Civil War and Military Intervention: Toward a More Systematic Approach

by
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B.A. (Hons.), University of British Columbia, 2007

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Abstract

This capstone argues for a more systematic framework to guide decision-making concerning military interventions to stop civil wars. The analysis incorporates quantitative and qualitative data, and a sample of three countries in sub-Saharan Africa – Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Somalia – to draw out a few examples of the relevant factors that should always be assessed when considering a military intervention to stop a civil war. These factors – characteristics of the country and conflict in question, as well as the potential interveners – would form part of a larger framework, which should be developed for use in policy making. Compared with ad hoc decision-making, use of a systematic framework to guide policy decisions would lead to better outcomes for both conflict-affected populations, as well as for the budgets of members of the international community.

Keywords: Military intervention; humanitarian intervention, sub-Saharan Africa, civil war
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<tr>
<td>AFRC</td>
<td>Armed Forces Revolutionary Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMISOM</td>
<td>African Union Mission in Somalia</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARS/UIC</td>
<td>Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia/Union of Islamic Courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOMIL</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States Mission in Liberia</td>
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<td>ECOMOG</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States Observer Group</td>
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<td>ECOWAS</td>
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<td>GED</td>
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<td>NPFL</td>
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<td>R2P</td>
<td>Responsibility to Protect</td>
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<td>Transitional Federal Government</td>
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<td>TNG</td>
<td>Transitional National Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCDP</td>
<td>Uppsala Conflict Data Program</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNAMSIL</td>
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Executive Summary

This capstone project argues in favour of a more systematic framework to guide policy decisions concerning military interventions to stop civil wars. The analysis identifies factors – characteristics of the countries in conflict as well as potential interveners – that should be part of a comprehensive decision-making framework for policies attempting to stop civil wars.

For practical reasons, the present project cannot identify all relevant factors; rather, I provide a few examples of factors that should be part of a more fully-developed framework. The analysis nevertheless demonstrates that use of more systematic decision-making, compared with the status quo method which is characterized by ad-hoc, politically-driven action, would be highly likely to result in significantly better outcomes for conflict-affected populations as well as intervening and donor states.

I employ a comparative analysis of three countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Somalia) to draw out factors that serve as examples of the constituent parts of a hypothetical fully-developed framework. These factors affected the conduct of the interventions into those conflicts, which in turn affected the nature and timing of the end of the conflict (or lack thereof, in the case of Somalia).

I define four broad types of interventions into civil wars, based on the intersection of two critical aspects thereof: whether or not the goal of an intervention is to stop (or support the end of) a conflict (i.e. conflict-ending versus non-conflict-ending goals), and whether or not the intervener(s) act(s) in favour of one or more of the principal parties to the conflict or act(s) impartially with respect to the main conflict parties (i.e. biased versus impartial involvement).

The four types of intervention are:

- **Impartial, conflict-ending** interventions, in which the intervener(s) aim(s) to help end the conflict and does so in an impartial fashion with respect to the primary conflict parties (e.g. most UN peacekeeping missions);
• **Impartial, non-conflict-ending** interventions, in which the intervener(s) act(s) impartially but has goals that do not involve ending the war (e.g. relief missions to deliver food or medicine to conflict-affected populations);

• **Biased, conflict-ending** interventions, in which the intervener(s) “take(s) sides” with respect to the main conflict parties, in order to hasten the end of a conflict (e.g. the British intervention into Sierra Leone in 2000); and

• **Biased, non-conflict-ending** interventions, in which the intervener(s) “take(s) sides” with respect to the main conflict parties, but with goals that do not involve ending the conflict, or indeed may involve attempting to sustain it (e.g. interventions in which the intervener(s) profit from access to the conflict country’s resources).

For practical purposes concerning the size of the present project, I apply three major scope restrictions. The first is that I discuss only military interventions involving troops on the ground, and exclude diplomatic and observer-based interventions. The second is that I analyze only conflict-ending interventions, since my primary goal is to contribute to the development of more effective policies to stop civil wars sooner and/or reduce the risk of conflict resurgence wherever possible. Finally, I limit my analysis to consideration of (a subset of) factors that are relevant once a decision to intervene has already been made. A fully-developed framework would include not only the full set of factors relevant to how to intervene, but also the many more factors that would be relevant to critically important decisions on whether to intervene.

The examples of factors identified through the comparative analysis of civil war and military intervention in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Somalia are:

• assessing, and acting in accordance with, public opinion within the conflict country;

• allowing policymakers to more freely and officially consider biased interventions as a means to end certain conflicts;

• the level of sincerity of the various conflict parties with respect to peace processes;

• the willingness and ability of intervening parties to stay long enough to accomplish conflict-ending goals

• the extent of financial and logistical support for intervening parties

To assess the potential effect on the included conflicts of the hypothetical application of a systematic decision-making framework, I retroactively apply the ‘mini’-
framework, consisting of the five factors identified above, to the same three conflicts. I demonstrate that use of such a systematic framework would have greatly increased the probability of these conflicts ending earlier (or at all), and I estimate alternate (counterfactual) end dates for each of the conflicts – end dates that may have resulted from use of the mini-framework.

I evaluate this framework by comparing the resulting counterfactual outcomes with those which actually took place, in terms of three principal criteria. The criteria are: effectiveness (i.e. whether use of the framework could have avoided deaths); cost (i.e. the difference in total intervention-related costs through use of the framework compared to the status quo); and moral legitimacy (defined also as the avoidance of death, since there are many definitions of moral “goods” and “bads”, but avoidance of unnecessary death is a fairly universal value).

The evaluation shows that use of a more systematic decision-making framework for military interventions to stop civil wars would likely, in the three included conflicts, have saved many lives as well as donors’ dollars. Further research of this type should be conducted to identify the many other factors that would form part of the proposed fully-developed decision-making framework. The present analysis demonstrates that more systematic decision-making would not only save many lives, but would also benefit the budgets and credibility of international donors.
1. Introduction: Interventions into Civil Wars

In late 2010 and early 2011, protests erupted in several Middle Eastern and North African countries that would, in some cases, lead to the ousting of autocratic leaders whose repressive rule had gripped their countries for decades. Tunisia’s Zine El Abidine Ben Ali fled the country after a peaceful protest following the self-immolation of a food cart owner led to widespread anti-government demonstrations. Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak went into exile following large-scale, mostly peaceful protests centered in Cairo’s Tahrir Square.

In Libya, however, events took a rather different turn. Initial protests were met with consistently violent responses, leading to regular exchanges between Muammar Gaddafi’s forces and protesters-turned-rebels. The support of NATO countries, which for several months backed the Libyan rebels with air power and logistical support under the auspices of a United Nations (UN) resolution authorizing them to protect civilians, was crucial to the eventual victory of rebel forces and the overturning of the Gaddafi regime.

