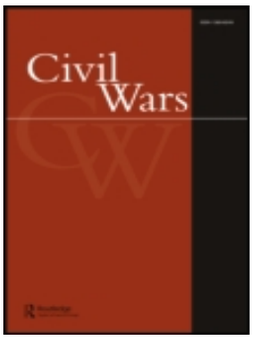

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Patrick M. Regan

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Interventions into Civil Wars: A Retrospective Survey with Prospective Ideas

PATRICK M. REGAN

The last decade has generated a robust study on the role of external interventions into civil wars. This literature builds on a rather small but influential foundation that at minimum pointed in the direction for a more systematic exploration for the conditions that lead to effective interventions. After a decade or more of research, it seems appropriate to take stock of where we have gone, what our results tell us, and how we might further advance this important theoretical and policy issue. In this review, I summarize and evaluate the large N, broadly cross-national studies on the conditions that lead to external interventions, and the conditions that lead to their success. I follow this with a discussion of how best to advance our understanding and move the research process forward.

INTRODUCTION

Civil wars continue to provide a vexing problem for policymakers to grapple with. We know that on average there will be about two civil war onsets in each year, and this pattern has been reasonably robust over the past 60 years. From a policy perspective, it is important to understand why groups take up arms against their states; theory and empirical evidence has contributed to our ability to understand these conditions[1] and to forecast them.[2] A body of scholarship over the past 10 years has attempted to weigh in on the related question of how external actors influence the course of civil wars. The implications of our understanding of the impact of external interventions have important political consequences, as former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright highlights in a *NY Times* editorial.[3]

From both theoretical and policy perspective the conditions under which interventions work is important. Russia recently intervened in the renewed violence between Georgia and the breakaway region of South Ossetia. To what end? Albright lamented that nobody intervened in the Zimbabwean unrest, yet we do not have a sense of the consequences if there had been an intervention. From a broader theoretical perspective, interventions are international policies that sometimes violate international norms, sometimes support the continued oppression of people, and sometimes can bring armed violence to an end and provide peace and stability. Where scholarship falls short is in articulating adequately where 'sometimes' is 'often', or when facilitating peaceful settlements is more likely.

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The evidence would suggest that interventions into civil wars remain a common feature of world politics, in spite of the former US Secretary's complaint that leaders no longer have the stomach for such actions. According to her *NYT* editorial, state sovereignty rules the international system and the old days of interventions are behind us. The evidence does not bear out her argument, but it is important at this juncture to step back and evaluate what the past decade of systematic, broadly cross-national, research into the conditions for and consequences of external interventions has taught us, and why she might have it so wrong.

While conventional wisdom puts the beginning of outside interventions at the end of the Cold War, empirical evidence suggests that intervention policies have changed little since the end of World War II.[4] And in spite of some early efforts to conceptually develop the ideas behind our understanding of interventions, the systematic study of outside interventions into internal conflicts did not take off until 1996.[5] Two central questions of theoretical and policy relevance drive most of the research on interventions: (1) when to state leaders choose to intervene in internal conflicts and (2) under what conditions do interventions work to achieve specific outcomes?

This article provides a survey of what we know about interventions as a result of contemporary, largely cross-national, scholarship. What I leave out might be as important as that which I include. Two types of literature stand out: (1) the literature on UN peacekeeping operations and (2) that adopting a more qualitative approach, often using single cases to describe specific interventions. The omission is not without logic, even though the insights from some of this literature could be fruitfully developed in studies of unilateral interventions.[6] For example, one argument that is more fully developed in the peacekeeping literature involves the idea that peacekeepers are sent to the hardest cases. In effect, there is a process by which the peacekeeping data we observe appear to be non-random.[7] I pick up this point more fully below, but suffice it to say at this juncture that logic points to a different selection process in unilateral, state-based interventions. My survey emphasizes the role of state interventions into ongoing civil wars, and serves as a compliment to the recent survey on peacekeeping by Fortna and Howard.[8]

From this review, I point to limitations and opportunities that derive from the collective body of research, areas where we seem to know something and those for which we remain largely in the dark. Finally, I end with a prescription for future research.

Such a survey is useful for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that over a decade of scholarship has addressed issues of when interventions take place and how interventions play out when they do take place. It is useful at a point like this – where studies accumulate, but progress becomes increasingly halting – to step back and reflect on what we know and what we don't, and to identify some of the pitfalls that have been skirted or avoided, pitfalls that must be overcome to ensure future progress. This should be the standard on which this review stands. I work from a summary of the early literature on interventions toward a comprehensive overview of what contemporary scholarship contributes to our theoretical understanding of the role of external actors in the outcome of internal conflicts.

Three points of reference motivate this review: (1) the outcomes from interventions (2) the conditions under which states, or more directly, who, intervenes and where, and (3) future directions that might help advance our understanding of the role of intervention in the dynamics of civil war. There has always been debate about the goals of interventions, whether they are to achieve geopolitical objectives or to advance humanitarian considerations such as bringing peace to the country. At this juncture, we can only speak to the empirical patterns and leave research into the relationship between potential goals and specific outcomes for the future. At the core, one could view decisions about who intervenes and into which conflicts from the perspective of realpolitik behaviors vs. liberal concerns with cooperation and stability. How we think about outcomes and actors should influence the future direction of research efforts.

