

Journal of Peace Research

<http://jpr.sagepub.com/>

Rebellion, mediation, and group change : An empirical investigation of competing hypotheses

Marie Olson Lounsbury and Alethia H Cook

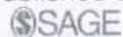
Journal of Peace Research 2011 48: 73

DOI: 10.1177/0022343310390256

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://jpr.sagepub.com/content/48/1/73>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:

Peace Research Institute Oslo



Journal of Peace Research Replication Data

Additional services and information for *Journal of Peace Research* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://jpr.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://jpr.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

>> Version of Record - Feb 15, 2011

What is This?

Rebellion, mediation, and group change: An empirical investigation of competing hypotheses

Journal of Peace Research

48(1) 73–84

© The Author(s) 2011

Reprints and permission:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/0022343310390256

jpr.sagepub.com

**Marie Olson Lounsbery***Department of Political Science, East Carolina University***Alethia H Cook***Department of Political Science, East Carolina University*

Abstract

Multilateral and diplomatic resolutions to intrastate conflicts are the preferred method of termination. However, mediated settlements tend toward failure and conflict recurrence. A significant factor in this failure is that government and groups are heterogeneous. While the demands, goals, preferences, and intentions of both sides are sometimes viewed as being held in common, they are potentially as diverse as the groups' members. Understanding the relationship between resolution efforts and group heterogeneity is complicated but crucial to improving mediation success. The current article examines all intrastate conflicts for the period 1945–1999, in order to test two competing propositions found in the literature on group change and the occurrence of mediation. The primary question of interest is whether group change tends to result from or precede mediation attempts. In other words, is group change an impetus to engage in mediation or do mediation processes tend to result in altered group characteristics. The findings support only the proposition that when governments engage rebels in mediation, rebel group changes are significantly more likely to occur than without mediation. The implications of the findings are also discussed.

Keywords

civil war, mediation, negotiation, rebellion, splintering, terrorism

Introduction

Civil wars are particularly perplexing phenomena that continue to challenge the international community, as well as the governments of those experiencing such rebellion. Our approach to examining civil wars as researchers has emerged from our experience in examining interstate wars. Participants have sometimes been depicted as unitary actors whose actions can be explained by their characteristics. However, civil wars are more complicated than that. Any one nation may be facing several internal armed threats, while at the same time experiencing division within governmental ranks. Rebel groups may splinter, die or merge; tactics may shift; and conflict histories are forged, informing and influencing later interactions. All of these complexities have significant implications for resolution. Cunningham (2006) has suggested that the

more rebel group factions there are in a civil war, the more likely conflict will endure. Longer duration in such a case is a function of a smaller negotiating space. As the number of groups increases, it becomes more difficult to identify areas where all participants' preferences overlap. This makes resolution even more difficult. Further, multiple actors mean multiple military target groups to engage. Military victory may remain elusive as a result.

Military victories are not usually the most desirable of outcomes if one is interested in upholding human rights. Although military victory may be the most stable outcome (these do indeed return to war less frequently than negotiated outcomes), they are also more prone to

Corresponding author:

olsonlounsberym@ecu.edu

genocide or politicide (Licklider, 1995). Conversely, negotiated outcomes might be less viable, but they are much more likely to result in at least some effort to alleviate the situation that produced conflict in the first place. As a result, diplomatic efforts to resolve civil wars have increased dramatically since the end of the Cold War (Talentino, 2005). Walter (2002) argued that civil wars rarely end in a settlement absent international intervention. Interestingly, however, in spite of the emphasis on negotiated settlements in the international community, victory by either the rebel group or the government is more prevalent than negotiated settlement.

Today, actors in the international system are freer to approach such conflicts without threat of the stalemated bi-polar world viewing the conflict in strategic terms. Because of these efforts, there have been more peace agreements entered into in the post-Cold War era than during the entire Cold War period. These agreements, however, continue to be weak predictors of peace. In other words, they tend to fail frequently. Hartzell, Hoddie & Rothchild (2001) examined civil war peace agreements specifically. They identified 38 peace agreements in 31 countries for the 1945–1998 period, indicating that several countries experienced repeated agreement events.

How can this be explained? Governments may feel pressure to engage in mediation with internal factions particularly in light of the international community's renewed interest (Johnston, 2007). They do so because of that pressure, but in reality, they may not be negotiating in good faith. Whatever agreements they produce through mediation or negotiation might fail because the government may not intend to keep its end of the bargain. Groups may also engage in negotiations without any real intention of following through on the agreement. However, it is not necessarily the case that government and groups enter into negotiations in bad faith. If one looks within the competing sides, one may see factions with competing interests, some of which may be negotiating in good faith, while others might not.

