



Spring 2020

External Intervention and the Duration of Civil Wars

Sofia E. Mouritsen
Gettysburg College

Follow this and additional works at: https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/student_scholarship



Part of the [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#), and the [Political Theory Commons](#)

Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.

Recommended Citation

Mouritsen, Sofia E., "External Intervention and the Duration of Civil Wars" (2020). *Student Publications*. 798.

https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/student_scholarship/798

This open access student research paper is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact cupola@gettysburg.edu.

External Intervention and the Duration of Civil Wars

Abstract

This paper examines the effect of external intervention on civil war duration from the years 1946-2002. Based on the logic that intervention causes a distortion of the bargaining process in civil wars, it is hypothesized that intervention leads to increased civil war duration. This hypothesis is tested using linear regression analysis, which finds a positive, significant relationship between intervention and civil war duration. Considered in the context of previous literature, it is concluded that in addition to the distorting effect intervention appears to have on the bargaining process, this result may have been informed by the presence of competitive intervention, rival intervention, and interventions by states with an independent agenda. This research provides further evidence of the conflict lengthening effect of intervention, while tracing a common explanation based in the bargaining model of war throughout the various perspectives in the literature.

Keywords

Intervention, Civil War, Conflict Duration, Bargaining Model

Disciplines

Peace and Conflict Studies | Political Science | Political Theory

Comments

Written for POL 351: The Political Economy of Armed Conflict.

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Abstract

This paper examines the effect of external intervention on civil war duration from the years 1946-2002. Based on the logic that intervention causes a distortion of the bargaining process in civil wars, it is hypothesized that intervention leads to increased civil war duration. This hypothesis is tested using linear regression analysis, which finds a positive, significant relationship between intervention and civil war duration. Considered in the context of previous literature, it is concluded that in addition to the distorting effect intervention appears to have on the bargaining process, this result may have been informed by the presence of competitive intervention, rival intervention, and interventions by states with an independent agenda. This research provides further evidence of the conflict-lengthening effect of intervention, while tracing a common explanation based in the bargaining model of war throughout the various perspectives in the literature.

Sofia Mouritsen

POL 351

Professor Hartzell

28 April 2020

External Intervention and the Duration of Civil Wars

I. Introduction

Conflict is a persistent element in the international system, and it is likely to remain so in the coming years. Despite this, scholars can attempt to understand the nature of conflict in order to communicate best practices to policymakers and ultimately promote conflict management.

While this research can take many forms, this paper will focus on the duration of civil wars, which has been the prevailing form of conflict in recent years. It is important to study civil war duration because of the increased economic and human costs associated with longer conflicts; in the case of civil wars, these costs are often already devastating due to the fact that the fighting occurs primarily on a state's own soil. Furthermore, these costs are rarely contained in the country facing civil conflict, but often spill over into states both near and far in the form of refugees, economic consequences, instability, and more, especially as a result of long-term civil conflicts.

Because of these substantial costs, it is important to understand what impacts the duration of civil wars so that the international community might move towards actions that are associated with shorter conflicts. Along this vein, the central question of this paper is: How does external intervention affect the duration of civil wars? Given that the efficacy of external intervention is contested, this paper seeks to further understand this relationship so that external governments

can make more informed choices about whether to intervene or not in a civil war, given the consequences on duration that their actions might bring. This paper begins by exploring the variety of perspectives on intervention and duration that are represented in the literature; next, the effects of intervention are considered in terms of the bargaining model of war, leading to my hypothesis that intervention lengthens civil wars. After empirical testing, the hypothesized relationship is found to be present and significant, and the results are contextualized with the previous theory in order to identify possible factors driving the results. The study concludes that intervention leads to an increase in civil war durations likely because of the distorting effect that intervention has on the bargaining process, but that the observed relationship might also be the collective result of the effects of different characteristics of intervention.