THE CONCEPTUAL BEGINNINGS

Roseneau,[9] Duner,[10] and Rasler[11] provided some of the early foundations for the contemporary, and more systematic, study of external interventions. Roseneau's early work posed the problem of how we can best understand the idea of an intervention as distinct from more 'normal' forms of interstate interactions. Everything is an intervention unless you set some parameters to identify those that are targeted at influencing an ongoing – or maybe yet to be started – conflict. His criterion involved a standard that focused on authority-targeted and convention-breaking policies. The former requires that any intervention should attempt to influence the authority structures, and we know that one of the core concepts of civil wars is that they involve multiple centers of authority within one geographical entity.[12] Targeting authority structures, whether it is to overthrow the ruling elite or to support the status quo, seems to be precisely the type of question that motivates policy makers. The convention-breaking criterion reminded us that the interventions of interest are distinct from regular interactions. Recurring aid to a country at civil war does not necessarily constitute an intervention policy, even though cutting off that aid might. Roseneau never translated his conceptual arguments into empirical insights, but his definitional discussions were sufficiently compelling to form the foundation for numerous studies to follow.[13]

In a search for systematic analysis of the implementation and outcomes from external interventions into civil wars, Duner[14] and Rasler[15] stand out as early attempts to identify patterns in interstate behaviors. Rasler's was a single-case longitudinal study of the Syrian intervention into the Lebanese civil war. Even though her study was not broadly cross-national, the cross-temporal variations in Syrian policy provided her with sufficient information to draw interesting inferences. The implication of her analysis is that external military interventions can control internal violence if the intervener is willing to commit a sizeable military force. Early and reasonable weak Syrian interventions had little effect on the civil war, but a massive show of force helped bring the fighting to a halt. And while the argument is compelling, there are questions of how generalizable it may be,

particularly given the US experience in Vietnam and what we are currently observing in Iraq and Afghanistan. At a minimum, these are the types of questions that have immediate contemporary policy application, and reflect in many respects the types of intervention strategies at the heart of Madeleine Albright's recent lamenting over the end of interventions.

Duner took a different early track to understand military interventions, focusing instead on the sequence by which interventions unfold. As he framed it, he was interested in the 'anatomy of interventions'. The results from his sample of cases suggest that interventions tend to be grouped, sequenced, and escalatory. To put his results into the more contemporary framework adopted today, interventions tend to be part of a strategy that takes place in a strategic environment involving interveners and targets and that the sequence follows an identifiable logic.[16]

For at least a decade very little by way of systematic cross-national research followed up on these early efforts. Book-length treatments of interventions in specific civil wars provided most of the analysis,[17] and policy prescriptive discussions could be found in foreign policy journals.[18] The end of the Cold War seemed to move attention from the US – Soviet standoff into other questions of war and peace, and, importantly, interventions. Contemporary efforts to understand the determinants and consequences of external interventions build from these early foundations.

CONTEMPORARY SYSTEMATIC RESEARCH

There are two clear dimensions to contemporary research on interventions that together form parts of the same puzzle, but in practical terms tend to be engaged separately. The first has a focus on the results from intervention efforts: do they work or not?; do civil wars last longer or are they bloodier with interventions than without? The second theme tends to focus on who is doing the intervening and which countries tend to be targets. For the most part these two dimensions are intellectually linked, and understanding outcomes require some understanding of the countries, regions, and possibly types of conflicts involved. I tie these two queries together at the end of this section.

Outcomes from Interventions

In 1996, as the intellectual opportunities that arose from the end of the Cold War began to take root, four articles took on the task of trying to understand the role that outside actors can play in determining the outcome of internal conflicts.[19] The world had recently witnessed the genocide in Rwanda and the bloody breakup of Yugoslavia. In the Rwandan case, international action was paltry at best and the call for the partition of Rwanda was heard in policy circles and editorials. Chaim Kauffman argued that partitions and population transfers were the only solution to conflicts rooted in such ethnic hatreds, and that to make them successful they would have to be enforced through military intervention. His article relied more on argument than on evidence, but it certainly presented arguments that were testable.

Sambanis subjected this argument to empirical verification and found that, in essence, partitions are not the answer.[20]

Patrick Regan[21] asked the question of what types of interventions do work and under what conditions, with 'work' being defined in terms of stopping the fighting. Using a new data set on military and economic interventions he tested whether different forms of intervention contributed to the end of the conflict. His results suggested that interventions that include a mix of military and economic levers would be more effective than either type alone, but that in general, conflicts with external interventions are less likely to end than those without. The latter inference may have been a result of a selection process whereby the most violent and longest running civil wars are those that attract interventions, but this qualification did not hold up to evidence.[22] The success or failure of intervention policies, however, is not always defined in terms of conflict abatement, so the results and the theoretical argument required further refinement.

Mason and Fett[23] used Correlates of War data to test arguments about the outcome of interventions. The COW definition of an intervention required the deployment of troops into the conflict zone, effectively setting the bar for what we consider an intervention quite high. They used an expected utility model of the outcome of civil wars to develop expectations, and they anticipated that external interventions would influence the outcomes of the war. Their results, however, did not support this expectation, and in fact in their models external interventions had no discernible impact on war outcomes. If the logic, that external interventions would buttress the recipient and make victory more likely, did not hold up to evidence, the problem was to be found in the crudeness of the indicators of interventions. Much logic in world politics revolves around the idea that power matters most, and when this does not stand up to evidence, at least in the case of civil wars, we have to look elsewhere. One of the results of their research was to call for more refined data on interventions, which up to that point consisted of data on interventions only when troops were inserted into a conflict zone.[24] Mason and Fett's work, however, pointed to the potential theoretical importance of relative power and in doing so highlighted the difficulty of making these relative judgments when one participant is not a state actor. We know how to measure the 'power' of a state but non-state actors posed more difficult problems; the resolve of rebel groups might temper a more standard measure of relative power. I will return to this point later.

