

Dismantling the Conflict Trap

Essays on Civil War Resolution and Relapse

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Abstract

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Countries that have experienced civil war suffer a greater risk for new conflict than countries with no prior history of civil war. This empirical finding has been called a *conflict trap* where the legacy of previous war - unsolved issues, indecisive outcomes, and destruction – leads to renewed fighting. Yet, countries like Cambodia, El Salvador, Indonesia, and Mozambique have managed to overcome decade-long conflicts without relapse. This dissertation addresses this empirical puzzle by seeking to *dismantle* the conflict trap and look at microlevel explanations for civil war resolution and relapse. It adds to existing scholarship in three ways: first, by using disaggregated empirics on war termination and how fighting resumes; second, by exploring government agency in conflict processes; and third, by disaggregating rebel organizations. Essay I present original data on the start and end dates and means of termination for all armed conflicts, 1946-2005. Contrary to previous work, this data reveal that wars does not always end through victory or peace agreement, but commonly end under unclear circumstances. Essay II addresses how developments exogenous to the conflict influence governments' decision to engage in a peace process. The results show that after natural disasters when state resources need to be allocated towards disaster relief, governments are more willing to negotiate and conclude ceasefires with insurgents. Essay III focuses on the post-conflict society, and posits that security concerns among former war participants will push them towards remobilizing into rebellion. The findings indicate that if ex-belligerent elite's security is compromised, the parties of the previous war will resume fighting, while insecurity among former rank-and-file leads to the formation of violent splinter rebel groups. Finally, Essay IV seeks to explain why governments sometimes launch offensives on former rebels in post-conflict countries. The results show that internal power struggles provide leaders with incentives to use force against domestic third parties to strengthen their position against intra-government rivals. Taken together, this dissertation demonstrates that there is analytical leverage to be had by disaggregating the processes of violence in civil war and post-conflict societies, as well as the actors involved – both the government and rebel sides.

Keywords: civil war, conflict resolution, conflict recurrence, diversionary war, ripe moment, natural resources, peace agreement, victory, war termination

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To Kristine

Acknowledgements

It may not seem like an obvious analogy, but years of playing, coaching, and watching soccer has taught me that it has many similarities with academia. There is, for example, the “next season”-syndrome. When one is winning, there is always the concern that next season, next project, will be more difficult. When one is losing, there is always the hope that next season, next rewrite, will fare better. But - most of all - both involve the difficult balancing acts between individualism and teamwork; between style and results.

Fortunately for me, I have spent the last years in a winning team at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, where both individual skill and intricate teamwork exist in abundance. There is always someone willing to provide advice when needed, or to have a drink with afterwards. Throughout the process of writing this dissertation, I have received excellent coaching and support from my supervisors; Magnus Öberg, Mats Hammarström, and Halvard Buhaug. You have always been there when I have needed advice or a second opinion, while trusting me enough to let me plan my work and design my study. Magnus’ sharp brain has constantly reminded me when theories need to be refined and where my reasoning has gone astray as well as helped me to clarify my arguments. Mats is the undisputed champion of identifying a contribution even in the vaguest of ideas, and have provided unrelentless support throughout the process of completing this dissertation. Together, Magnus and Mats have created an excellent research milieu through weekly meetings and constant deliberations about mine and my colleagues’ ongoing research. A different, but also essential, form of advice has been supplied by Halvard who has provided insights from the world outside of Uppsala. I am extremely grateful for having had the opportunity to receive his feedback and suggestions, and he has always pin-pointed the parts of the papers that benefited from additional attention.

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At last, here comes the mandatory cliché that is expected in the acknowledgements of a dissertation: the analogy of a journey. For me, the essays in this dissertation are inherently connected with memories of people and plac-

es during an eventful time of my life; getting the idea for Essay IV in a hotel room in Brussels the night before a workshop; revising a draft of Essay II in a small boat in the Roslagen archipelago; coming up with the dissertation title while walking around Saint Mary's Lake in Notre Dame, or designing the hypotheses for Essay III while walking a 2-month to sleep behind the University building in Uppsala. Many of these memories include my daughter, Maxine, who continues to amaze me and make sure I prioritize important things such as hide-and-seek. Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to Kristine, who always has been there for me with unwavering love and support. If it had not been for you, my life would have been inferior in so many ways and you make me want to be a better person. I am lucky to be walking through life by your side.

Joakim Kreutz

Uppsala, April 2012

List of Essays

- I “How and When Armed Conflicts End:
Introducing the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset.”
(2010) *Journal of Peace Research* 47(2):243-250.
- II “From Tremors to Talks: Do Natural Disasters Produce Ripe
Moments for Resolving Separatist Conflicts?”
(2011) An earlier version was presented at the Department of
Peace and Conflict Research Seminar; Uppsala;
September 29, 2011.
- III “The Individual’s Security Dilemma and Civil War Relapse.”
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European International Relations Conference; Stockholm;
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- IV “When Governments “Rebel”: How Internal Power Struggles
Can Make Governments Reignite Civil War.”
(2012) An earlier version was presented at the 51st Annual Con-
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Introduction

Countries that have experienced civil war suffer a greater risk for a second or third conflict than countries with no prior history of civil war. This empirical finding has been labeled the *conflict trap*, and is often argued to be a consequence of the destructiveness of conflict.¹ Compared with countries that have not experienced war, post-conflict countries suffer from negative economic growth (e.g. low GDP, widespread unemployment, and a strong illicit economy); poor public health (including spread of disease and disability); widespread destruction of infrastructure and the environment; and a high level of inequality and insecurity (Ayoob 1996; Blomberg and Hess 2002; Collier 1999; Ghobarah, Huth and Russett 2003; Hoddie and Smith 2009; Kang and Meernik 2005). As a consequence, countries such as Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Palestinian territories seem to be trapped in an endless cycle of repeating civil war.

However, the logic of the conflict trap fails to account for two important factors. First, whereas destruction presents a viable argument for why fighting resumes, it cannot explain why conflict ended in the first place. If conflict leads to destruction, and destruction leads to conflict, then we should not ever see any civil wars end. Second, it does not explain the variation in civil war relapse: why do some civil wars start again while others do not? Indeed, some countries that have suffered substantial destruction during decade-long conflicts, such as Cambodia, El Salvador, Indonesia, and Namibia have shown that it is possible to successfully transition to peace. This empirical puzzle motivates the ambition in this dissertation to *dismantle* the conflict trap and take a closer look at microlevel explanations for civil war relapse.²

While the essays in this dissertation focus on two specific questions: (i) what makes civil war end, and (ii) what makes civil war resume, they are united by a common starting point. I assume that individuals, regardless of their

¹ Unless specified as interstate, the terms armed conflict, armed strife, civil conflict, civil war, insurgency, insurrection, intrastate conflict; internal conflict, rebellion, and war are in this dissertation used to mean the same thing: violence between a government and at least one rebel group based on a political incompatibility.

