

Diplomacy, Peacekeeping and the Severity of Civil War

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Abstract: A large body of literature has demonstrated that third-party actions such as peacekeeping and mediation can promote the resolution of conflicts. Conflict termination is just one goal of third-party interveners, however, and we examine whether actions such as peacekeeping, mediation, and other action by the UN Security Council lead to a reduction in violence in *ongoing* conflicts. We find, consistent with existing work, that a greater number of peacekeepers leads to a reduction in violence. We also find that other third-party activity, especially mediation, can play important roles in reducing bloodshed. In addition, we find that mediation increases the effect of peacekeeping troops in decreasing battle-field fatalities, particularly at low numbers of peacekeepers. These analyses show that third parties, such as the UN, can rely on a range of tools to reduce violence and suffering in intrastate conflicts and that the success of third-party interventions cannot be judged solely on the basis of their capacity to fully end conflicts.

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While all civil wars involve the loss of life, there is very large variation between and within conflicts in how many people are killed. The Syrian civil war, which began in 2011, has resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths. Civil wars in Ethiopia in the 1980s and early 1990s, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka have also generated large numbers of battlefield casualties. Other civil wars, such as peripheral conflict in India and Myanmar, while long-lasting, persist at a much lower level of intensity and result in far fewer casualties.

Since at least the end of the Cold War, the international community has devoted substantial attention resolving internal conflicts. A major motivation is to reduce violence and suffering resulting from these wars. A growing scholarly literature has developed examining the effect of actions such as peacekeeping and mediation on the termination of civil wars and the duration of peace following ceasefires.¹ Additionally, some work suggests that the UN and other international actors can have a preventative effect, helping to deter the outbreak of civil war² or escalation of low-level conflict.³

Yet few studies examine the extent to which third-party actors succeed in attenuating violence in ongoing civil wars. This gap is unfortunate, because if reducing violence and suffering is the goal, actions that lead to a reduction in severity without actually resolving conflict in high intensity wars arguably have a bigger impact, in terms of reducing loss-of-life and overall suffering, than resolving a low-intensity conflict.

An important exception to the general tendency to ignore third-party efficacy in attenuating conflict severity is the study by Hultman, Kathman and Shannon (2014), who find that battle-related fatalities are substantially fewer amidst peacekeeping deployments. Peacekeeping, however, is only

¹ See, for example, Walter 2002, Bercovitch and Gartner 2008, Doyle and Sambanis 2006, and Fortna 2008.

² Such as Beardsley, Cunningham, and White n.d.

³ Such as Karreth and Tir 2013.

one type of conflict-management activity that international actors might employ to reduce hostilities. Indeed, while peacekeeping has been shown to be effective at promoting peace, mediation also has the potential to de-escalate conflicts. The extant studies on third-party intervention, however, do not typically analyze the role of the interventions in reducing the severity of violence, and they typically consider peacekeeping and diplomatic interventions in isolation even though they are often co-incident.

In this article, we assess the role of various actions taken by international actors such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), with a particular focus on mediation, in reducing the severity of violence in civil war. We find that, consistent with Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon (2014), peacekeeping reduces battlefield casualties. We also find that other third-party activity, especially mediation, can play important roles in reducing bloodshed. We additionally find that peacekeeping and mediation have an interactive effect and that mediation increases the effectiveness of peacekeeping troops, particularly at low levels of peacekeepers. The results show that international actions such as peacekeeping and diplomacy can reduce the severity of civil war.

International Action and Violence Reduction

Action and Resolve

The UN and other international actors are quite active in internal disputes. In South Sudan, for example, the United Nations conducts a peacekeeping mission while, at the same time, various international organizations, governments, and non-governmental organizations promote negotiation and dialogue among warring parties. In the civil war in Syria, while the UN Security Council has remained so polarized that it has done little more than condemn acts of terrorism and the use of chemical weapons, other UN entities, along with the Arab League have been more active. Joint

envoys of these international organizations and other representatives of various governments have worked to design peace processes and facilitate negotiations to try to ameliorate violence in Syria.

We discuss four ways in which international actors, particularly the UN, could contribute to a reduction of violence in ongoing civil wars—the deployment of force (primarily in the use of peacekeeping), the use of various diplomatic efforts such as mediation, the application of sanctions, and condemnations of one or more of the combatants and their actions. We anticipate the first two types (force and diplomacy) to have the largest effect on the attenuation of violence, and therefore focus our attention primarily on those.

We consider two main ways that international attention to civil wars could lead to a reduction in violence. The first is through the actual action itself. International actions such as the deployment of peacekeepers, diplomatic activity such as mediation or good offices, or the application of sanctions can directly affect battlefield violence by making violence functionally more difficult or less attractive to the combatants relative to alternative options. Second, international attention (through, for example, UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions) signal resolve by the international community to take future action, and this signaling may lead to a change in behavior by the parties on the ground. The UNSC includes five permanent members with disparate preferences that have the ability to veto any resolution, thus, when a resolution is passed there is a clear signal of international commitment to ending the war and reducing its violence.⁴ Resolutions themselves could lead to the attenuation of violence by changing the expectations of the conflict protagonists.

⁴ The importance of the divergence of preferences of UN members has been noted by Voeten 2005, Thompson 2009, and Chapman 2009, who find that UNSC resolutions serve an informational role precisely because they are so hard to pass.

In the empirical analysis that follows, we examine the effect of the deployment of force, diplomacy, sanctions, and condemnations on the level of violence in civil war. Before turning to our analysis, we briefly discuss theoretically how each action could lead to a reduction in violence.

Force

While the United Nations has operated peacekeeping missions since 1948, the use of peacekeeping has increased dramatically since the Cold War. UN Peacekeepers are currently deployed in missions in several conflict-torn countries, including Central African Republic, Mali, Haiti, Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan. While, in some cases, peacekeepers are deployed to monitor the implementation of a peace agreement, in many others these missions are deployed while hostilities are ongoing. These missions are authorized through UNSC resolutions and, thus, the deployment of peacekeepers could both affect the decision-making of combatants and signal international attention to the conflict.

