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What we know and we don't know about civil wars

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SYNOPSIS

What we know and we don't know about civil wars

Civil wars are the most prevalent form of contemporary war. Currently, civil wars in countries such as Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Ukraine dominate the news. During the past fifteen years, the comparative study of civil wars has made progress in pinpointing their causes and explaining their dynamics, duration, the ways in which they end, and their long-term impact. I review the most robust findings of this literature and discuss its shortcomings, as well as the future avenues for research.