Carment and James[25] contributed to this early work by presenting a game theoretic treatment of the conditions or processes by which third parties intervene in civil wars. Their work helped lay the foundation for a number of later studies that develop strategic models of intervention.[26] These strategic interaction models turn out to be quite important in our contemporary thinking about when and why states intervene, pointing to clearer theoretical refinements on when to expect interventions and when they are more likely to be effective.

At the core, scholars and policymakers want to know what works and when. The trickiest part has been how to conceptualize the notion of what is meant by 'works', but this has stymied research for well over a generation.[27] The most common

outcomes that were explored involved either win, lose, or negotiations on the one hand, or the expected duration of the civil war on the other. Individual studies have picked up outcomes such as democratic transitions,[28] and genocides,[29] but the core body of research has focused on how or when a civil war ends. Research into the expected duration of civil wars, given interventions, has been the most enduring in this genre of research, most of which comes to a very similar conclusion: interventions into ongoing civil wars are more likely to extend the length of the conflict.[30] Regardless of the data that are used or the empirical specification, each of these studies finds that on average external interventions increase the expected duration of a civil war. The exception to this overarching result is by Collier, Hoeffler, and Soderman, where they find that under certain conditions external interventions that support the rebels can decrease expected durations.[31] They used Regan's[32] data but their sample was restricted to 1960, and they operationalize interventions as an increasing function of time. It is the latter change to the research designs of the other studies that presents both an innovation and a liability, though much more of an innovation. Effectively, by inflating the contribution of interventions for each unit of time that a conflict continues after the intervention, the intervention becomes more effective with each successive period. The innovative part of this is that they, for the first time, conceptualize interventions as something other than static behaviors, but the assumption of an inflator rather than a deflator, I think, is troubling. And since this is the only study to find results supporting an effect from interventions that decrease durations, the assumption deserves further review.

The questions of 'what happens to an intervention' or 'when do interventions end' are important, though difficult ones to answer. In general, the only interventions that have both a start and an end date are those in which troops from the intervening country are placed into the conflict zone. The Correlates of War requires this for its definition of an intervention, and studies by Balch-Lyndsay and colleagues[33] adopt the COW definition and data. Interventions which are more refined in character such as military hardware, intelligence, or monetary aid do not have a clear end date because the end point is when the form of aid or the piece of equipment becomes lost or obsolete. Since Collier *et al.* use Regan's data, which includes various forms of aid as well as troops, it is virtually impossible to identify an end date for each intervention. By the functional form of their counting of interventions they make the assumption that a cache of weapons today becomes more effective over time, and as a result find that interventions on behalf of the rebels, 1960–99 can shorten expected durations. The guns, however, may be lost, captured, or broken and in practice leaves the initial intervention degraded over the course of time. Their result demonstrating that interventions supporting the rebels decrease expected duration stands on its own, but it points to the importance of model specification. Regan and Aydin[34] adopt the Collier *et al.* approach to thinking about the temporal impact of interventions and developed a deflator – rather than an inflator – for each individual intervention. Using data that model a declining impact of interventions over time supports the general body of literature's conclusion that interventions serve to extend the time that combatants fight.

One of the insights from recent scholarship is that civil war participants hold expectations about potential interventions, and that these prior expectations can influence the course of the war.[35] Put differently, under some conditions rebels or governments plan on interventions and these expectations play into their strategies for prosecuting the war. For example, Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski frame this in terms of the effect of interstate rivalries on the duration of civil wars. If the state experiencing a civil war is involved in an interstate rivalry, the rebels fighting that state may expect to receive support from the rival country. In their model the geopolitical relationship among actors is an important determinant of the willingness and ability of rebels to press their case by force of arms, and their results point to the existence of a rivalry increasing the probability of observing an intervention supporting the rebels. However, the interventions themselves, as demonstrated by others, extend the duration of the conflict. Even with this more nuanced theoretical specification, their results support the general trend in duration models.

An important aspect of research into the effect of interventions on civil war duration is how robust the 'negative' result is to model specification, research design, and data sources. It seems to matter little whether the requirement is troops on the ground or the provision of aid or arms, interventions generally extend durations, and countering – or as Balch-Lyndsay and Enterline[36] frame it, balanced – interventions seem particularly prone to extending the duration of a civil war.

An alternative approach to understanding the outcome of interventions is to examine the influence of external support on the probability that we observe negotiations or victory by one side. It seems that many in the policy arena would view this as an implicit (if not explicit) outcome of interest, and that this more closely mirrors the questions asked by those who are responsible for implementing intervention policy. There is some convergence in this genre of research, even though not all studies come to the same conclusion. Mason, Weingarten, and Fett[37] use an expected utility framework to develop hypotheses posting that biased interventions, those that support one side in a conflict, will lead to an increased probability of that side winning and a decreased probability of a negotiated outcome. That is, victory should come to those who generate external support. Their evidence, however, suggests that there is no significant relationship between biased support and the probability of victory, at least in the short term.