² The term civil war relapse is used solely as describing that a country experiences a repeat war. In contrast, the use of the terms recurrence, reignition, or resumption indicates that a conflict party actively start fighting.

position in an organization, care about both policy and personal well-being. For members of the regime, this means that “leaders generally care to keep themselves in office so that they can allocate goods and, when possible, retain resources for their discretionary use. To stay in office, they must be attentive to the pressures they face from the institutions within which they operate” (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003:24). I extend this logic to discuss incentives for rebel elite decision-making even though rebels, obviously, operate in different organizational structures. Furthermore, I contend that individual soldiers in armies and rebel groups also balance their personal well-being against the stated goals of their organization. For the latter, though, I expect that concerns about personal well-being will mainly center on personal security issues. While this seemingly suggests that individuals always should avoid participation in armed conflict because of the risks involved (Lichbach 1998), this may not be the case. Increasing personal security in a conflict setting does not always mean shunning involvement, as fear and revenge are pertinent reasons for civilians to join or support violent activities (de Figuerido and Weingast 1999; Kalyvas 2006).

This introductory chapter proceeds as follows. The next section describes the three ways in which this dissertation differs from previous scholarship on civil war resolution and relapse. First, I focus on disaggregated empirical evidence and introduce several new data collection efforts; second, I emphasize the agency of state actors in conflict processes; and third, I take into account that conflict actors are not static. After that, I summarize the four essays that form the remainder of this dissertation. Finally, the concluding section discusses the general contributions of these studies and suggests possible ways forward for future research to advance the field.

Disaggregated empirics

The first way in which the essays in this dissertation differ from most previous literature is the empirical focus on disaggregated evidence about the processes of civil war termination and relapse. Presenting new data on different types of conflict termination is the main contribution in Essay I, but new and unique data is also used in Essay II where I explore the effect of natural disasters on the onset of talks, ceasefires, and peace agreements. In Essay III, I disaggregate the identity of rebel actors in the post-conflict environment, while Essay IV introduces new empirical evidence relating to who is the first mover, i.e. who launches the offensive at the outset of civil war recurrence. Studying microlevel processes is in itself not new, as this has long been a core function of case study work. However, recent years have seen a rapid expansion in research on microlevel processes of civil war, primarily focus-

ing on the dynamic nature of violence during conflict (for example Kalyvas 2006, Lyall 2010).

Taking a closer look at the means of civil war termination or the way in which fighting resumes reveals an empirical phenomenon that is rarely discussed in the extant literature, namely, that victories and peace agreements are not the exclusive means through which conflicts end. This point has been made by Heraclides (1997: 686), who identifies 12 different situations that leads fighting to “come to a halt, temporarily or indefinitely,” and early work by Sollenberg and Wallenstein (1997) finds that only about one-third of cases end in victory and defeat. Fortna (2009), Lyall and Wilson (2009), and Toft (2005) all note that outright victories have become increasingly rare in civil wars, but they generally conclude that these outcomes have been replaced by negotiated compromises.³ This is not always the case. Although a comparison of civil war terminations during the Cold War and the post-1989 period show an increase in peace agreements from on average 0.3 to 1.7 per year (a more than fivefold change), the majority of conflicts end without a decisive outcome.⁴ The consequences of the existing focus on victory and peace agreements as the sole means of civil war termination is twofold: first, existing explanations fail to account for the most common means of termination; and second, empirical findings become sensitive to which of the outcomes is used as the “reference category” in the model. A study that focuses on the effect of peace agreements commonly identifies peace agreements and then implicitly assumes that all cases that have not ended with a peace agreement must have ended through victory. An example is Doyle and Sambanis (2000:795) who “define termination as signature of a peace treaty or victory by one side” but code it as “the parties sign a peace treaty or after a prolonged break in the fighting.”⁵ Thus, without the use of comparable and clear definitions about what constitutes both victory and peace agreement, as well as the possibility that cases can be neither, it is problematic to compare the effect of different outcomes. Essay I introduces a new dataset where the ambition is to disaggregate conflict outcomes and provide clear and consistent definitions across cases.

Table I shows an overview of research findings relating to the effect of different outcomes on post-conflict stability from work published in major civil

³ For a discussion on the concept of victory, see Carroll 1969, Coser 1961, or Mandel 2007.

⁴ See Table III in Essay I. For victories, the corresponding change is from 1.8 during the Cold War to 1.25 after.

⁵ While Doyle and Sambanis (2000) only use the data to explore the effect of peacebuilding measures, their data has been employed by other researcher for the comparison of victory and negotiated settlements.

war research journals during the last decade.⁶ The dependent variables in these works were conflict relapse (at all or within a specified time period) or the duration of peace.⁷ What is notable in this overview is that only some 50 per cent of the findings are statistically significant (the plus and minuses) and there seems to be a particular discrepancy between different studies relating to post-peace agreement stability. Some studies find that peace

Table I. Research Findings on Victory and Peace agreement

	DV: Fighting recur			
	Any victory	Government victory	Rebel victory	Peace agreement
DeRouen and Bercovitch (2008)	0			
Doyle and Sambanis (2000)*	0	0	0	-
Fuhrmann and Tir (2009)	0			
Meernik, Nichols and King (2010)		-	-	-
Pearson et al. (2006)*				0
Quinn, Mason and Gurses (2007)			-	0
Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl (2009)*				0
Toft (2010a)			-	+
Walter (2004)	0			0
	DV: Peace duration			
Flores and Nooruddin (2009)	+			0
DeRouen and Bercovitch (2008)	+			
Fortna (2004)	+			0
Fuhrmann and Tir (2009)	+			
Gurses, Rost and McLeod (2008)	0			
Hartzell (2009)	+			+
Mason et al. (2011)		+	+	+
Mukherjee (2006)		0	0	

* Doyle and Sambanis (2000) measure if fighting recurs within 2 years/5 years; Pearson et al (2006) within 5 years; Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl (2009) within 2 years.

⁶ *American Journal of Political Science, American Political Science Review, Conflict Management and Peace Science, European Journal of International Relations, International Interactions, International Organization, International Security, International Studies Perspectives, International Studies Quarterly, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Journal of Peace Research, and World Politics.*

⁷ The selection included only studies that included both peace agreement and victories in the models. There is an abundance of studies that focus on post-peace agreement societies.

agreements provide a statistically significant increased likelihood of repeat conflict, while others find that the risk decreases.

This is indicative for another important aspect that becomes evident when focusing on disaggregated data on processes of civil war termination: all peace agreement situations are not the same; all victories are not the same; and all ceasefires are not the same.

