



Can International Interventions Secure the Peace?

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ERSA working paper 314

March 2013

Economic Research Southern Africa (ERSA) is a research programme funded by the National Treasury of South Africa.

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April 15, 2013

Abstract

The international community uses a number of interventions to make and build peace. How effective are these interventions? What works and what does not? The discussion highlights the uncertainties when evaluating interventions. Although some interventions are frequently advocated we know very little about their success. Some of the commonly advocated interventions have been assessed in large n-studies. Although there is no evidence that development aid helps to prevent wars, there is evidence that aid stabilizes post-war situations. There are also a number of studies suggesting that UN Peace Keeping Operations do indeed keep the peace. Although there are fewer studies, there is some emerging evidence that arms embargoes do restrict arms transfers to conflict zones and thus help to make conflicts less deadly. The discussion also suggests that internationally binding rules on arms transfers and the use of private military and security services would support conflict prevention.

1 Introduction

We live in violent times. Armed conflicts are currently raging in Afghanistan, Syria and Mali. As brave journalists bring us the shocking images of war to our screens we begin a discussion on how to stop the killing, maiming, torture, (child) abductions and sexual violence. In addition to these terrible human costs there are significant spill over costs from war. Populations are displaced and seek shelter in different parts of their or neighbouring countries. With them come hunger, disease and trauma. Economic studies suggest that wars do not only depress their own country's growth but also that of their neighbours. The increased military expenditure diverts funds for development purposes and has an impact on neighbouring countries by setting off a regional arms race (Collier and Hoeffler, 2007). The estimates of the cost of the average civil war in a

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[‡]I would like to thank Doug Bond and Nic Marsh for useful discussion. All remaining errors are of course my own.

low income country range from \$64bn (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004b) to around \$120bn (Dunne, 2013). These are conservative estimate because they do not include the global cost of conflict. For example, in order to finance wars some rebel leaders turn to the production and/or trafficking of illegal drugs. Typically, these drugs are consumed in rich countries and this can seriously increase crime and prostitution in the consumer countries. Another worry is that armed conflicts often generate ungovernable spaces which potential terrorist organisations can use. They can hide, train and potentially scale up their operations during the conflict. One recent example is the Islamist rebellion in Northern Mali.

Given that wars cause enormous human suffering as well as regional and global costs, there are humanitarian as well as self-interested reasons of why international actors want to intervene. Since motivation is not something that can be observed, but only assumed, I will not discuss the reasons for intervention in this contribution. Instead, the focus is on reviewing different types of third party interventions and discussing their effects on wars. While some concentrate on the harmful effect of interventions (Anderson, 1999), others refer to the positive effects of interventions. One often cited example was the British military intervention in Sierra Leone in 1999/2000 that ended a particularly brutal and long civil war (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004b). Since there are always examples and counter-examples the method chosen to address the effectiveness of interventions is to review large n-studies. Third party interventions are defined broadly as including diplomatic, financial and military interventions. More specifically, in this paper I will focus on aid, peace keeping operations and arms trade restrictions. This is mainly due to the fact that they are the most commonly debated and used interventions and a body of evidence has built up over the past two decades.

Finally, it should be noted that although we are witnessing some ongoing wars, the world is now much less violent than ever before (Pinker, 2012). If this trend continues, a study like this will have no use. However, although wars are now very unlikely in some regions, there are others that are still plagued by large scale violent conflict. These trouble hotspots are easy to identify: they are poor countries, have suffered growth collapses and have a history of civil war (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004a; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Hegre and Sambanis, 2006). This knowledge should provide a good guide on *where* to use third party interventions. The question of *how* to intervene is more problematic. Interventions should ideally address the twin challenge of security and development, ending conflicts and preventing new ones by building stronger states, enabling people to lead secure lives free from poverty.