In such situations, government and group leaders may engage in mediation with all intention of upholding their end of the bargain. They may be subsequently unable, however, to convince others that the negotiated settlement is in their interest. In groups, for example, the leaders may believe firmly that a settlement is in the group's best interest. Those who are less willing to compromise, however, may reject the settlement and continue the fight. Peace remains elusive. This can manifest itself in group splintering or other forms of significant group change. People within the groups may range from being

very willing to compromise in order to stop the fighting to those who will tolerate no concessions and prefer to continue the violence until their ultimate goal is achieved. This is a dilemma for mediation and negotiation attempts. It impacts the ripeness of the conflict for third-party assisted negotiation. It may be that a conflict is only ripe for negotiations when a sufficient number of people on each side are willing to compromise to avoid further bloodshed. What number will suffice is a very difficult estimate to make, however. It also must be recognized that groups are behaving based on both endogenous and exogenous pressures. Regardless of the external influences brought to bear on the situation, it is the internal group dynamics and their perceptions that will determine how and whether a group changes. On entering into negotiations, each side has to believe that the other is negotiating in good faith and that their opponent has the capacity to enforce the agreement once it is made. However, neither side can be certain that these characteristics are present. For years, scholars and practitioners have worked to create more effective settlements. However, all those efforts will be meaningless if negotiations are not either entered into with true resolution intentions by both sides or in the presence of a third party guarantor to penalize those who may break with the resolution.¹

As a result, we have reason to believe that mediations of intrastate conflict can be complicated by group changes either prior to the mediation or following the resolution attempt. How prevalent these occurrences are and which tends to challenge third party efforts more is an empirical question we seek to address. In order to do so, we need to take a much closer look at group dynamics as they relate to resolution attempts, both failed and successful, on all intrastate conflicts occurring between 1945 and 1999.

Negotiations, conflict resolution, and group splintering in the literature

Little systematic research has been done examining the relationship between group change and third party resolution efforts, but an examination of the literature provides an indication of expectations in this regard. Civil

¹ Indeed, one of the findings regarding civil war peace settlements is that they are likely to endure when third parties guarantee the peace (see Hartzell, Hoddie & Rothchild (2001) and Pearson et al. (2007)). How often third parties actually 'guarantee' the peace (i.e. take up arms to defend the terms of the settlement) remains a matter of some debate, however.

conflicts can end in a number of different ways, but they tend to primarily end in either some sort of negotiated outcome or through military victory. Settlements can also differ in the extent to which the demands of either side are accommodated. Either a full agreement or a partial agreement may be arrived at through negotiations (Wallensteen & Sollenberg, 1997). Victory could be achieved either through military conquest of one side by the other or through one side quitting the battle.

As indicated, one of the challenges in dealing with the dynamics of civil conflicts is that both government and groups are heterogeneous. The demands, goals, preferences, and intentions of both sides are potentially as diverse as the groups' members (Pearlman, 2008/09; Kydd & Walter, 2002). This complicates peace negotiations. While each side in the dispute may send representatives to negotiations, it is unlikely that all opinions are adequately represented. Further complicating the situation is the fact that the settlement may not satisfy the demands of all participants and clearly may not represent the interests of those not invited to the talks. Even negotiations entered into in good faith by both sides may fail to satisfy all interested parties. This can result in group change and continuation of hostilities in spite of the settlement, as extremists or those not happy with the settlement continue to fight and perhaps become even more hostile, potentially driving groups to terrorism and government to repressive acts.

Essentially, the outcomes of mediations rely on the goals of those who are participating in them. Those goals are often hierarchically arranged, with some being more important to some participants than others (Kydd & Walter, 2006; Trager & Zagorcheva, 2005/06). Negotiations in the post-Cold War environment frequently tend to be challenged by issues of identity.² On the surface it may appear in such cases that the essential objectives of the parties may not be things that can be settled through negotiations. Although the 'bottom-line' issues such as representation, autonomy, or group security might be addressed through interest-based negotiations, they may be difficult to deal with when issues of religious ideology, territory, and ethnicity are intertwined. Civil wars tend to involve layers of issues that create challenges both for third-party interveners and for group cohesiveness. Furthermore, the type of conflict may impact the

potential for groups to experience significant changes. If a group is engaged in an identity conflict, for instance, there may be less likelihood that it would experience splintering, as these group members will have more to lose than those engaged in conflict over territory, for instance (Fearon & Laitin, 1996).

The varying ideals among members of groups can result in group changes including splintering, entry of new groups into the conflict, exit of groups from the conflict, or consolidation of groups into coalitions to challenge the government. Splintering and the addition of new groups both have the effect of generating additional dyads pitted against the state, complicating future interactions. Among the members who may not be willing to consider compromising solutions, mediations or negotiations may actually give impetus for higher levels of violence. This may be because of a perception that their 'acts are particularly effective during peace negotiations because opposing parties are naturally distrustful of each other's motives and have limited sources of information about each other's intentions' (Kydd & Walter, 2006: 73). It may also be a strategy employed by the group to derail the negotiations and prevent a peace agreement from occurring. These so-called spoilers serve as a hindrance to negotiation and mediation attempts.

Another challenge to third party resolution efforts is the fact that group goals and those of factions within groups can change over time (Abrahms, 2008). Groups that may already be tenuously cohesive are likely to be challenged by mediation efforts. Disagreement over either whether negotiations are even an acceptable option or the progress of the negotiations themselves can exacerbate already competing interests. 'Despite the successful negotiated outcomes that can result between major parties, a common effect of political processes is the splintering of groups into factions that support the negotiations (or their outcome) and those that do not' (Cronin, 2006: 25). When group splintering occurs over negotiation, it is often the case that the new challenging faction is more committed to violence, and therefore more difficult to negotiate with, than the original group. Whether the motive of the faction is greed or grievance, their ideology is so intensely held that the violence being experienced by the country may continue (Fearon & Laitin, 2003). As a result, a peace agreement may be achieved while the armed conflict continues.