In Syria, demonstrations in early 2011 led to a full-scale civil war in which rebel groups, two full years after the start of the uprisings, are still fighting to oust Bashar al-Assad. Nearly 100,000 have died at time of writing (June 2013), either from direct fighting or from the effects of displacement, disease and malnutrition, and lack of access to health services (BBC 13 June 2013 #66)). An ongoing discussion among members of the international community has repeatedly considered whether any intervention into Syria’s conflict would be appropriate, and if so, in what form. Opinions are sharply divided, and strong arguments exist on either side of the debate (see for example the discussions in Hilleary 2013 and The Economist October 20th - 26th 2012).

1 Unless indicated otherwise, all cited deaths figures come from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)’s Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED).
Those who believe that some form of intervention into Syria’s conflict is necessary argue that the international community should not simply stand back and watch as the death toll mounts, and that something both should and can be done, even if it would be difficult. On the other hand, opinions against intervention can also be justified by a mix of moral and practical factors. Intervening in Syria could be interpreted as yet another example of “western” powers imposing their will on a non-western country, or the geopolitical situation in this case is so precarious that any military intervention may cause a widening of the war, dragging neighbouring countries with many animosities toward each other into active hostilities (see for example Patrick 2012). Still others worry about disturbing the long-standing ethnically-driven system of political and economic patronage in Syria, arguing that even if an intervention achieved peace in the short term, this peace would not ultimately be sustainable if newly disenfranchised citizens accustomed to holding power cause a resurgence of hostilities. Even if such patronage and power distribution is seen as unfair, it is difficult to dismiss out of hand the argument that an Alawite-based dictatorship has nevertheless been consistent with relative stability. Unfairness and repression of certain groups is arguably better than all-out war.

The events described collectively as “The Arab Spring” have renewed the question of what should guide decisions surrounding military intervention into civil wars. How should members of the international community decide, in the context of vastly different local and international contexts, when to provide support, and what type of support would be most effective?

The question is particularly relevant given that most wars today are civil wars, claiming more victims every year than war between states (interstate war) (see Figures 1 and 2). Although the incidence and severity of both interstate and civil (intrastate) wars have generally been on the decline over the past twenty years and in some cases even longer, civil wars still kill between 30,000-50,000 people per year (Lacina and Gleditsch
2005) and (Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) 2012). In addition to the threat of death or long-term injury or disability, civil wars almost always cause numerous other forms of devastation including mass displacement (with its own associated threats to security and health of the displaced and host populations); sexual violence; disease and malnutrition; destruction of livelihoods; and destruction of the supporting physical, environmental, and socioeconomic infrastructure, to name but a few of the consequences.

Figure 1. *Number of interstate and intrastate (civil) armed conflicts, 1946-2009*

Source: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset v.4 – 2010

The low end of the estimate’s range is from the 2008 annual total for intrastate conflict from the UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset, and the high end is from the 2008 annual total for intrastate conflict from the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) Battle Deaths Dataset. The two datasets are the most credible current conflict data projects, and because they use different methodologies they often arrive at somewhat different annual estimates. In both cases the estimate includes only “direct” deaths occurring during combat, excluding the non-violent conflict-related deaths from disease and malnutrition which can be much greater than the direct death toll.
Many, and perhaps most, civil wars of today are subject to various types of diplomatic and/or military interventions. However, there has been relatively little evaluation of the different types of intervention and their effects on the dynamics of war or their ability to achieve peace. The decision-making process around military interventions is still frighteningly ad-hoc for a policy area that is literally a matter of life and death for so many people.

A recent article in *The Atlantic* pointed to exactly this problem, noting that actors in the international community “still haven’t established a standard” for decisions on the

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3 The battle deaths data go to 2008 because that is the final year covered by the most recent update to the data. The term “battle deaths” refers to “direct” deaths suffered in the course of combat by soldiers and civilians caught in the crossfire.
provision of external support (Foust 2012). It discusses the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), a doctrine that was adopted in principle by the General Assembly at the United Nations World Summit in 2005 (United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide 2013). R2P codified the agreement among UN members that when governments fail to protect their citizens from violence, or worse, are the perpetrators of violence against them, the international community has a responsibility to step in to protect those people. Despite this in-principle acceptance of R2P, we have little in the way of practical, systematic, guidance for decisions on when to intervene, and on the conduct of interventions that do occur. The author argues that with respect to the practical side of R2P, “we’re still figuring that out” (Foust 2012).

The need to ‘figure it out’ is what guides the present analysis, which consists of a comparative analysis of various military interventions into three different armed conflicts – in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Somalia. The purpose of the analysis is to identify and evaluate the effects of several important factors related to the interventions that took place in these countries. It is not an exhaustive analysis; for practical purposes this analysis examines only a subset of relevant factors. In addition, it focuses on factors relevant to the nature of an intervention once a decision to intervene has already been made, excluding considerations on whether to intervene at all.4

This capstone argues that creating a fully-developed, comprehensive framework for decision-making – along the lines presented here – should become a higher priority in this critical policy-making area. The factors identified herein can be seen as examples of the elements of a larger framework for decision-making concerning military intervention. Such a framework would include not only all factors relevant to how to intervene, but also the even greater number of factors relevant to decisions on whether to intervene.

Figure 3 illustrates the progression from the factors considered in the present project to the factors that would constitute a fully-developed framework.

4 I apply additional restrictions to the scope of the analysis for practical purposes; these are described in the Scope section.
The goal of the present research is also to advocate for more inquiry into the conditions – characteristics of the conflict, the conflict country, and the potential interveners – that may determine what policy is the best one to apply in specific circumstances. Current research has identified a number of general factors influencing the risk of conflict onset or recurrence, or the duration of conflict. However, general conditions are only partially helpful when policymakers must make decisions concerning individual conflicts; this is where the type of research represented by this capstone project can contribute to improved policy decision-making. Where it does not lead to more systematic decision-making, such research can, as the present project does, at least illustrate the costs of failure to do so.
2. **Policy Problem Examined**

2.1. **Problem Statement**

No comprehensive, systematic framework exists to guide policy decisions by international actors – governments, international organizations such as the UN, African Union, etc. – on how to intervene militarily (with troops) to stop civil wars.

2.2. **Research Objectives**

Two research objectives guide the present analysis:

1. What are the effects of ad-hoc decision-making around military intervention into civil wars, compared with those from systematic consideration of relevant factors?