Rowland and Carment[38] also use a game theoretic framework to develop the expectation that biased interventions are more likely to lead to an escalation of a civil war than its termination, in effect the exact opposite prediction from the Mason *et al.* model. And although their evidence relies on a case study of the conflict in Kosovo, the implications seem to be quite convergent with the evidence presented by Mason and his colleagues.[39] Moreover, this result garners some support from the work by Balch-Lyndsay, Enterline, and Joyce in which they use a competing risk framework and find that biased interventions increase the time until the onset of negotiations, but a balanced, or offsetting, interventions can decrease the time until we observe negotiations. As the dictates of social science would have it,

Gent articulates a formal theoretical model positing that biased interventions will decrease the time until we observe either rebel victory or negotiations.[40] His model makes no prediction about the effect of an intervention supporting the government, and his results support this hypothesis that runs counter to the study by Balch-Lyndsay and colleagues. The most promising explanation for the differing results between Balch-Lyndsay *et al.*, Mason and his colleagues, and Gent is their use of different data sets, which in turn require dramatically different standards for observing an intervention. One interpretation might be that interventions consisting of troops involved in the conflict decrease the prospects for an early victory or negotiations, but less intrusive interventions have a quite dramatic impact on the time it takes for either outcome to prevail. It would be possible to test for this differing outcome by selecting only Regan's interventions that reach the level of the use of force by the intervener. If those results hold up then we would be on firmer ground thinking about the effect of differing magnitudes of intervention on negotiations or victory. To my knowledge this has not been done.

Cetinyan develops a formal model to explore the conditions under which external interventions will influence the course of civil wars, asking a somewhat broader question about the effect of interventions on probable civil war onsets.[41] His model and subsequent analysis using the Minorities at Risk data demonstrate that external support does not affect the likelihood of the onset of a civil war (one of the only studies to explore this question), but it does influence the terms of a settlement, should one occur. Gershenson also develops a formal model of the role of external interventions, conceptualized in terms of sanctions, on the likelihood that the state engages rebels in negotiations.[42] His analysis points to a double-edged sword, where weak sanctions against the state can hurt the rebel cause but strong sanctions can compel the state to engage rebel demands. Together these studies point toward a possible link between external interventions and the bargaining power of the rebels vis-à-vis the government. This type of power-based argument would be consistent with a general understanding of the role of power and bargaining in world politics,[43] but subsequent research has not yet taken this line of enquiry further. It should. One of the primary difficulties is in deriving measures of rebel power when the sources of their power might be rooted in factors other than soldiers in arms. For example, rebel sanctuary across an international border,[44] ethnic affinities,[45] or the commitment of the rebels all contribute to their capabilities.[46]

These analyses rely on different model specifications and one of three data sets, each of which sets a different standard for conceptualizing an intervention. And since the bulk of the broadly cross-national studies also rely on similar conceptions of the expected outcomes of interventions, the results are comparable. In general, interventions do nothing to decrease the duration of a civil war,[47] they appear to be associated with more violence,[48] and it is somewhat unclear as to whether support for rebels will increase their chance for victory or decrease the time until negotiations start.[49]

Given that negotiations – at least as an outcome if not a form of intervention – are central to the conflict management aspects of interventions, it is remarkable how

little systematic research there is on this topic. As described above, a few studies examine the role of military and/or economic interventions and the prospects for observing negotiations between the warring parties, but only a few recent articles examine the impact of externally driven negotiations, that is, mediation, on the outcome of the civil war.[50] If studies of bargaining, power, and resolve in interstate conflict have taught us anything it is that an expected payoff from a given choice is important for understanding outcomes, at least given the relative military capabilities of each side.[51] Conceptualizing interventions as part of a strategic decision process should include the option of offering or engaging in mediation. Results adopting this frame of reference demonstrate that mediation is the only type of external intervention that is associated with shorter conflict durations, and the effect of mediation on duration is substantively huge compared to other forms of intervention.[52] In effect, interventions that manipulate information about possible outcomes seem to have a considerably larger impact than those that only manipulate relative capabilities. A likely explanation for why there is no body of literature on the role of mediation in civil war outcomes is that data were not widely available. Regan, Frank, and Aydin[53] have addressed this problem by introducing a data set on external diplomatic interventions into civil wars that builds on the data used by Regan and Aydin,[54] while Greig and Regan[55] use these data to test models of the offer to mediate and the conditions associated with its acceptance by the warring parties. Their results suggest that common interests drive the offer to mediate but conditions associated with the conflict are most influential in the acceptance of an offer.

As with the relative dearth of research on diplomatic forms of interventions, there are a number of other outcomes that could form the basis for understanding the impact of external interventions on internal conflict. Genocide prevention and democratic transitions are two outcomes for which interventions would seem to be tailor made. The outcry over the lack of action during the Rwandan genocide was grounded in an implicit assumption that an intervention could have worked to at least slow the tide of the murders. Krain provides possibly the only broadly cross-national analysis of the impact of interventions on genocides.[56] His results suggest that if interventions were to target the perpetrators of the genocide, the severity of the violence could be reduced. But he cautions that neutral interventions into genocidal situations are largely ineffective. If Krain's study were to hold up in further analysis, then the results could have important policy implications. Clearly the humanitarian motivation behind interventions has been the subject of considerable attention, but too few have addressed these questions in a broadly cross-national framework[57] nor with a focus on what might be the gravest of humanitarian crises, genocide.