Figure 1 depicts a situation where resolution efforts bring about group change. There may be situations where some elements in a group enter into third-party assisted negotiations in good faith. As pre-negotiation activity commences and negotiations ensue, differences

²This is not to say that issues of identity did not exist during the Cold War. Indeed, they did. The environment at the time, however, meant that most conflicts would be viewed in terms of interests and their place in the Cold War.



Figure 1. Negotiations processes result in group change

of opinion may develop within the group such that some members find the impending agreement to be satisfactory while others find it objectionable. The resulting change in the original group could find some progressing toward more peaceful relations with government while others continue or even increase the violence.

Figure 1 demonstrates the potential impact that impending negotiated agreements may have on groups. Based on the literature, the rebellious group can be expected to consist of those willing to negotiate and may also include spoilers who hope to derail negotiations entirely. We argue that a third type of individual in the group may be reluctant to negotiate but still not completely dedicated to violence. It may be that such individuals could be enticed in either direction, depending on the negotiation's content and processes. Given these divisions in the group, the negotiation process and the imminence of an agreement could result in group change.

Hypothesis 1: Efforts to resolve an armed civil conflict through a negotiated approach are likely to produce rebel group change.

Change can also occur if factions in the group fundamentally disagree on whether to enter into negotiations at all. These differences can represent fundamental disagreements over conciliatory action or divisiveness over the course of any pre-negotiation processes, including preconditions to the mediation event itself. As a result, the signaling that mediation is a possibility or moves by particular members to engage in mediation can potentially create spoilers to that process. A spoiler is any group or faction that may seek to undermine negotiations if the impending peace may not serve the goals of the faction (Pearlman, 2008/09; Kydd & Walter, 2006). 'Peace creates spoilers because it is rare in civil wars for all leaders and factions to see peace as beneficial. Even if all parties come to value peace, they rarely do so simultaneously, and they often strongly disagree over the terms of an acceptable peace' (Stedman, 1997: 7). Spoilers may be motivated by the desire to achieve total power, a desire for a higher level of security, disbelief that the other side will hold up its end of negotiated settlements, a lack of desire for peace, dissatisfaction with negotiations, or any number of other group or personal reasons (Stedman, 1997). A spoiler may be a party to the conflict or could be an outside actor who feels that a

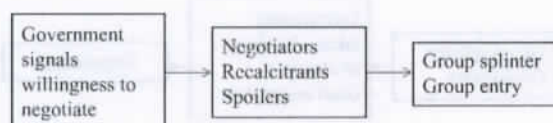


Figure 2. Government attempts to bring about group change through negotiations

settlement is not in their interest. Any spoiler that emerges during the negotiations process has the potential to become a veto player, or an entity that could effectively stop the passage of an agreement. The implication of this is that negotiations will have to appease each of the possible veto players (Kydd & Walter, 2002).

Another factor that can impact negotiations is the lack of accurate information each side has about the capabilities and intentions of the other as they enter into conflict. It would be unlikely for a group to enter into a conflict it knew it had no hope of winning. Even in the case of significant asymmetry between the combatants, the smaller side has to have some notion that it could achieve at least a portion of its goals through violence. As more information becomes available and the capacities, commitment levels, and goals of combatants become clear, groups may refocus their demands on other aspects of their goals that may seem more attainable. When this happens, a bargaining space develops that can facilitate negotiations (Cunningham, 2006). It is in the interest of spoilers, then, to strike out when trust and information are both low to increase the chance that their efforts will derail negotiations (Kydd & Walter, 2002).

Similarly, the signaling of efforts to mediate civil conflict may produce group change as well. However, this would occur before negotiations actually took place. Figure 2 depicts this different dynamic interaction. In this case, the government signals that it would be willing to negotiate with the rebels. Whether this is a strategic act on the part of the government (i.e. the government is hoping to take advantage of potential divisions within the group and appeal to some and not to others) or a good faith effort to bring about resolution, the result may be the same. The rebel group could experience disagreements about whether to engage in dialogue with the government. This could result in subsequent group change or splintering.

However, there are other conceptualizations of when group change might occur. Not all change is seen as being in response to mediation signaling. In this perspective, mediation may not influence group change, but rather group change occurs as a result of other factors. According to Cunningham, there are three reasons that splinter factions can form: differing policy preferences;

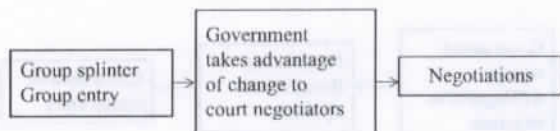


Figure 3. Group change brings about government negotiations with the willing

leadership disputes; or disputes within the group over the strategy to pursue (Cunningham, 2006: 878). Each of these reasons could be relevant to internal group disagreements about whether it should be negotiating or not. Subsequent to a shift in group cohesiveness, government and the willing faction may engage in mediation. The recalcitrant faction may pursue an agenda that is different from that of the original group, which will likely retain a commitment to violence. Ross and Gurr (1989) differ slightly in their perception of why negotiations can increase violence. They argue that the very existence of the competing group is threatened by the impending settlement (Bueno de Mesquita, 2005). For individuals who have based their identity or lives on group membership, such a threat would be unbearable.

Figure 3 demonstrates the situation if some sort of group change creates an environment ripe for negotiation with some portion of the group. An opportunistic government then takes advantage of the shifting group dynamics and engages the willing in negotiations. In this case the government is not the cause of change, but takes advantage of its occurrence to bring negotiators into the political process.