2. What are some of the consequences of the failure to act systematically in decisions concerning military interventions to stop civil wars?
3. Background

This section provides background information relevant to the study of interventions into civil war. The first part describes the nature of interventions, including those that have been most prevalent in recent decades. The second part illustrates the global geopolitical context faced by the UN and other members of the international community, especially as it has influenced the practice of peacekeeping, one of the most common forms of intervention. The third part describes the state of the literature on intervention into civil wars.

3.1. The Nature of Interventions into Civil Wars

Interventions into civil wars can take many forms with regard to the means, the parties, and the goals involved. They can be diplomatic or military. They can be carried out by a variety of actors ranging from single states to global inter-governmental organizations like the UN. The goals of an intervention can range from those that primarily or exclusively aim to end the conflict to goals that do not depend on ending the conflict or are only achievable if the conflict continues. The goals of an intervention will also affect whether an intervening party acts impartially with respect to the local armed groups involved in a conflict or actively supports one or more groups.

3.1.1. Goals of Interventions

Classifying interventions according to their goals would seem to be critically important for evaluating their efficacy; however, this aspect is overlooked in most analyses. Some interventions, as explained above, aim largely to end the conflict.  

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5 See the literature review below for more description of the existing body of work on the effects of interventions.
Some, however, do not. Interventions that do not aim to end the conflict include a range of sub-types, including both relief operations which attempt to provide local populations with necessary food and medicine, for example, and interventions conducted largely or solely for the profit or other benefit of the intervening party.

This analysis incorporates the goals of interventions at an overarching level, since most other decisions regarding interventions – for example whether to use diplomatic versus military means – are affected by and flow from the goals of intervening parties, along with the extent of their impartiality (or lack thereof) toward the principal combatant groups. I therefore define four broad types of interventions, based on the combinations resulting from the goals of an intervention – conflict-ending versus non-conflict-ending – and whether the intervener(s) are impartial with respect to the main conflict parties or whether they are biased in favour of one or more groups.

Impartial, conflict-ending interventions are those that aim to support the termination of the conflict, and are enacted in a way that does not favour any of the primary parties to the conflict. United Nations and regional peacekeeping operations typically fit into this category.

Impartial, non-conflict-ending interventions neither aim to end the conflict nor support any party to the conflict. This type is represented mostly by relief operations which attempt to deliver food, medicine, and other basic supplies to conflict-affected populations.

Biased, conflict-ending interventions are those in which the intervening parties enter the conflict in support of at least one conflict actor with a view to hastening the termination of the conflict. The goal is to end the conflict, but in these cases the context may suggest that intervening on one side or the other will best accomplish this goal. One example of this type of intervention is the British operation in Sierra Leone in 2000.

Finally, biased non-conflict-ending interventions are those in which the intervening party/parties do so in support of at least one conflict actor but with no goal to end the conflict, or with an interest in sustaining the conflict for profit or political goals. Examples of this type of intervention include the involvement of various sub-Saharan African states in the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) between 1996

Figure 4 illustrates the main types of interventions defined in this analysis.

Figure 4. Types of interventions into civil wars

3.1.2. Types of Interventions in Recent History

Interfering in the conflicts of other countries for their own self-interest has long been a policy option considered by states, but it wasn’t until the creation of the United Nations that interventions to stop conflicts or provide relief to conflict-affected populations became an official international priority. Soon after the UN’s first
peacekeeping operations, however, the start of Cold War affected the types of interventions seen in practice because of the ‘paralysis’ in the Security Council resulting from the geopolitical alignments of the ‘permanent 5’ members. During the Cold War, the UN was able to conduct some peacekeeping operations, but there were also many self-interested interventions with non-conflict-ending goals by the United States and the USSR, who often interfered in developing-world civil conflicts to try to affect the global geopolitical balance.

The post-Cold War era, by contrast, has seen a large increase in the number of interventions with conflict-ending goals. Various authors have noted the so-called “explosion” of international activism by the United Nations once the Security Council was largely freed from Cold War paralysis (Human Security Report Project 2011, 63). For example, in 1988 the Security Council adopted 20 resolutions in total; in 2008, it adopted 65 (United Nations Security Council 2013a; United Nations Security Council 2013b). These days, the UN is involved in most interventions with conflict-ending goals in some shape or form, but some interventions primarily or exclusively feature regional organizations, coalitions of states, or even single states. Non-conflict-ending interventions based on highly self-interested goals also still occur frequently, usually by individual states or coalitions of states.

### 3.2. The United Nations, the International Community, and Peacekeeping

When the United Nations charter was written in 1945, no provision was made for interventions into civil wars, and the word “peacekeeping” famously does not appear anywhere in its Charter (United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library 2013). Not only did interstate war at the time pose the greatest threat to the security of people around the world, but the norm of non-interference in the affairs of sovereign states was strong. The first peacekeeping missions were “interpositional” lines which separated the armed forces of independent states, in order to help support peace and ceasefire agreements (Durch 1996, 3).
During the Cold War, interstate war became less frequent and was often less deadly when it did occur, relative to the rise of intrastate (civil) conflict (see Figures 1 and 2 above). Newly-independent states in the developing world that had successfully evicted their colonial rulers found themselves embroiled in civil warfare over control of the independent state apparatus. The tactics used by colonizers to control their subjects (using various forms of so-called “divide and rule”) created divisions between people in these countries that did not heal once the colonizers were gone.

When the United Nations Security Council emerged in the early 1990s from Cold-War paralysis, it was simultaneously caught unawares by, and thrust into the midst of, the implications of these post-Cold War realities. While civil wars had been growing in number before the end of the Cold War, numerous conflicts related to the dissolution of the Soviet Union also broke out. Indeed, the early years of the 1990s saw the highest number of armed conflicts in the post-World War II world, by far most of them civil.

The 1990s was necessarily a watershed decade for the UN as it tried to improvise responses to these new challenges while becoming accustomed to its new (relative) freedom to manoeuvre. One of the main dilemmas it faced was that traditional norms such as non-interference (i.e. not intervening without the consent of the host state), impartiality (Doyle and Sambanis 2006, 12), and support of existing peace or ceasefire agreements were ill-suited to the practical realities of the day, which featured civil wars, murderous regimes in some cases, and pressure to enter ongoing wars to “make” peace rather than simply “keep” it. The lack of provision for peacekeeping in the Charter, plus the strong norm of non-interference, led a number of missions to be authorized under what has come to be called “Chapter Six and a Half” grounds – “placing it between traditional methods of resolving disputes peacefully, such as negotiation and mediation under Chapter VI, and more forceful action [to address “threats to international peace and security”] as authorized under Chapter VII” (United Nations Information Service (Vienna) 2008); United Nations 2013).

