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SPECIAL DATA FEATURE

Diplomatic Interventions and Civil War: A New Dataset*

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Recent research in the civil war literature has focused on how and when external actors intervene. However, to date, systematic data have not existed on diplomatic efforts in conflict management. This article fills this gap and introduces a dataset on 438 diplomatic interventions in 68 conflicts stretching from 1945 to 1999. The authors briefly outline previous research on third-party interventions in civil wars, describe the dataset in some detail, including some initial patterns in the data, and describe how this dataset contributes to research into conflict processes. The authors also demonstrate how diplomatic interventions can be incorporated into other research agendas by merging this dataset with Doyle & Sambanis's peacekeeping data and replicating their analysis to examine the role of external diplomacy on peacebuilding success. These data on interventions, moreover, can be merged with commonly used datasets on intrastate conflicts, which promises a wide range of application in civil war studies. Developing a greater understanding of when and how civil wars end, scholarship needs to take into account efforts to arrive at diplomatic solutions. And if, as the results demonstrate, externally driven diplomacy facilitates the termination of civil wars, then the policy implications are quite important.

Introduction

Research into the onset and termination of civil war has increasingly focused on the role of external actors in conflict management. While the evidence paints a somewhat opaque picture of how interventions affect outcomes, the body of research does suggest that external actors matter. However, research has focused on military, economic, or peacekeeping interventions to the near exclusion of diplomatic efforts to control civil war. To date, data have not existed to test ideas about when, how, and under what conditions mediation and other forms of diplomatic interventions are effective. In this article, we introduce a new dataset on diplomatic interventions. Our premise is that without considering the role of diplomacy, modeling the effects of more coercive forms of interventions on warring parties' preferences is likely to be incomplete at best. Indeed, the dataset we introduce here suggests that diplomacy (with third-party mediation being the most common form) is frequently used to manage civil wars. This new dataset includes information on 438 diplomatic interventions in 68 of the 153 conflicts from 1945 to 1999 identified by Regan (2002). In the following sections, we describe our new dataset in detail, along with

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some descriptive statistics. We also illustrate its possible uses by re-evaluating Doyle & Sambanis's (2000) findings on the outcome of international peacekeeping after civil wars.

Previous Research on Third-Party Interventions

Most research on interventions focuses on how military and economic instruments affect conflict duration and termination. The evidence is mixed, though largely pointing to the ineffectiveness or even perverse effects of military and economic statecraft. Regan (1996) argues that third-party states enter internal conflicts in an attempt to halt the fighting. His evidence, however, points to a more complex picture, one in which external military and economic interventions often fail as a means of conflict cessation. Balch-Lindsay & Enterline (2000) develop a duration model of civil war and, using data from the Correlates of War Project (Singer & Small, 1994), come to the same conclusion: external interventions tend to *increase* rather than decrease the expected duration of a civil war. This result is consistent with research by Elbadawi & Sambanis (2000), Regan (2002), and Collier et al. (2003).

Other research attempts to gauge intervention success by how effective third-party states are at maintaining peace once the fighting has stopped (e.g. Doyle & Sambanis, 2000). Outside intervention might not be effective at finding the conditions that hasten peaceful resolution, but they appear to contribute to the preservation of peace once it has been achieved. Walter (2002) finds that external security guarantees are a necessary condition for fully implemented peace agreements. Doyle & Sambanis (2000) demonstrate the stabilizing effect UN interventions have in civil wars, while Fortna (2004) finds that the character of a third-party peacekeeping mission is an important determinant of postwar stability.

We know from the case study literature and a casual reading of contemporary history that third parties frequently use a combination of incentives and disincentives to manipulate the behavior of warring parties. This point is made clear in a World Bank report on civil wars (Collier et al., 2003) that not only calls for the adroit use of interventions but also suggests that more carefully designed interventions may be critical to ending a state's conflict cycle.