Hypothesis 2: Group change can create an environment conducive to mediation.

Many endogenous factors are also discussed as potentially influencing group changes and offers of mediation in the literature. One of the main resources that a rebel group can draw upon is public support. Absent that, the group may find that it cannot raise funds, find safe-havens, recruit, or acquire necessary supplies and equipment (which is obviously related to the funding issue). A group that commands a high level of popular support may be less likely to enter into mediation, as it could feel that the support of the domestic population will help it to win the day. However, if they do choose to negotiate, they will do so from a position of greater strength that is afforded them due to their popular support. Group splintering can also be influenced by public support levels. Splintering may be less likely if the group enjoys high levels of support for their mediation strategy. If the public rejects negotiations in large numbers, this may give

factions increased impetus to defect. Measuring public support, however, is challenging.

The size of a group can be an important determinant of their willingness to negotiate with government. The ability of rebels to recruit members is likely to be a good indication of its popular support. Group size is an important determinant of its capacity. Groups that are at a significant numerical disadvantage to the government cannot hope to overcome their opponent in direct conflict (Olson Lounsbury & Pearson, 2009). As group size decreases, the willingness of the group to negotiate would therefore be expected to increase. This is a possible scenario that could bring about the interaction depicted in Figure 1. Groups that are large in comparison to government capacity will have little reason to negotiate, as they will perceive that they can win the conflict through force. As group size increases, therefore, we might expect that a situation similar to Figure 2 might arise, where the government signals its willingness to negotiate in the hopes of inhibiting continued increases in rebel strength.

This is relevant to group change in many ways. If the group splinters because of participation in mediation, the bargaining units are then decreased in size versus the government. This may push the faction that continues to negotiate to decrease its demands. However, the government may face additional pressures to achieve peace with the negotiating faction so that it might help to defeat the faction that wants to continue the fight. It would also decrease the number of groups the government has to fight at one time.

Mediation might also increase the number of challengers faced by government as it could demonstrate to other disaffected groups in society that they can gain at least some of their goals through rebellion. The government may choose not to negotiate if it feels that it would set a negative precedent to others (Walter, 2006). While it is negotiating, it may face additional groups that develop in society to compete for benefits, further complicating its negotiation position.

Furthermore, negotiations may be impacted by the formation of coalitions among groups that were previously unaffiliated. Coalitions could increase the bargaining power of the government's opponent as well as altering the bargaining space in which negotiations are being conducted. When a government is negotiating with multiple groups, either in a coalition or individually, the set of 'agreements that all parties will accept is smaller' (Cunningham, 2006: 879). Finally, it could also be the case that the situation in Figure 3 could be brought about if changes in group size or popular

support, for any number of different reasons, result in group splintering.

Group change and mediated efforts are also likely to be influenced by characteristics related to the conflict itself. Conflicts that are longer in duration are likely to produce more group change than those that are rather short in duration. At the same time, this relationship is potentially curvilinear. In the early phases of a conflict, rebel groups are likely to be unorganized and lack cohesion. Elites may potentially compete over the future of the group and its goals, creating multiple factions. Once a conflict has progressed for some time, if it is to survive, cohesion and consolidation of rebels becomes more likely. As time progresses, however, and victory remains elusive, frustration among elites involving disagreements over strategies and goals may produce a new round of elite outbidding and subsequent group change (Bapat, 2005). In terms of conflict duration and resolution opportunities, Zartman (1995) has suggested that mediation is more likely to be influential during the early and the late phases. Early on in conflict, groups have not invested as much of their resources into the conflict, society has not yet polarized to the extent to impede resolution, and as a result, opportunities to engage in more peaceful resolution options will be available. When early mediation efforts fail, however, more hard-line demands become likely and resolution opportunities diminish. Again, later in the conflict, as victory remains elusive and war weariness sets in, groups may be more willing to engage in renewed mediation.

We also expect that the intensity of a conflict will impact group dynamics and mediation opportunities. When a conflict produces a large number of fatalities in a given year, it can provide an environment in which either splintering or mediations are more likely. The rationale is similar to that of duration. High-intensity years are likely to lead to feelings of fatigue and frustration which can create opportunities for a mediated resolution or shifts in group cohesiveness.

Conflicts will also vary according to group goals. The civil war literature tends to use two separate conflict dichotomies according to conflict goals and conflict parties. Conflicts waged over control of the central government can be distinguished from those that vie for territorial secession or autonomy. This is the dichotomy employed by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)/Uppsala researchers and adopted for the purposes of this article. At the same time, conflicts often involve issues of identity versus those involving issues of ideology. The identity of the group itself is typically used to determine the nature of the conflict in this regard. Territorial

conflicts tend to be fought by groups that can be identified by their identity, while governmental conflicts involve group ideology, although we recognize that this is certainly not always the case. It is likely that the type of conflict will impact the occurrence of mediation or group dynamics. It has been argued that conflicts involving territory, and those that involve elements of identity, are more resistant to negotiated settlement. However, Licklider (1995), using the identity/ideology dichotomy, found that both types were equally unlikely to end in a negotiated settlement. This leaves uncertainty about the extent to which conflict type impacts outcome. Although it is likely that group goals, and therefore conflict type, can impact the propensity for group change, this aspect has yet to be explored in the literature. It is also likely that many environmental factors that are not easily measured have an impact on the group goals, their changes over time, and the propensity for conflict termination. This is part of the complexity of studying such heterogeneous subjects.