In terms of action, peacekeeping could lead to a reduction in violence in ongoing civil wars through at least two mechanisms. These parallel some of the mechanisms that Fortna (2008) finds to be important in explaining the ability of peacekeeping missions to reduce conflict recurrence. First, peacekeepers can be positioned between combatants, which directly reduces the ability of combatants to target one another. Related, one trend over the past decade is for many peacekeeping missions, and not just multilateral enforcement missions, to have more robust mandates, rooted in Chapter VII of the UN Charter, to use force against entities that threaten to disrupt the peace processes (Hultman 2013). The threat of the use of force by peacekeeping and multilateral enforcement missions against violations of the peace may help deter some would-be violations. Second, peacekeepers can observe and publicize participants' commitment to ceasefires—or lack

thereof—helping to overcome commitment problems and decreasing the incentives that combatants have to use violence.

Diplomacy

In addition to its role in authorizing peacekeeping missions, the United Nations and other international actors are quite active in diplomacy related to civil war. Many civil wars now see early efforts at negotiation, and the UN—via the Secretary-General, Special Representatives of the Secretary-General or teams from the Department of Political Affairs—often deploys mediators to seek a peaceful solution to these conflicts. As with force, we would expect diplomatic efforts to affect the level of violence in civil war both through the direct effect of these diplomatic actions on the conflict and, when UNSC resolutions explicitly direct or affirm the mediation efforts, through the signal that international willingness to engage in these diplomatic efforts sends about the level of international interest in the conflict.

Diplomacy can contribute directly to a reduction of violence in several ways. Mediators can facilitate the flow of information, helping to overcome problems of uncertainty and mistrust that can be significant barriers to peace (Kydd 2004). They can also affect the perceived costs and benefits of continuing to fight for the parties involved, by offering carrots and sticks (Schrodt and Gerner 2004). These positive benefits of mediation are the reasons why studies have concluded that, once the non-random assignment of mediation is addressed, mediation makes negotiated settlement more likely (e.g., Beber 2012; Gartner and Bercovitch 2006).

In many cases, these negotiated settlements fail to fully resolve conflicts, and ceasefire agreements resulting from mediated peace processes often break down (Beardsley 2011). However, if diplomatic activity reduces barriers to bargaining and thus leads to a reduction in hostilities, or to a reduction in the number of combatants (by leading to an agreement whereby some, but not all, of

the combatants stop fighting), this could lead to a decrease in violence even if it does not end the war (Schrodt and Gerner 2004).

Sanctions

In addition to authorizing the deployment of force, and to engaging in diplomatic actions (such as mediation), international actors such as the UN also use sanctions to try to manage civil conflicts. The authorization of sanctions can signal resolve, and sanctions can also provide a motivation for combatants to find a peaceful solution to civil war by raising the costs of fighting and/or the benefits of peace. Depending on how successfully they are implemented, sanctions can make non-compliance costlier (Bapat and Kwon 2015), providing greater incentive for peaceful settlement.

Even if sanctions do not result in an end to war, they could lead to a reduction of violence in an ongoing war by limiting the war-fighting capabilities of the parties.⁵ For example, the sanctions authorized by Resolution 713 (September 1991) were directly intended to decrease the arms available to the various combatants in the former Yugoslavia at the onset of the Balkan civil wars and, if effective, these actions could have reduced battlefield casualties.

Condemnations

Finally, the UNSC often issues resolutions deploring hostilities, non-compliance with prior UN directives or international agreements, or human rights violations in relation to civil wars. These condemnations are frequently-used tools by the UNSC, and have been issued in civil wars such as the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Georgia's conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the wars in the former Yugoslavia.

⁵ Hultman and Peksen (2015), however, find that both the threat of sanctions and use of economic sanctions lead to an increase in violence.

We would not expect condemnations to have as much effect as more tangible actions, because they do not directly affect the costs and benefits of fighting for combatants, the barriers to bargaining, or the ability of combatants to directly engage one another militarily. However, they can provide a signal of international resolve in the conflict, and so could potentially play some deterrent role.

Research Design

To examine the effects of these various types of third-party engagement with civil war combatants, we examine the correlates of the monthly counts of battle-related fatalities in active African intra-state armed conflicts from 1989-2008. While we attempt to rule out many plausible confounds and alternative explanations, it is important to note that, like most of the existing quantitative work on third-party intervention, we are unable to leverage exogenous sources of variation to provide strict causal identification. We note, however, that strict causal identification has limited utility in understanding the potential impact of third-party processes, as if the interventions could ever be switched on and off as exogenous treatments. Many of the interventions in our study, especially diplomatic and peacekeeping activity, arise from negotiated processes among the protagonists and the third parties. Those processes themselves are likely to be an important determinant of the trajectory of de-escalation that would not be captured by exogenous assignment of the treatment. That is, we are principally interested in correlational inference in this study—we are interested in whether the cases that have various types of third-party intervention have different patterns of violence than cases that do not, and we anticipate that the processes that led to the occurrence of those interventions actually contribute to those observed patterns. Furthermore, an alternative explanation contending that positive associations between major UN peacemaking initiatives and violence reductions are the product of the UN cherry-picking its interventions is inconsistent with

existing work (e.g., Fortna 2008; Gilligan and Sergenti 2003; Gartner and Bercovitch 2006) and the UN’s incentive structure in which easy victories are not likely to confer substantial benefits.

Dependent Variable

To capture fine-grained temporal variation in conflict violence, we use Hultman, Kathman, and Shannon's (2014, hereafter HKS) monthly count of battle-related deaths⁶ in a government-rebel conflict dyad—from the UCDP dyadic dataset (Harbom, Melander, and Wallensteen 2008). To obtain monthly counts of battle-related deaths, HKS use the UCDP Global Events Dataset (GED), which records specific events of battle-related violence in all government-rebel dyads in Africa from 1989-2008. We aggregate the dyad-level counts of battle-deaths in HKS to the conflict-month—the unit of analysis—since several of our independent variables are coded at the conflict level.⁷ Months during an active conflict in which no battle-deaths are observed in the GED are coded as having 0 battle-deaths. We treat conflicts as active until 12 months after the most recent non-zero count of battle-deaths.⁸

Table 1: African intra-state conflict violence in conflict-months (1989-2008)

Conflict-months	Non-zero conflict-months	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
4025	1510 (37.516%)	62.133	370.382	0	9082

⁶ HKS' count includes government and rebel combatants as well as noncombatants killed as a result of battle-related violence.

⁷ With this set-up, there may be more than one conflict in a given country at the same time. If, for example, there is a territorial conflict occurring concurrently with an anti-government rebellion or multiple territorial conflicts, as in Myanmar and India. However, the data are structured such that there can be only one center-seeking dispute—i.e. a dispute over the government—at a time, and all center-seeking rebel groups are aggregated in this dispute.