Often the terms “neutral” and “impartial” are used interchangeably; however, since the term used on the website of the UN’s Department of Peacekeeping Operations is “impartiality”, this analysis uses the same terminology to refer to the avoidance of the expression or provision of support for one or more sides in an armed conflict. However, in cases where I quote authors who use the term “neutral” to mean “impartial”, I leave the quotations intact.
There were many failures and successes in the 1990s. Many lessons have still not been learned, but some of the lessons had a measure of staying power. For example, the need to find a basis on which to intervene in civil wars to protect civilians found voice in the 2005 UN World Summit declaration in support of the Responsibility to Protect. While R2P is considered dangerous thinking by many developing countries that fear the creation of excuses for more meddling in their affairs, the principles nevertheless enjoy widespread support in many countries to the extent that they are not misused (United Nations General Assembly 2008b).

3.3. Literature on Interventions into Civil Wars

The literature on the effects of different types of interventions is surprisingly porous for an issue-area of such importance and prevalence, although it has been growing in recent years. Significant progress has been made recently in terms of studying the effects of peacekeeping operations, which form the bulk of what are in the present analysis termed ‘impartial, conflict-ending’ interventions. For example, Fortna (2004, 2008) took on the question of whether UN peacekeeping “works”, and Hegre, Hultman, and Nygård in 2010 examined the “conflict-reducing effects of UN peacekeeping operations” according to mandate. Other recent studies (e.g. Hultman 2010) have looked at unintended effects of peacekeeping, such as the effect of peace operations on violence against civilians. Evaluations of peacekeeping are highly useful for policy, but they make only a partial contribution to the literature on interventions, of which peacekeeping constitutes but one form.

The literature on the effects of interventions into civil wars is overly dominated by econometric studies. These studies examine the impact of certain types of interventions on various aspects of civil conflicts – the duration, the likelihood of recurrence, the length of post-conflict peace, and so on. The lack of balance between econometric and qualitative or mixed-methods literature imbalance poses two principal problems.

First, in the quest to build a dataset large enough for the results to be considered reliable, many econometric studies conflate factors that should be coded as distinct in order to produce meaningful results. One conflation occurs with respect to time.
studies use datasets that encompass decades of data. However, during recent decades, the geopolitics governing intervention dynamics have undergone a sea change. Including Cold-War interventions with post-Cold War interventions will fail to distinguish differences that result from the sweeping geopolitical changes linked with the end of the Cold War. Researchers could use approaches such as dummy variables to account for these structural shifts, but many of them do not, even when such variables are coded in their data.

For example, Regan (2002), and Regan and Aydin (2006) rely on a dataset comprising the years 1945-1999 (even a 2009 update to the dataset focused on the period from 1945-1999 – see Regan, Frank, and Aydin 2009). The data include a Cold War dummy variable; however it is not always used in the analysis. This means that results from two very different global contexts are considered together, when in reality, almost every factor relevant to the practice of intervention has changed since the end of the Cold War. Doyle and Sambanis’ important evaluation of UN peacekeeping, published in 2006, likewise looks at civil wars beginning in 1945 (Doyle and Sambanis 2006). Despite the fact that factors such as norms, international priorities, state capabilities, and resulting policy options after the end of the Cold War are vastly different that those of the Cold War era, it is not yet a prevalent practice to look only at post-Cold War events. Even though doing so would reduce the number of observations in a quantitative dataset, the tradeoff is probably worthwhile, since very few lessons for 2013 can be drawn from the study of datasets which include interventions occurring in the 1950s.

The second problem is that, by their very nature, large-N econometric studies aim to capture the overall effect of one or more variables on another (set of) variable(s), when the unique cases can be much more instructive for policy. Many of the econometric studies either do not include any qualitative analysis or include only a very small section and often fail to point out some of the most critical factors distinguishing success stories from failures. For example, many humanitarian activists in the international community wax nostalgic about the British intervention into Sierra Leone in 2000, which is largely considered a major success (Fo and Morris 2008). Such an intervention, in an econometric study with no robust qualitative component, would be relegated to at most a handful of observations, depending on the unit of analysis. As a
result, its inclusion in a quantitative dataset and analysis would tell us nothing about the particular conditions that made it such a success. This reduces the potential for learning policy-relevant lessons from that intervention.

One final, and rather puzzling, weakness in the existing body of literature is the near-total absence of consideration of the goals of an intervention. Almost no research has distinguished between conflict-ending and non-conflict-ending goals. For example, the Human Security Report 2012 found that conflicts in which foreign countries have provided troops in support of one side in a conflict are on average twice as deadly as those without foreign troops ((Human Security Report Project 2012, 157)\(^7\). However, such literature does not distinguish between conflicts in which foreign troops were deployed to achieve self-interested, non-conflict-ending goals on the part of the intervening countries and those in which troops were deployed to try to end the conflict. Regan (2002) is another example of intervention research that ignores the goals of interveners. This study codes whether interventions are impartial or biased with respect to the main parties to the conflict. However, it assumes that “outside interventions into internal armed conflicts are a form of conflict management and therefore attempt to control the hostilities rather than exacerbate them” (Regan 2002, 59). This assumption precludes the possibility that biased interveners sometimes benefit from the continuation of a civil war, when their intervention goals are self-centred and are served by continued hostilities with the attendant confusion and absence of rule of law.

A few studies have looked at the issue of the goals or motivation of the intervening parties. For example, Seybolt (2007, 38–45) creates a typology of interventions that takes into account their objectives (e.g. relief to conflict-affected populations versus ending the conflict); however it focuses on “humanitarian” interventions only. Kim (2012) examines the motives of intervening parties with respect to war outcomes, classifying them into the same two broad types that are used in the

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\(^7\) The analysis in the Human Security Report, like other studies that are discussed therein (see pp. 159-160), does not identify causal relationships between high death tolls and foreign intervention. Certainly, examples exist both of a high death toll prompting an intervention, as well as violence associated with an intervention being responsible for an increase in deaths. This line of inquiry is beyond the scope of the present project, and deserves a body of literature in itself.
present analysis – self-interest versus ‘humanitarian’ goals (Kim 2012, 1). However, Kim’s analysis conflates multilateral interventions and humanitarian goals, which ignores that it is possible for a single state to intervene for humanitarian goals.