Consider the internal conflicts in Cambodia. Civil war datasets have identified the following phases of the conflicts. According to Uppsala Conflict Data Program, there was a colonial (extrastate) struggle against the French until 1953 and thereafter civil wars in 1967-1975 and 1978-1998 (Themnér and Wallensteen 2010); the Correlates of War dataset include the colonial conflict until 1954 and civil war in 1971-1975, 1989-1991, and 1993-1997 (Sarkees and Wayman 2010); Fearon and Laitin (2003) identify civil war 1970-1975 and 1978-1992; while Sambanis (2004) lists civil war in 1970-1975 and 1975-1992.⁸

A detailed investigation of the conflict history of Cambodia suggests that at least six occasions of conflict termination can be identified: 1953-4, 1967, 1975, 1978, 1992, and 1998. The end of the colonial war was representative for most decolonialization processes. Rather than hand over power to the independence forces, which in Cambodia consisted of a loose coalition of militias (the United Issarak Front, UIF), the French transferred rule to the Cambodian King Sihanouk in November 1953, who accepted continued French troop presence in the territory. The immediate effect of independence was that most non-communist UIF forces dissolved or decided to join the King's forces (Girling 1972). At the same time, the joint French-Royal Army continued attacks on the communist-dominated UIF remnants during the first half of 1954. Indeed, the UIF decided to demobilize only after pressure from their Vietnamese allies who did not want to jeopardize the independence of North Vietnam produced by the 1954 Geneva conference. Notably, though, there were no UIF representatives at this conference so the Cambodian war ended with neither a peace agreement nor a clear military victor (Kiernan 1985).

During the early independence period, the Cambodian communist movement was divided between those that sought co-operation in the Sihanouk-led coalition government and those that preferred armed revolution. In early 1967, the state instigated a large-scale repressive campaign of the left, and soon thereafter, in April 1967, the Khmer Rouge launched an armed insur-

⁸ The discrepancy in conflict years can mainly be attributed to different criteria for inclusion, such as fatality thresholds.

rection. The government responded with additional force and the rebels had to withdraw into the jungle. By June 18, Sihanouk victoriously declared that the rebellion had ended. However, the communists considered the retreat a simple tactical move for the purposes of reorganizing and preparing for the next offensive. As recounted by a local commander, Muol Sambath, in 1977: “we broke out of the enemy’s encirclement and victoriously withdrew from the mountain. Even though a number of troops and people sacrificed their lives, their sacrifices were very valuable because they provided important experience in armed struggle” (cited in Kiernan 1985: 257). This quote illustrates how the concept of victory, as proclaimed by the stronger side, may fail to capture the underlying features of the situation. The Cambodian government victory of 1967 is commonly not recognized as such in scholarship on civil war outcome, mainly because the rebels resumed fighting again already in January 1968.

After Sihanouk was ousted by a military coup in 1970, he made an alliance with the Khmer Rouge, and fighting continued to escalate (Chandler 2000, Osborne 1984). When the US disengaged from Vietnam, they also withdrew support to the Cambodian government who subsequently surrendered to the Khmer Rouge in April 1975. What is less commonly known, though, is that fighting during the final months of the war had also erupted in eastern Cambodia, where a combination of local Sihanouk supporters, ethnic Vietnamese, and Chams (Khmer Muslim) rebelled against the Khmer Rouge. Opposition in this region was not quelled until November 1975 (Kiernan 2002).

Having succeeded in taking power, the rebel alliance quickly fell apart. Sihanouk was given a ceremonial position, while Pol Pot and his circle controlled the state. Power-struggles among government leaders continued, however, as indicated by government reshuffles in August 1975, April, September, and November 1976, January, April, and June 1977, May, June, and November 1978 (Vickery 1984). These were accompanied by constant purges of local leaders who were suspected of plotting to challenge the centre. Phnom Penh seemed particularly concerned with the loyalty of the forces fighting the border war with Vietnam, and decided in May 1978 to send two divisions accompanied by tanks to attack its Eastern Zone command. As a result, several commanders in eastern Cambodia rebelled against the government and several months of fighting ensued. By October, the insurgents were forced to retreat across the border into Vietnam where they unified in a formal organization and requested external support. On 25 December 1978, some 15,000 Cambodian insurgents accompanied by 150,000 Vietnamese troops launched an offensive that less than two weeks later ousted the Pol Pot government (Evans and Rowley 1990; Kiernan 2002).

Despite the overwhelming military superiority of the new Vietnamese-backed government, this victory did not end the conflict. The first Khmer Rouge counteroffensive was launched already in late January 1979, but they were forced to retreat until they set up bases in the largely uninhabited mountains in western Cambodia along the Thai border (Evans and Rowley 1990). At this point, new rebel groups such as the anti-communist KPNLF (Khmer People's National Liberation Front) formed while Sihanouk also affiliated himself with a small armed group near the border. All parties in the conflict received substantial external support, which eventually led to international pressure to initiate negotiations (Gottesman 2004). This was helped by the economic crisis in Cambodia that shifted intra-governmental power away from socialist ideologues towards a faction that favored economic reforms. Talks started in 1988 as the Vietnamese started to withdraw its troops from Cambodia. On 23 October 1991, the four belligerent parties signed the so-called "Paris agreement" to end the conflict and accept UN assistance for 1991-1993. Of the three rebel groups, both Sihanouk's FUNCINPEC (Front Uni National pour un Cambodge indépendant, neutre, pacifique et cooperative) and the KPNLF ceased armed activity and demobilized (Brown and Zasloff 1998). The peace agreement can therefore be viewed as a partial success, although it did not end all armed activity for long.

The final rebel group, Khmer Rouge, stopped fighting during the final negotiating phase in April-October 1991, but ceasefire violations were reported already in late 1991 and continued throughout 1992. The attacks started as minor incidents of retributive attacks on government militia members, but soon escalated to targeting UN peacekeepers and army posts. After the May 1993 elections and the end of the UN mandate, violence escalated further. At the same time, the new Cambodian coalition government was ravaged by infighting between FUNCINPEC and the members of the former regime (Doyle 1999). While accusations of coup plots became increasingly common, both factions offered amnesties to local Khmer Rouge commanders and their forces as a way of strengthening their position in the ongoing power struggle. This led to splintering in the Khmer Rouge as well as substantial force attrition: from some 10,000 troops in 1994, only a hundred or so remained four years later. In December 1998, the remaining leaders Kheiu Samphan and Nuon Chea surrendered to the government (Peou 1999). The final outcome of the conflict was thus; again, a victory for the government but it was accompanied less by successfully military campaign than by offers to commanders and rebels to defect. Indeed, very few of former rebel leaders were punished for their involvement in three decades of conflict although Khmer Rouge leaders have been charged with genocide for their policies while in power 1975-1978.

