Is diversity detrimental? Ethnic fractionalization, public goods provision, and the historical legacies of stateness

Existing research has shown that highly diverse communities and countries tend to provide less public goods. So much has this association been taken for granted that scholars have now begun focusing on the various possible mechanisms that could account for this association. This paper argues, by contrast, that the relationship might be spurious: contemporary ethnic heterogeneity and low public goods provision both represent legacies of a weakly developed state capacity inherited from the past. In a second part of the analysis, classical theories of state formation are tested to understand why weak states emerged in some places but not others. Empirically, this paper uses three different measurements of public goods provision and data on pre-colonial levels of state formation in Asia and Africa to test these various hypotheses.

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When:
Friday, January 30th, 1:30-3:00pm

Where:
HSH 201

Refreshments to be provided.