⁸ This differs slightly from HKS, who use a 24-month period. While our results are robust for the 24-month period, we doubt that information about how many fatalities occurred after peacemaking efforts in the midst of two years of relative peace can tell us much about the conflict-reducing potential of those efforts.

Table 1 shows the number of conflict-months in our data, the number of those which see at least one battle-death, and descriptive statistics for the dependent variable—the count of battle-deaths in a given conflict-month. There is substantial variation in the number of battle-deaths. Additionally, the proportion of conflict-months with no battle-deaths is substantially higher than those with at least one battle-death (62.484%). Further, the size of the standard deviation relative to the mean indicates that the dependent variable is over-dispersed. These two factors drive our choice of a zero-inflated negative binomial model for the analysis, which is discussed in more detail below.

Independent Variables

We focus on the effect of third-party conflict management efforts of four types—the deployment of force, diplomacy, sanctions, and condemnations. For the deployment of force and diplomacy, we examine indicators of both action and resolve by using separate measures of on-the-ground engagement (action) and UNSC resolution adoption (resolve) that pertain to such efforts. For sanctions, we focus only on the resolve dimension and use a measure of UNSC authorizations of sanctions. We do not focus on indicators of action related to sanctions because of limitations in the availability of sanctions data during our time period and because the UN is not responsible for the implementation of sanctions in the same way that it carries out peacekeeping and diplomatic initiatives. We also only focus on the resolve dimension of condemnations because there is no feasible on-the-ground action dimension.

To measure force deployments (peacekeeping), we use the main independent variable from HKS's study—a one-month lag of Kathman's (2013) monthly counts (in thousands) of the number of peacekeeping troops deployed to a specific conflict, which they find exerts a consistently negative effect on conflict violence. HKS differentiate between three types of peacekeepers—troops, police,

and military observers—and include a count of each type. HKS find that peacekeeping *troops* exert a consistently significant effect in ameliorating conflict violence, so we focus on peacekeeping troops in our analysis.⁹ By including their key independent variable in the analysis here, we are able to examine whether their finding on peacekeeping holds when we include variables measuring other types of international effort and with a modified modeling approach.

To examine the effect of different diplomatic efforts, we use two main measures of these actions. The first is a measure of third-party mediation from the Managing Intra-state Conflict (MIC) data (Melander and Uexkull 2011)—a binary indicator coded as 1 if a given conflict-month sees third-party mediation. We define mediation as having occurred if the type of third-party talks in the MIC data is coded as “direct talks”—face-to-face talks between the two primary parties of the dyad in the presence of the third party. An example of this would be the African Union-mediated discussions held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in 2005 between the Sudanese government and two Darfur rebel groups—the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Justice and Equality Movement.¹⁰ We also include a binary indicator generated from the MIC data for third-party diplomatic action outside of mediation, which includes indirect third-party talks, bilateral third-party engagement, unclear third-party participation in talks, good offices, and fact-finding missions. An example of this would be the meeting that the President of Uganda held with the British Minister of International Development and Cooperation in 2004 regarding conflict in the north of the country. These talks were *bilateral*, because while they pertained to the Ugandan government's conflict with the Lord's

⁹ In their analysis, HKS examine separately from peacekeeping troops the effect of peacekeeping police and military observers, finding that police exert no statistically significant effect on conflict violence and that there is a positive association between military observers and conflict violence.

¹⁰ See, e.g., *Reuters*. 8/24/2005. "Sudan's Darfur talks to resume mid-September - AU."

Resistance Army (LRA), they did not involve representatives of the LRA.¹¹ When third-party activity continues across multiple months, each month is coded as having experienced the activity. In auxiliary analyses discussed below, we distinguish between UN and non-UN third parties, and we also use the MIC data to code a variable for whether a non-UN peacekeeping mission was deployed in each month.

To measure the authorization of sanctions and the issuing of condemnations, we started with data on the content of UNSC resolutions (Beardsley 2013), which codes actions authorized or mandated by resolutions as well as the countries to which they apply. These data identify resolutions as authorizations of sanctions when they contain explicit demands and authorizations for the international community to restrict the trade, financial privileges or movement of specific governments or leaders.¹² Condemnations cover explicit statements in the operative paragraphs that deplore actions such as hostilities, human rights abuses, and failure to comply with existing agreements.¹³ We examined each resolution that was directed at a country in the sample period to determine whether it directly or indirectly related to a particular armed conflict occurring in that country and describe the coding procedure in the Appendix. Beardsley, Cunningham, and White (n.d.) have shown that both directly and indirectly relevant UNSC resolutions can reduce the likelihood that self-determination disputes escalate to civil war. Given this, we anticipate that both types of actions will have a potentially ameliorative effect on conflict violence. Accordingly, in our

¹¹ See, e.g., BBC Monitoring-Africa. 4/8/2004. "Uganda: President in talks with visiting British minister."

¹² Resolutions are coded for sanctions when they authorize new sanctions as well as when they call for the continuation or expansion of existing sanctions.

¹³ We also include in this category explicit threats—but not actual implementation—of sanctions or some other punishments.

main analysis, we aggregate indirectly and directly relevant resolutions. However, in robustness checks, we also restrict the analysis to directly relevant UNSC actions and find comparable results.

Beardsley’s (2013) data contain information on UNSC resolutions authorizing force and diplomatic efforts as well, and we use these data to examine whether the signal of resolve sent by these actions has an independent effect on the level of violence in conflict while controlling for the action that follows. As such, we have four types of UNSC resolutions: sanctions, condemnations, authorization of force, and diplomatic action. We separate authorizations of force into two variables measuring “new force” and “force reauthorizations” because, unlike other types of UN action, force authorizations carry an explicit expiration date that can only be extended with another resolution.¹⁴ In all cases, we model the long-term—but decreasing—effect of each UNSC action with an exponential decay function with a one-year half life.¹⁵ We allow also for UNSC actions to have a cumulative effect, so that a weight of “1” is added to the decaying effect of a prior resolution that mandated the same type of action and then decay continues to proceed. The effects of each type of UNSC action—i.e., condemnation, diplomacy, force, and sanctions—are modeled separately.