The discussion of these questions is structured in the following way. The second section of the paper presents an overview of organized political violence and its different forms. This empirical section shows that civil war is the most common form of large scale armed conflict. The third section turns to the discussion of various interventions. Development aid post-war helps to stabilize the peace and there is good evidence that UN Peacekeeping Operations have been successful at keeping the peace. There is also some evidence that arms trade

restrictions are effective. In addition to interventions the section also considers conflict prevention. The analysis of conflict prevention is difficult because it analyses a ‘non-event’ and the empirical study of preventions requires the formation of a relevant comparison group. The last section concludes. Although there is now evidence to guide policy makers on the effectiveness of certain types of interventions there is still considerable uncertainty on the complementarities and synergies between diplomatic, economic and military interventions.

2 From War to Peace

A simple definition of peace is the absence of violent conflict. The most widely used empirical definitions is the one developed by the Uppsala Data Conflict Program (UCDP) and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) (Themmer and Wallensteen, 2011; Gleditsch *et al*, 2002). In their global data set they distinguish between ‘major’ and ‘minor’ armed conflict. ‘Major armed conflicts’ or ‘wars’ cause at least 1,000 battle related deaths a year. Military as well as civilian deaths are counted as ‘battle related’. A further part of the definition is that there is organised effective violent opposition to the government, this distinguishes this type of violence from genocides, pogroms and communal violence. ‘Minor armed conflict’ is defined as above but is limited to 25 to 999 battle deaths per year. Throughout the paper I use the term ‘conflict’ for minor as well as major armed conflicts and ‘war’ exclusively for major armed conflicts.

The UCDP/PRIO data set provides conflict data from the end of World War II until 31st December 2010. Figure 1 depicts the global prevalence of violent conflict. International conflicts and extra-systemic conflicts (mainly conflicts over independence) are rare for the study period. Conflicts internal to a country are most prevalent. Many of these internal conflicts are characterized by international involvement. The number of conflicts peaked after the end of the Cold War in 1992 at 52 conflicts. Since then the world has become a more peaceful place, we observe a downward trend in the number of conflicts. In 2009/10 about 15 per cent of all countries experienced internal armed conflict. Hegre *et al* (2013) estimate that this prevalence rate will fall to seven per cent in 2050.

Figure 2 indicates that global conflict trends were similar across the main regions.

The Figures provide information on the global prevalence of armed conflict but do not provide any information on their incidence (new cases) nor on their duration. Table 1 reports the duration by conflict type and fatality rates. Civil wars are the longest lasting conflicts, they last on average just under six years and are about four times longer than international wars. How do conflicts end? Using data from Kreutz (2010) negotiated settlements are more common for international wars than civil wars (Table 2). Out of 57 civil wars, only 16 ended in negotiated settlements, a similar number to the wars that ended in military victory. The chances of the government winning were about the same as for a rebel win. However, a large number of wars (12) were not resolved and

continued, albeit on a lower scale.

Conflicts internal to countries are the most common form of conflict. Figure 3 only uses data on internal conflicts, most internal conflicts are classified as ‘minor’ (25-999 deaths per year). In 2010 out of 30 conflicts there were only four wars: Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and Pakistan.

Regan (2009) states that about 16 million people have been killed in civil wars since the end of World War II. Many countries have seen repeat armed conflict and seem to be in a ‘conflict trap’ (Collier *et al* 2003). About forty per cent of civil war countries revert back to war within a decade (Collier *et al*, 2008) and Walter (2011) argues that recurring civil wars have become the dominant form of armed conflict in the world today. Thus, countries with a violent past are more likely to experience new conflict. What other characteristics make a country more conflict prone? Over the past 15 years evidence has emerged that economic characteristics are important determinants of conflict risk. Large *n*-studies show that income levels and growth are robustly correlated with conflict onset (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004a; Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Hegre and Sambanis, 2006; Miguel *et al*; 2004). Thus, the strength of the economic recovery is crucial in avoiding a cycle of war and underdevelopment.