II. Theories of Intervention and Duration

The relationship between intervention and duration has been studied from a variety of perspectives. Although this paper cannot feasibly cover all of these contributions, the most prominent articles in the literature can be broadly organized into four general categories: Scholars who observe more broadly that intervention leads to increased conflict duration; scholars who conclude that the relationship depends on the sides an intervening actor take sides in a conflict; scholars who find that competitive intervention of multiple actors can cause longer conflicts; and scholars who argue that the effect of intervention depends on the motivation behind the intervention. Notably, some scholars utilize multiple perspectives in their analyses.

Perspective: Intervention leads to increased duration

In arguably one of the landmark pieces of literature on intervention and duration, Regan (2002) focuses on the effect of third-parties on civil conflicts. Regan finds that the presence of

either a military or economic intervention “greatly increases the expected duration of a conflict” (p. 71), and thus that intervention is not an effective conflict-management tool. However, Regan adds that biased interventions, in which an actor intervenes on behalf of either the government or the opposition forces, are associated with shorter expected civil war durations compared to neutral interventions. Despite this distinction, Regan retains the conclusion that most interventions prolong the duration of civil conflicts, and that there is no mix of intervention strategies that leads to shorter civil conflict duration. Interestingly, Regan also finds that if multiple opposing forces intervene in a conflict, the likelihood of the conflict ending within the next month is nearly nonexistent (p. 71). This is a perspective that will be revisited later.

Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) consider civil war termination through the lens of the balance of military capability between government and rebel forces, and they focus on external intervention as an important determinant of this balance. Rather than using current external intervention as the explanatory variable, the authors use expected intervention, which they find to be positively and significantly correlated with civil war duration (p. 15). Due to the stability and significance of this result, they reject the notion of a possible inverse causality of the variables (i.e., that interventions occur primarily in wars that are already long-lasting). The authors note that their result contradicts previous studies, namely that of Betts (1994), who argues that external intervention is negatively associated with war duration. Although more recent studies have also linked intervention to shorter civil wars, as will be seen in Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom (2004), this paper will explore these results within their respective theoretical perspectives rather than as a unit.

Perspective: Side-Taking Determines Conflict Duration

Another perspective in the literature posits that the effect of intervention depends on with whom the external actor(s) side: the rebels, or the government. In their article exploring the key structural and variable characteristics that affect conflict duration, Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom (2004) find that intervention on the side of the rebel group shortens conflict duration. In contrast to other studies, the authors code intervention as a month-by-month, time-varying variable rather than as a dummy variable. Like Regan, they consider both economic and military intervention, but they find that economic intervention has an insignificant effect on conflict duration. Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom also conclude that military intervention on the side of the government is ineffective, and that only military intervention on the side of the rebels is significant, which shortens conflict (p. 267). This idea is also reflected in the work of Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan (2009), who argue that the presence of strong rebels leads to shorter conflicts, as they pose a greater military threat to the government (p. 590). One could extend this argument by suggesting that intervention on the side of the rebels leads to stronger rebels and therefore shorter conflicts, as concluded by Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom (2004).

Balch-Lindsay and Enterline (2000) also consider the side-taking aspect of intervention; they hypothesize that in its most basic form, intervention in favor of either group makes the probability of that group winning the conflict more likely, thus shortening the conflict (p. 624). In reality, the authors find that both government and opposition intervention are negatively associated with hazard rates, which is defined as the risk of failure (p. 630). Based on the logic that increased hazard rates lead to shorter conflicts, this finding suggests that as one group receives support, the hazard rate decreases, leading to a longer civil war (p. 632). However,

Balch-Lindsay and Enterline caution that this result should perhaps not be taken at face value, but instead within the context of another variable: balanced intervention.

Perspective: Competitive Intervention Increases Duration

Balch-Lindsay and Enterline (2000) continue their analysis by considering balanced intervention, the theory that when one external actor provides the rebel or government group with resources, other third parties are motivated to counterbalance these contributions by providing the opposing group with resources (p. 632). The authors explain that the measures of pro-government and pro-opposition intervention are likely missing a significant number of these balanced interventions, potentially causing the negative association between intervention and hazard rates. Corresponding with their hypothesis, Balch-Lindsay and Enterline find that when balanced intervention is present, the hazard for a civil war decreases and its duration increases (p. 633). This brings to mind Regan's similar conclusion that if multiple opposing forces intervene in a civil war, the conflict is very unlikely to end soon thereafter (2002, p. 71).