Table 2: Third-party action in armed conflicts in Africa (1989-2008)¹⁶

Third-party action	Number of conflict-months	Percentage of conflict-months
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¹⁴ Resolutions that expand the scope and/or size of an existing mission are considered as “new force.” Moreover, mandates that authorize “all necessary force” to be used are considered as “new force” because these mandates are sufficiently rare and, even when the “all necessary force” language is a reiteration of earlier resolutions, we assume that they indicate greater UN involvement than simple extensions of an existing mission.

¹⁵ This specification gives a UNSC action an effect of “1” in the month in which it is adopted by the UNSC, an effect of .944 the following month, which decays to .50 by twelve months, and so on.

¹⁶ Data for the MIC variables is only for 1993-2008.

Mediation (MIC)	286	8.89%
Other diplomacy (MIC)	798	24.81%
<hr/>		
UNSC new force	100	2.48%
UNSC sanctions	40	0.99%
UNSC diplomacy	108	2.68%
UNSC condemnation	141	3.50%
Peacekeeping troops	1068	26.53%

Table 2 shows the frequency of each type of diplomatic action, UNSC resolution, and UN peacekeeping in the 4,025 conflict-months contained in our data. These descriptive statistics show that both peacekeeping and diplomatic actions are common—approximately a quarter of conflict months contained some sort of diplomatic action as identified by the MIC data. Mediation is a bit less common, but still takes place in 9% of conflict months. Peacekeeping troops, meanwhile, are identified as present in conflicts for nearly 30% of the conflict months here.¹⁷ UNSC resolutions are less common, although we note that the reported figures reflect only the months in which a resolution was adopted—the decay functions allow for the resolutions to have influence in subsequent observations.

Modeling Conflict Violence

To model conflict violence we use a zero-inflated negative binomial regression and report standard errors that are robust to clustering on each conflict. This model not only accounts for the over-dispersion of battle-deaths in the conflict-month data, but also models separately the correlates of

¹⁷ In terms of descriptive statistics, the average number of peacekeeping troops deployed in a given conflict-month in our data is 906.048, with a minimum of zero and a maximum of 29,209. The standard deviation is 3,238.770.

the absence of violence—the "0s" in the count of battle-deaths—and the correlates of the counts of violence for the cases with non-zero battle-deaths. More than 60% of the conflict-months in our data have zero battle-deaths (see Table 1), which is suggestive that separate processes are driving the occurrence of any battles and the severity of the battles that do occur.

With a zero-inflated model, we are able to specify separately equations of "no violence" and "violence severity." We include our key explanatory variables in both parts of the zero-inflated model in order to ascertain their effect on both the presence of violence and its severity. In some cases, control variables appear in both parts of the zero-inflated model, while in other cases, they appear in one and not the other, depending on our expectation of whether the variable is likely to affect the opportunity for battles to occur (no violence), the severity of the battles that do occur (severity), or both.

In line with HKS, we include in both stages a count of the number of different rebel organizations active on the rebel side of a conflict. Also in both stages of the model, we include a cumulative average rate of the number of battle deaths—i.e., the number of battle-deaths in the conflict up to that point, divided by the number of months the conflict has been active. This allows us to account for baseline levels of violence and some of the potential for serial dependence in the data.

In just the "zero" stage of the model—modeling the absence of violence—we include a binary measure of whether or not there is a ceasefire agreement in a given conflict-month,¹⁸ used by HKS, because we expect that a ceasefire is most relevant to whether or not there is an opportunity for battles to occur. We also include a measure of the duration of the current episode of conflict, as well as a cubic polynomial of the number of months in the conflict in which there has been no

¹⁸ From the UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset (Harbom, Hogbladh, and Wallensteen 2006).

violence to account for temporal dependence for the binary outcome of "no violence."¹⁹ In just the "count" stage of the model, which measures conflict severity, we include from HKS the relative strength of the rebel group in the conflict in a five-level ordinal scale²⁰ and the natural log of the state's population²¹ because conflicts with weak rebel groups and in low-population states have less potential to escalate to high counts of battle-related deaths.

Results

Table 3 shows the results from our main analysis, reporting the coefficients as incidence-rate ratios—where values greater than 1 indicate a positive effect and less than 1 indicate a negative effect. The greater the distance from 1—in either direction—the greater the magnitude of the effect. The results for both the "No battle-related violence (BRV)" and "BRV count" stages of the zero-inflated model are reported separately. Here, it is important to stress that the dependent variable at the "No BRV" stage is the absence of violence, so a coefficient greater than "1" indicates that the given variable makes any violence *less likely*.

We conduct three sets of analyses. In the first, we only include measures of peacekeeping and diplomatic efforts alongside the controls. In the second set, we include the four types of UNSC resolutions, allowing us to examine whether the signal of resolve provided by the resolution has an effect on battlefield violence. In the final set, we include all together, allowing us to compare the effect of the action (i.e. peacekeeping or diplomacy) and the resolution (resolve), and to examine whether each has an independent effect controlling for the other.

¹⁹ See Carter and Signorino (2010).

²⁰ From Cunningham et al's (2009) Non-state Actor Dataset.

²¹ From the CINC data (Singer et al. 1972).