What do we know about post-conflict recovery? Based on panel growth regressions Collier and Hoeffler (2004) find evidence for a peace dividend. After the civil war countries experience higher than average growth: their growth rates are about one per cent higher, *ceteris paribus*. Hoeffler *et al* (2010) revisit these results and confirm that the post-war recovery sets in slowly and is strongest around during the fourth, fifth and sixth year after the end of the war. However, this peace dividend is not automatic. In many countries lower level violence continued after the end of the war (25-999 deaths per year). Panel regressions show that in these cases there was no peace dividend, i.e. growth was no higher than in other countries. Thus, in order to catch up countries must end lower levels of armed conflict.

To summarize, conflicts internal to a country are the most common form of armed conflict. Only some of these conflicts cause more than 1,000 battle deaths per year and are thus classified as wars. However, these civil wars are costly in terms of economic and human losses¹, last for a long time (almost six years) and many are neither settled by negotiation or victory but ‘rumble’ on. In the next section I will discuss the most commonly proposed and used third party interventions. What stops wars and how do we achieve lasting peace?

3 Making Peace Last

The international community uses a number of interventions to make and build peace. How effective are these interventions? What works and what does not? My discussion highlights the uncertainties when evaluating interventions. I argue that although some interventions are frequently advocated we know very

¹See for example the estimates put forward in the Copenhagen Consensus Project: Collier and Hoeffler (2004b), Collier *et al* (2008) and Dunne (2012).

little about their success. Partly because we base our assessment on the implicit assumption that interventions are motivated by the desire to prevent or lessen conflicts. This implicit assumption may not be correct. Some of the most commonly used and proposed interventions have been assessed in large n-studies and I provide a brief overview of the effectiveness of aid, peace keeping, arms control and early warning systems.

3.1 Development Aid

The relationship between aid and peace can be analysed from a number of different perspectives. Aid might have a direct impact on the risk of conflict or via other variables such as for example growth. Aid may have an impact on the risk of a war breaking out in a previously peaceful country, on the duration of conflict and the risk of renewed war in a post- conflict society. In addition, different types of aid may have a differential impact on the incidence and duration of civil war: food aid may be misappropriated by rebel forces while it is more difficult to capture other types of aid, for example budget support. The literature typically only considers development aid, which excludes military aid. To my knowledge, there is no study on the impact of military aid on the risk of conflict. Possibly, because very few donors publish their military aid. However, there are a number of studies analysing the effect of military interventions by third parties (see below).

Food Aid and Civil War

Theoretically, development aid could either increase or decrease the risk of conflict. In conflict models that centre on the capture of the state for financial advantage, aid makes such a capture more lucrative. Thus, higher amounts of aid increase the risk of rebellion (Grossman, 1992). On the other hand, there are reasons to be sceptical of aid as an incentive to rebellion. For rebel organizations it is difficult to capture aid during a conflict, for example budget aid and technical assistance. The one notable exception of aid that can be captured for conflict is food aid. Allegedly, in a number of cases the misappropriation of food aid has promoted conflict (see for example Anderson, 1999). This qualitative evidence has recently been tested using a global data set (Nunn and Qian, 2012). The regression results suggest that countries that receive more US food aid have a higher risk of a conflict breaking out and these conflicts tend to last longer. This evidence is stronger for minor armed conflicts than for civil wars (defined by having caused more than a 1,000 battle related deaths). There are two major concerns with this type of study: First, there may be a determinant that simultaneously drives conflict and aid. Poverty may be such a determinant, poor countries receive more aid but are also more at risk of experiencing a conflict (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Fearon and Laitin, 2003). Second, food aid and conflict may be correlated but it cannot be established that food aid *causes* conflict. Nunn and Qian (2012) use an instrumental variable approach to address the issues of simultaneity and endogeneity. They develop a novel identification strategy and use US wheat production as the exogenous source of variation. Wheat production is dependent on US weather shocks and the

government stabilizes prices by accumulating reserves in high production years. Much of this surplus is used for food aid in the following year. Food aid and wheat production in the preceding year are highly correlated. Wheat production is a good instrument for food aid because most of US food aid is wheat (58% of total US food aid).