This idea of a stalemate is also echoed in a more recent piece of literature. Anderson (2019) finds that competitive intervention, which she defines as "two-sided, simultaneous military assistance from different third-party states to both government and rebel combatants", prolongs civil wars because it has a distorting effect on the bargaining process of the domestic combatants (p. 692). Anderson finds a negative, significant relationship between competitive intervention and duration in her empirical models (p. 699); however, she believes that this is a result of the decline in competitive intervention by both major and lesser powers since the Cold War (p. 697). Therefore, Anderson concludes that while competitive intervention leads to longer civil wars, the average duration of modern intrastate conflicts has declined.

Perspective: The Motivation Behind Intervention Determines Its Effect on Duration

Finally, some scholars focus on the motivation behind intervention as an important determinate of its effect on civil war duration. In their research, Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski (2005) focus on the relationship between rival intervention and civil war duration, specifically the effect it might have on rebels' inclination to either keep fighting or negotiate. Naturally, rivals are motivated to intervene in order to manipulate the civil war outcome to their advantage, making them likely to assist rebels and seek to shift the balance of power in their favor (p. 352). Because of this, the authors find that rival intervention can substantially prolong civil wars. This conclusion runs counter to previous findings in the literature that military intervention on the side of the rebels shortens civil wars (see Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom, 2004).

Notably, Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski (2005) go on to argue that even without any aid actually being given, rebel *expectations* of aid from state rivals can motivate them to continue fighting, as these expectations significantly decrease the hazard rate (p. 367). The authors explain that because rivals are uniquely motivated to intervene, rivals send more credible signals to rebels about possible intervention, which more strongly affects rebel calculations about whether or not to continue fighting (p. 369). Furthermore, rivals are less likely to face domestic opposition to intervention, allowing them to potentially continue aiding rebels for a long time (p. 369). All of these factors lead Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski to conclude that rival intervention can substantially prolong civil wars.

Cunningham (2010) considers motivation through a slightly different lens, challenging the previously held notion that states intervene in civil wars because they want to help one side or the other or facilitate peace. Rather, the author focuses on state interventions with an

independent agenda. Although Cunningham finds that interventions in general prolong civil wars, he concludes that “independent interventions have a substantially greater impact on the duration of conflict” (p. 124). As a result, Cunningham argues that previous research that finds a positive relationship between intervention and conflict duration is in fact “primarily driven by the presence of a subset of these interventions in which the intervener has an independent agenda” (p. 124-125). In addition to complementing the results of Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski (2005), Cunningham’s research potentially provides a more specific explanation for the findings of scholars like Regan (2002) and Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000).

Implications of the Literature

It is clear from this survey of the literature that scholars have come to conflicting conclusions regarding the relationship between external intervention and civil war duration. Although much (though not all) of the research finds that intervention is positively associated with civil war duration, many scholars have come to this conclusion by focusing on different aspects of intervention. Although this paper will by no means resolve this debate, it will consider the intervention-duration relationship using a more basic methodology in order to help solidify the scholarly groundwork regarding the effect of intervention on civil war duration. Furthermore, this research will attempt to find a common theoretical thread among the various explanations, and its empirical findings will be considered in the context of the existing literature, allowing for further consideration concerning what factors might be at work in this relationship.

III. Explanation and Hypothesis

The relationship between intervention and duration can be analyzed through the lens of the bargaining model of war, which attempts to understand why opposing actors either engage in

conflict or reach an agreement. As Regan (2002) explains, conflict is fundamentally a bargaining situation “in which information is gained through successive moves” (p. 59); in essence, actors consider whether or not to settle the conflict or continue it based on “expectations of future victory and current and anticipated costs” (p. 60). The first tenant of the bargaining model of war is information asymmetries; the model suggests that when actors do not have a clear idea of the other actor’s resolve regarding the contested issue at hand, they will not bargain. This lack of clear information acts as a barrier to the actors’ ability to reach an agreement, and as a result the opposing parties will engage in conflict instead. Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) base their research on a similar idea, that civil war duration can be modeled as “a forecast error on the part of the rebels or the state with reference to each other’s military capability” (p. 2).