It is puzzling that so little previous research has distinguished among the goals that motivate interventions into civil wars, since they may be among the most important factors to consider when analyzing the effects of military interventions on various characteristics of civil wars. In the simplest form, knowledge of the goal(s) of a policy would seemingly be necessary to evaluate whether these goals have been achieved. It is possible to fail in a quest to establish peace, however it is nearly impossible to accidentally cause peace when the goal of an intervener is to prolong the conflict or where the intervener is indifferent to the outcome. This means that research which fails to make these distinctions will lead to misinformed policy prescriptions by implicitly or explicitly evaluating the success of various interventions to end conflict when the goals may not always have been to end the conflict.
4. Scope of Analysis and Case Selection

4.1. Scope of Analysis

This capstone is restricted to analysis of critical factors from cases in which interventions did occur, and excludes questions of whether to intervene or not. The time period under consideration is 1989-2009, since it also allows a focus on post-Cold War conflicts and the version of the primary quantitative dataset I employ ends in 2009.

I apply two additional principal restrictions to the scope, with respect to the type of interventions included in the analysis. The first is that I focus on only two of the four main categories of interventions described above – impartial and biased interventions with conflict-ending goals – since my main concern is how to end conflicts. I also focus exclusively on military forms of these types of interventions, since they are markedly different from diplomatic interventions, and the scope of the present project cannot accommodate an adequate analysis of both.

In this analysis, I do touch briefly upon a biased, non-conflict-ending intervention in Somalia by Ethiopia with the support of the United States, even though it is, strictly speaking, outside of the defined scope of this capstone. This is because it is particularly illustrative of one factor identified as critical to the conduct of interventions designed to end conflicts. In addition, I comment to some extent on the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) intervention in Somalia, even though it was a relief mission with no conflict-ending goals. This is because it overlapped and was linked with other interventions into the Somali conflict, so it must be acknowledged that its existence had some impact on the conduct of the other interventions into that country.
4.2. Case Selection

Several criteria guided my selection of cases. Most importantly, they had to be countries that had seen either an impartial or biased conflict-ending intervention, or both. In addition, they had to be conflicts occurring after the Cold War. The countries had to be in sub-Saharan Africa for practical purposes; the main quantitative data employed in this analysis is from a fairly new data project which codes sub-annual and sub-national data on armed conflict but which so far only covers sub-Saharan Africa. The chosen countries also had to have had an absence, or very low level, of non-conflict-ending military interventions, particularly biased ones, since these could confound efforts to assess the interventions of interest for the present analysis. Finally, I chose to include three cases in total given scope of the present project and the need for a detailed examination of each case.

After the application of these parameters to the countries included in the main dataset, the following seven countries remained: Burundi; Côte d'Ivoire; Sudan (North-South); Sudan (Darfur); Liberia; Sierra Leone; and Somalia. I chose Liberia and Sierra Leone in part because of their similarities in various background characteristics such as geography (the countries are next to each other); size of country, complexity of ethnic relations, and other traits. Also, the conflict experiences of the two countries were linked; rebel groups from one country organized on the other’s soil, and their war economies were intertwined, as Liberian rebel-turned-president Charles Taylor worked with Sierra Leonean rebels. In essence, Liberia and Sierra Leone represented good choices for “most similar” cases.

I chose Somalia as the final case because it has a mix of factors that distinguish it from the West African cases, but also a strong similarity with Sierra Leone in terms of experiencing a biased conflict-ending intervention by a single major power (the United States in the case of Somalia and the British in the case of Sierra Leone). These two interventions are good candidates for comparison, while other features of the Somali context provide good contrasts against those of the two West African countries, for example in terms of the much greater complexity of Somali societal organization (given the extensive clan and sub-clan system) than in either Liberia or Sierra Leone. In terms
of the differences, Somalia provides not a “most different” case, but a sufficiently different one to be able to draw out policy-relevant comparisons.

Table 1 details the final list of countries, their conflicts, and interventions chosen for this analysis:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflicts</th>
<th>Sierra Leone</th>
<th>Liberia</th>
<th>Somalia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervention 1 (Dates) (Type)</td>
<td>ECOMOG(^{10,11}) (June 97 – July 00) (Biased conflict-ending(^{12}))</td>
<td>ECOMOG (Aug 90 – Sep 99) (Biased conflict-ending(^{12}))</td>
<td>UNITAF (Dec 92 – Apr 93) (Impartial non-conflict-ending)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention 2 (Dates) (Type)</td>
<td>UNAMSIL(^{13}) (Nov 99 – Nov 05) (Impartial conflict-ending)</td>
<td>ECOMIL(^{14}) (July 03 – Oct 03) (Impartial conflict-ending)</td>
<td>UNOSOM II(^{15}) (March 93 – Jan 95) (Impartial conflict-ending)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention 3 (Dates) (Type)</td>
<td>British Military(^{16}) (May 00 – late 00) (Biased conflict-ending)</td>
<td>UNMIL(^{17}) (Oct 03 – Dec 09) (Impartial conflict-ending)</td>
<td>American Military (June 93 – Oct 93) (Biased conflict-ending)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention 4 (Dates) (Type)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention 5 (Dates) (Type)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>AMISOM(^{18}) (May 07 – Dec 09) (Biased conflict-ending)(^{19})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{8}\) See Appendix A for notes on the inclusion of countries and interventions in Table 1.

\(^{9}\) Active years are defined as those with twenty-five or more deaths in a calendar year.

\(^{10}\) ECOMOG refers to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Observer Group.

\(^{11}\) ECOMOG was in Sierra Leone for some time both before the 1997 coup and after the conflict died down. However, to some extent the troops already present in Sierra Leone before 1997 and likely afterward, had to do with mutual defence agreements between countries in which soldiers might be stationed even though there is no conflict. For this reason, in Sierra Leone, I enter the dates which mark the escalation and de-escalation of ECOMOG soldiers in specific relation to conflict dynamics.

\(^{12}\) ECOMOG in Liberia and in Sierra Leone were supposed to be impartial operations according to their mandates but were in practice biased interventions. In the case of Liberia, ECOMOG was in practice fighting against the forces of Charles Taylor, while in Sierra Leone it battled the RUF, and to some extent the AFRC.

\(^{13}\) UNAMSIL refers to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.

\(^{14}\) ECOMIL refers to the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia.

\(^{15}\) UNOSOM II refers to the United Nations Operations in Somalia II.

\(^{16}\) “Late 2000” is the most accurate date I have been able to find on the culmination of the main phase of British military presence in Sierra Leone. The British military presence there encompassed several different missions, and they retained a presence even after the main fighting was over. It was not clear from the available sources precisely when the British transitioned from active combat to a supporting role.

\(^{17}\) UNMIL refers to the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

\(^{18}\) AMISOM refers to the African Union Mission in Somalia.
5. Data and Methodology

This capstone employs a mixed methodology using quantitative data and qualitative descriptions. The quantitative data illustrate the number of deaths per month in each conflict, as well as the number of troops from any interventions into those conflicts. The qualitative descriptions complement the quantitative data and explain the causal factors driving the conflict dynamics illustrated by the quantitative data.