Although the results on food aid are convincing, they may not be that important for the contemporaneous risk of conflict. The study considers food aid from 1972-2006, during this period of time the importance of food aid has diminished. Over the past decade the share of food aid in total aid was only about two per cent.² Thus, unless food aid is increased in the near future, it is likely to contribute only marginally to the risk of conflict.

Development Aid and Peace

I now return to the question of the relationship between aid, irrespective of purpose, and war. Development aid could potentially reduce the risk of conflict directly. Aid increases the government budget and since aid is fungible these additional funds can be used to increase military expenditure (Collier and Hoeffler, 2007) and thus deter rebellion or suppress it. Another possible channel is that potential rebel groups can be ‘bought off’ (Azam, 1995). However, there is no empirical evidence that aid decreases the risk of conflict (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002; de Ree and Nillesen, 2009).

Although there is no evidence that aid directly reduces the risk of war, what about indirect channels? Aid could potentially decrease the risk of conflict by increasing growth and income. Growth and income are robustly correlated with the risk of conflict (Hegre and Sambanis, 2006; Miguel *et al* 2004) and if aid increases growth and cumulatively income, aid may reduce the risk of war through increased growth. Despite the vast literature on the economic impact of aid on growth (e.g. Burnside and Dollar, 2000; Dalggaard *et al* 2004) there is no evidence of a robust causal relationship between aid and growth. Furthermore there is also no evidence that aid ‘works’ in better policy or geographical environments nor that certain types of aid work better than others (Rajan and Subramanian, 2008). Thus, aid is unlikely to affect the risk of conflict through growth.

Does aid affect the duration of conflict? Most of the aid goes to the government although there is some discussion that food aid is appropriated by rebel forces. De Ree and Nillesen (2009) provide some evidence that aid shortens the duration of civil wars. They suggest that aid strengthens the government by ‘leaking’ into the military budget. While this appears plausible they do not examine whether aid results in a military victory of the government.

Another line of inquiry is whether aid can help to stabilize post-conflict countries and reduce the high rate of recurrence. Collier and Hoeffler (2004c) and Hoeffler *et al* (2011) focus their analysis on whether aid can enhance the peace dividend. In contrast to the general literature on aid and growth (which finds essentially no links), they find that aid has a positive effect on growth in post-war economies. However, the effect is moderate: an extra one per cent of

²OECD/DAC data for 2000-2010, own calculations.

aid increases growth by 0.05 - 0.1 per cent (Hoeffler *et al*, 2011). Importantly, they show that these results do not hold in violent post-war situations, aid in violent post-war situations has no growth enhancing effect. Toft (2010) shows post-conflict growth is independent of the type of settlement that brought the conflict to an end. Hoeffler *et al* (2011) examine whether certain types of aid are particularly beneficial to growth in post-war countries. After an armed conflict countries face particular needs, for example physical infrastructure reconstruction and rehabilitation and a health burden. However, they find no statistical evidence that a particular type of aid is more beneficial than another.

3.2 UN Peacekeeping

There is now considerable evidence that UN peacekeeping operations (UNPKOs) are effective in maintaining peace. Collier *et al* (2008) use a duration model and conclude that UNPKOs extend the peace. Fortna and Howard (2008) provide an overview of the peacekeeping literature and conclude that there is robust evidence on the positive effects of peace keeping. Hegre *et al* (2011) also suggest that UNPKOs are effective in keeping the peace and their simulations suggest that a 60 per cent increase in UNPKOs expenses would result in halving the risk of major armed conflict. One concern in this literature is the possible endogeneity of UNPKOs. If peacekeepers are only sent to less difficult situations, we would observe a positive association of UNPKOs with longer durations of peace, but this positive association could not be interpreted as causal. Typically, econometric studies tackle this problem with the help of instrumental variables, but to my knowledge no research team has yet come up with a suitable instrument. However, Fortna (2008) argues that the UN sends peacekeepers to the more difficult situations. This would bias the correlation between UNPKOs and the duration of peace downwards, and this argument strengthens the results of the large n-studies. Despite the evidence on the peace enhancing effect of UNPKOs, the channels through which they support the peace are not well understood. There is no evidence that UNPKOs lead to democratization (Fortna and Howard, 2008) or that they affect growth directly (Hoeffler *et al*, 2011). Interestingly, Fortna (2008) suggests that the success of UNPKOs is mainly due to non-military mechanisms. The decision of the belligerents to keep the peace is the result of altered incentives, alleviation of fear and mistrust, the prevention of accidental escalation into war and the reshaping of the political procedures.