Bueno de Mesquita and Downs[58] tested the idea that external interventions facilitate the transition to democracy. Working from expectations derived from a selectorate model they find that external interventions do not promote democratic transitions, or at best interventions contribute to a 'facile' form of transition. In effect, interventions tend to restrict rather than facilitate democratic transitions in the targeted state. This general question has a precursor in work by Peceny.[59]

Building on a different body of literature Peceny shows that US interventions can promote democratic transitions, but only if they marry military interventions to the active promotion of elections within the targeted country. As with Krain's research on genocide and intervention, two systematic studies on the effect of intervention on democratic transition are hardly enough to draw policy relevant inferences, particularly when the results tend to diverge in critical areas. However, the idea of promoting transitions toward democracy provides an integral link to Walter's work on peace agreements that resolve civil wars.[60] Her analysis demonstrates that fully implemented agreements require external guarantees in the form of interventions, and her notion of success requires a democratic transition, at least in the form of an election. One view of this is that you cannot generate peace until you remove the incompatibility, and elections provide one such mechanism for doing so. In the systematic and cross-national genre of research, this has been woefully underdeveloped.

Who Intervenes and Where

A critical part of any effort to model the outcome of interventions into civil wars is to develop an understanding of who intervenes and where. In the interstate war literature this generally shows up as models designed to account for selection processes, and in the realm of civil wars this is plainly evident in observations about UN interventions.[61] At the level of intuition, the process by which a United Nations intervention can be organized, approved, and implemented requires that the conflict be large and destabilizing enough to bring it to the attention of the world community, and effectively, get the five permanent members of the Security Council to sign on to the intervention. Put differently, the hardest cases are most likely to be the ones that attract the attention of the UN, and these are presumably the most difficult cases in which an intervention can be successful.

The empirical evidence would suggest that many of the unilateral interventions are carried out by the major powers,[62] and conventional wisdom would posit that most of these are tied to the geopolitics of the Cold War. Recent research has begun to frame the decision to intervene in terms of strategic interactions, with implications for whether a civil war starts and the potential outcomes if an intervention takes place.[63] Few studies, however, link models of interventions to models of the outcome of intervention.[64]

Who intervenes is wound up in issues that transcend the geopolitics of the Cold War and is often conceptualized in terms of trans-border support for ethnic kin or insurgencies. Since many of the civil wars are not in neighboring countries to the world's great powers, something else is pushing states to intervene. Khosla's research suggests that neighbors are one of the biggest sources of interventions, and this result is consistent with the theoretical arguments presented by Davis and Moore.[65] Carment *et al.*[66] articulate a model of interventions, which suggests that the twin factors of group affinity and cleavage drive intervention policies, and we know from others that cross-border ethnic kin can influence both.[67]

Empirical results support the notion that neighbors and major powers are the primary interveners, and that the decision to intervene is strategic.[68] Gent argues and provides evidence to support his argument that the preferences of possible interveners structure who actually intervenes. Convergent preferences lead to free riding by allies, and as preferences diverge the incentive to intervene increases, presumably to the point that completely divergent preferences result in competing interventions. This would be consistent with evidence that major powers during the Cold War account for a considerable portion of the observed interventions. Regan's results hold up under a selection model, and Thyne provides evidence that interventions extend expected durations when controlling for the selection into interventions.[69] Although not framed explicitly as a selection model *per se*, Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski adopt a strategic framework involving the role of interstate rivalries to understand civil war durations, effectively using rivalries as a selection criterion.[70] Their results suggest that interventions prolong civil wars, even when controlling for this strategic selection process. A game theoretic treatment by Rowland and Carment provides some of the theoretic logic behind these strategic calculations.[71]

Greig and Regan focus exclusively on external mediation, with mediation being a form of diplomatic intervention.[72] But any mediation that is offered must be accepted by the warring parties, so that part of the puzzle revolves around the parties that actually accept offers of mediation. Since mediation is voluntary and both (or all) parties must agree to participate, this provides for us a window on the role of intervention as part of a conflict management process. Presumably, a party would not agree to participate in mediation if they did not conceive of an outcome that was potentially obtainable through negotiation that was preferred to their best-expected outcome as a result of war. In this sense the observation of mediation provides at least a tacit understanding that there is a potential pathway out of war, even if it is difficult to find. The results of their analysis demonstrate that prior relationships between the country at war and the party offering mediation have a considerable influence on who offers, but that it is not solely the strength of that relationship that determines when an offer is accepted. Conditions associated with the conflict and the reputation of the potential mediator are the dominant predictors of acceptance.

The idea that there are multiple pathways to intervention as well as multiple forms that an intervention can take leads directly to the concept that intervention policies reflect a substitutable set of options available to any potential actor. Why one state chooses to use military troops vs. a less intrusive form such as a cache of weapons, or economic aid vs. diplomatic negotiations remains elusive. But that such policy options are substitutable holds intuitive appeal when considered as a foreign policy choice.[73] The concept of substitution has been used to understand the conditions under which the US chose one of four strategies with regard to intervening in a civil war: do nothing, military, economic, or diplomatic intervention.[74] The strongest predictor of a change in US intervention policy was the amount of attention the conflict generated in the national media. Political party difference, trade, alliance, or other interveners were considerably weaker predictors

of US policy than a measure of how visible the war is to the US public. These results only hold for the USA but are at least suggestive of earlier results that humanitarian events drive intervention policy. It might be naïve to think that geopolitics are unimportant but may be equally simplistic to ignore the role of local politics.[75] In effect this is a line of research that requires considerably more attention to understand how these mechanisms drive policy choices.