Operationalization and measurement

Our hypotheses suggest that group change is related to mediation occurrence in intrastate conflict as either a product or as a facilitator. In order to test these propositions empirically, all intrastate armed conflicts occurring between 1945 and 1999 as identified using Regan (2002) were evaluated. Intrastate armed conflicts are those that occur between a government and a non-state actor operating within its area of sovereignty resulting in at least 200 battle-related deaths in a given year. Following the Correlates of War (COW) definition for civil war, intrastate armed conflicts must involve effective resistance as well (Small & Singer, 1982). This allows us to distinguish armed conflict involving rebel groups from situations of massacre or genocide. There were 153 intrastate conflicts meeting this definition as identified by Regan. This list was compared to the PRIO/Uppsala Armed Conflict Data (ACD) which uses a lower, 25 battle-related death threshold. A total of 127 intrastate armed conflicts involving at least 200 battle-related deaths were identified by both the Regan and ACD projects. The 26 cases not identified by both Regan and ACD were dropped from the analyses. Our unit of analysis is the conflict-year, where again, only years of each conflict appearing in both datasets were included.

Primary variables

Our primary variables of concern are whether or not mediation occurs in any given year of a conflict and whether or not rebel group cohesiveness shifts. Systematic data are not available on negotiations for all intrastate

conflicts. Third-party assisted negotiation data are available, however.³ This will serve as a good proxy measure for negotiations generally. Civil wars are naturally more likely to experience negotiations with third-party efforts than without. As a result, in our first model (H1), mediation occurrence serves as the primary independent variable thought to predict group change. According to Bercovitch (1991: 8), mediation is 'a process of conflict management where disputants seek the assistance of, or accept an offer of help from, an individual, group, state or organization to settle their conflict or resolve their differences without resorting to physical force or invoking the authority of law'. Regan, Frank & Aydin (2009) employ this definition in order to identify mediation occurrence for each intrastate armed conflict in a given conflict-year. This variable is coded dichotomously, indicating whether or not mediation occurred in a given conflict-year.

We are also interested in changing rebel group dynamics, specifically the splintering of groups. Group change serves as our dependent variable in the first model. ACD identifies active armed rebel groups for each conflict for each year. Using this information, we looked for change in group identification over time. Rebel groups generally can either splinter/multiply, coalition/die off, re-emerge as separate entities after having formed a coalition or died off, or simply become replaced by another group. Conceptually, we expect that mediation is likely to produce group splintering, re-emergence or group replacement. All of these options indicate division within the rebel group faction(s). As a result, group change is coded 1 in a year when a new rebel group is identified by ACD from the previous year. We also focus specifically on group splintering, the most obvious type of group division event, and present those findings as well. Splintering is considered to have occurred when group identification (using ACD) from one year to the next involves the previously listed group or groups and a new rebel group.⁴

Our second model (H2) suggests that the relationship between mediation occurrence and group change might

actually be reversed, with group change providing an opportunity for a government to isolate some factions of a group while cooperating with others. As a result, we also examine group change as the primary independent variable and mediation occurrence as the primary dependent variable, thus examining two potentially competing models.

For each model, the independent variables are measured at time t and the dependent variable is measured at $t + 1$. This allows us to determine the order of events to allow for effective comparison of the two competing hypotheses.⁵

Control variables

Any correlation between rebel group change and the occurrence of mediation is likely to be influenced by several conflict characteristics noted in the literature review. To rule out spuriousness, we include the following variables in our analyses:

Duration: This is the length of conflict measured in years, as identified by Greig & Regan (2008). We also include the squared duration term to examine the possibility of a curvilinear relationship between duration and mediation, as well as duration and splintering.

Intensity: This variable is measured as the log intensity of each conflict per year of conflict. These data have been generated by Lacina & Gleditsch (2005) and are included in the Greig & Regan (2008) replication data.

Territory: We employ two measures aimed at the issue of conflict type. First, each conflict has been identified as occurring over issues of territory, government, or territory and government by PRIO/Uppsala in the ACD. Conflicts over territory in this respect have more to do with the groups themselves and their location relative to the central governmental authority. Second, Greig & Regan (2008) also have a territory measure for each conflict, distinguishing cases that are struggles for

³ It should be emphasized here that by using this approach we are limited in our ability to analyze only third-party assisted negotiation (i.e. mediation). The Regan dataset, while very useful, is focused on mediation attempts and fails to capture unassisted negotiations. As a result, we potentially lose relationships between group change and negotiation when third parties are not involved.

⁴ It is possible that the addition of a new group in a particular year is not necessarily the result of a splinter faction. New groups in the same conflict could potentially arise and not draw members from a previously active group. Our expectation, however, is that this possibility is a rare occurrence.

⁵ By measuring dependent variables at time $t + 1$, we recognize that we introduce potential bias in our estimates. Group change and mediation events that occur after armed conflict has ended would not be identified using our approach. This is a limitation derived from the use of datasets focused on armed conflict episodes only. In some conflicts, using the lagged DV does not pose an issue. Because we were only able to analyze case years that are included in both Regan and ACD, and ACD has a lower fatalities threshold, some of the cases included group information after the conclusion of the Regan case. In these instances, we can indeed identify group change after Regan considers the conflict to have ended, since it was coded by ACD for a longer period of time. As a result, although this is clearly a limitation of the data, we do not expect that it will seriously bias the results.

secession or irredentism from those involving other issues. Both of these dichotomous measures are used and analyzed separately.