Table 3: Third-party intervention and conflict violence

Third-Party Activity and Battle-Related Fatalities						
	PKO, MIC		UNSCR		PKO, MIC, UNSCR	
	BRV count	No BRV	BRV count	No BRV	BRV count	No BRV
PKO troops (lag, per 1,000)	0.917 (<.001)	1.018 (0.268)			0.942 (0.043)	1.038 (0.212)
MIC mediation (lag)	0.649 (0.029)	1.768 (0.034)			0.670 (0.025)	1.712 (0.0419)
MIC other diplomatic int. (lag)	1.438 (0.035)	0.512 (0.006)			1.350 (0.074)	0.533 (0.001)
UNSCR new force weight (lag)			1.035 (0.848)	1.396 (0.047)	0.927 (0.473)	1.159 (0.435)
UNSCR sanctions weight (lag)			1.138 (0.524)	1.220 (0.484)	1.480 (0.018)	0.989 (0.970)
UNSCR diplomacy weight (lag)			0.768 (<.001)	0.730 (0.109)	0.879 (0.010)	0.811 (0.240)
UNSCR condemn weight (lag)			1.183 (0.121)	0.766 (0.059)	1.200 (0.026)	0.846 (0.204)
UNSCR renew force weight (lag)			0.880 (0.315)	1.071 (0.642)	0.750 (0.002)	1.089 (0.569)
UNSCR other weight (lag)			0.727 (0.215)	0.919 (0.592)	0.886 (0.641)	0.917 (0.584)
Number of rebel groups	1.075 (0.030)	0.887 (0.127)	1.009 (0.866)	0.859 (0.138)	1.075 (0.036)	0.878 (0.102)
Rebel strength	1.572 (<.001)		1.412 (0.088)		1.541 (0.043)	
Population (ln)	1.269 (0.00530)		1.219 (0.212)		1.189 (0.058)	
Prior battle related violence rate	1.007 (<.001)	0.996 (0.037)	1.003 (0.025)	1.000 (0.868)	1.008 (<.001)	0.997 (0.240)
Ceasefire		2.157 (0.006)		2.000 (0.007)		2.314 (0.006)
Episode duration		0.998 (0.322)		0.997 (0.046)		0.998 (0.167)
Peacemonths		4.632 (<.001)		5.047 (<.001)		4.463 (<.001)
Peacemonths^2		0.789 (<.001)		0.783 (<.001)		0.795 (<.001)
Peacemonths^3		1.012 (<.001)		1.012 (<.001)		1.011 (<.001)
Constant	1.160 (0.871)	0.500 (0.016)	4.816 (0.357)	0.385 (0.004)	2.138 (0.498)	0.558 (0.053)
alpha		2.062 (<.001)		2.732 (<.001)		1.976 (<.001)
Observations		2,637		3,366		2,637

Values are incidence-rate ratios; p-values in parentheses

The analyses in Table 3 support the violence-reducing effect of peacekeeping identified by HKS. In both count models, a greater number of peacekeeping troops is associated with fewer battle-related fatalities, and the effect is statistically significant. The sign on the coefficient is as expected in the inflation models (showing that more peacekeepers make zero battle-related deaths more likely), but these results are not statistically significant. Given that we analyze the effect of peacekeeping at the conflict-month rather than dyad-month level, and that we control for other forms of third-party

involvement, these analyses provide further support for the findings in HKS that peacekeeping troops reduce the severity of civil conflicts.

We also find strong evidence that, beyond the presence of peacekeeping troops, third-party conflict management can reduce violence. Specifically, third-party mediation efforts exert a strong pacifying effect at both stages of the zero-inflated model. This suggests that mediation is associated with reductions in conflict violence at all levels of conflict, even to the point of leading to no fatal violence. In terms of substantive effects, predictions generated from the model suggest that conflict-months that have had third-party mediation efforts in the prior month see approximately 21 fewer battle-related fatalities on average.²² Put differently, a conflict-month that has had no third-party mediation in the prior month is expected to see approximately 52 battle-deaths on average, while a conflict-month that has seen prior third-party mediation is expected to see 31.²³ This effect for mediation is particularly striking when we compare it to predicted fatality counts for different levels of peacekeeping generated from our model and find the predicted number of battle-deaths does not drop to 31 until deployments reach approximately 7,000,²⁴ suggesting that mediation is associated with a very strong pacifying effect when placed in context with other third-party interventions. This is not to suggest that mediation is a *replacement* for boots on

²² The predicted effect is 21.436 fewer deaths with a 95% confidence interval of (33.846 fewer and 9.025 fewer).

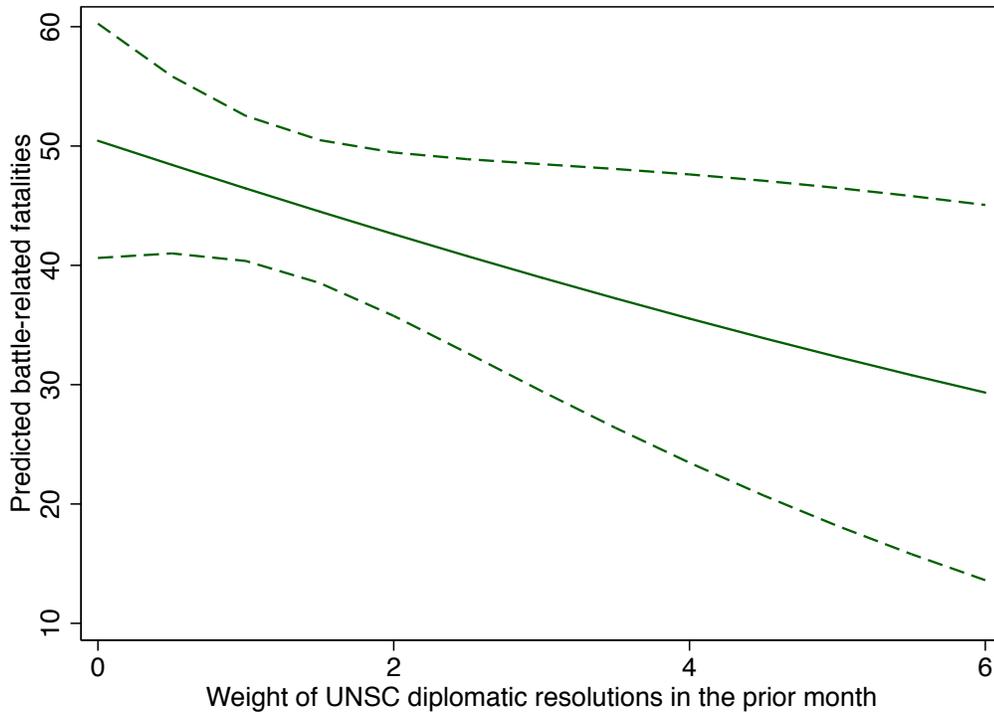
²³ The predictions are 52.551 battle-deaths (43.198, 61.905) and 31.116 battle-deaths (22.551, 39.681), respectively.

²⁴ On average, the predicted number of battle deaths in a given month with a prior month deployment of 7,000 peacekeeping troops is 31.084 (21.202, 40.965), whereas the predicted count of battle-deaths with no peacekeepers is 50.364 (41.088, 59.640).

the ground, since the two often occur in concert. In further analysis below we explicitly model the interaction of peacekeeper deployments and mediation.

Beyond active mediation efforts, we find that UNSC resolutions that authorize diplomacy have a strong effect on reducing violence at the count level, but not to the point of ending violence. However, while statistically significant, the effect of the UNSC resolutions authorizing diplomacy does not appear to be as strong as the mediation itself. Predictions generated from the model suggest that on average, a conflict-month that saw no UNSC diplomatic resolutions in prior months has, on average, approximately 50 battle-deaths, while a diplomatic resolution in the prior month reduces this to approximately 46 deaths. As Figure 1 shows, the predicted effect does increase with the weight of multiple, recent UNSC diplomatic resolutions. However, the predicted efficacy of these resolutions approaches that of actual mediation only at very high (and rare) values and then with a very high level of uncertainty surrounding the predictions.