The process of information transmission in conflict is already complex when there are two actors involved; however, when external actors intervene, it becomes even more so. After all, each intervening actor brings with it its own resolve, military and economic capabilities, motivations, intentions, and methods. As a result, an intervention “will affect each actor’s estimate of the chances for victory by altering the balance of capabilities required to sustain the fight” (Regan 2002, p. 59). No longer does each actor have to simply understand the resolve, intentions, and capabilities of the other actor in order to determine whether they should bargain or fight; they must now consider these factors compounded with the resolve, intentions, and capabilities of the intervening actor. This makes it more difficult for the primary actors in the conflict to confidently and clearly assess the situation and determine what their next “move” should be. Drawing on the bargaining model of war, it is reasonable to conclude that due to information asymmetries caused by or magnified by intervention, the actor(s) engaged in a civil

war are likely to continuing fighting instead of bargaining, leading to a longer civil war. Put more simply, I hypothesize that external intervention lengthens the duration of intrastate wars.

However, intervention is not the only factor that might impact the duration of a civil war. A country's GDP per capita is widely considered to be correlated with civil war duration, and considerations of this relationship have been included in many studies. First, as Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan (2004) explain, GDP can be considered a measure of state strength, and by extension military strength (p. 583); because a stronger state with a stronger military is able to more quickly quell a civil war, GDP can be associated with shorter duration. Secondly, shorter conflicts can be connected to higher opportunity costs for engaging in conflict, as posited by Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom (2004). This calculation of opportunity costs can in turn be signified by a state's GDP per capita (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2004, p. 583); in other words, the wealthier a country is, the higher opportunity costs rebels tend to face associated with continued rebellion, leading to shorter civil wars.

An additional explanation for civil war duration could be population; as Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom (2004) find, more populous countries tend to have longer civil wars. The authors find that doubling the population increases the duration of a conflict by 18 percent (p. 263); however, they note that more populous countries also tend to have more rebellions and therefore multiple underway at once, and that this "continued rebellion" variable might be the true driving factor behind this correlation. Finally, another potential explanation for civil war duration is democracy; scholars have linked increases in democracy to "lower chances for military victory (rebel) and greater chances for negotiated settlement" (DeRouen and Sobek 2004, p. 306).

Democracies tend to have existing and more effective channels through which to address

political disputes, so rebels are more likely to utilize these nonviolent channels in order to reach a settlement, as opposed to in non-democratic states in which these processes are not present. In other words, conflicts are shorter when political insurgents can take advantage of meaningful political alternatives to violence (Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2004, p. 592).

IV. Research Design, Data, Methods

Based on the Bethany Lacina dataset, this research focuses on civil conflicts worldwide from 1946 to 2002 as the unit of analysis. Out of the 114 conflicts accounted for in the dataset, 107 were available for analysis regarding intervention and duration. My independent variable is external intervention by other states, which is measured as a dummy variable, and my dependent variable is the duration of a civil war, which is measured by the number of years a conflict has been ongoing; more specifically, the dependent variable used in the quantitative analysis is the natural logarithm of duration. Notably, Lacina does not clarify the nature of “intervention”, aside from the specification that the intervening actors measured are states. Instead, intervention is measured as a binary, coded 1 if intervention has been observed in a civil war and 0 if it has not.