In the end we have a sense of who intervenes into which types of conflicts, but the few efforts to model outcomes as part of a structural process have not significantly changed the results derived from non-selection-based research. One interpretation is that the strategic calculations of potential interveners are already worked into the models that account for outcomes. There is enough systematic evidence, however, to begin to tie things together in ways that can facilitate progress in the study of interventions.

SOME UNDERLYING THEMES IN THE RESEARCH

At the core, there is a relative paucity of broadly cross-national research on interventions into civil wars, relative in the sense that this type of policy option does not get the intellectual attention that, say, the onset of civil war does. This leaves a lot of room for a broader range of research and a better marrying of quantitative and qualitative scholarship. As a form of international behavior it is rather frequent, and by most accounts civil wars are, today, the most frequent form of armed conflict within and between states. So this relatively sparse body of research leaves room for much more scrutiny as to the conditions for and outcome from external interventions. But in spite of what appears to be a paucity of broadly cross-national studies, the results are remarkably convergent. My task at this point is to bring together this summary into a more coherent whole that will allow to point toward a direction for further research.

This general body of research on the effect of external interventions on civil war outcomes demonstrates that civil wars tend to be longer and more violent if they attract external interventions, at least those of the military or economic variety. There is some, albeit meager in terms of volume, evidence that externally mediated civil wars are more likely to end sooner than non-mediated civil wars. This has implications that I will pick up shortly. There is also evidence and argument suggesting that external interventions can lead to earlier negotiations, or framed differently, that interventions supporting the rebels can compel the government to address their issues.[76] The outcome of those negotiations, however, remains largely unexamined.

Interventions as a policy choice appear to be only marginally productive if the goal is framed in terms of some form of conflict management, that is, if the interventions seek to limit conflict. The question of whether or not that is the goal remains one of the speculations and for the most part implicit by way of assumption.

Two assumptions shape almost all of the systematic studies of interventions, and to my mind they are almost always implicit. The first assumption is that

interventions reflect some form of conflict management, and as such policies are designed to make conflicts less likely, shorter, or less violent. One of the few studies to make this explicit posits that the goal of interventions is to stop the fighting associated with civil wars.[77] Few have explicitly bought into that assumption and many have challenged it.[78] But at the core, many of the studies outlined above have assumed that some form of conflict management is at the foundation of intervention. It might not be stopping the fighting *per se*, but by way of assumption the intervener has goals that appear to be facilitated if the war were to end. Related to this, the second assumption is that interventions are part of the geopolitical process by which states try to manipulate behavior of their allies and enemies. Outcomes such as victory or negotiation simply describe how this manipulation plays out. In rather practical terms this provides a way for research to move forward, but by making these assumptions researchers have tended to avoid the attribution of more specific goals to the intervention.

Either of the implicit assumptions articulated above could cater to the use of specific goals to more closely refine models of intervention outcomes. For example, when viewing interventions as a form of conflict management, stopping the fighting, reducing the violence, or shortening the expected duration are all viable outcomes. But the mechanisms by which interventions will achieve these outcomes are left unstated. In most instances the theoretical logic relies on some notion of balancing capabilities between rebels and the state, such that one side sues for peace or the conflict reaches a stalemate and negotiations begin. It is all about balance of capabilities, not goals and objectives of either the intervening state or the combatants. The conflict management aspects of any intervention, those behaviors that might actually contribute to peace, remain underspecified both theoretically and empirically.

The assumption of geopolitical manipulation underlying intervention policies also falls victim to under-articulated goals. States incur a cost of intervention to manipulate specific behaviors. The general assumption of manipulating an outcome does not provide a vehicle for thinking about the actual policy that might generate an intervention or provide the policymaker with a metric for evaluating if it was a success.[79] Goals of overthrowing a state, preventing a takeover of an ally, securing foreign nationals, or maintaining public integrity through the alleviation of a humanitarian crisis provide concrete outcomes more likely to be part of the policy discussion. Articulating a coherent and systematically reproducible set of goals may be tricky, but doing so may provide a more solid foundation for evaluating the outcome of interventions.[80] This is one area where scholarship of a qualitative methodology can facilitate progress in the quantitative genre.

An example of this can be seen in the editorial by Madeline Albright referenced in the introduction and her musing that the age of interventions is over and that state sovereignty finally won. Her implicit goal for the types of interventions that she advocates is the overthrow of an existing regime, albeit one that she feels has lost legitimacy. She poses an empirical question as to (1) the frequency of these types of interventions and (2) their success rates. Maybe these types of regime-change

interventions are rare and prone to failure when they do take place, but to date scholarship cannot evaluate this type of policy as articulated by a very senior policy advocate. A closer attention to goals would facilitate our understanding of different outcomes and their relative success rates. I shall come back to this point later, but it should be clear that the public articulation of goals could mask 'true' goals, such as President Bush's claim of the threat of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, makes empirical analysis difficult yet pressing.