Ethnic: As we have indicated, territorial conflicts are not necessarily identity-based, though they frequently involve identity groups. As a result, we also distinguish conflicts that are 'ethnic' from those that are not (i.e. those that are ideological in nature). Greig & Regan's (2008) data include this dichotomous measure based on its original reporting in Regan & Aydin (2006).

Group size: We measure group size using Regan's (2002) opposition group measure which is an estimate of the number of rebels in any one conflict.

Success: It is likely, although not necessary, that whether or not mediation results in group change is a function of an imminent agreement, as we have suggested. As a result, we control for mediations that result in either partial or full settlement. These data have been coded by Regan, Frank & Aydin (2009).

Our contradictory models suggest a potential endogeneity problem (Kmenta, 1997). As a result, we analyze a bivariate probit model allowing for a simultaneous estimation of the impact of our covariates on each dependent, as well as the appropriate lagged endogenous variable. The resulting correlation coefficient between the residuals of each of the two probit models (ρ) is not statistically significant, indicating that two separate models can indeed be estimated. As a result, we estimate two multivariate logit models with robust standard errors. In order to control for conflict panel effects, logit analyses are evaluated by conflict cluster. Although our data involve elements of time, they are not true time-series data in that years of conflict are not consistent across cases. As a result, we test for autocorrelation in the dependent variable of each model to ascertain whether appropriate controls are required. The findings of these tests suggest that neither model requires autocorrelation correction. We do, however, include measures to identify previous mediation occurrence (DV = mediation occurrence) and previous group change occurrence (DV = group change) because their inclusion improves the strength of the multivariate models. Our multivariate logit findings are presented below.

Findings

For the 127 conflicts identified by both Regan (2002) and ACD, there were a total of 1,179 conflict-years examined. Our findings, based on the panel corrected logit models, are presented in Table I. Models 1–3 test the first hypothesis that mediation is likely to create group change or splintering. The hypothesis is

confirmed, although with marginal significance. Mediation does appear to lead to rebel group splintering or significant change in the following year when controlling for conflict duration, the previous year's deaths (logged), whether the conflict is over territory⁶ or ethnicity, the size of the opposition group, whether or not mediation had occurred in the previous year, and whether or not previous group change occurred.⁷ Our control variables are discussed in more detail below.

It appears that our curvilinear expectations regarding conflict duration are also supported. Group change is more likely to occur in the early and late phases of conflict. Further, intensity appears to influence group splintering positively. As intensity in any particular year increases, group splintering becomes more likely. This finding is also not surprising. Higher intensity conflicts place greater pressure on groups, generating increased frustration in the process. Elite outbidding is likely to arise in such situations.

Although territory did not itself achieve statistical significance in any of the models, its inclusion in both Models 1 and 3 improves the estimation of those models overall. Territorial conflicts are more likely to experience group change in this regard, although again this factor appears to be the case in combination with the other variables examined. Ethnic conflicts, however, did not appear significant and did not improve any of the models, indicating that identity conflicts do not appear to impact group cohesion any more than ideological conflicts. This finding is presented in Model 2. Although the model as a whole is statistically significant, the inclusion of ethnicity is not an improvement over Model 1.

Size of opposition group does appear to influence the probability of group change, although again with marginal significance. As the size of opposition increases, change becomes less likely. Perhaps groups that are effective at recruiting members are also better able to maintain a cohesive unit. It also may be the case that larger groups have more leverage against the government, resulting in more favorable negotiated outcomes. This could diminish the tendency toward group change as the group's demands are being more satisfactorily addressed. It also appears that previous mediation occurrence dampens group change, while groups that changed before are likely to do so again.

⁶ Both measures of territory were examined. Results did not change significantly. As a result, only ACD's territory code is presented.

⁷ This variable was included to control for autocorrelation. Its inclusion improves the model despite our autocorrelation test finding such correction was unnecessary.

Table I. Rebel group change and mediation occurrence logit analyses

Variables	Model 1 predicting group change (DV)	Model 2 predicting group change (DV)	Model 3 predicting group change (DV)	Model 4 predicting splintering (DV)	Model 5 predicting mediation (DV)
Mediation occurrence	.392* (.22)	.368* (.21)		.721** (.36)	
Successful mediation occurrence			.135 (.33)		
Group change					.112 (.43)
Duration	-.256*** (.05)	-.245*** (.06)	-.261*** (.06)	.063 (.06)	-.248*** (.08)
Duration ²	.005*** (.001)	.005*** (.001)	.005*** (.001)	-.001 (.002)	.005*** (.002)
Intensity (log deaths)	.142*** (.04)	.148*** (.04)	.145*** (.043)	.335*** (.12)	-.174 (.14)
Territory	.47** (.20)		.463** (.20)	-.714* (.38)	-.849** (.41)
Ethnic		-.058 (.18)			
Size of opposition	-4.62e-06* (2.42e-06)	-4.01e-06* (2.14e-06)	-4.46e-06* (2.32e-06)	-9.94e-06 (6.58e-06)	2.96e-06 (1.85e-06)
Previous mediation	-.343 (.289)	-.34 (.29)	-.233 (.29)	.14 (.35)	7.84*** (1.10)
Previous group change event	1.69*** (.23)	1.58*** (.23)	1.71*** (.23)	Predicts splinter perfectly	
Constant	-1.86*** (.39)	-1.84*** (.45)	-1.83*** (.39)	-6.00*** (1.14)	-4.49*** (1.33)
N	1,179	1,174	1,179	1,026	1,179
Chi-square	124.25	100.78	123.12	26.07	61.08
P-value	.0000	.0000	.0000	.0005	.0000
Log pseudolikelihood	-452.11	-452.79	-453.23	-146.08	-158.35

* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$.

