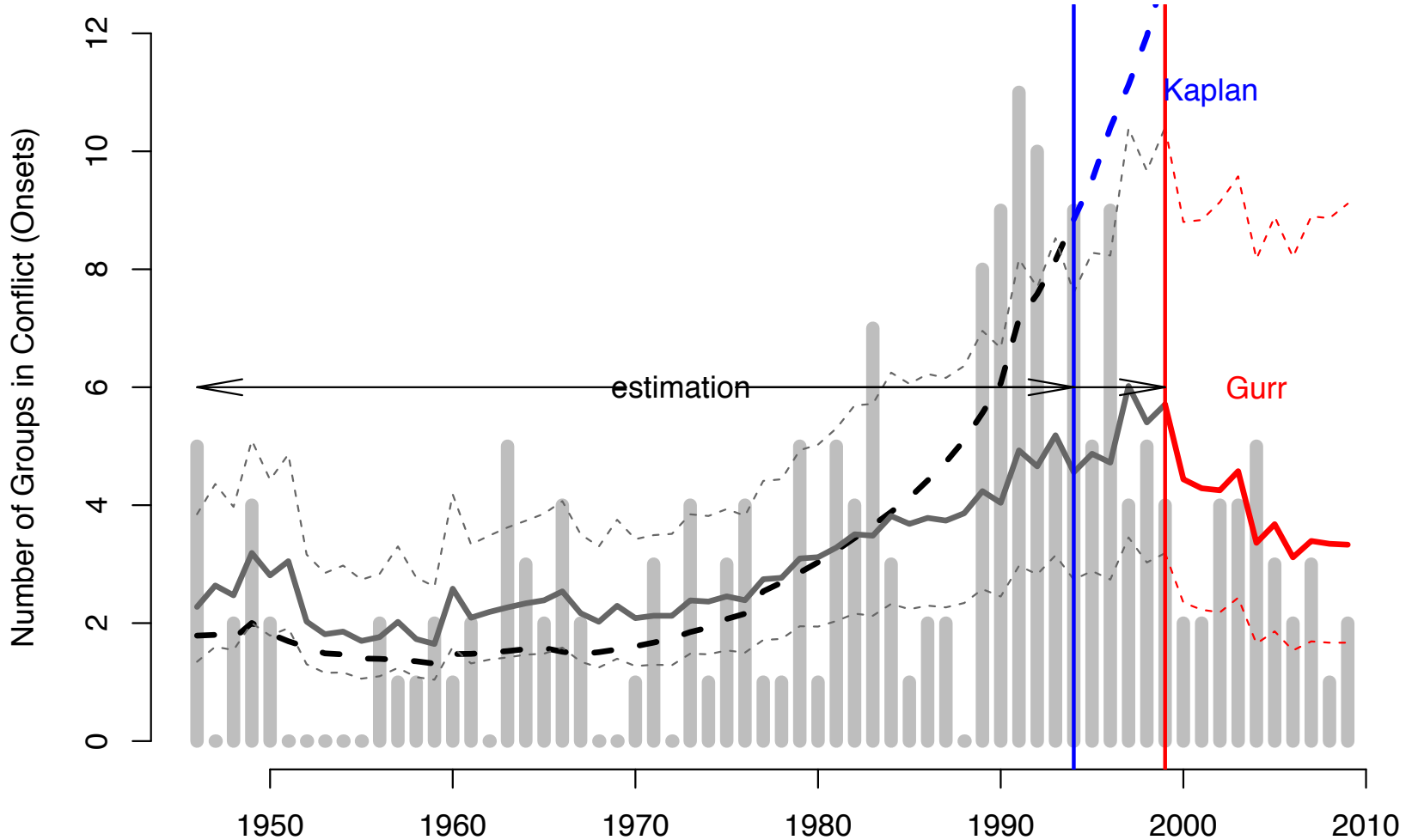
Termination of civil war

	Model 2a	Model 2b	Model 2c	Model 2d	Model 2e
group rights	-0.212 (0.949)				
autonomy		3.646* (1.515)			
inclusion			-0.243 (0.795)		
democratization				1.497 ⁺ (0.796)	
peacekeeping					0.924* (0.361)
<i>(Control variables not shown)</i>					
Observations	140	286	395	302	450

Standard errors in parentheses

⁺ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Predicting conflict trends: Gurr vs. Kaplan

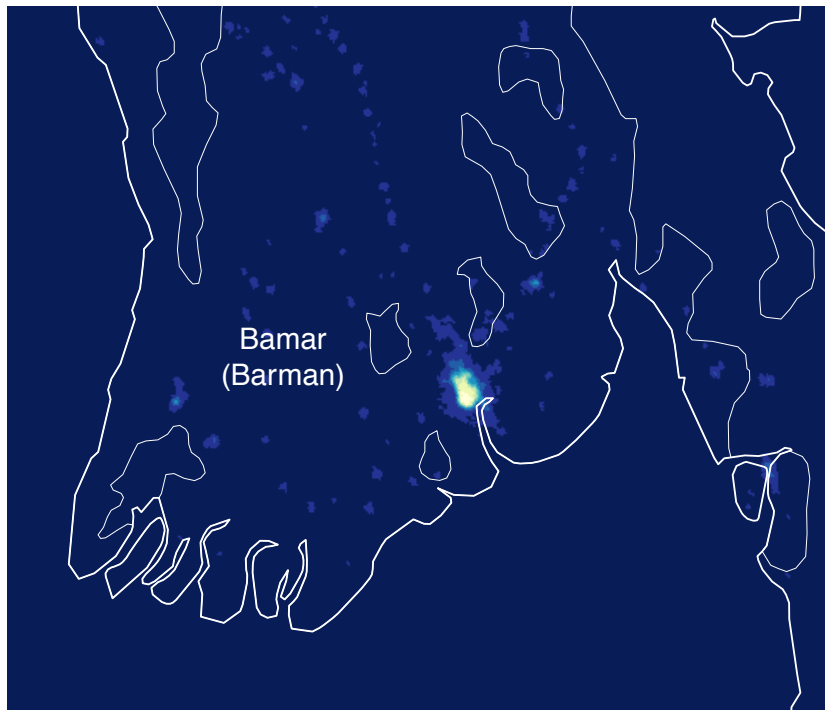


Conclusion

- Yes, ethnic inequality is declining
- Yes, political violence is declining
- Suggestive evidence of link between ethnic political inequality and civil wars: Gurr was right for the right reasons!
- Beyond political inequality, e.g. religion?
- Beyond civil wars?
- Possible reversals? Other causes?

Nightlights & horizontal inequality

- Chen & Nordhaus
(*PNAS* 2011)



G-Econ Estimate

Nightlights Estimate