The data for conflict deaths come from a relatively new, geo-referenced dataset\textsuperscript{20} which codes both sub-annual and sub-national conflict events. The dataset is from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) in Uppsala, Sweden, and is called the UCDP Geo-Referenced Event Dataset (GED). Data on UN interventions came from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)’s website. Data for non-UN interventions came from a wide variety of academic and other sources (e.g. United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) documents; government documents; academic papers and theses; local and international media resources; etc).

After briefly describing each conflict and its intervention(s), I compare and contrast the various situations to identify and explain the characteristics of the country and/or conflict, as well as the intervening actor(s) which most affected the dynamics of each

\textsuperscript{19} AMISOM, like ECOMOG in Liberia and Sierra Leone, is an impartial force according to its mandate. However, much of its activity on the ground appears to be, as in the West African cases, active combat against a particular rebel group, in this case al-Shabab. See for example the International Crisis Group update of late 2011, which refers to AMISOM “prosecut[ing] the war against Al-Shabaab” (International Crisis Group 2011, 15).

\textsuperscript{20} The UCDP geo-referenced event dataset codes conflict events by day, and codes the geographical coordinates of each conflict event. Thus far, most conflict datasets have provided deaths estimates only at the level of the country and the year. This relatively new dataset will permit much more fine-grained analyses of the conflicts included therein, by virtue of these two types of additional disaggregation. While I do not use the geo-referenced aspect of the dataset in this capstone project, the sub-annual format of the data has allowed for a more nuanced illustration of the intensity of the conflicts over time than would be possible using only annual figures.
conflict. The relevant factors identified in the comparative analysis exemplify the types which should be included in the wider proposed framework for guiding policy decisions in this area.

Once the factors illustrated by the included conflicts are identified, the ‘framework’ will be evaluated by retroactively applying it to the same conflicts. The situations resulting from the hypothetical application of the framework will be compared to the outcomes that actually did occur, and will be measured in terms of the chosen criteria which are explained below. The framework will be considered successful if its application would have led to better outcomes for conflict-affected populations and the donor community than those which in fact occurred.
6. Cases: Civil War and Military Intervention in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Somalia

This section describes the experiences of each country with civil war and military intervention. For each country, I examine the early dynamics of conflict, as well as the nature and extent of their subsequent interventions. The descriptions provide the basis for the subsequent comparative analysis, which identifies and explains the factors most relevant to the outcome in each conflict situation.

6.1. Sierra Leone

The conflict in Sierra Leone featured mostly the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a particularly brutal and notorious rebel group. At the start of the conflict in 1991, the RUF enjoyed some popular support. However, their tactics were brutal and indiscriminate, and the group soon began to terrorize the very populace that it claimed to represent. More often than fighting against the government, the RUF would instead attack civilians, their homes and their livelihoods, committing unimaginable abuses against scores of citizens.

Elections planned for mid-1992 were disrupted by a coup led by disgruntled members of the army, and the country was ruled by a military junta between 1992 and 1996. The junta continued to fight against the RUF, but by 1994, the latter had made significant gains, including capturing primary mining locations essential to the revenue of the central government.

21 Descriptions of all three conflicts draw heavily on the UCDP’s online Conflict Encyclopedia, at http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/search.php. Other sources used in this section are cited as usual.
Over the next two years, government forces and their allies were somewhat able to subdue the RUF, and elections were organized for 1996. A civilian candidate named Ahmed Tejan Kabbah was elected to the presidency. Peace talks with the RUF, which originated under the junta rule of previous years, were revived, and conditions were set for the RUF to transform itself into a political party. These conditions, among other measures, included amnesty for RUF combatants.

This optimistic state of affairs did not last for long. By May 1997, another group of disaffected soldiers launched a coup. This group, calling itself the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), collaborated with the RUF who joined them in holding power over the country for several months. A military intervention was launched in response by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), called the ECOWAS Observer Group (ECOMOG). By early 1998, following failed attempts at negotiation with the AFRC, successful military actions by ECOMOG and other groups supporting the government paved the way for the reinstatement of Kabbah. The UN, around the same time, began the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) to try to guarantee the peace process.

By May 1999, however, the AFRC/RUF forces had again entered Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. Although ECOMOG, the government forces, and other allies successfully prevented a takeover of the capital city, the international community applied much pressure to President Kabbah following this offensive to negotiate with the rebels. Reluctantly, he did so, and another peace accord – the 1999 Lomé Accord – was signed.

During this time, the ECOMOG forces had retreated, and the existing UN mission transitioned from an observer status to a full peacekeeping mission, changing its name to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Sankoh, however, soon began to attack the UN forces, even taking hundreds of them hostage during an ambush. By May of 2000, the RUF had advanced again on Freetown and their presence threatened to overrun what little international military presence remained.

It was at this point that the British military entered the picture. What began as a limited operation to evacuate British citizens turned into an active military mission
against the RUF. In May of 2000, 1,200 British soldiers repelled the RUF from Freetown. British forces stayed for several months and on a few other occasions engaged rebels in combat. This included a hostage crisis, in which a small group called the “West Side Boys” kidnapped British soldiers in an unsuccessful attempt to emulate what had happened to the United States forces in Mogadishu, which had led to US withdrawal from Somalia.

The decisive actions by the British military in combination with the actions of ECOMOG troops and the strengthened UN force finally led to the end of hostilities. The British clarified to Kabbah that they would return within 72 hours of his request should it become necessary to protect his government, providing what is called an ‘over the horizon military guarantee’ (Roberson 2007, 23). These developments allowed for the return to peace and provided room for the resumption of democratic processes. Disarmament and demobilization began, and elections were eventually held in 2002 which returned president Kabbah to power. There has been no return to war since these events. In total, Uppsala Conflict Data Program’s Geo-Referenced Dataset (UCDP GED) records 7,525 direct deaths from this conflict.

Figure 5 provides a quantitative illustration of the conflict in Sierra Leone. The number of direct deaths is graphed on the left-hand Y axis, and the number of troops from the various military interventions on the right-hand Y axis. The graph shows the escalation of the war in the late 1990s, and the subsequent drop in deaths following the increase to ECOMOG’s numbers on the ground. It also demonstrates how a relatively small number of troops in the British intervention, backed by the over-the-horizon guarantee and a somewhat strengthened UNAMSIL presence on the ground, eventually managed to stem the tide of violence.
6.2. Liberia

The armed conflict in Liberia basically consists of two distinct phases – the first being defined by Charles Taylor and his rebel group against the government of Samuel Doe from 1989 to 1997; the second, by Taylor’s presidency and opposition thereto from 1997 to 2003. The armed conflict first began in 1989, then-rebel Charles Taylor led his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) across the border from Côte d’Ivoire into Liberia. The NPFL gained ground very quickly in this phase of the conflict and reached Monrovia by mid-1990. In June, a splinter faction of the NPFL, called the INFPL, found and killed then-President Samuel Doe.