3.3 Restrictions on Arms Transfers

This section starts with a review of the existing rules of international arms transfers and discusses how they impact on conflict proliferation. The analysis then moves to the evaluation of UN arms embargoes and concludes by highlighting problems with the provision of security services, so far an unregulated market.

Arms Production, Exports and Regulations

The production of arms remains highly concentrated: during the period 2007-2011 75 per cent of total major conventional weapons transfers were sourced

from just five countries: The United States, Russia, Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Unlike the production of arms, their export is far less concentrated. The top five importers only account for 30 per cent of total arms transfers (Holtom *et al*, 2012).

Arms transfers include not only sales but also temporary transfers, loans, leases and gifts. The transfer of arms is not regulated in the same way as other international trade and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) explicitly makes exceptions for the arms trade when ‘essential security interests’ are at stake.³ Although it is legitimate for states to hold and use arms to provide security to their citizens, there are a number of countries that do not use the imported arms for their intended purpose. Governments can use them for human rights abuses, divert the arms to rebel and terrorist groups in the region and abuse the procurement process for corrupt payments (see Bromley *et al* (2013) for further discussion.) While many exporting nations have rules to prevent transfers to such regimes, they are all too often sidestepped. For example, during 2005-09 the Ukraine exported conventional weapons and maintenance services to Sub-Saharan African countries such as Angola, Chad, Djibouti, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. The exports included aircrafts, artillery, armoured vehicles, grenade launchers, machine guns, automatic rifles as well as maintenance services for aircrafts and helicopters. There is strong evidence to suggest that Ukrainian arms were diverted from Kenya to Southern Sudan.⁴ This arms transfer contravened the UN arms embargo as set out in a UN Security Council Resolution.⁵

Given the highly concentrated structure of the worldwide production of arms, an internationally binding agreement on the arms trade could reduce the supply of arms to conflict countries. Thus, restrictions on arms transfers could help in the de-escalation of large scale conflicts and prevent smaller conflicts from intensifying. An international Arms Trade Treaty would potentially be a useful instrument in the international prevention and intervention strategy. Currently there is no internationally binding international Arms Trade Treaty but the UN negotiations for such a treaty are ongoing.

There are a number of regional and national regulations that restrict the arms trade to countries in conflict or to states with a poor human rights record. Examples are the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and the US Arms Export Control Act (AECA). The experience with these regulations provide a useful guide for the formulation and implementation of an UN Arms Trade Treaty. Some of the existing arms trade restrictions appear to be motivated by the self-interest of the manufacturing country rather than concerns for the conflict situation in destination countries. Many arms manufacturers want to

³The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) allows any contracting party to take “any action . . . it considers necessary for the protection of its essential security interests relating to the traffic in arms, ammunition and implements of war . . .” (Article XXI (b) (ii) of the GATT, 1947, www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/gatt47_02_e.htm#top).

⁴For a discussion of Ukrainian arms transfers see Holtom (2011).

⁵UN Resolution 1556 (2004), full text can be found here [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1556\(2004\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1556(2004))

prevent the spread of technology.

For the prevention of civil war the transfer of small arms and light weapons (SALW) is of most interest. Small arms can be defined as conventional arms that can be used and carried by a single person (e.g. rifles and light machine-guns). Light Weapons can be operated and transported by small teams, using light vehicles or animals (e.g. heavy machine-guns, portable missile launchers).⁶ In civil wars the majority of deaths and injuries are caused by SALW. However, as the overview by Kreutz and Marsh (2012) suggests, the proportion of injuries and death caused by SALW are conflict specific and vary from 1 per cent (Lebanon) to 97 per cent (Republic of Congo).