If the first assumption is correct, that interventions are intended as some form of conflict management, then the overall lack of emphasis on the role of negotiations and mediation is striking. A few studies model the prospects of negotiations within the context of interventions, but there is little attention devoted to the outcome of those negotiations or the conditions under which they take place.[81] That is, do negotiations motivated by the intervention lead to a resolution, a peace accord, a shorter conflict, or less killing? An emphasis on the conflict management role of interventions demands this. Walter[82] provides data on peace agreements and their implementation, as does Hartzell[83] and Fortna,[84] so it would be possible to examine the impact of external interventions on the likelihood that agreements get negotiated, particularly in light of Walter's argument that interventions – in the form of security guarantees – are a necessary condition for the implementation of negotiated agreements. Much needs to be done on this score. There seems to be no compelling reason that questions about the role of external intervention on the stability of negotiated outcomes could not form the foundation of a viable research strategy, and one with theoretical and practical implications.

A related aspect to the question of negotiations is that of external diplomatic interventions. Most of the literature focuses on the most intrusive forms of interventions, those of the military or economic variety, and in many instances the literature adopts a threshold of intervention that requires at least troops on the ground. Mediation and other forms of external involvement in diplomatic efforts have been largely neglected, primarily I suspect because of data limitation.

Using recent data on diplomatic interventions, Regan and Aydin[85] test a duration model of intervention that includes an indicator of mediated negotiations. While the substantive effect of military and economic interventions remains consistent with earlier studies, external mediation dramatically reduces the expected duration of the civil war. Without going beyond inferences that are permissible from one study, the general body of literature on interventions seems to be missing a crucial element in the strategies available to potential intervening countries. This omission is particularly glaring in those studies that adopt the often implicit assumption that interventions reflect efforts at conflict management. If a country is trying to broker peace, then one of the tools available would be their diplomatic corps. Importantly, mediation serves to manipulate the information boundaries of those involved in the conflict, while military and economic interventions manipulate the structural characteristics. Theories of international politics would suggest that information asymmetries are often at the core of armed conflict[86] and that relative capabilities often determine when settlements can be reached. Combining these insights into studies of the outcome of

interventions seems to be imperative, and data on diplomatic interventions have recently been released that could help fill in these gaps.[87]

The strengths and weaknesses of the broadly cross-national literature on interventions into civil wars provide a way to describe a road forward. I next turn to articulating some of the ways in which important omissions in the literature can be developed into coherent research projects.

POINTING IN NEW DIRECTIONS

I offer three suggestions that would help to develop our understanding on the effect of interventions into civil wars: (1) an emphasis on goals, (2) thinking about the impact of the motivation of rebels, and (3) testing models of intervention prior to the onset of a civil war.

As a result of all of the research on interventions into civil wars we know next to nothing about the goals of the interveners. Without explicitly considering the goals, statistical models have a difficult time evaluating their effectiveness. Instead, most of the studies reviewed have posited an outcome of interest and by extension assumed the outcome was the goal. Krain[88] and Bueno de Mesquita and Downs[89] articulated specific goals: stopping genocides and promoting democracy, respectively, but they only evaluated the effect of interventions on that one specific goal. But as Scott[90] and Jentleson[91] make clear, the goals that justify an intervention may be both varied, and geopolitical rather than issue specific. And although the few studies that evaluate the effect of interventions on specific goal-oriented outcomes are helpful, we would benefit from a more systematic examination of the goals of interveners.

Focusing on the goals of interveners, however, presents some thorny theoretical and empirical problems, but incorporating goals might tell us a lot about the impact of interventions on outcomes. Most often we think in terms of promoting human rights, protecting economic assets, humanitarian crises, overthrowing a government, or bogging down an adversary as some of the more immediate objectives. But we face the potential dilemma that stated goals may not be those that drive the policy decisions, the goals of the intervener may differ from those of the targeted state or rebel group, and goals may change over time. The work by Bueno de Mesquita and Downs helps to illuminate this problem. If the goal of an intervention is to promote democratic transition, then their evidence either suggests that the tool of intervention is simply ineffective for the articulated objective, or that the articulated objective is more complex than simply promoting democratic transition. Either interpretation suggests that more such research is necessary. Finnemore provides for a way to think about goals and how they change over time. Building on this type of work to develop operational indicators would take us a long way toward models that account for the goals of the intervener.

Nicaragua (1980s) and Iraq (2000-present) provide easy examples of the difficulty of incorporating goals into our models of intervention outcomes. In Iraq we were told that the war (a very large-scale intervention) was targeted at weapons

of mass destruction, breaking Iraqi links to terrorist organizations, promoting democracy, or overthrowing a dictator, yet we know *ex post* that the stated goal changed with time. If a research team were coding 'goals', which of these would they code as operable? Moreover, there are numerous unstated or understated goals that have at least reached the level of speculation, such as securing oil fields and revenge for Saddam's attempt on George H. W. Bush's life. While potentially implausible, the burden of proof is on the research team and this type of issue will pose problems. The US support of the Contra in Nicaragua during the 1980s provides another example. According to the US government, support for the Contra was not designed to overthrow the Sandinista regime. It was instead designed to force democratic openings upon the government. One way to achieve that goal would have been to defeat the Sandinista militarily, but we cannot easily eliminate the overthrow of the government as a viable goal, and this goal, moreover, may have changed as the fortunes of Congressional authority waxed and waned. What were the actual goals behind US policy? This may be a difficult question to answer. But more precise evaluations of the effectiveness of external interventions would be facilitated by a focus on goal-oriented behavior. The difficulty of developing operational indicators of state goals expands, moreover, as you consider the range of countries that intervene and the temporal range of interventionary policies.