Possibly the single most important condition for thinking about the management of civil wars is the role of third-party diplomacy. We see this on many dimensions – from the intuitive to the scholarly to the policy arena – but we have lacked empirical evidence to judge which argument is supported by experience. As a result, in spite of rather coherent theoretical arguments, we know little about the effect of diplomatic initiatives on warring parties' decisionmaking or the record of external diplomatic efforts in the management of civil wars.

What we do know about diplomatic efforts in civil wars draws more on specific case studies than broad empirical regularities. For example, Zartman (1989) argues that as the cost of fighting increases or a stalemate grows painful, possible solutions become more likely. Studies of mediation, moreover, tend to focus almost exclusively on interstate conflicts, and even here, the success rate of individual mediation attempts is rather low (e.g. Bercovitch, 1997). This apparent disconnect between interventions, conflict outcomes, and evidence is particularly clear when considered in the light of the contributions of the literature investigating the roles of information, bargaining, and credibility of commitments to negotiated settlements of conflicts (e.g. Pillar, 1983; Morgan, 1994; Kydd, 2003) and the work on states' substitution of foreign policy tools when responding to external pressures (e.g. Morgan & Palmer, 2003; Regan, 2000).

Diplomatic Interventions in Civil Wars

Third-party interventions into ongoing civil wars are complex attempts to manipulate the preferences of warring parties and, thus, conflict outcomes. These attempts to alter the course of a conflict can include providing material, intelligence, and money to change the structure of the relationship among combatants or, alternatively, providing information through mediation and other diplomatic initiatives to change the information that they hold about their adversary. Both approaches can have conflict management goals, although mediation has a much more direct link to a goal of containing violence and making peace. Conceptually, however, the two approaches to intervention could work in unison.

Information, Structural Change, and External Intervention

External actors operate in a hostile environment where information asymmetries about relative capabilities and preferences matter, and some form of a security dilemma exists. In this respect, any potentially successful intervention has to manipulate the structure of the relationship between the warring parties and the information they have about the other's preferences and capabilities. For the most part, military or economic interventions only manipulate the former and possibly help to confuse the latter. Empirical studies of civil war interventions generally focus on manipulating structures.

The structure of the relationship between the warring parties can be manipulated through outside interventions by (1) changing the incentives for fighting or the military and economic ability to fight and by (2) preventing or minimizing accidental flare-ups (Fortna, 2004). Manipulating information may, however, influence calculations about when and how to agree to a negotiated outcome.

Information is critical to the termination of civil conflict. Withholding or misrepresenting private information can make reaching a stable and mutually agreeable negotiated settlement difficult. For example, one side's estimate of its ability to win on the battlefield, tolerance of the costs of fighting, reservation points, and possible compromises would all be held closely. Additionally, revealing a lack of resolve would send a signal of weakness, as would betraying a conciliatory bargaining position. Asymmetric information and the risk of revealing the 'true' value of a peaceful settlement can make bilateral negotiations difficult at best. Furthermore, there are often cultural barriers, ethnic or religious cleavages, or histories of entrenched animosities that make credible information critical but scarce. In this environment, facilitating communication and building trust between opponents are instrumental to making peace possible.

Parties in a civil war, moreover, face a security dilemma unlike most others in global affairs – what Walter (2002) sees as the inability to make a credible commitment to demobilize and disarm. The commitment to disarmament is central to civil war termination because a stable society cannot exist with two or more competing centers of authority (Tilly, 1978). Disarmament needs to be a negotiated outcome, if it is not the result of military victory.

Bias and Negotiated Outcomes

A relatively recent contribution to the study of mediation generally and the management of civil wars specifically has examined formally the conditions under which mediator bias, mediator preferences, and mediator 'honesty' influence the effectiveness of the mediator (Kydd, 2003; Svensson, 2007). The ideas that come out of these formal treatments, however, have not been subjected to systematic empirical verification. That is, the effect of mediator bias – which in one

form is an attribute that is assumed to be an anathema to successful mediation (Bercovitch, 1997), and in another an attribute that might facilitate successful outcomes (Kydd, 2003) – has not been tested against data. Given the theoretical and policy importance of these diametrically opposed ideas about the role of mediator bias, testing is important.