Restrictions on the transfer of SALW are less likely to be guided by concerns about the spread of technological knowledge, since the technology of SALW is comparatively simple and already well understood. The global trade of SALW is discussed by Bourne (2012). He suggests that there is no amorphous black market for SALW but that arms are acquired regionally and that these acquisitions are linked to local economies and patterns of enmity and amity. As described in the above example of Ukrainian arms exports being diverted to Southern Sudan, SALW are typically obtained within the region; imported by one country but diverted to a different end-user through unauthorized re-export.

Thus, one important element of the implementation of arms trade restrictions is to check that the arms are being used by the intended end user for the purpose of national security. What do we know about existing end user checks? The US's post-export checks are regarded as the most effective and known as the 'Blue Lantern' program. It includes the checks of foreign consignees and end-users. The operational budget for 2011 was \$2.17 million, this excludes salaries (US Department of State, 2011). Considering that the total US arms trade with developing countries is about \$21.3 billion (Grimmett, 2011) there is scope to improve and finance the monitoring program. The value of the global arms exports to developing countries is estimated at \$40.4 billion (Grimmett, 2011) and scaling up the controls may be a very effective way of reducing the flow of arms to conflict countries.

Arms Embargoes

Are arms embargoes effective? UN Security Council arms embargoes are the only global, legally binding prohibition on arms transfers. Since 1990 the UN have imposed 28 arms embargoes (Holtom and Bromley, 2010). However, there have also been various national and regional embargoes and there is a small emerging literature on the effectiveness of arms embargoes. Brzoska (2008) examines 74 arms embargoes and considers their success with respect to six motives: improvement of human rights, end of hostilities in interstate wars, end of support of terrorism, end of civil war, regime change and change in nuclear policies. The effectiveness is assessed by considering three main indicators: (1) change in the targeted countries' policies, (2) change in the flow of arms and (3) satisfaction in the initiator countries. The study concludes that although UN arms embargoes change import patterns it is less clear that targeted countries

⁶Greene and Marsh (2012) provide a detailed discussion and definition.

changed policies. Multilateral embargoes (for example EU) appear to be more effective than unilateral (US) embargoes and increase the satisfaction in the initiator countries. Embargoes take time to work, import restrictions only ‘bite’ once stockpiles of arms and ammunition are depleted. Brzoska (2008) suggests that embargoes of five years duration are more likely to be effective. The study by Fruchart *et al* (2007) suggests that embargoes have a higher effectiveness in the presence of UNPKO.

As this discussion indicates, one of the key issues is what is meant by ‘effectiveness’. The objectives of embargoes can be wide ranging, for example regime change, end of a civil war or end of the support of terrorism. Objectives cannot be directly observed and there may be a difference between the stated aims and the true objectives. However, it is encouraging that arms embargoes considerably decrease the flow of arms, thus helping to make conflicts less deadly.

Security and Military Services – An Unregulated Market

Although the international transfer of arms is poorly regulated, there is almost no regulation of the international provision of private military and security services. The provision of such services was limited during the Cold War and individuals providing these services are often referred to as ‘mercenaries’. The UN convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries (General Assembly, 1989) regulates these services, but many states (including the USA and the UK) have never ratified the convention. A mercenary is defined as a person recruited for personal gain to fight in an armed conflict for personal gain and who is not a member of the armed forces.⁷ Developments since the end of the Cold War, in particular since the 9/11 attacks, have seen a considerable expansion of private military and security companies. Isbister and Donnelly (2012) list five main sources of demand for private military and security services: (1) During military interventions like in Iraq and Afghanistan the regular armed forces request support in intelligence analysis, security advice, protection for diplomatic staff, oil production facilities and other essential civilian installations. (2) In situations of weak state military and security provision, decision makers may look to private providers to carry out functions typically provided by the armed forces or the police (3) Multinational companies require protection for their workforce, for example companies extracting natural resources (4) Humanitarian organisations often operate in fragile and violent states and require protection (5) In some situations states are either unwilling or incapable of providing security, an example is the Horn of Africa where private companies are providing anti-piracy functions, such as providing armed guards on ships. In many cases the provision of private military and security forces is controversial, mainly due to transparency and accountability issues. For example the Iraqi authorities had no authority over private security firms contracted by the U.S. government, leading to public resentment when employees of US companies committed human rights abuses.