Figure 1: UNSC Diplomacy Resolutions and Battle-related Fatalities in African Civil Wars (1993-2008)



It is important to stress that these results for mediation and diplomatic resolutions are robust to the inclusion of HKS' peacekeepers measure as well as a dummy variable for non-UN peacekeeping (see Table 5 below), which demonstrates that diplomatic efforts do not necessarily require accompanying "boots on the ground" to reduce violence.

We do not find strong evidence that other types of third-party action are able to reduce conflict violence. UNSC resolutions that authorize new force deployments do have a strong positive relationship with "no battle-related violence," but this relationship is statistically insignificant when the actual deployments of peacekeepers are included in the model. In line with HKS, this suggests that the effect of UNSC peacekeeping resolutions is in the actual deployment of peacekeepers, not in the resolve that the resolutions themselves may signal. UNSC resolutions that renew existing peacekeeping mandates do have a

statistically significant effect in reducing the counts of battle-deaths, but this effect is only present when controlling for peacekeeper deployments.²⁵

We also find that a number of third-party interventions—including non-mediation diplomacy (MIC), UNSC condemnations of combatants, and UNSC authorization of sanctions—are associated with *increased* violence.²⁶ It is likely that this stems from a selection effect, whereby severely violent conflicts are more likely to attract third-party action than more subdued ones (Gartner and Bercoivitch 2006). Unlike peacekeeper deployments and mediation, it may be that sanctions, condemnations, and non-mediatory diplomacy by themselves are unable to subdue the severe violence of the conflicts to which they are directed. In this way, the positive correlations with violence of these variables reduces the plausibility of selection effects explaining our main findings regarding the negative correlations pertaining to the mediation, diplomatic UNSC action and peacekeeping variables. Such an explanation would need to explain why some types of third-party intervention are going to the "easy" cases while others are going to the more difficult ones.

In sum, while finding that the pacifying effect of peacekeepers is robust to a number of model specifications, we also find that the ability of third parties to reduce conflict violence is not limited to peacekeepers. Mediation exerts a strong pacifying effect in particular. In terms of UNSC resolutions, the effect of diplomatic resolutions is statistically significant even when holding constant actual mediation, but the effect is substantially

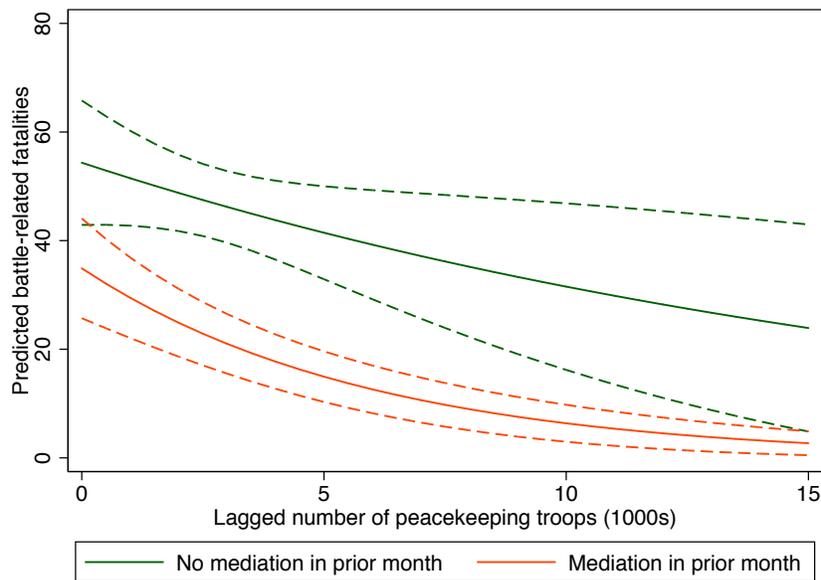
²⁵ This result is somewhat puzzling, since we would expect the force renewal resolutions to pick up much of the ameliorative effect of peacekeepers when actual peacekeeper deployments are excluded from the model. One possibility is that the renewal interval matters—when renewals occur at shorter intervals, this variable will tend be higher. If the interval is correlated with both the numbers of troops deployed and the severity of violence, this might explain the observed results.

²⁶ This finding on sanctions is consistent with that of Hultman and Peksen (2015).

weaker than that of actual mediation. Our conclusions from this analysis are two-fold: first, in line with our expectation, the efficacy of third-party engagement in reducing conflict violence is not limited to peacekeeper deployments, and second, of the two anticipated mechanisms through which third-parties can intervene—action and resolve—action is stronger, given the strong pacifying effects of both peacekeepers and mediation when compared to the effect of UNSC resolutions. In additional analysis below, we explore in more detail how peacekeepers and mediation can complement each other.

Conditional Effects

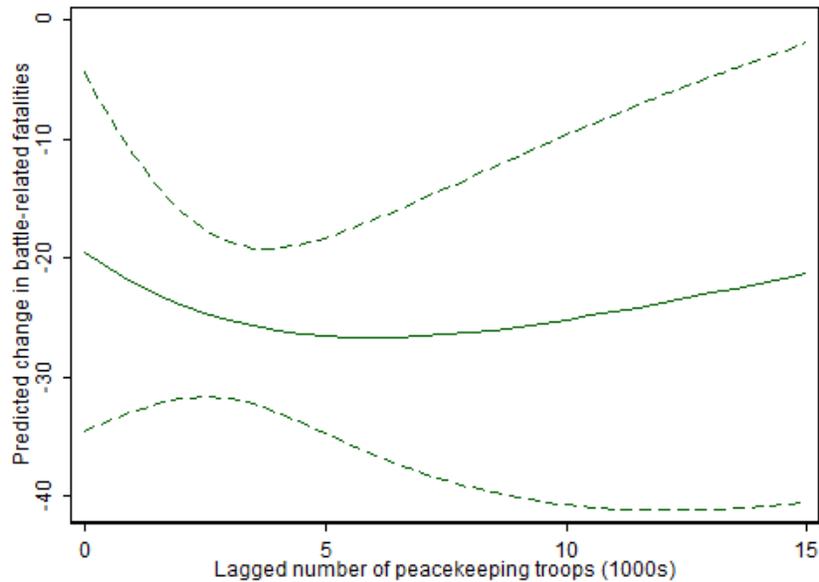
Figure 2: Peacekeepers and Battle-related Fatalities, conditional on mediation