To aid testing of broad models of civil war outcomes, the effect of bias on mediation, or external actors and post-conflict stability, we introduce a dataset on diplomatic forms of intervention into civil wars. These new data will help forge a link in our understanding of conflict management and help solidify what we know about UN peacekeeping, military, or economic interventions and how security guarantees and peace agreements materialize and are implemented.

Data on Diplomatic Interventions

Knowledge is limited about diplomatic efforts to end civil war, in large part because we have not had access to systematic data with which to test when diplomacy might be effective. Studies of international conflict have long argued that external parties use a combination of carrots and sticks to end conflict (e.g. Singer, 1963). However, previous datasets have tended to code characteristics of the conflict (Doyle & Sambanis, 2000; Fearon & Laitin, 2003) or aspects of interventions targeted at the structure of the relationship among combatants (Regan, 1996, 2002). The data we describe below provide a way to examine the effects of external interventions that incorporate diplomatic initiatives, alone or in combination with military or economic efforts.

We focus primarily on mediation because it forms the bulk of external diplomatic efforts in the post-World War II period. Other forms of diplomatic efforts include international forums, recalling ambassadors, and arbitration. In relative terms, there are but only a few occurrences of these other diplomatic tools when compared with the frequency of mediation.

Conceptually, we view diplomatic initiatives as attempts by outside parties to transform a conflict by enhancing communication between warring parties and providing information about the conflict that can help generate movement toward negotiated outcomes. In addition, the outside party(ies) can tie information to explicit carrots or sticks by linking diplomacy to possible economic or military interventions. We code data on four specific forms of diplomatic interventions: (1) mediation, (2) international forums, (3) the recall of ambassadors, and (4) explicit offers to mediate by third parties that were not accepted by both sides. In addition, we code requests for diplomatic intervention by one of the warring parties that were not accepted. Data were derived from public sources such as the New York Times, Keesings' Contemporary Archives, Facts on File, and case-specific historical treatments.

For an operational definition of mediation, international forum, or offers to mediate, we rely on the work of Bercovitch (1997), where *mediation* is a non-coercive, nonviolent, and, ultimately, non-binding form of intervention. Mediators enter into a conflict to affect, change, modify, or influence the outcome. The mediator can represent a state or a non-state actor. Other forms of external diplomacy include the following: an *international forum* is a formally organized meeting of the representatives from several countries, where the outcome is non-binding; the *recall of an ambassador* (or the ranking representative in the country) occurs when the intervening government calls home the ranking diplomat *and* the recall is explicitly tied to the behavior of the state in its internal conflict; and *offers* to mediate represent an explicit offer from a third party that was not accepted by at least one of the

warring parties. They are recorded on the date of the offer.

Third-party mediation is unique, because participation relies on the voluntary agreement by all parties. Before starting, they have generally agreed to the format, the location, and the range of issues to be discussed. Mediators first work to convince warring parties to try to settle their differences at the negotiation table, and then they work to maximize communication and minimize distrust between the civil war parties. This transmission of information is critical to understanding how outside interventions can affect the outcome of civil conflicts. A critical and unique characteristic of mediation is that mediators both *initiate* and *facilitate* peaceful bargaining: the mediator helps provide information that both sides see as credible and that gives both sides sufficient grounds to move toward a compromise outcome and possibly sign and implement a peace agreement.