What the example from Cambodia illustrates is that there can be many contextual factors that separate victories from victories, and peace agreements from peace agreements. While there are certainly similarities amongst various victories (or peace agreements), this example illustrates the value of questioning the assumptions we make about the nature of these outcomes. Military victories are commonly seen as a signal of the strength of belligerents' resources which serve as a deterrent for future conflict, but this may not always be the case. As shown in 1967 and 1979, the weaker side may tactically withdraw from fighting in order to re-arm and prepare for a counteroffensive rather than because they have expended all their resources and resolve. Similarly, parties may negotiate a way to stop fighting without it being part of an official peace process. Several local commanders and thousands of rank-and-file individuals defected from the Khmer Rouge while fighting was going on in the 1990s. They were neither forcibly disarmed nor part of a peace settlement that provided them with specific post-conflict political rewards. In Essay II, I use disaggregated data on conflict resolution efforts as I explore whether the onset of talks, ceasefires, and peace agreements can be explained by the same factors.

Finally, the Cambodia example highlights the variation in the ways fighting resumed. The start of conflict in 1967 was primarily provoked by state repression, while the Khmer Rouge regime in 1978 triggered an insurgency by attacking its own regional military commanders. This suggests that there are advantages to use disaggregated evidence also on the means of conflict relapse, as this may uncover patterns that are obfuscated when relying on country-level variables. Essays III and IV exploit unique new data about both who is involved in a second round of fighting and who instigates the armed clashes. These data may be beneficial for the research community as a whole and further promote the disaggregated study of civil war relapse.

The role of the government in conflict processes

The second difference between the essays in this dissertation and existing research is the emphasis here on the role of the government in post-conflict society. This is the main contributions in Essay II, which deals with the process of conflict resolution, and Essay IV, which focuses on the puzzling empirical phenomenon of why governments sometimes reignite a dormant civil war. Much of the literature on civil war focuses on the ability of rebels to form, execute armed operations, and remobilize after the end of conflict. This effectively reduces the government's role to providing the opportunity for rebels to act or not and diminishes its role as an agent in conflict recurrence.

In the general civil war literature, the role of the government during ongoing conflict is commonly seen as determining the duration of the conflict. It is argued that it is a government's inability to defeat rebels that creates longer running conflicts (DeRouen and Sobek 2004, Fearon 2004). Similarly, studies that model how conflict dynamics produce incentives for both parties to seek a settlement (Leventoglu and Slantchev 2007; Mason, Weingarten and Fett 1999; Powell 2012) commonly see this decision as dependent only on a government's perceived likelihood of defeating its opponent. Although that is certainly part of the decision, the role the government plays in conflict resolution has rarely been addressed empirically (see Höglund and Zartman 2006 for an exception). In Essay II, I provide a first step towards understanding how government agency leads to conflict resolution by focusing on how demands on a government that are exogenous to the conflict can provide a change in priorities regarding fighting or conceding.

This undertheorization of government agency can also be seen in scholarship that focuses on civil war relapse. The government is suggested to influence the opportunity costs for renewed rebellion, either by repression or by offering alternative channels for expressing opposition (Walter 2004). Similarly, Quinn, Mason and Gurses (2007; see also Mason et al. 2011) argue that the structural presence of "multiple sovereignty" in a country is a necessary condition for the relapse of fighting. This concept, originally developed by Tilly (1978), implies that the government is not perceived as the sole legitimate authority in a country. The implication of this argument is that the risk of recurrence is as a function of a post-conflict government's ability to foster economic growth and restore legitimacy and control over its territory. Although the mechanism of government strength is central to the argument that victories lead to post-conflict stability, this is rarely explored empirically. Licklider (1995) finds that government victories are more likely to be followed by genocide, while Toft (2010b) finds that government victories are least likely to be followed by democratization. A competing argument comes from Quinn, Mason and Gurses (2007) who suggest that since victorious rebels have to establish their presence throughout the state and reform government institutions, they will be more likely to forcibly disarm ousted state agents.

The other way governments have been argued as influencing opportunity costs for rebellion relates to the opportunities of pursuing opposition activities through means other than armed strife. In particular, there has been a great deal of focus on the role of democracy in the aftermath of conflict as a means of preventing civil war recurrence. Metternich and Wucherpfennig (2011) find that although the risk of civil war relapse is high during the democratization process, a country with consolidated institutions has a virtually zero probability of renewed conflict. This corresponds well with other

findings about how democratic institutions decrease the likelihood of civil war onset in general (Hegre et al. 2001), as well as other forms of political violence (Davenport 2007). Going beyond the general advantageous effect of democracy, it has been further posited that post-conflict societies benefit from the imposition of power-sharing between former belligerents. As this provides the former enemies with a common responsibility for rebuilding the country, it is argued that power-sharing provides incentives to co-operate rather than resume hostilities (Hartzell 1999, Hartzell and Hoddie 2003; Hartzell, Hoddie, and Rothchild 2001). Other accounts emphasize the need to demobilize or integrate the forces from the preceding conflict into a unified army (Berdal 1996; Call and Standley 2003; Gamba 2003; Glassmyer and Sambanis 2008; Spear 2002). A shortcoming with the literatures on democratization and power-sharing is the narrow focus on post-peace agreement cases, as institutional reforms can occur after other types of termination as well.

The final literature that discusses the government's role in civil war relapse focuses on so-called spoilers (Stedman 1997). Spoilers are usually defined as conflict actors that want to derail a peace process, and this literature does acknowledge that government actors can actively spoil a peace process (Nilsson and Söderberg Kovacs 2011). Some argue, however, that if governments oppose the terms of an agreement, they will act as inside spoilers, merely obstructing or threatening to withdraw from implementation rather than actually acting on this threat (Stedman 1997). The logic is that inside spoilers will not jeopardize the gains they have already secured. However, this should not prevent the government side from renegeing on the peace agreement. Since the government becomes increasingly superior over former opponents in the post-conflict period by building up the policy, army and internal security forces while isolating opposition leaders, its risk of losing gains by renegeing on the deal steadily decreases (Fearon 1998; Walter 1997, 2002). While the implication from this argument is that the government side should be expected to initiate renewed fighting, this has rarely been made explicit in the literature. Instead, it is assumed that *rebels* will resume warfare because they are concerned that the government may renege on a deal. Thus, to prevent such rebel-ignited resumption of fighting, mediators should be biased to reduce rebels commitment problems (Svensson 2007) while peacekeepers should be deployed to provide them with security guarantees (Fortna 2004).

Contrary to much of existing literature, two of the essays in this dissertation focus specifically on government agency in civil war resolution (Essay II) and recurrence (Essay IV). Both suggest that government policy can change for reasons that are exogenous to the conflict itself because incumbents have to consider other threats to their position beyond the civil war. In addition to

the theoretical contribution of these essays, Essay IV provide disaggregated data on when government chooses to launch offensives on former insurgents which can be employed to further advance the study of government behavior in civil war.