It is likely that the different actions that third parties can take to ameliorate conflict violence are complementary. Specifically, we anticipate that third-party mediation and peacekeeping deployments should work together. Accordingly, we explicitly modeled the effect of mediation, conditional on peacekeeping deployments by including in our model an interaction of mediation with HKS' measure of peacekeeping troops. The full results from

this model can be seen in Table 4, while Figure 2 plots the predicted battle-deaths from this model at different levels of peacekeeping, conditional on mediation. The conditional effect, which is statistically significant in the count equation, is striking. The space between the two lines' confidence intervals demonstrates a significant pacifying effect for mediation at a broad range of peacekeeping-levels. Further, the much steeper initial slope for the line plotting the effect of peacekeeping when there is prior mediation suggests that at least at low-to-middling levels of peacekeepers, concurrent mediation can substantially increase their efficacy, suggesting that mediation can act as a substantial "force-multiplier."

Figure 3: Effect of Mediation on Battle-Related Fatalities, conditional on peacekeepers



However, while the results demonstrate that mediation increases the efficacy of peacekeeping, it is not clear that peacekeeping does the same for mediation. Figure 3 plots the effect of mediation in the prior conflict-month on conflict violence for different levels of peacekeeping deployments. For a clear gain in mediation efficacy to be evident as

peacekeeping increases, the trend line would need to slope downwards from left to right without substantial overlap between the confidence intervals at different points along the line. And while the plot does suggest some gains in mediation efficacy at low-to-middling levels of peacekeeping troops, this gain is not statistically distinguishable from the effect of mediation when there are no peacekeepers on the ground. It is striking, however, that mediation exerts a consistent pacifying effect at all levels of peacekeeper deployments shown in Figure 3—though uncertainly surrounding the size of the effect increases substantially at high and low levels of peacekeeper deployments.

These results are consistent with a separate analysis (not shown) in which we estimated models with an interaction term for third-party mediation (MIC) and UNSC resolutions authorizing new force. Here, the coefficient on the interaction term for the count equation was statistically significant and positive. In sum, peacekeeping and mediation appear to work *together* to reduce conflict violence. This effect is most clearly felt in mediation increasing the efficacy of peacekeeper deployments. Peacekeepers do not seem to dramatically alter the pacifying effect of mediation efforts, and, critically, mediation does not require peacekeeper deployments to reduce violence.

Table 4: Effect of mediation, conditional on peacekeepers

	Peacekeeper & Mediation Interaction	
	BRV count	No BRV
MIC mediation (lag)	0.722 (0.072)	1.655 (0.073)
PKO troops (lag, per 1,000)	0.955 (0.117)	1.036 (0.305)
Mediation*PKO troops	0.895 (0.003)	1.009 (0.883)
MIC other diplomatic int. (lag)	1.354 (0.066)	0.534 (0.010)
UNSCR new force weight (lag)	0.932 (0.497)	1.159 (0.419)
UNSCR sanctions weight (lag)	1.439 (0.022)	0.988 (0.968)
UNSCR diplomacy weight (lag)	0.862 (0.007)	0.809 (0.223)
UNSCR condemn weight (lag)	1.21 (0.011)	0.85 (0.213)
UNSCR renew force weight (lag)	0.751 (0.001)	1.082 (0.599)
UNSCR other weight (lag)	0.891 (0.623)	0.91 (0.544)
Number of rebel groups	1.075 (0.036)	0.878 (0.100)
Rebel strength	1.546 (0.033)	
Population (ln)	1.188 (0.065)	
Prior battle-related violence rate	1.008 (<.001)	0.997 (0.250)
Ceasefire		2.339 (0.005)
Episode duration		0.998 (0.163)
Peacemonths		4.46 (<.001)
Peacemonths^2		0.795 (<.001)
Peacemonths^3		1.011 (<.001)
Constant	2.133 (0.502)	0.56 (0.054)
alpha		1.97 (<.001)
Observations		2,637

Values are incidence-rate ratios; p-values in parentheses

One possible concern with the especially strong joint pacifying effect demonstrated in Figure 2 at low-to-middling levels of peacekeeper deployments is that peacekeeper deployments of this size combined with mediators are more likely to go to conflicts that are already in the process of pacifying on their own. Large-scale peacekeeper deployments without mediators may be more likely to go to more violent disputes so as to establish the conditions on the ground necessary for mediation to occur. The inclusion in our analysis of a number of controls for past and ongoing conflict dynamics—i.e., prior violence rate, ceasefires, and conflict episode duration—bolsters our confidence that the observed joint effect of peacekeeping and mediation does not stem from some other underlying conflict dynamic. Further, the pacifying effect for mediation is evident at a very wide range of peacekeeper deployments, which should provide added confidence that the efficacy of mediation is not limited to low-to-middling levels of peacekeeper deployment going to more pacific conflicts. In the following section, we also address this concern with additional specifications that explicitly take into account the prior trend in conflict violence, and there is no change in our findings.

Identity of Third-Party Intervener

In this article, we have focused primarily on the United Nations since it is the most prolific actor in international conflict management. In further analyses, we separate UN interventions from those enacted by other third-parties—e.g., IGOs, regional security organizations, and individual nations. Table 5 shows results from a model which includes a dummy variable from the MIC data indicating a non-UN peacekeeping mission in a

particular conflict and the MIC mediation dummy split into UN and non-UN mediation activity. The results show that the non-UN peacekeeping dummy is negatively associated with the count of battle-deaths in a conflict while positively associated with instances of no battle-related deaths in a given conflict-month. Both coefficients are statistically significant. This indicates that the pacifying effect of peacekeepers is not strictly limited to UN forces and complements HKS' main findings. While from these findings we cannot ascertain the relative effectiveness of different non-UN peacekeeping forces—e.g., African Union, European Union, or ECOWAS—these results suggest that the effect of peacekeeping is driven by the practical effect of third-party "boots on the ground" and not the particulars of the more distant institution from which the peacekeeping mission originated. This is consistent with our findings in the main analysis that it is the presence of UN peacekeepers that has a pacifying effect, not the resolutions dispatching the peacekeepers.