Patterns in the Data

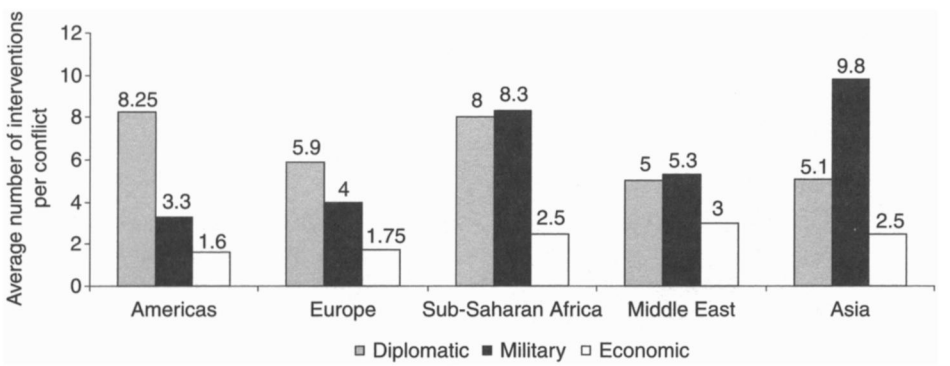
As a general format, we incorporate data on diplomatic interventions into the data on military and economic interventions generated by Regan (2002). In Regan's data, there are roughly 13,000 conflict month observations in 153 conflicts between 1945 and 1999. The unit of observation is the *conflict month*, and each external diplomatic effort is recorded in the month that it was initiated. In total, there are 438 diplomatic interventions coded; 352 are mediations, 23 involve multilateral forums, 5 are recalls of diplomatic representation, and 44 reflect offers to mediate that were not accepted by one or all parties. There are also 12 requests for mediation by one of the civil parties that were not undertaken by third-party states.

For purposes of comparison, Figure 1 presents the average number of diplomatic (all forms), military, and economic interventions by region. For example, in the Americas there are 2.5 times more diplomatic interventions per conflict than there are military interventions, and over three times the average number of economic interventions. This trend toward an emphasis on diplomatic efforts is reversed in Asia and the Middle East. Below, we describe a number of what we think are the more salient and useful aspects of the diplomatic data, including characteristics of the external actors and the outcome.

Mediation Characteristics

There were diplomatic interventions in 68 of the 153 conflicts in Regan (2002). Over the course of 55 years and 68 civil conflicts, 86

Figure 1. Interventions by Region



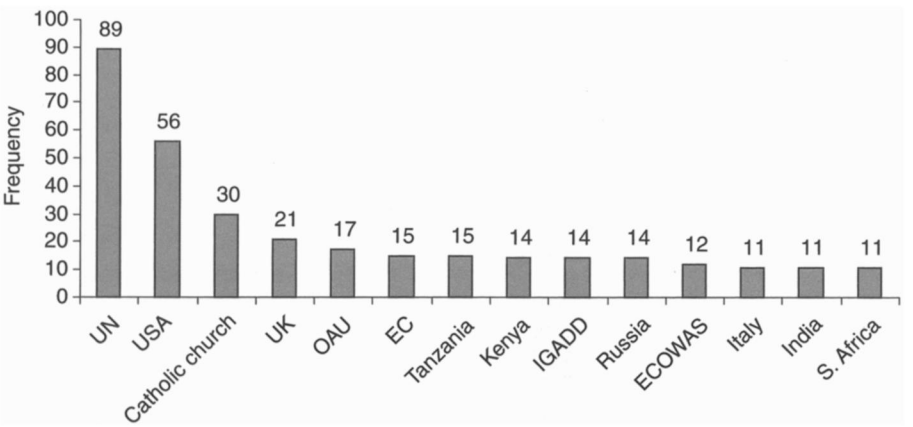
different political *units* were involved in 352 mediations. We conceive of the 'unit' in terms of states, international organizations, religious organizations, or private non-governmental groups – in effect, the institution that 'sends' the specific individual. The UN is by far the most frequent intervener, with 89 diplomatic interventions in 22 conflicts. These interventions took place in 22 different countries in all five geographic regions. The United States intervened diplomatically 56 times, 42 of them unilaterally, and the Catholic Church intervened diplomatically 30 times (Figure 2). Beyond the global involvement of the UN and the USA, mediators frequently come from within a conflict's geographic region. In fact, in four out of five geographic regions, at least half of the mediators come from political units from within the same region. Only the Middle East has more than half of its external diplomatic interventions coming from outside the region. At the other extreme, European and Sub-Saharan African conflicts had 77% of their mediating parties from within the region.