The variability of rebel groups

The third way that these essays differ from existing scholarship on civil war resolution and relapse literature has to do with the variability of rebel groups. This forms part of the data collection focus in Essay I, and is the main contribution in Essay III. That civil wars can involve multiple rebel groups is not a new insight, even though this aspect primarily has been explored through comparative case study work. As more detailed conflict data has become available, disaggregating the rebel side has become an increasingly prominent feature of quantitative scholarship as well (Cunningham, Gleditsch and Salehyan 2009; Harbom, Melander and Wallensteen 2008).

The first key finding from this burgeoning literature is that the conflict dynamics are different in situations with multiple rebel groups than if a single group is opposing the government. Conflicts with multiple groups are both longer in duration (Cunningham 2006) and more violent (Bloom 2005; Cunningham, Bakke and Seymour 2012), suggesting that they are harder to settle. This is largely attributed to the logic that a settlement in conflicts with multiple rebel groups needs to satisfy more actors. Similarly, there will be more actors that may renege on a peace deal in the aftermath of conflict, which could make a relapse more likely (Cunningham 2011; Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Findley and Rudloff 2011). However, even though conflicts with multiple rebel groups make settlement harder to reach for the conflict as a whole, this situation does not necessarily make it harder to reach partial settlements with specific rebel actors during conflict (Nilsson 2008; Nilsson 2010). A possible explanation for these somewhat contradictory findings is that ending conflict in a multiple rebel setting may not be more difficult, but that implementation is. There will be more rebel groups that need to be demobilized, which will make the process more difficult, and there may be a greater risk of splintering within groups into factions of moderates and extremists.

This point to another important feature of how the end of conflict influences rebel organizations. The groups are commonly created for the specific goal of fighting against the government, which means that members may have

little loyalty to their group at the end of conflict.⁹ According to DeNardo (1985), movements contain members who have different preferences regarding both goals and tactics. As an organization grows, the intra-organizational diversity is likely to increase, meaning that large rebel groups will generally be less unified than small groups (Gates 2002). If the elite of the organization engages in a peace process, or has decided to abandon armed strife, there is a great risk that those in the group that still favor the use of force will splinter off and form a new group (Kydd and Walter 2002; Olson Lounsbury and Cook 2011; Pearlman 2009; Stedman 1991; Zahar 2003).

Furthermore, even after an organization has been formally disbanded, former members of the group will view the outcome as more or less successful. Atlas and Licklider (1999) show that conflict in post-peace agreement societies commonly erupts between former allies rather than between former belligerent. Yet, there are only two existing quantitative studies available that have specifically modeled the possibility that a civil war relapse can involve different actors than those that fought before. The first of these is the seminal contribution of Walter (2004: 383) who addresses the possibility that a repeat war in a country is fought between a new set of combatants and finds that “basic living conditions were related both to whether new combatants initiated violent civil conflict and to whether the same combatants returned to war.” The second is Nilsson (2008, see also 2006) who shows that signatories to peace agreements will not be drawn into renewed conflict even if other rebel groups try to provoke a breakdown of the settlement.

In Essay III, I extend the research field beyond Walter (2004) to disaggregate conflict relapse actors into three separate categories: previous belligerents, splinter groups formed by ex-combatants, and completely new groups. I argue that this division is advantageous since individuals with a background in the conflict will be easier to mobilize than when a new group is formed by civilians (Buxton 2008; Themnér 2011). While Essay III focuses on why ex-combatants may resume fighting, an additional contribution of this data collection effort is the possibility to further explore the causes of recurrence by other groups.

⁹ Although there is a difference here between groups involved in conflicts over government power and over territory, the logic is the same. Providing a separatist movement succeeds in gaining independence, their members may support competing political views in the new independent state. For an example of this process, see Eritrea.

Presenting the Essays

The four essays in this dissertation share the ambition of disaggregating actors and decision-making processes in civil war resolution and relapse. The benefit of disaggregation is the ability to reveal empirical variation and theoretical mechanisms that are obfuscated in aggregated data. Essay I introduces the advantages of modeling different means of conflict termination, while Essay II suggests that governments' willingness to concede to rebel demands is susceptible to events exogenous to the conflict. Essay III examines how ex-participants' post-conflict security concerns influence the risk of civil war relapse, while Essay IV investigates why incumbent government leaders may be willing to re-ignite fighting against ex-rebels. Although the essays address separate research questions, they all share an underlying assumption, namely, that governments and rebel groups are made up of a wide diversity of factions, interests, and individuals, and that policy-choices is influenced by the elites ambition to control the organization.

Essay I

The essay "How and When Armed Conflicts End: Introducing the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset" is published in *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no 2, 2010. This paper differs from the others in this dissertation because it focuses primarily on a weakness of existing empirical work rather than a theoretical problem. In it, I present original new data on the start and end dates and the means of termination for armed conflicts, 1946-2005. In addition to presenting the definitions and data collection methodology, this paper offers descriptive statistics on the patterns of conflict termination. Moreover, it examines some factors that have been found to predict civil war recurrence in the literature and explores whether similar results obtain when using the new dataset.

The purpose of this article is to present a dataset in which the start and end dates of armed conflict behavior is disaggregated in detail, and in which the means of termination are clearly defined. Until now, existing global data on civil war duration focus on the yearly incidence of high-intensity war, while outcomes are aggregated as either peace agreement or victory (Fearon 2004; Licklider 1995; Sambanis 2000; Sarkees 2000). Hence, the new dataset contributes in three ways. First, it identifies as close as possible the date when fighting begin and ends, which improves variable measurement and model specification. Indeed, the dyad-level version of the dataset makes it possible to analyze multiple episodes of fighting over the same conflict issue within the space of a single year. Second, the dataset provides stringent definitions for identifying peace agreement and victory. This improves on existing approaches in which a peace agreement is defined as the signing of a treaty,

regardless of whether it is accompanied by the termination of fighting, and in which victory is defined as the absence of violence for a specified time period. This extant practice introduces bias when comparing, for example, post-conflict stability after different outcomes since peace duration is part of the definition for victory but not for peace agreement. Third, the dataset offers a wider range of possible conflict terminations than available in existing data. Previous research has commonly either defined what constitutes a peace agreement and then assumed that all other terminations are victories, or defined victory and assumed that all other terminations are negotiated settlements.

The article introduces the concept of conflict episodes as a way of identifying multiple analytical units in the UCDP-PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, and then presents the operational definitions of the different means of conflict termination. The initial empirical examination of these data on conflict termination reveals some interesting findings. Contrary to assumptions in the literature, conflicts do not exclusively end with decisive outcomes such as victories or peace agreements but more often end under unclear circumstances in which fighting simply ceases. This pattern is consistent across different types of conflict, but is particularly prominent for civil wars. Indeed, most intrastate conflicts terminations can be classified as an *'other'* outcome, while some 35% end with victory and 14% with a peace agreement. The data also reveal another factor that is consistent across different types of conflict: conflicts that end with a victory are of shorter duration than others. This empirical pattern suggests that parties seek a quick defeat of their opponents at the beginning of a conflict episode. If neither party is able to do so, they will seek a negotiated solution or withdraw from fighting unilaterally for other reasons.