The concerns about legitimacy, image and professionalism have led to the

⁷The full text of the UN convention can be found on <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/547/93/IMG/NR054793.pdf?OpenElement>

International Code of Conduct for Private Security Providers (ICOC).⁸ The signatory companies affirm their responsibility to respect the human rights of, and fulfil humanitarian responsibilities towards, all those affected by their business activities. By 1 February 2013 the code had been signed by 592 companies. At the moment this code is not legally binding and there is no independent oversight. The sanctions of the ICOC are limited to the suspension or termination of the ICOC membership. Since there is almost no regulation of the private military and security market this code appears to provide a good starting point. Next steps could be to set up independent oversight, make the commitments legally binding and encourage third party governments to hire companies that have signed up to the ICOC.

3.4 Interventions in Ongoing Civil Wars

There is an implicit assumption that interventions will manage the conflict, i.e. interventions are assumed to shorten the war or make the conflict less violent. In comparison to the intellectual attention that civil war onset has received, the duration of war has been relatively under-studied. Regan (1996) defines interventions as military, diplomatic or economic and has generated a data set which has been used by a number of researchers (e.g. Collier *et al* 2008). Military interventions include UNPKOs as well as interventions by neighbours and major powers. Economic interventions include economic assistance as well as sanctions. Regan (2010) provides an overview of the intervention literature and concludes that external interventions increase the expected duration of a civil war. Thus, based on the implicit assumption that interventions should limit conflicts, we conclude that they are not effective in conflict management. However, there are other reasons why external interventions take place, such as strategic considerations. The goals of interventions are often multifaceted and it is thus difficult to assess the effectiveness of interventions. One area that is poorly understood is whether interventions result in a particular form of conflict termination. This is an important question because there is evidence that military victories result in longer lasting peace. Negotiated settlements are more likely to break down and civil war reoccurs (Toft, 2010).

3.5 Interventions before a Civil War

The question whether interventions can prevent wars has received very little attention in the academic literature. The relatively recent effort in developing early warning systems has not yet been systematically analysed. The central questions are whether ‘early warning’ results in ‘early action’ and whether this prevents civil wars. Nyheim (2009) and Wulf and Debiel (2009) provide overviews on early warning and response mechanisms. An example of a regional warning and response system is the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) in Africa which was initiated in 2002. It is intended to contain crisis situations

⁸More information on the code can be found here <http://www.icoc-psp.org/>

and prevent them from further escalation into large scale violent conflict. The system was generated by African Union (AU) and is part of an integrated conflict preventions mechanism: intelligence is gathered and analysed in a specialist centre, the AU can send additional fact finding missions, the Peace and Security Council can then decide to intervene. The African Peace Facility Fund and the African Standby Force are used to implement the interventions. Recent missions include: Burundi (2003), Darfur (2004-06), Somalia (2007/08) and Comoros (2008). Some of the interventions seem to have been under-resourced and a lot of outside funding (for example from the US) appears to be ad hoc.

While it is too early to assess the effectiveness of AU interventions statistically, Regan's (2010) large n-study assesses the success of interventions before civil wars. To my knowledge this is the only paper of this kind. He builds on Goldstone *et al* (2010) and determines countries and periods with a high risk of civil war. Regan (2012) then analyses whether interventions were successful in preventing conflict. He concludes that military interventions increase the likelihood of civil war, economic interventions have no effect on the likelihood of war and diplomatic interventions decrease the likelihood of a war.