Mediators can intervene either unilaterally or multilaterally. Figure 3 summarizes how often the main intervening units go it alone or in a group. Groups of states like the UN, OAU, and EC, which are inherently multilateral, overwhelmingly go in alone. For example, the UN intervenes on its own 75% of the time.

Following Bercovitch (1997), we have recorded the *outcomes* of mediation attempts at the end of each individual mediation. We constructed a four-category ordinal scale reflecting (1) full or (2) partial settlement of the issues at stake, (3) ceasefire agreements, and (4) failure (Figure 4). If we consider full or partial settlements as successful outcomes, mediations were coded as ending successfully in 133 out of 352 cases (38%). Over 57% of mediations result in a ceasefire, and only 4% fail completely. While we take the explanation for the frequency of ceasefires to be a theoretical and empirical question, we speculate that because mediation is almost always voluntary, parties will seek to reach at least a modest outcome with some positive value. Moreover, ceasefires can have strategic value, and it is possible that external diplomacy is used to generate information, good will, or buy time for strategic advance. To our minds, this should be a topic for further study.

Nearly all mediation attempts result in an observable change in behavior between

Figure 2. Frequent Interveners



combatants, even if the negotiated outcome is only short-lived. This puts greater emphasis on understanding how negotiated agreements can be translated into fully implemented peace accords (Walter, 2002) and how intervention forces can be utilized to facilitate this process (e.g. Fortna, 2004; Hartzell, Hoddie & Rothchild, 2001).

We also record the mediator's *rank* in terms of a three-category ordinal scale. The ordinality of our scaling is predicated on the level of executive authority the mediator would have over the resources of the state: (1) head of state or leader of an international organization, (2) representative of a state or international organization, and (3) private citizen or member of a non-governmental organization (NGO). Surprisingly it appears that success is unrelated to the rank of the mediator (see Figure 5). While heads of state undoubtedly bring clout and resources to the table, they might lack in staying power and relevant experience. Alternatively, political representatives often have greater flexibility to stay focused on the task at hand, while still having access to the resources of their political leadership. Finally, private citizens and NGO representatives might bring a sense of impartiality and a more credible humanitarian focus that might influence the conditions under which two sides agree. The data themselves can only provide answers when approached by an appropriate theoretical logic, so we leave the empirical trend we observe as something to be explained in further research.