At this time, a regional ECOMOG ‘peacekeeping’ force was dispatched. Consistently plagued by lack of financial support, equipment, and training, ECOMOG
bore the brunt of the fight against Taylor’s forces and suffered many casualties. Taylor’s forces experienced various successes during the early 1990s, and while not achieving control of Monrovia, at certain points they controlled up to 90% of Liberian territory which Taylor dubbed “Greater Liberia”.

During the early 1990s, many attempts at negotiations were made. Taylor’s forces would participate in these talks, only to repeatedly violate the terms of the resulting deals (Sesay 1996, 38). After successive rounds of negotiations, another deal was struck between all of the warring parties in Abuja, Nigeria, in 1996, which also paved the way for elections in 1997. The elections in question gave Taylor the presidency of Liberia – less because Liberians actually wanted him in office than because of the widespread fear of the consequences of returning to war if Taylor was not elected. Indeed, Taylor’s infamous campaign slogan was “he killed my ma, he killed my pa, but I will vote for him” (Left 2003).

As President, Taylor was no less violent and brutal than he had been as a rebel leader, and eventually, resistance to Taylor’s rule resulted in a resurgence of armed hostilities as new groups formed to oppose the Taylor government. This constituted the second stage of the Liberian conflict. By 2003, under much pressure, Taylor agreed to negotiate and ECOWAS sent a second force, called the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL), to aid in stabilizing the situation and to facilitate negotiations by reducing violence on the ground. Taylor eventually agreed to step down from the Presidency, being offered amnesty in exile in Nigeria, and arrangements were made for an interim government to lead until new elections could be held. The peace deal also authorized a multinational peacekeeping force to guard these achievements and ensure continued stability; thus entered the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), into which many ECOMIL soldiers were integrated soon after their deployment.

Elections were eventually held in 2005, with former World Bank economist Ellen Johnson Sirleaf winning the presidency. By the end of the period of the present analysis, 2009 (and indeed until the present day), UNMIL retains a significant presence
in Liberia. Between 1989 and 2003, the UCDP GED codes nearly 10,000 direct deaths in this conflict.\footnote{Because of their strict coding rules, UCDP data often undercount the number of battle deaths in conflicts (see the discussion in Human Security Report Project 2012) for more information). In addition, neither the UCDP nor any other credible data tracking project provides estimates of the number of non-violent deaths – from disease and malnutrition – that also result from armed conflict. This means that the true number of deaths associated with a given conflict is likely to be significantly higher than the UCDP estimate thereof.}

Figure 6 illustrates the number of deaths from conflict in Liberia, and the number of troops in its military interventions. It shows how the number of deaths declined in the presence of the ECOMOG operation and for a short while following Charles Taylor’s election to the presidency. It also illustrates the subsequent rise in deaths when the war resurfaced in the early 2000s with increased opposition to Taylor’s rule. The second ECOWAS intervention, ECOMIL, is shown beginning in 2003, as is the transition from ECOMIL to the UN peacekeeping operation, UNMIL.
6.3. Somalia

The conflict in Somalia began well before the 1990s, but during the time period covered in this analysis it has seen roughly three phases. The first phase included the coup which forced Mohamed Siad Barre from power in 1991 and its aftermath, along with the United Nations Observer Mission (UNOSOM I) and the first three military interventions: UNITAF; the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II); and the American military. The second phase encompasses the relative vacuum of power that followed the complete military withdrawal of the international community in 1995 and the general lack of a functioning central government. The third phase covers most of the new millennium and includes the locally unpopular, internationally-supported transitional governments of 2000 and 2004, the rise of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), the American and Ethiopian response thereto in late 2006, the African Union Mission in
Soon after the 1991 coup, a major famine began, which led to a UN plea to member states for military assistance to provide security for the delivery of aid. The response resulted in the formation of the US-led UNITAF. UNITAF was relatively successful in its goals of providing short-term security to guard the provision of aid, and, once the situation had been somewhat stabilized, UNITAF handed the reins to UNOSOM II in early May 1993.

UNOSOM II struggled to fulfil its expansive mandate to “take appropriate action, including enforcement measures” to maintain security across the country (United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) 2003b). In June, the ambush and execution of 24 Pakistani UN soldiers by a group led by General Mohammed Farrah Aideed prompted a call from the Security Council for his capture. The American Task Force Ranger was deployed in response to this call, and from June to October of 1993, the American forces fought with UNSOM II troops against Aideed’s forces. The culmination of this phase of the conflict occurred during the infamous October firefight in Mogadishu in which 18 American soldiers were killed and 84 wounded. Soon after this, American soldiers withdrew from Somalia, leaving a beleaguered UNOSOM II force to deal with the aftermath.

UNOSOM II withdrew in early 1995, and the next few years were characterized by occasional negotiations and fighting between largely clan-based groups. By 2000, a conference had been arranged in neighbouring Djibouti to elect a transitional government, known as the Transitional National Government (TNG). The TNG was ineffective from the start and another attempt at creating a central government was made in 2004, this time with a federalist theme. Unfortunately, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) experienced many of the same types of problems as its predecessor, and did not successfully achieve control over the country or indeed even over Mogadishu.

In 2006, the armed opposition to the TFG had grown strong. By the end of the year, a group calling itself the ARS/UIC (Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia/Union
of Islamic Courts) (here referred to as the UIC) achieved control of Mogadishu and other areas, bringing a measure of stability to the country for the first time in years. This relative calm was not to last for long, however. The American political leaders of the day, concerned with potential terrorist havens and Islamist groups, provided support for an Ethiopian invasion into Somalia in December 2006 (Prince 2010). In early January 2007 Ethiopian activities on the ground were occasionally backed by American air power (Rice 2007). Within a short time, the UIC had left Mogadishu, the TFG moved in, and Ethiopian and Somali government forces battled the remnants of UIC fighters. In addition, AMISOM, the African Union mission in Somalia, was authorized in January 2007, with deployment starting by March. AMISOM soon found itself battling a new enemy, however, as some of the more extremist members of the disempowered UIC would resurface later in the form of the much more radical al-Shabab rebel group, against whom it has fought since its initial deployment in 2007.

The situation in Somalia today remains fragile and tenuous. Al-Shabab remains a credible threat to the security of Somalis, and the central government still enjoys little support from locals while being propped up by the international community. From 1989 to 2009, the UCDP GED records 28,855 deaths from the conflict in Somalia.