In order to explore the relationship between intervention and civil war duration, this paper uses linear regression and three control variables: the natural log of GDP, democracy, and the natural log of population. In addition to being logged, the GDP per capita variable was measured in the year prior to fighting and has been adjusted for inflation and purchasing power; additionally, democracy is coded as a dummy variable, defined by the Polity scale of regime type as a score of 6 or higher (Lacina 2006, p. 285). The results from these variables will help determine whether or not the observed effect on duration is actually a result of intervention, or instead a result of the other explanatory variables. However, this is not the only effect that must

be considered: because my independent variable is binary, my measures lack the nuance to determine more specifically how intervention impacts duration.

As one can observe from the variety of research presented earlier, many scholars have found different relationships between intervention and duration by coding or studying “intervention” in a more specific manner, which may explain the variation between previous results and the findings of this paper. Although my results will present a conclusion about intervention as a general phenomenon and its impact on duration, the dichotomous nature of my independent variable will make it more difficult to determine exactly what it is about intervention that produces the observed relationship. However, it is possible to explore this relationship more closely by considering my research in the context of previous literature. Although this methodology is limited because it does not separate incidences of intervention based on characteristics such as side-taking, number of intervening powers, intervener motivations, intervener strength, and more, the findings of this paper can potentially add to scholars’ understanding of the intervention-duration relationship as a more general phenomenon.

V. Results and Analysis

Table 1 presents the results of of the linear regression of the duration of a civil war based on the presence of intervention, as well as based on the three control variables previously discussed. The results support my hypothesis that external intervention lengthens the duration of civil wars; with a P-value of 0.000, the presence of intervention is shown to have a significant positive effect on duration. This result supports most closely the findings of Regan (2002) and Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000), the scholars who observed most generally and strongly that intervention leads to longer civil wars. In contrast to the significance of the intervention variable,

Table 1: Intervention and the Duration of Civil War, 1946-2002

Intervention	0.850*** (0.235)
GDP natural log	-0.027 (0.112)
Democracy	0.235 (0.279)
Population natural log	0.095 (0.069)
Constant	-0.317 (1.590)
Observations	107
R-squared	0.1236

***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.

all three control variables were shown to be statistically insignificant. Interestingly, although GDP and population were shown to be negatively correlated with duration, as expected, the results show a positive (though not statistically significant) relationship between democracy and civil war duration, contrary to my expectation.

The results of this regression analysis are consistent with my proposed explanation that intervention causes information asymmetries among combatants, leading to continued conflict instead of bargaining. Importantly, this explanation seems to be applicable not only to my findings, but also to the findings of previous scholars. It seems plausible that intervention of many types (regardless of differences in the number, power, or motivations of the intervening states) can distort the bargaining process in civil wars; thus, this explanation may serve as a link

between the various scholarly conclusions about intervention and duration, providing a way to unite the perspectives under a broader explanation.

As previously discussed, Regan (2002) and Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) examine civil war duration as a process of information transmission, forecasting, and successive moves by each actor. Regan (2002) considers intervention to be a disruption of this process and an explanation for his conclusion that external interventions extend the duration of civil wars; however, Anderson (2019) also uses a similar explanation in her article on competitive intervention. Anderson explains how external interventions distort the bargaining process, and she argues that this distortion incentivizes continued fighting among combatants, leading to longer civil wars (p. 697).

Furthermore, in his study on the effects that state interventions with independent agendas have on the duration of civil wars, Cunningham (2010) also explores conflict as a bargaining process, one in which parties participate in a war based on expectations of victory and constant updates of these expectations. Cunningham adds that when there are more parties in a conflict, it becomes more difficult for the actors to agree on a bargain. As he puts it, “External states intervening with a separate agenda, then, make wars harder to resolve because they increase the number of actors” (2010, p. 118). The application of these similar theoretical explanations in studies with a variety of focuses indicates its potential to be used as a broader explanation of the effects of intervention.

However, it would be imprudent to conclude that a distortion of the bargaining process is the only factor potentially at work in the relationship between intervention and duration. The empirical results of this research, that intervention is positively and significantly correlated with

duration, may also reflect the findings of other scholars who evaluate intervention in a more specific manner. Because this research measures intervention as a dichotomous variable, it is not possible to challenge the conclusions of other scholars who measured intervention differently; however, it is helpful to consider how their observations might inform my findings in order to explore the various causal mechanisms at play. Therefore, while I have considered bargaining theory as an explanation for the positive relationship between intervention and duration, I will now examine how my results do or do not fit with the findings of other scholars and consider what might this reveal about the relationship between intervention and civil war duration.