Figure 3. Unilateral and Multilateral Interventions

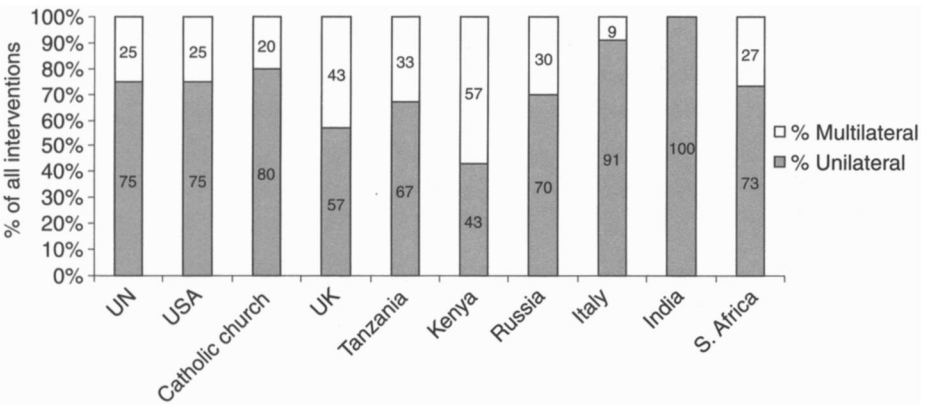


Figure 4. Mediation Outcome

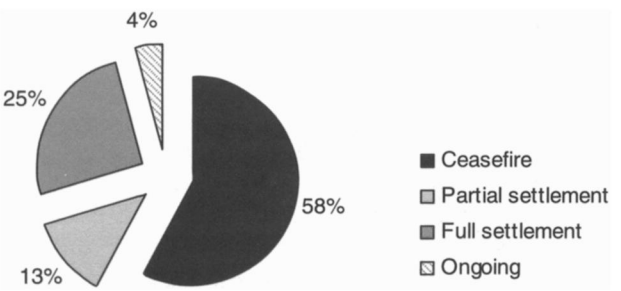
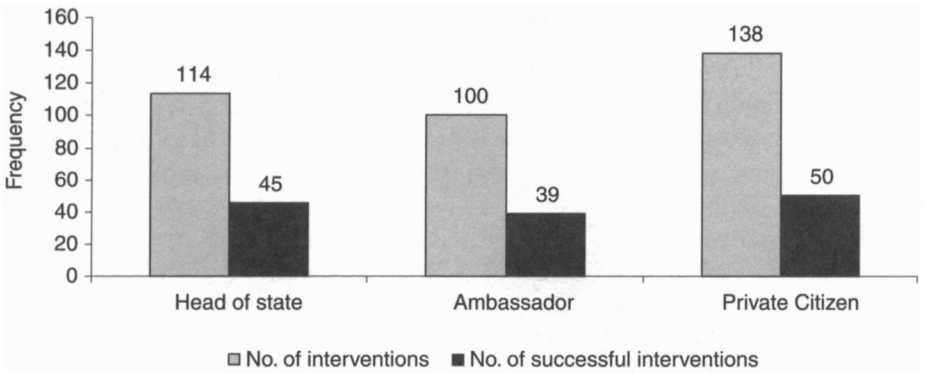


Figure 5. Mediator Rank



We also record data on the specific *identity* and *strategy* of the mediator(s) (Figure 5). Some mediators possess greater international stature than others (Jimmy Carter or Nelson Mandela, for example), and there is both theoretical work and empirical evidence suggesting that the identity or reputation of a mediator or negotiator matters in the success or failure of the process (Regan & Stam, 2000; Tinsley et al., 2002). More internationally visible or well-regarded mediators might bring to bear greater levels of persuasion (or pressure) on the combatants to compromise. These data provide a vehicle for examining the role of specific mediators' stature, abilities, or reputation, and also identify some people as being frequent mediators. For example, Kenyan President Moi mediates 21 times in five different conflicts, former president Jimmy Carter mediates 12 times, and British Foreign Secretary Lord Owen mediates 11 times in two conflicts. Other notable mediators include UN Special Representative Arnault and Zimbabwean President Mugabe (see Figure 6).

Mediation or other forms of diplomatic interventions are not uniform in terms of the frequency within a conflict or the status of the mediators. For example, 44% of the 153 civil wars in Regan's data (2002) have had some form of diplomatic intervention, and within these 44%, Sudan (32), Guatemala (26), El Salvador (20), Liberia (23), Mozambique (22), and Afghanistan (19) account for roughly one-third of those efforts. By comparison, Colombia has only three diplomatic interventions, in spite of numerous military and economic interventions. A head of state, moreover, participates in a mediation of the Sudanese conflict 75% of the time, while the mediators in Guatemala are lower-level representatives 56% of the time, with a head of state involved only once.