4 Conclusions

During the past 50 years civil wars have been the most common form of large scale violent conflict. There is of course nothing 'civil' about these conflicts, they impose huge human and economic costs, not only on the local populations but they have regional and global spillover effects. Recently, the cost of the average civil war in a low income country has been estimated in the region of \$120bn (Dunne, 2013). This is more than the total bilateral aid from the members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), about \$108bn in 2011. Thus, in addition to humanitarian considerations, third parties want to limit the local, regional and global damage such wars inflict on the international community.

Since the end of the Cold War a large number of third party interventions have taken place. Some have been successful, some have not. In this paper I provide a critical overview the effectiveness of some of the most commonly discussed third party interventions, focusing on development aid, UN Peace Keeping Operations and arms embargoes. Large n-studies provide evidence that UNPKOs keep the peace and that aid increases growth in the post-war period. Improving the growth performance of post-conflict countries is important, because economic growth reduces the likelihood of renewed conflict. However, a key pre-condition for the effectiveness of aid is that there is no further violence in post-war situations. Many conflicts 'rumble on' and in these situations development aid does not improve the country's growth performance. Concentrating efforts to stabilize post-war situations appears to be an effective use of international resources because cross-country studies suggest that recurrent conflict is the predominant form of armed conflict in the world today (Walter, 2011). However, during the past couple of years civil wars have broken out in countries that have no recent history of civil war (e.g. Libya and Syria). It is too early to

say if these are just ‘outliers’ or whether we are seeing the emergence of a new trend.

There is comparatively little work on interventions during conflict. Many interventions seem to prolong war; it appears to be very difficult to stop a war once it has started. Currently the biggest hope are arms embargoes. The small literature on embargoes suggests that they are effective in restricting arms transfers to conflict zones, helping to bring conflicts to an end. Embargoes are also perceived to be successful in the presence of UNPKOs. Thus, we have evidence that aid, UNPKOs and arms embargoes can prevent renewed conflict.

Most of the literature considers conflict interventions in ongoing conflicts or conflict prevention in post-war situations. If we knew how to prevent small scale conflicts from escalating into war, a lot of human suffering and economic costs could be avoided. However, there is hardly any work on the effectiveness of interventions before a conflict and it is too early to provide a quantitative assessment of early warning and response efforts.

Some of the discussion indicates some interventions are more effective if they are combined with other interventions. However, we know very little about optimal policy design. Fragile countries require a combination of economic and security assistance. Studies either concentrate on the development or the security aspects, but pay insufficient attention of the relationship between development and security. This is an important area of future research.

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Tables

Table 1: Duration of Armed Conflict in days

| | War/ Major Armed Conflict | Minor Armed Conflict |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| International conflict | 477 (25) | 444 (38) |
| Civil Conflict | 2071 (57) | 1354 (286) |
| Extra-systemic conflict | 1992 (4) | 1674 (17) |

Source: Themnér and Wallensteen (2011). Wars are Major Armed Conflicts with a minimum of 1,000 battle related deaths per year. Armed Conflicts result in 25-999 battle related deaths per year. Durations are reported in days, numbers in brackets report the number of observations.

Table 2: How do Armed Conflicts End?

| | Internat. War | Internat. Minor Conflict | Civil War | Civil Minor Conflict | Extrasys War | Extrasys Minor Conflict |
|----------------|------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Neg.Settlement | 13 | 15 | 16 | 63 | 1 | 6 |
| Gov.Victory | 5 | 3 | 11 | 60 | 2 | 4 |
| Rebel Victory | 5 | 5 | 13 | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| Low Activity | 2 | 15 | 12 | 124 | | 3 |
| Other | | | 5 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Total | 25 | 38 | 57 | 268 | 4 | 17 |

Source: Kreutz (2010). Government victory in international conflicts refers to side A victory, in the 'Rebel' victory cases, side B won. Negotiated Settlements are the sum of peace agreements (with or without conflict regulation) and ceasefire agreements. The number of observations in Tables 1 and 2 differ slightly, because Themnér and Wallensteen (2011) exclude some conflicts which are included in Kreutz (2010) and vice versa.

Figures