The finding that seems most at odds with my own is that of side-taking. Recall that Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom (2004) concluded that military interventions on the side of the rebels shortens conflict. Although this conclusion seems to be incompatible with my own findings that intervention increases duration, this may not actually be the case. Theoretically, if military intervention on the side of the rebels does not represent a major portion of international interventions, its effect might not be large enough to be reflected in the broader trend. In order to determine this, I turn to Anderson (2019), who graphed the trends in external military assistance from 1975-2009. Her graph shows a continuous increase in intervention on the side of governments from about 16-17 percent in 1975 to 59 percent in 2009, while intervention on the side of rebels peaked at 19 percent in 2000 and settled to 11 percent in 2009 (Anderson 2019, p. 698; see Figure 1 in Appendix A). This trend suggests that while military interventions on the side of the rebels might shorten civil conflicts, this effect is not reflected in the overall trend because a smaller percentage of military intervention is undertaken on the side of the rebels.

Next, I will consider the possible impact that competitive intervention might have had on my result that external intervention leads to increased civil war duration. As Balch-Lindsay and Enterline (2000) and Anderson (2019) find, when both the government and rebels are receiving third-party military assistance, the civil war duration lengthens. Given that this positive intervention-duration relationship coincides with my own, it is possible that competitive intervention, a variable not measured in my own regression analysis, might have contributed to my findings. Although Anderson's observation that competitive intervention has declined in recent years sheds doubt on this explanation, it must be acknowledged that the data she examined was from 1975-2009, while mine was from 1946-2002; this may explain the difference in our findings regarding the general effect intervention has on duration.

My results also do not account for the motivation of intervening actors, so it is possible that my findings stem at least in part from this variable as well. The findings of Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski (2005) that rival intervention substantially prolongs civil wars, even when aid has not actually been given, could be a factor in my observed relationship that intervention leads to longer civil wars. Indeed, out of 103 cases of civil wars from 1946-1992, Akcinaroglu and Radziszewski found 60 coinciding with rivalries (p. 354). This indicates that the presence of rival interventions is fairly substantial, and thus may likely have contributed to my finding that intervention as a more general phenomenon increases civil war duration.

Likewise, Cunningham's conclusion that state intervention with an independent agenda considerably lengthens civil wars (2010) might also have contributed to my findings. Certainly, Cunningham would agree with this: not only does he find that "the effect of independent interventions is much larger than that of external interventions generally", he argues that these

independent interventions are the true drivers of results that find a positive relationship between intervention and civil war duration (p. 115). Although independent-agenda interventions may well have strongly influenced my results, I am hesitant to so quickly discount the possible effects of the other factors discussed above. Because my independent variable does not differentiate between the specific manifestations of intervention, this paper cannot make any concrete, empirical conclusions regarding the possible effects of such factors. In short, while this study recognizes the role that other factors might have played in informing its results, it is limited in its ability to determine the exact nature of this influence.

These findings have important policy implications. The fact that a lengthy civil war can prove devastating to people and states makes it all the more important for potential interveners to understand what consequences will result from their intervention. Based on the findings of this study, one can conclude that external states should be cautious when choosing to intervene in a civil war, as it appears that intervening will lead to increased duration. Likewise, the international community should perhaps be particularly cautious when states seek to intervene in civil wars with their own agenda or when rival states intervene, as scholars have linked these occurrences to longer civil wars. In a similar manner, it is important to be cognizant of situations of competitive intervention, which is also found to lengthen civil wars.