The article also examines statistically whether findings on civil war recurrence identified in previous studies by Walter (2004) and Quinn, Mason and Gurses (2007) hold when tested against the more detailed data presented in the article. This exercise offers a number of interesting insights and finds that the determinants for civil war relapse identified in previous research are sensitive to testing on alternate data formulations. The findings indicate that intrastate conflicts are less likely to recur after government victories or after the deployment of peacekeepers. If the previous conflict is fought with rebels aiming for total control over government or if the belligerents are mobilized along ethnic lines, the risk of recurrence increases. While the findings in this analysis should be viewed as preliminary, they demonstrate the usefulness of employing more detailed data in the study of conflict resolution and relapse. The main contribution of the article relates to the benefits of temporally and qualitatively disaggregating the means of termination, but the findings indicate that a closer look at the actors involved in the conflict is warranted.

Essay II

Essay II, “From Tremors to Talks: Do Natural Disasters Produce Ripe Moments for Resolving Separatist Conflicts?” is a working paper which was presented at the Uppsala University Department of Peace and Conflict Research Seminar on September 29, 2011. In this essay, I address how developments that are exogenous to the conflict influence belligerents’ willingness to engage in a peace process. To identify the microprocesses of decision-making, I focus on just one conflict actor – the government side – and whether it becomes more to open talks, agree to ceasefires, or sign peace agreements with separatist challengers when faced with additional costs wrought by the occurrence of a natural disaster. In this manuscript, natural disasters are a form of external shock.

The essay departs from the well-known problem in the conflict resolution literature that while theoretical work emphasizes the importance of timing in peacemaking, it has had difficulties in empirically identifying a so-called “ripe moment.” As a result, the concept is often used tautologically: the evidence that a conflict was ripe for resolution is that it was successfully resolved. Recent iterations have sought to remedy this shortcoming by suggesting that the theory should be applied to a single conflict actor. In line with this, my argument relates to governments’ willingness to negotiate in ongoing separatist civil wars. As a means to identify whether factors exogenous to the conflict are influential for the choice of fighting or talking, I focus on natural disasters. Following the peace agreement in Indonesian Aceh soon after the 2004 tsunami, many recent studies have advanced the proposition that disasters may provide a ripe moment for conflict resolution.

Natural disasters are sudden events that bring about extensive destruction in a country. When incumbent government leaders depend on the support of the citizenry to maintain power, they need to allocate resources for disaster relief. One way for a government to improve its disaster management effort is to divert the resources it currently has engaged in the civil war. Thus, governments have incentives to reconsider the use of armed force against insurgents and instead try to seek a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

In my analysis, natural disaster events are used as a treatment in a quasi-natural experiment that compares the likelihood of the onset of talks, the agreement of ceasefires, and the conclusion of peace settlements in the pre- and post-disaster period. Thus, the dataset consists of the dyadic interaction between a government of a country and every active armed separatist unit it faces during the 12 months prior to a disaster event (the untreated sample) and the 12 months after the disaster (the treated sample). Under mild continuity assumptions, the population thus consists of observations that are ex ante comparable in all other ways (on average) except in their experience of

a natural disaster. Drawing on global data for 1990-2004, 405 natural disasters are identified in 21 countries where governments faced 50 different separatist challengers.

The findings from the basic empirical analysis provide support for my argument. The likelihood for new talks between belligerents increases by 45% after a natural disaster, and the likelihood of a ceasefire being signed increases by 57%. The findings indicate, however, that natural disasters do not have any statistically significant effect on the likelihood that a peace agreement is concluded. In order to gain more leverage on the claim that these findings are caused by the mechanism of political survival, I focus on two factors that should aggravate this effect: regime type and disaster severity. If incumbents are concerned with losing power if they provide adequate disaster relief to the population, then I expect that peacemaking becomes more likely in democratic countries and following more severe disasters. Both of these propositions are supported in the analysis. The increased willingness to engage in peacemaking is statistically significant in democratic countries but not in non-democracies. Similarly, more severe disasters have a greater substantial effect on the likelihood of talks or ceasefires than those with fewer victims.

The empirical investigation also considers and refutes two factors that suggest a different, but related, mechanism for conflict resolution in the aftermath of disaster. First, although the presence of mediators is beneficial for conflict resolution, this effect is quite separate from the post-disaster effect. Second, the disasters that create an environment conducive to peacemaking are primarily located *outside* the conflict zone. This means that governments do not engage in talks or sign ceasefires to co-operate with their opponents in administering disaster relief but because a shift in strategy away from trying to win the conflict with military means. Indeed, a closer look at the ceasefires in the analysis reveals that they were rarely used by conflict actors as an opportunity to rebuild military strength, but were accompanied by serious peace talks addressing the conflict issues. This study is a first cut at systematically studying the microprocesses of conflict resolution, and provides the first evidence for the claim that governments' concern for political costs from their supporters, rather than the interaction with the insurgents, can explain their decision to open talks or sign ceasefires.

Essay III

"The Individual's Security Dilemma and Civil War Relapse" was presented at the SGIR 7th Pan-European International Relations Conference in Stockholm, September 9-11, 2010.¹⁰ In this essay, I address the widely held as-

¹⁰ Under the title "Navigating the Fog of Peace."

sumption in the literature that the resumption of civil war by default involves the same actors as the previous round of fighting. While a defining feature of civil war is that multiple groups can challenge the government simultaneously and that rebel organizations appear, splinter, or are replaced over the course of armed conflict, this aspect has rarely been theorized or subjected to systematic investigation. Civil wars can relapse in three different ways: involving previous belligerents (conflict recurrence), involving splinter factions made up by ex-combatants (splinter conflict), or involving a completely new rebel organizations (new conflict).

In this essay I have two aims. First, I propose a theory of civil war relapse that focuses on individual ex-combatants security situation in the aftermath of conflict. I argue that the absence of a legitimate third party enforcer during the transition period after conflict creates a security dilemma for former war participants. While a resumption of rebellion carries the inherent risks of combat, a resettlement in society means facing the possibility of retributive violence from former victims without the protection provided by weaponry and comrades-in-arms. Whereas all former civil war participants are faced with this individual security dilemma, elite members and rank-and-file will rely on different strategies for addressing it. Elites will seek explicit security guarantees from their former opponents while rank-and-file will try to conceal their combatant past and resettle into society unnoticed. In the absence of such guarantees and anonymity, individual security concerns provide former participants with incentives to remobilize with former comrades-in-arms and resume conflict.