Based on our test of the first hypothesis, we can conclude that group change is likely to occur following mediation, during either early or late periods of conflict, when intensity is high, and in territorial conflicts with smaller rebel group size and past experience with group change. Interestingly, it does not seem to matter whether the mediation occurrence led to either partial or full settlement (see Model 3). In fact, it appears that the mere occurrence of mediation is sufficient to bring about group change. This would seem to support the path presented in Figure 2 over that in Figure 1.

In order to examine whether mediation is likely to result in group splintering specifically, we present Model 4. Mediation does appear to have that impact, and the relationship is statistically significant. It appears that mediation is likely to lead to splintering in more intense conflicts not over territory, but with previous group change occurrence (in fact previous group change predicts future splintering perfectly). Interestingly, conflict duration and size of opposition do not appear related to group splintering.

Model 5 tests the possibility that group splintering is likely to produce mediation in the following year. This is our competing Hypothesis 2 test. The model is clearly inferior to the previous two models. Group splintering

is not a significant predictor of mediation even when controlling for relevant variables. It is possible that governments may wish to take advantage of group splintering, but it does not appear they are able to get rebel group factions to the table consistently despite their strategic desires. Our second hypothesis is not confirmed as a result. It does appear that mediation is more likely earlier and later in conflict. Mediation is also likely to occur again once it has happened in the past. Our final control variable in this model is territory, which seems to indicate that territorial conflicts are less likely to experience mediation. Regardless, our overall findings leave us more comfortable predicting the occurrence of group change and splintering following mediation rather than the other way around.

The statistical significance of the findings helps to settle a debate in the literature regarding these two civil war events. However, we are also interested in understanding the magnitude of the impact mediation has on the propensity for significant rebel group change. As a result, we present the predicted magnitude of group change when mediation occurs compared to when it does not, keeping all other variables at their means or modes. We also present the magnitude of impact on our control variables of the group change from the mean to one standard

Table II. Predicted magnitude of impact on group change

Predictor	Percent change when occurring or shifting one standard deviation
Mediation	43.18%
Duration	-88.19%
Duration ²	236.71%
Intensity	30.94%
Size of opposition	-14.77%
Territory	53.59%
Previous mediation	-27.57%
Previous group change event	312.24%

Table III. Predicted magnitude of impact on group splintering

Predictor	Percent change when occurring or shifting one standard deviation
Mediation	99.30%
Duration	56.45%
Duration ²	-33.45%
Intensity	97.91%
Size of opposition	-30.66%
Territory	-50.17%
Previous mediation	14.63%

deviation from the mean for continuous variables or from non-occurrence to occurrence for dichotomous control variables. These predicted magnitudes are presented in Table II.

When mediation occurs, the chance of significant group change occurring in the following year increases by 43.18%. Only conflict duration, conflict intensity, and previous group change events appear to have a larger impact. Table III examines the predicted magnitude of the impact on group splintering. Mediation appears to significantly impact the probability of splintering, increasing the chance by 99.30%, the largest predicted change of all variables included in Model 4.

Conclusion

The problems with resolving civil wars are complex and varied. It has been demonstrated that military conquest can provide for more permanent peace. However, it is difficult to argue that the international system should push for a decisive military victory of one party over another. With the increasing use of mediation to try and arrive at a diplomatic solution to domestic disputes, it is

imperative that our understanding of the implications of mediation be improved.

As this article has demonstrated, one of the unintentional consequences of mediation may be the shifting of group cohesiveness and splintering of groups. Such splintering can result in the continuation of violence in a conflict that was supposedly settled. In fact, because it is likely that the factions split, with the less conciliatory elements continuing the fight, it is possible that the intensity of the violence could actually increase in the aftermath of peace efforts.

Four major factors were identified as being important predictors of group change in this article: beginnings and ends of conflicts, when conflict intensity is high, mediation attempts, and previous group change events. These findings can contribute to strategizing among policymakers and institutions that wish to assist in the termination of conflict. The most important lesson is that periods of change can be very threatening to group stability and cohesion. Such instability would certainly be present early in a conflict and if the group's existence were threatened by conflict termination. In the initial phases of a conflict, this could be beneficial. If the group has yet to consolidate power, its fragmentation could result in several weaker entities. While the government may be challenged by having to deal with multiple groups rather than just one, each of the separated groups should be weaker and therefore easier to persuade.

Of more concern is the instability associated with the termination of conflict. No negotiated settlement could possibly satisfy all groups. It is also unlikely that all individual actors in the conflict who held power based on the strife will retain power under the agreement. Those interested in mediating civil conflict should be aware of these factors while they are developing the terms of the peace.