Adding Persuasion to Coercion

One current theme in the civil war literature is that both the onset and the management of civil war have changed since the end of the Cold War (Marshall & Gurr, 2005). Coercion has purportedly given way to cooperation, unilateral interventions to multilateral peacekeeping. Our data provide some insight into possible shifts in conflict management and will allow for more thorough testing of theories about the effects of these shifts on global and regional stability.

In general, our data support the conventional wisdom that states are increasingly using cooperative means when trying to resolve intrastate conflicts (Figure 7). While there are many possible explanations for this

Figure 6. Frequent Mediators

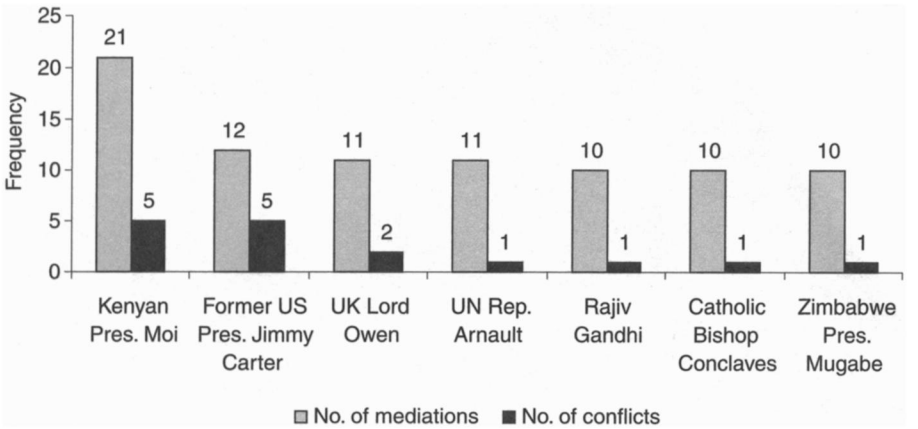
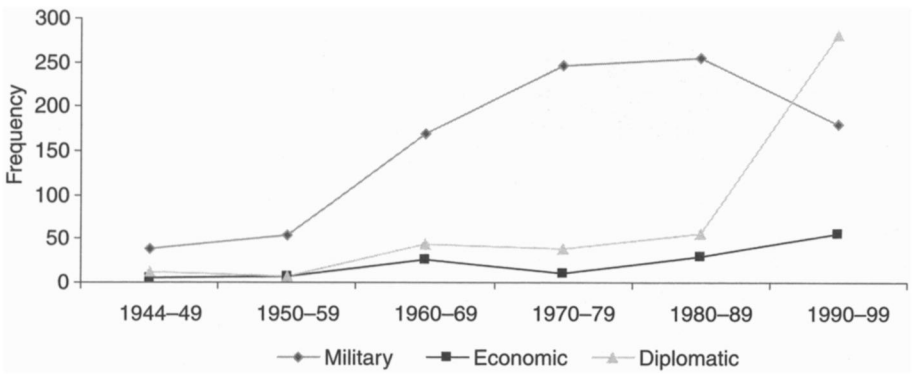


Figure 7. Intervention by Decade



shift – the end of the Cold War, the ascendancy of the UN, or the increased influence and diplomatic involvement of the USA – one central question is whether these changes have had a positive effect on the frequency, magnitude, or the consequences of civil wars.

Merging with Other Datasets

The dataset that we present has several applications that can facilitate a better understanding of the role of third-party states in civil wars. As an illustration of how this dataset on diplomatic interventions can be brought to bear on other types of civil war studies, we merged these data with those of Doyle & Sambanis (2000). They argue that the role of peacekeeping is an important condition for understanding the stability of post-civil-war peace. One might push this back further and ask about the role of negotiations that lead up to peacekeeping deployment.