Second, I empirically test this argument using disaggregated data on the identity of rebel actors and civil war relapse 1946-2008. To do so, I collected case-specific data to identify the parties involved in the resumption of violence, and then classified it into three possible pathways to relapse: (i) parties that have previously fought in the conflict (conflict recurrence); (ii) a splinter faction from a previously active party including the government side (splinter conflict), or (iii) groups with no clear link to any earlier active party (new conflict). In defining splinters, I included all new organizations formed by ex-participants in an earlier group short of the absolute leadership.

Before testing the predictions made in my theoretical framework, I compared my approach with a model without the disaggregated relapse data, which is the standard practice in previous research. This exercise indicated that focusing on different pathways to conflict relapse increases the explanatory power of the proposed mechanism, as some correlations are obscured by the use of overly-aggregate data. For example, I find that for both rebel victories and peace agreement, there is a decreased risk of relapse involving the previous belligerent, but at the same time an increased risk for splinter conflict. Thus,

improving the data structure itself helps clarify some of the inconclusive findings in existing literature.

I apply a multinomial logit statistical technique to test my arguments about the individual's security dilemma, and find support for the claims relating to the presence of security guarantees for belligerent elites and ability for rank-and-file to resettle unnoticed. While it is not possible to measure individuals' perception of security threat directly, I focus on identifying observable implications in the form of security guarantees to elites or anonymity to rank-and-file. These are used as proxies for the elusive concept of perceived insecurity. If the previous conflict ended with a victory for either side, a peace agreement, was followed by power sharing, or was accompanied by the demobilization of the opponent's armed forces, then elites are less likely to resume conflict. The risk of splinter conflict was, on the other hand, only decreased if peacekeepers were deployed and increased following peace agreements and rebel victories. While peace agreements provide both sides with the ability to pursue retributive attacks on each others, rebel victories are likely to be accompanied by attacks on former state agents. Thus, because of their increased security concerns in the post-conflict environment, former rank-and-file in these situations will have little to lose by re-arming and return to rebellion. I subject these finding to a battery of robustness tests and find that they hold, even for alternative data specifications.

Essay IV

The essay "When Governments 'Rebel': How Internal Power Struggles Can Make Governments Reignite Civil War" is a working paper that was presented at the 51st Annual Convention of the International Studies Association in New Orleans in 2010. In it, I address the previously untested assumption that civil war recurrence is started by the rebel side. In many ways, there is an intuitive logic behind this assumption, as the government side should be satisfied with the status quo distribution of power and want to avoid the destabilizing effect of conflict. With conflict, governance and economic life becomes more difficult, resources need to be diverted to the war effort, and the constituency may become increasingly critical of the regime. Yet, the empirical record shows that governments do sometimes reignite civil war. While not as common as rebel offensives or tit-for-tat dynamics, on average more than one conflict every year since 1970 has been initiated through offensives launched by the government.

In this study, I focus again on the influence of factors that are not necessarily part of the conflict itself as determinants of government behavior. I argue that it is rational for government leaders to attack their former civil war opponents if they are threatened by an internal power struggle. As factions

within the government in such situations compete for support from key allies outside the government, this process creates incentives to resume civil war. The logic is that the individuals or intra-party factions challenging the incumbent have to conceal their ambitions and covertly assemble a sufficient power base before launching their bid. For challengers to obtain – and for incumbents to retain – this necessary support, an armed assault on former rebels can be an attractive decoy as it provides both rewards to loyalists and an excuse to deploy unreliable troops away from the capital.

In order to empirically test this argument, I first collected detailed data regarding who was the “first mover” in the recurrence of civil war 1970-2002. For each recurrence, I identified whether fighting resumed through government offensives, rebel offensives, or tit-for-tat dynamics between the two parties. As provocations of different kinds could be expected to be common in a post-conflict environment, I went to great lengths to be conservative in my interpretation of the data and only include the clear cases of government or rebel offensives in these categories.

The second empirical challenge consisted of identifying a useful indicator for ongoing intra-governmental power struggles. I rely primarily on Belkin and Schofer’s (2003) coup risk index which has been shown to match well with the actual propensity of coups and coup attempts.

The empirical analysis consists of two steps. First, I show that governments that are vulnerable to internal power struggles are more likely to reignite a dormant civil war. This finding is robustly consistent both in a between-country comparison and in a fixed-effect model that account for year-to-year changes. Thereafter, to explore whether these findings are influenced up some unobserved factor that simultaneously makes internal power struggles and civil war outbreak more likely in a country, I estimate placebo regression on other pathways of civil war recurrence. In other words, vulnerability to internal power struggle makes governments more likely to reignite civil wars but not rebels, or tit-for-tat dynamics.

In addition to this quantitative evidence, I also look into the case literature to ensure that the civil war was not part of the internal power struggle. There are only three occasions (Cambodia 1978, South Yemen 1986 and Chad 1991) where the groups targeted by government offensives were in some way connected to the administration. A closer examination of the case narratives for different pathways to civil war relapse show that governments are more likely to reignite territorial conflicts, where lootable resources are present, when the rebels are weak and if the previous conflict did not end through a decisive settlement like a victory of peace agreement. Further-

more, this type of strategy is more common in countries where the military hold a more visible role, either as part of the regime or when it is large.

Overall, this evidence provides support for my argument that internal power struggles may provide a reason for government leaders to reignite a civil war. The groups that are targeted by these governments will primarily be those rebel groups that are easily identifiable while militarily weak, and preferably at some distance away from the capital.

Conclusions

The essays that form this dissertation focus on the decision-making processes behind civil war resolution and relapse. Taken together, the dissertation have shown the improved analytical leverage that come from using disaggregated data as it reveal important variations in empirical patterns that often are obfuscated in country-level variables. In addition, the individual essays have made important contributions such as highlighting the need to theorize government agency in conflict processes, and identifying the benefits of acknowledging that rebel organizations are variable over time.

My theoretical approach has centered on how individuals, whether leaders or rank-and-file, are concerned with their physical security and access to power, and how these concerns influence the incentives of belligerent actors during and after civil war. Patterns of alliance-building and breaking common in civil wars are well-illustrated by a return to the example of Cambodia, where the composition of the rebel side changed constantly. During the independence struggle, the rebels consisted of a unified front with many subgroups. While veterans from that struggle were active in the resumption of communist rebellion more than a decade later, this was superseded by a royalist-communist alliance that split as soon as Khmer Rouge captured power in 1975. Conflict resumed because of intraorganizational power struggles, after which the breakaway faction with the help of Vietnam became the new regime. The Khmer Rouge quickly renounced their communist past and proclaimed that they were fighting for democracy, and were soon thereafter again part of a broad rebel alliance that also included royalists and anti-communists. After the peace agreement, only Khmer Rouge continued as rebels while former rebels and former regime representatives became parts of internal power struggles in the new coalition government.