However, this discussion of policy implications brings to light a fundamental issue with the question of when it is helpful to intervene in a civil war. While longer civil wars often lead to greater measurable costs, shorter civil wars are not necessarily any less devastating. For example, a strong and repressive government might quickly quell a revolution, then go on to continue exploiting its population; in this case, although the civil war was short in duration, the result of

the conflict was not in the best interests of the people. Therefore, scholars and policymakers must also remember to ask: Regardless of how any type of intervention affects the duration of a civil war, when do states have a moral obligation to intervene in a conflict? This is a complicated question, and it serves as a reminder that the international community must fully consider the consequences of potential intervention from multiple angles, rather than relying on one or two scholarly perspectives. It is up to the international community to responsibly weigh these costs and consequences before considering intervention in civil wars.

VI. Conclusion

This research has explored the question of how intervention affects civil war duration. After hypothesizing that external intervention leads to longer civil wars, this study connected the presence of intervention to the bargaining model of war in order to explain this relationship; specifically, I posit that intervention distorts the bargaining process, leading to longer civil wars. The empirical results from the linear regression analysis revealed a significant, positive relationship between intervention and the duration of civil wars, which supports the findings of several previous scholars such as Regan (2002) and Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000). When considered in the context of previous literature that has focused on different, more specific aspects of intervention, it becomes clear that several factors might be influencing my results, most notably the presence of competitive intervention, rival intervention, and interventions by states with an independent agenda. Therefore, while my results might be explained using the bargaining model of war, contextualizing them within the previous literature helps to fill in the gaps presented by this study's measurement of intervention as a dichotomous variable.

Future research might continue to dissect the notion of intervention, perhaps by exploring less-studied characteristics such as differences in the effect of intervention by major powers and minor powers. Additionally, it would be productive for future scholars to undertake an empirical study considering as many of these characteristics as possible and considering their collective impact on civil war duration. Although I attempted to consider several aspects of intervention as it related to my findings, the literature would benefit from a more thorough, empirically driven study of these collective characteristics. Regardless of the precise direction of future research on civil war duration, however, scholars must acknowledge the limitations that come with such studies, given the variety of situations in which civil wars arise; in order for responsible policy decisions to be made, this issue must be understood not only from an empirical point of view, but also a moral one.

Works Cited

- Akcinaroglu, Seden, and Elizabeth Radziszewski. 2005. "Expectations, Rivalries, and Civil War Duration." *International Interactions* 31(4): 349–74.
- Anderson, Noel. 2019. "Competitive Intervention, Protracted Conflict, and the Global Prevalence of Civil War." *International Studies Quarterly* 63(3): 692–706.
- Balch-Lindsay, Dylan, and Andrew J. Enterline. 2000. "Killing Time: The World Politics of Civil War Duration, 1820-1992." *International Studies Quarterly* 44(4): 615–42.
- Betts, Richard. "The Delusions of Impartial Intervention," *Foreign Affairs* (1994), 73: 6.
- Collier, Paul, Anke Hoeffler, and Måns Söderbom. 2004. "On the Duration of Civil War." *Journal of Peace Research* 41(3): 253–73.
- Cunningham, David E., Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan. 2009. "It Takes Two: A Dyadic Analysis of Civil War Duration and Outcome." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(4): 570–97.
- Cunningham, David E. 2010. "Blocking Resolution: How External States Can Prolong Civil Wars." *Journal of Peace Research* 47(2): 115–27.
- Hegre, Håvard. 2004. "The Duration and Termination of Civil War." *Journal of Peace Research* 41(3): 243–52.
- Lacina, Bethany. 2006. "Explaining the Severity of Civil Wars." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50(2): 276–89.
- Lake, David A., and Donald S. Rothchild. 2011. *The International Spread of Ethnic Conflict: Fear, Diffusion, and Escalation*. Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press.
- Regan, Patrick M. 2002. "Third-Party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts."

Journal of Conflict Resolution 46(1): 55–73.

Rouen, Karl R. De, and David Sobek. 2004. “The Dynamics of Civil War Duration and Outcome.” *Journal of Peace Research* 41(3): 303–20.

Sambanis, Nicholas A., and Ibrahim A. Elbadawi. 2000. “External Interventions and the Duration of Civil Wars.” *World Bank: Economic Development Institute*.