The important role of transmission of information between the civil war combatants plays itself out in the post-conflict era. If peace is achieved through an agreement that removes uncertainty and reflects the true distribution of power and resolve between the government and rebel groups, postwar settlements are more likely to last longer. Third-party mediation is crucial in adjusting the combatants' beliefs and preferences. By facilitating communication, the mediator

Table I. Predicted Probability of Post-Conflict Stability

Conditions:	*Prob. post-conflict stability*
Baseline	
Ethnic or religious war	
UN peacekeeping mandate	
No mediation	
Other variables at mean	0.36
From base to:	
UN mediation	
No Catholic church mediation	
Total of 10 mediations	0.30
From base to:	
No UN mediation	
Catholic church mediation	
Total of 10 mediations	0.94

creates the opportunity for learning and provides information about the possible future outcomes. A cooperative outcome that is consensually agreed upon by the civil war parties further contributes to the durability of post-conflict stability, by reducing incentives to create myths about an 'elusive enemy', and reduces between-group skepticism.

Without developing a more in-depth theoretical argument to guide our empirics, we replicated Doyle & Sambanis (2000), adding variables reflecting aspects of diplomatic interventions that took place in a civil war. The results suggest that external diplomacy within a civil war contributes effectively to peacebuilding success; that is, diplomacy influences outcomes and also post-conflict stability. Our expanded model demonstrates that our inferences about the effectiveness of peacekeeping should be tempered by the contribution of mediation to the management process.

For example, Doyle & Sambanis identify 122 civil wars of which 105 overlap with Regan's list. Of these conflicts, 58 had diplomatic interventions. We add to the Doyle & Sambanis model four new variables that reflect: (1) whether the UN mediated, (2) whether the Catholic Church mediated, (3) the total number of mediations in the conflict, and (4) the outcome of the mediations. The results in Table I demonstrate that not only does the Doyle & Sambanis model become more robust, but the identity of an external mediator has a strong effect on subsequent stability. For example, within the context of their model, a UN peacekeeping mandate increases the probability of post-conflict stability. But when controlling for external diplomatic interventions by the Catholic Church, the probability of post-conflict stability increases Substantially. A similar diplomatic intervention by representatives of the UN only marginally affects the prospects of post-conflict stability, from Doyle & Sambanis's baseline probability of post-conflict stability.

It is an important question as to whether diplomacy during a conflict can influence the long-term prospects for peace once the conflict has ended. Our extension of the influential Doyle & Sambanis model suggests that who mediates might have a considerable influence on post conflict stability. The data we present provide a tool to

advance this relatively understudied area of civil wars. Moreover, this extension could be made more complex by expanding a dataset like that of Doyle & Sambanis rather than collapsing ours, but the point should hold regardless of the unit of observation.

To broaden the application of our diplomatic intervention data, we present it in a user-friendly format. The unit of observation in the dataset is the individual diplomatic intervention, and the dataset includes 68 civil wars that have experienced some form of external diplomacy. Because we provide the number of months that each conflict has lasted and the specific month that the diplomatic intervention took place, the dataset can be extended to a time-variant format where the unit of analysis is the civil war month. The data also can be easily merged with the COW civil war data and the Uppsala/PRIO data on civil conflict. We provide Stata do files in the web appendix that can help with this merging. Civil war scholars can therefore include in their analysis diplomatic forms of external involvement in civil wars without being limited by the dataset they use or the unit of observation they employ in their research.

Conclusion

External actors in civil wars have a variety of intervention strategies at their disposal. Quantitative studies of civil war have largely focused on the role of coercive strategies such as military and economic interventions. These empirical analyses have, of necessity, ignored less coercive diplomatic strategies to manage an ongoing internal conflict. The dataset we introduce enables scholars to systematically study diplomatic efforts at conflict management – alone or in conjunction with more coercive forms of intervention. Scholars can distinguish the effectiveness of coercive and persuasive forms of third-party involvement in a variety of civil war processes such as duration, termination, and post-conflict stability. Studies of civil war duration and its termination should be re-evaluated in the light of our ability to develop models that incorporate active attempts to reach negotiated settlements.

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