These essays have offered several theoretical insights that, collectively, can contribute to further scholarship on civil war relapse. At the same time, there are some contradictions between the different studies. Essay III argues that an individual's security is the key aspect for the decision to remobilize in

civil war, but Essay II and Essay IV largely assume that forces will act on orders from above. While some of this difference can be explained by the different focus in the respective essays, where Essay II and IV focus primarily on government decision-making and Essay III on the situation for demobilized individuals, this still points to a possible new field of inquiry. What is the role of ex-rebel organizations after the conflict has ended? While some contemporary studies have started to focus on how wartime experiences shapes subsequent political and violent behavior (Blattman 2009, Jha and Wilkinson 2012), this dynamic has not yet been fully explored in the context of civil war relapse. There are three primary approaches through which it would be possible to gain more analytical leverage for understanding post-conflict mobilization processes. The first consists of focusing on the experiences of former war participants and drawing on their accounts of how, why, and when they were mobilized or decided to abandon rebellion. This type of work is well underway, through a multitude of ongoing survey and interview projects in conflict zones. However, one shortcoming with this approach is that this type of information can only be collected where conflict activity has ceased, or at least decreased, so that large-scale demobilization is possible. Also, survey instruments and interviews have not included, and in all likelihood cannot get an answer to, the crucial question: “what would make you fight again?”

A second approach could focus instead on the organizational structures of former rebel groups and their post-conflict internal politics. This has been done in some case-study work, but only in the aftermath of peace agreements rather than after all types of conflict outcome (Söderberg Kovacs 2007, Themnér 2011.) The only project to my knowledge that has tracked the organizational development of rebel groups beyond the end of fighting is Hartzell (2009) who assessed to what extent a faction’s structure was destroyed three years after the end of fighting. As there is a growing scholarly interest in different facets of rebel organization, there is great potential for future advancement in this research field providing that researchers continue to study groups after the end of fighting (e.g. Kreutz and Themnér 2011).

A third approach is to focus on different types of violence that can be identified in the aftermath of conflict. While this, again, has been studied in the narrow subset of post-peace agreements (Darby 2001), there are several reasons to expect high levels of societal post-conflict violence after other outcomes as well. The lack of effective and legitimate state control will not only create risk for revenge attacks by former victims (as argued in Essay III), but should also contribute to criminality, the formation of self-protection militias and local gangs, as well as create a potential risk for increased domestic violence (Kreutz, Marsh and Torres 2011). Furthermore, it can be expected that victories in conflict will lead to organized state repression of former opposi-

tion supporters. While Licklider (1995) found that the risk of genocide was greater after victories and suggested that this could be a viable path for future research, little progress have been made in the interim. Since there have been substantial developments in scholarship on state repression and violence against civilians during the last decade (cf. Davenport 2007, Eck and Hultman 2007), it is somewhat surprising that no one has responded to Licklider's call. While the general question regarding whether post-conflict violence itself may generate a resumption of warfare is interesting, connecting this feature with data on who is involved in the subsequent conflict and the way it escalates may contribute to both the civil war recurrence literature and scholarship on the repression/dissent nexus.

Another conclusion from the findings in this dissertation relates to the role of interparty bargaining during and after civil war. Although my theoretical and empirical work has primarily focused on aspects that are exogenous to the conflict itself as providing the impetus for civil war resolution and relapse, this approach is not contrary to explanations proffered by bargaining theory. As shown in a vast literature, the bargaining between belligerents provides a relevant mechanism to explain the difficulty in reaching and upholding a settlement in civil war (Fearon and Laitin 2008; Filson and Werner 2002, Morrow 1989, Walter 1999, 2002). Uncertainty about whether the opponent will remain committed to implementing an agreed settlement makes belligerents stall implementation themselves, and may therefore provoke a resumption of fighting. This aspect of bargaining is consistent with the phenomena of civil war recurrence that I explore in Essay III, and I find support for the expected effect of bargaining on the risk of relapse.

In that essay, I also identify an important limitation to existing bargaining models in conflict research, as these has not explored the possibility that new actors form during or after the first round of fighting has been concluded. Thus, although this dissertation does not employ a bargaining perspective, the findings can have implications for future studies that draw on that theoretical tradition. It is important to use disaggregated empirics to separate the effect of bargaining from those situations where other factors are arguably more important. It may also be beneficial to consider factors beyond immediate belligerent interactions. These factors can include, for example, concern for domestic political costs (Putnam 1988, Fearon 1994), but they can also concern the effect of natural disasters or external pressure in the form of sanctions and threat of military intervention.

Another implication for future research relates to the role of institutions in the aftermath of conflict, an aspect that has not been prominent in the essays in this dissertation. While the peacebuilding literature has debated the benefits of democratization before the construction of state institutions, and vice

versa (see Paris 2004, Zartman 1993), these aspects have not been addressed in the essays of this dissertation. This is partly because this literature focuses only on the subset of post-peace agreements and thus is less relevant, and partly because the variables on regime type and state strength have little, if any, effect on the risk of recurrence. The only statistically significant effects in this dissertation which relate to institutions are that ceasefires are less likely in strong states (Essay II) and that recurrence through rebel offensives is less likely in authoritarian countries (Essay IV). While this suggests that state institutions are unrelated to the risk of relapse, I suspect that these non-findings are indicative of the necessity to look closer into these factors. It is not surprising that the effects are so weak and non-significant since the countries that are studied in all of the essays are countries in conflict or that have recently experienced a devastating war. Thus, it can be expected that there is not much variation among these countries. A way forward could take the lead from recent attempts to explore the conditional effect of peace implementation on the risk of recurrence. Metternich and Wucherpfennig (2011) find, for example, that by splitting the sample of post-conflict countries between those where institutions are undergoing transition and those where institutions have been fully consolidated, there is a substantial difference in the risk of recurrence. In countries that have consolidated institutions, the probability of recurrence is virtually zero.

There is another reason why the literature should look closer at the role of institutions and the risk of relapse. Existing studies often have focused on democratization in the aftermath of conflict, without exploring different types of authoritarian rule. This omission contrasts with the current literature on political violence which has increasingly focused on how the variation among authoritarian states can influence the risk of inter-state disputes (Lai and Slater 2006), civil war (Fjelde 2010), and coup d'état (Magaloni 2008). There are theoretical reasons to expect that the end of civil conflict, and the potential risk of recurrence, creates tension within an autocratic state apparatus since parts of the armed forces are made superfluous in peacetime. This may be an even greater challenge if the government expects to reintegrate former rebels into the army, as is commonly recommended by practitioners engaged in post-conflict security sector reform. As a result, there are many questions that remain unanswered which follow the observation made by Atlas and Licklider (1999: 37): “post-settlement political tensions often arise, not from reopening fissures between former foes but from deepening division among former allies.”

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