Appendix A

Figure 1: Trends in external military assistance in the form of competitive interventions and one sided support to civil war combatants, 1975–2009 (Anderson 2019, p. 698).

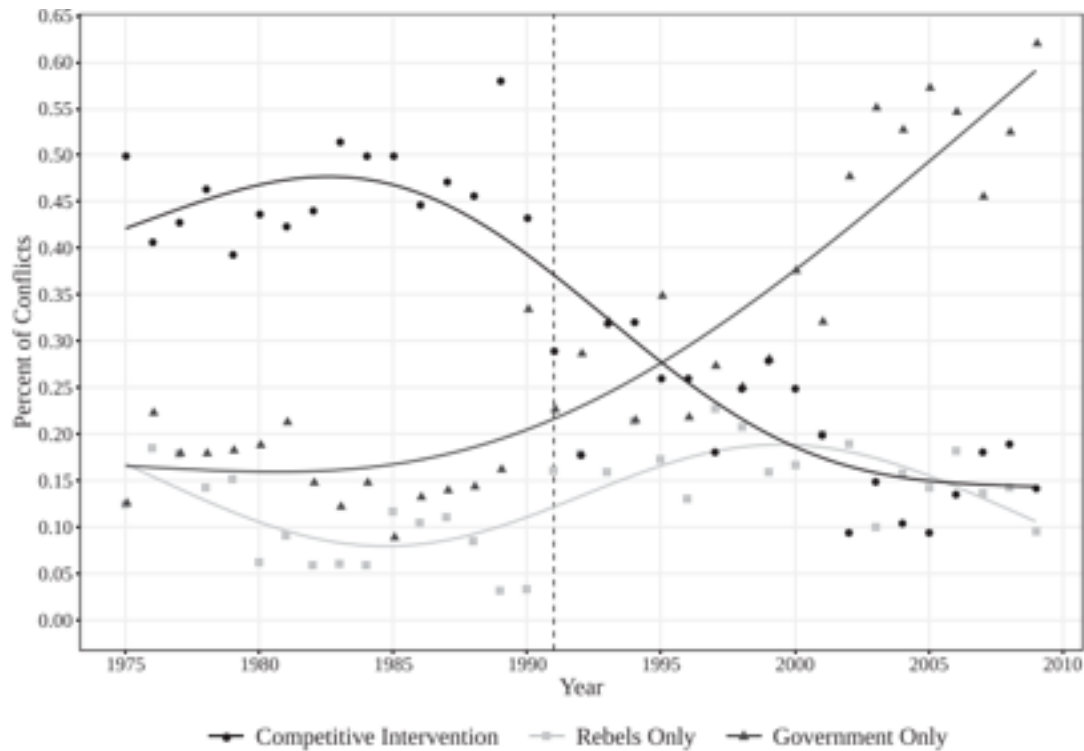


Table 2: Original Stata output testing the relationship between intervention and the natural log of duration using linear regression analysis

```
. reg lnduration intervention lngdp democ lnpop
```

```
Source |      SS      df    MS  Number of obs =   107
-----+----- F(4, 102) =   3.60
Model | 17.1232421    4 4.28081053  Prob > F      =  0.0087
Residual | 121.42853   102 1.19047578  R-squared     =  0.1236
-----+----- Adj R-squared =  0.0892
Total | 138.551772   106 1.30709219  Root MSE     =  1.0911
```

```
-----+-----
Induration |   Coef.  Std. Err.   t  P>|t|  [95% Conf. Interval]
-----+-----
intervention | .8500418  .235119   3.62 0.0000   .3836844  1.316399
lngdp | -.0274589 .1120798  -0.24 0.807  -0.2497686  .1948508
democ | .2347601 .2786078   0.84 0.401  -0.3178572  .7873774
lnpop | .0948723 .0690302   1.37 0.172  -0.0420488  .2317935
_cons | -.3174674 1.589963  -0.20 0.842  -3.471151  2.836216
```