While this research increases our understanding of the externalities of mediated settlements, future research on the importance of splintering and its impact on peace are clearly required. Furthermore, it would be useful to examine whether the content of mediation activities has an influence over group change. While this research demonstrates that mediation itself has an impact, further research may help to determine whether some types of discussions, compromises or concessions during the settlement process are more likely to result in group change than others. Finally, future research might also examine the impact group splintering has on the course of conflict. What we suggest here is that mediation is challenged by these divisions, but it may also be the case that such divisions are necessary so that the most extreme

players can be isolated and ultimately defeated. These questions remain for subsequent study.

Replication data

Replication data can be found at <http://www.prio.no/jpr/datasets> and <http://www.ccu.edu/polsci/faculty/lounsbury.html>.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Dursun Peksen, two anonymous reviewers, and the journal's editor for their comments on earlier drafts.

References

- Abrahms, Max (2008) What terrorists really want. *International Security* 32(4): 78–105.
- Bapat, Navin (2005) Insurgency and the opening of peace processes. *Journal of Peace Research* 42(6): 699–717.
- Bercovitch, Jacob (1991) International mediation and dispute settlement: Evaluating the conditions for successful mediation. *Negotiation Journal* 7(1): 17–30.
- Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan (2005) Conciliation, counterterrorism, and patterns of terrorist violence. *International Organization* 59(Winter): 145–176.
- Cronin, Audrey K (2006) How al-Qaida ends. *International Security* 31(1): 7–48.
- Cunningham, David (2006) Veto players and civil war duration. *American Journal of Political Science* 50(4): 875–892.
- Fearon, James D & David D Laitin (1996) Explaining interethnic cooperation. *American Political Science Review* 90(4): 715–735.
- Fearon, James D & David D Laitin (2003) Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war. *American Political Science Review* 97(1): 75–90.
- Greig, J Michael & Patrick M Regan (2008) When do they say yes? An analysis of the willingness to offer and accept mediation in civil wars. *International Studies Quarterly* 52(4): 759–781.
- Hartzell, Caroline; Matthew Hoddie & Donald Rothchild (2001) Stabilizing the peace after civil war: An investigation of some key variables. *International Organization* 55(1): 183–208.
- Johnston, Patrick (2007) Negotiated settlements and government strategy in civil war: Evidence from Darfur. *Civil Wars* 9(4): 359–377.
- Kmenta, Jan (1997) *Elements of Econometrics*, 2nd edn. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Kydd, Andrew H & Barbara F Walter (2002) Sabotaging the peace: The politics of extremist violence. *International Organization* 56(2): 263–296.
- Kydd, Andrew H & Barbara F Walter (2006) The strategies of terrorism. *International Security* 31(1): 49–80.
- Lacina, Bethany & Nils Petter Gleditsch (2005) Monitoring trends in global combat: A new dataset of battle deaths. *European Journal of Population* 21(2–3): 145–166.
- Licklider, Roy (1995) The consequences of negotiated settlements in civil wars, 1945–1993. *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 681–690.
- Olson Lounsbury, Marie & Frederic Pearson (2009) *Civil Wars: Internal Conflicts, Global Consequences*. Toronto, ON: UTP Higher Education.
- Pearlman, Wendy (2008/09) Spoiling inside and out. *International Security* 33(3): 79–109.
- Pearson, Frederic; Marie Olson Lounsbury, Scott Walker & Sonja Mann (2007) Replicating and extending theories of civil war settlement. *International Interactions* 32(2): 109–128.
- Regan, Patrick M (2002) Third-party interventions and the duration of intrastate conflicts. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46(1): 55–73.
- Regan, Patrick M & Aysegul Aydin (2006) Diplomacy and other forms of intervention in civil wars. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50(5): 736–756.
- Regan, Patrick M; Richard Frank & Aysegul Aydin (2009) Diplomatic interventions and civil war: A new dataset. *Journal of Peace Research* 46(1): 135–146.
- Ross, Jeffrey I & Ted Robert Gurr (1989) Why terrorism subsides: A comparative study of Canada and the United States. *Comparative Politics* 21(4): 405–426.
- Small, Melvin & J David Singer (1982) *Resort to Arms: International and Civil Wars, 1816–1980*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Stedman, Stephen J (1997) Spoiler problems in peace processes. *International Security* 22(2): 5–53.
- Talentino, Andrea. (2005) *Military Intervention after the Cold War: The Evolution of Theory and Practice*. Columbus, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Trager, Robert F & Dessislava Zagorcheva (2005/06) Deterring terrorism. *International Security* 30(3): 87–123.
- Wallensteen, Peter & Margareta Sollenberg (1997) Armed conflicts, conflict termination and peace agreements, 1989–96. *Journal of Peace Research* 34(3): 339–358.
- Walter, Barbara (2002) *Committing to Peace*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Walter, Barbara (2006) Building reputation: Why governments fight some separatists but not others. *American Journal of Political Science* 50(2): 313–330.

Zartman, I William (1995) *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

MARIE OLSON LOUNSBERY, b. 1970, PhD in Political Science (Wayne State University, 2003); Assistant professor, East Carolina University (2007–); current main interest: intrastate conflict dynamics. Most recent book: *Civil Wars: Internal Struggles, Global*

Consequences (with Frederic S Pearson) (University of Toronto Press, 2009).

ALETHIA H COOK, b. 1969, PhD in Public Policy (Kent State University, 2006); Assistant professor, East Carolina University (2007–); current main interest: intrastate conflict dynamics and terrorism. Most recent book: *Emergency Response to Domestic Terrorism: How Bureaucracies Reacted to the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing* (Continuum, 2009).