One of the critical questions that remain unanswered is how interventions prior to the onset of civil war impact (1) the likelihood that a war ever starts and (2) the outcome or duration of any war that does start. If interventions worked perfectly and all states had great foresight, then rational policy would point toward intervening in such a manner as to prevent the onset of civil war, or to do so in a way that ensures a quick victory for the supported side. Why wait until after the fighting is well underway and rebel forces are entrenched? The empirical evidence demonstrates that there are a lot of military, economic, and diplomatic interventions after the start of a civil, in fact about 1,400 using Regan's data.[92] But we have little information on the effect of interventions before the sunk costs of war come into play. To a large degree this is an artifact of the data-generating process, where the observations reflect ongoing civil wars and data on interventions were recorded during these war periods. Looking for interventions when we do not know the population of possible civil wars presents a considerable hurdle, and potentially strains operative definitions of interventions.

There is currently a project underway to develop data and test models of early interventions on a set of at risk countries that, based on certain criterion, provide a reasonable population of cases into which an intervention targeted at the authority structures among contesting groups may influence whether, and if so, how violent armed conflict begins.[93] The population of at risk countries is derived from the risk estimates for civil war onset by Goldstone *et al.*[94] Given a population of countries with a reasonably high risk of civil war, but that have not yet experienced an onset, the task is to look for traces of interventions prior to any onset. If interventions work to prevent or forestall civil war, this should be evidence in a decreasing probability of observing onset; if interventions fuel or facilitate civil war, then prior interventions

should be associated with more frequent civil war. These data should be available in the near future.

The final area where progress in understanding the outcome of interventions could come at relatively little expense would be focusing attention on the motivation of the rebels. Most arguments about why and when interventions will influence civil war outcomes rely on the logic of manipulating relative capabilities. What is often missing is the concept of resolve, something which contemporary models of interstate conflict take on board.

Some research on the onset of civil wars incorporate elements of rebel resolve, but it is difficult to operationalize this concept in a manner that gives purchase on the role of interventions, just as it is in the interstate war literature. Mason[95] and Regan and Norton[96] conceive of one aspect of rebel motivation to be protection. That is, in a highly repressive environment the rebels – or potential rebels – join with an insurgency as a way to seek protection from random punishment by the state. Presumably, the more repressive the state, the greater the level of motivation by the rebels to overthrow the government. Some of the insights by Weinstein,[97] Petersen,[98] and Tilly[99] could facilitate linking the outcome of interventions to rebel motivation. For example, Weinstein argues that highly committed rebels will be much more disciplined and much less willing to commit wonton acts of violence. That level of commitment may contribute to the effectiveness of external interventions, those supporting either the state or the rebel movement. It would seem plausible to think that rebels do not respond solely to relative capabilities and that their willingness to fight, sometimes with meager weapons, is driven by the extent of their grievances. Fearon argues that those fighting over access to traditional lands – sons of the soil – tend to fight longer wars than others.[100] One way to view this is that these rebels are highly motivated, and that given sufficient external support they might win quickly, but even when they face a much stronger state, they might fight on.

The right specification of rebel motivation remains open for discussion, but incorporating the motivation of rebels into models of intervention has the potential to make a considerable contribution to our understanding of intervention outcomes. Importantly, it would seem to have a corollary in the legitimacy – or illegitimacy – of the state. An intervention in support of a highly unpopular government with low levels of legitimacy might not be sufficient to overcome the liabilities associated with the lack of public support. Castro's efforts to overthrow the Batista regime in Cuba, 1959, in spite of strong US support, may be an example of how state legitimacy can moderate the effect of external interventions. Both theoretical and empirical efforts could productively be devoted to understanding the complexities of these relationships.

Finally, I go back to a point raised previously in this paper. The foundation for this review was predicated on unilateral state interventions in civil wars, a frame of reference that necessarily neglects UN peacekeeping operations and qualitative contributions to our understanding. Peacekeeping operations require a political process that can be fundamentally different from those required by state leaders to send support to participants in a civil war. The political process required to mobilize

a PK force involves international negotiations, veto considerations, and at some level mutual consent. One result is that UNPKOs tend toward the most difficult conflicts to resolve. Therefore, empirical models control for the selection process; rarely do studies of unilateral interventions take this path. I offer two reasons, neither entirely sufficient as rationale, but both useful for understanding what we know and why.

First, the process by which states choose to intervene unilaterally appears to be significantly different from the process that describes UN interventions. The collective decision by the UN requires high level international attention, whereas unilateral decisions are often taken quietly without open discussion and absent international fanfare. So it is not clear that only the hardest cases attract unilateral interventions, and an increased focus on the goals of interveners would help sort this type of question out. Empirical evidence, moreover, does not appear to support a clear selection process. Second, much of the literature on the consequences of unilateral interventions focuses on the expected duration of the conflict, controlling for any intervention. The duration estimation techniques, up until very recently, have not been able to incorporate a simultaneous estimation of a selection model. Thyne has one of the first analyses, at least as far as I can tell, that tries to combine these two estimations into one model.[101] Progress can be made in this direction but there might appear to be more pressing intellectual concerns.

More than a decade of systematic, broadly cross-national, research into the effectiveness of external interventions into internal conflicts has provided us with the ability to articulate policy relevant inferences about what might work and when. But much needs to be done. Interventions into civil wars provide one of the more central policy tools available to states trying to maintain international stability in the 21st century, and given the magnitude and implications of the choice set available to the policy community, there is a good reason to refine this research to more closely test the outcomes and implications of interventions in order to refine theory and inform policy.

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