In terms of disaggregated mediation, UN activity appears to drive the overall efficacy of mediation in the main results. While there is some imprecision in the coefficient estimates ($p \sim .20$ in both cases), the coefficients indicate that UN mediation is both negatively associated with the count of battle-deaths and positively associated with incidence of no battle-deaths in a conflict. In contrast, the results for non-UN mediation are inconsistent. In the count model, the coefficient indicates a negative effect, but this is far from conventional levels of statistical significance ($p = .706$)—in the model of "zero incidence," the effect is actually negative, indicating that non-UN mediation corresponds to some level of violence above zero battle-deaths.

Table 5: UN and non-UN intervention in conflict

UN and Non-UN Involvement	UN & Non-UN Involvement	
	BRV count	No BRV
PKO troops (lag, per 1,000)	0.936 (0.010)	1.029 (0.372)
MIC other diplomatic int. (lag)	1.354 (0.061)	0.556 (0.015)
UNSCR new force weight (lag)	0.951 (0.657)	1.296 (0.216)
UNSCR sanctions weight (lag)	1.538 (0.001)	1.109 (0.710)
UNSCR diplomacy weight (lag)	0.886 (0.037)	0.795 (0.164)
UNSCR condemn weight (lag)	1.184 (0.025)	0.827 (0.223)
UNSCR renew force weight (lag)	0.761 (0.001)	1.049 (0.787)
UNSCR other weight (lag)	0.870 (0.582)	0.826 (0.332)
Number of rebel groups	1.073 (0.045)	0.867 (0.069)
Rebel strength	1.556 (0.045)	
Population (ln)	1.169 (0.095)	
Prior battle related violence rate	1.008 (<.001)	0.998 (0.288)
Ceasefire		2.741 (0.001)
Episode duration		0.997 (0.129)
Peacemonths		4.445 (<.001)
Peacemonths^2		0.794 (<.001)
Peacemonths^3		1.011 (<.001)
Non-UN peacekeeping (lag)	0.494 (0.001)	1.884 (0.080)
UN MIC mediation (lag)	0.771 (0.207)	1.426 (0.190)
Non-UN MIC mediation (lag)	0.894 (0.706)	0.432 (0.020)
Constant	2.447 (0.418)	0.577 (0.069)
alpha		1.992 (<.001)
Observations		2,637

Values are incidence-rate ratios; p-values in parentheses

Robustness Checks

We conduct three additional analyses to examine the robustness of these findings. One possible concern is that third-party intervention is more likely to go to conflicts where violence is already decreasing, and so the violence-reducing effects that we find for

mediation and diplomacy are due to those actions being directed at conflicts that would have become less violent regardless of the intervention. This is addressed by HKS with regards to peacekeeper deployments. They include in their analysis a measure of "Battle Violence Change"—the change in the three-month moving average of battle-related violence between the previous three dyad-months and the three months prior to this. (HKS, 13) We do the same (Table A1, in Appendix), aggregating the dyad-month measure to conflict-month, and find no substantive change in our results, providing confidence that mediation and diplomatic action actually serves to reduce violence rather than just being directed at already-pacific disputes. We also applied this check to our finding regarding the conditional effect of mediation and peacekeeping, and the results were essentially the same.

As noted previously, we include both directly and indirectly relevant resolutions in our weighted UNSC action indicators. As an added robustness check, we restrict the UNSC action indicators to only those resolutions coded as directly relevant and find comparable results (Table A1, in appendix). With this there is a modest loss of precision for the coefficient estimate pertaining to UNSC diplomatic resolutions in the count model ($p=.107$, two-tailed), but the direction of the effect remains unchanged. In this specification, the MIC mediation indicator remains significant at the 0.05 level. The results remain suggestive that UNSC initiatives can play a strong role in ameliorating conflict violence, even when accounting for other third-party mediation.

In a further specification, we recoded our measures of mediation and non-mediation diplomatic engagement to consider indirect talks (e.g., shuttle diplomacy) to be a form of mediation in addition to direct talks (e.g., face-to-face talks with a third-party present). The results from this analysis (Table A2, in Appendix) show that while mediation remains statistically significant in the "no violence" portion of the model, it is no longer significant in

the count portion ($p=.557$)—though the effect is still in the negative direction. This suggests that to be effective in reducing violence, third-party diplomacy should be in the form of face-to-face talks between belligerents overseen by the third-party. Weaker measures of diplomatic-engagement, such as shuttle-diplomacy, do not appear to have the same pacifying effect.

Conclusion

Over the last two decades, international actors have devoted increasing attention to managing intrastate conflicts. A substantial body of research has suggested that various efforts—such as mediation and peacekeeping—can make significant contributions to the resolution of intrastate conflict. Indeed, some have gone so far as to argue that the decline in the incidence of civil war over the last several decades is in large part due to international conflict resolution activity (Goldstein 2011).

Despite these efforts, however, a large number of civil wars are still fought. Our analysis suggests that the positive effect of international efforts is not limited to the cases of successful conflict resolution. Rather, it suggests that efforts such as peacekeeping and mediation can actually reduce the level of killing in ongoing wars as well as resolve them.

These findings are important, because they suggest that international actions have a positive effect that has, with the exception of peacekeeping, to date been unrecognized. Many of the conflicts that receive the most international attention—such as those in Syria and South Sudan—are incredibly bloody, and the level of violence can suggest that the ability of third parties to do anything constructive is limited. Our analyses suggest, however, that, on average, civil wars would be even bloodier without international efforts such as peacekeeping and mediation. The presence of severe armed conflict in the face of

international intervention does not necessarily represent the categorical failure of international efforts to reduce violence and suffering in civil war.

The first key policy implication from our study, then, is that scholars and policymakers evaluating the success of different international efforts should use a broader metric than the full resolution of the conflict. To fully gauge the effectiveness of third-party conflict resolution and mediation efforts, researchers should examine the severity of violence in conflict as well as its total resolution.

A second implication is that achieving these positive effects is not free, and indeed requires the investment of significant resources. We do not find a pacifying effect for UNSC resolutions that authorize sanctions or comprise condemnations—actions that are (relatively) low cost for the UN. Rather, diplomatic actions such as mediation and deployments of peacekeepers have the largest effects. Much of the discussion of efforts by states and bodies such as the UN to respond to these conflicts focuses on the costs of doing so, and these costs can be substantial. We show that the benefits can be as well.

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