Figure 7 shows the dynamics of Somalia’s civil war and military interventions, illustrating the three phases of the conflict. The initial successes of the early interventions can be seen in the lower numbers of deaths during that period. The middle of the graph represents the second phase of the conflict, with the absence of major intervention and a monthly death toll generally ranging from a few dozen to a few hundred victims. The third phase is characterized by the Ethiopian invasion and the subsequent increase in deaths, and the deployment of AMISOM in early 2007.
Figure 7. Civil war and military intervention in Somalia

Sources: UCDP GED v. 1 - 2010; DPKO; various government, academic, and NGO documents.
7. Comparative Analysis and Factors Leading to a Decision-Making Framework

In this section I draw out just a few of the many factors that should guide international community decisions on the conduct of military interventions to stop civil conflicts. Significant overlap exists between some of the factors; for example, it is impossible to discuss the willingness of troops to stay long enough without reference to available funding and other support for a given mission. However, I have attempted to discuss the factors separately to the extent possible.

The factors discussed in this analysis are examples of the elements of a more fully-developed framework that I ultimately argue should be designed along the lines presented in this analysis. Certainly, this hypothetical comprehensive framework would include many more factors than I include in the present analysis. Factors such as the number of participants in multinational coalitions; the level of agreement among coalition members on the goals to be pursued; the size of the various primary armed groups involved; the size and level of professionalism of the army in the conflict country; and the complexity of underlying social relations, extent of political patronage, and extent of ethnic cleavages in the conflict country are a few examples of the many additional factors that would form part of the fully-developed decision-making framework. In addition, use of such a framework should of course be accompanied by an assessment of the level of confidence in the information gathered for any given conflict.

Certain factors discussed in the following section are more relevant to some conflicts than others. For this reason, not all factors are discussed for each country; the discussion is centred on the most resonating lessons that can be learned from each country’s experience with war and intervention. Moreover, some factors are more straightforward than others, which means that some are discussed at greater length than others.
7.1. Accurately Assessing and Acting in Accordance with Public Opinion in the Conflict Country

7.1.1. Sierra Leone

Conflict situations vary substantially in terms of the number of active armed groups and levels of popular support they enjoy. Sometimes, when the population and size of the country are large, and numerous armed groups are active, it can be difficult to obtain a clear idea of whom, and what goals, citizens support. In small countries with only one or two armed groups, however, things can in potentially (though not necessarily) be a bit clearer. In general, however, interveners should make it a priority to assess local public opinion with respect to the armed groups, and equally or more importantly, ensure that their actions are in fact consistent with public opinion in the affected country. Sometimes, the problem is not the absence of knowledge of local public opinion, but a deliberate decision to disregard it.

The nature of public opinion and armed groups in the context of civil war could take up an entire discussion of its own. There are many conflict situations in which public opinion would be difficult to discern, and perhaps change rapidly, with vastly different opinions in different locations. On the other hand, there is no shortage of conflict situations in which the broad thrust of public opinion, at least concerning certain armed groups or individuals, has been fairly clear. In these cases, allowing any individual who terrorizes fellow citizens and is, for that reason, widely loathed, to assume political power creates significant and avoidable risks of a return to war. Opposition – perhaps violent – to the rule of such individuals will invariably arise, possibly causing the conflict to restart. In addition, the concept of self-determination underpins many global norms and practices; the self-determination of the population of a conflict country should never be overridden as a result of a foreign intervention, or a diplomatic process aimed at ending the conflict.

In the case of Sierra Leone, the broad thrust of public opinion was clear. One comment on the Sierra Leonean situation notes that “prior to the British intervention [in 2000] it was clear that the RUF had alienated the vast majority of Sierra Leoneans through its attacks on civilians” (Williams 2001, 146). It would seem rather bizarre on
the surface, then, that international mediators would have seen fit to allow the leader of a group which terrorized fellow citizens to occupy a high office in government. And yet, Foday Sankoh, leader of the RUF, was made Vice President in a power-sharing government as one of the provisions of the 1999 Lomé Accord. Adding insult to injury, the portfolio in question was that in charge of resources, including the diamond mines and fields which he had used as rebel leader to finance the RUF’s murderous rampage.

A large part of the explanation for this decision is that Nigeria was about to draw down its troop numbers in Sierra Leone (Williams 2001, 151). Nigeria had supplied a disproportionate share of troops to ECOMOG operations in both Liberia and Sierra Leone. During the autocratic reign of Sani Abacha in Nigeria, it was possible to sustain military adventures abroad despite concern at home about Nigerian casualties. In 1999, however, Nigeria returned to ostensibly civilian rule, and elected the most democratic government, led by Olusegun Obasanjo, that it had seen in many years. This new leadership was somewhat accountable to ordinary Nigerians and could not afford to continue to ignore local concerns for fear of being punished at the ballot box. This led to a new calculus on the part of Nigeria’s leaders, and most certainly affected the decision to draw down troops.

This reality meant that the timing and provisions of the Lomé Accord which put Foday Sankoh in power were in large part a reaction to the absence of sufficiently numerous troops on the ground to enforce any stronger actions against the RUF, as opposed to being based on the most optimal decisions for Sierra Leoneans. Had the international community acted in a manner consistent with Sierra Leonean public opinion (in addition to other factors), and refused to countenance any agreement that would allow the leader of such an inhumane rebel force to occupy the vice presidency of the country, the country may not have collapsed back into war in the late 1990s and 2000.

7.1.2. Liberia

As in Sierra Leone, the nature and pace of diplomatic efforts in Liberia reflected concerns about the effectiveness and longevity of an ill-equipped, underfunded ECOMOG force (Sesay 1996, 49). Practical realities such as these likely determined
many of the provisions of the 1996 peace deal more than a determination to do what would be necessary to secure long term peace in Liberia.

Charles Taylor obtained 75% of the popular vote in the 1997 election, which was deemed largely ‘free and fair’ by international observers (Harris 1999, 437–38). It would seem, therefore, as though the international community was in fact observing Liberian public opinion by allowing Taylor to assume the presidency following that election. However, it is the fact that he was even allowed to stand for election that forced Liberians into a very uncomfortable decision-making process. Taylor was the candidate who already controlled the majority of Liberian territory, he was able to vastly outspend his many rivals in a fractured opposition, and he made it very clear that his victory was the only outcome he would accept in the election. Many Liberians appear to have voted for him more on the basis of a fear of a return to war should Taylor lose, than because they genuinely liked him in such large numbers, given the damage he’d done to his country and people over the years. The result was a return to war in the early 2000s.

7.1.3. Somalia

In contrast to the relatively straightforward public opinion context in Liberia and Sierra Leone with respect to various armed groups including government forces, the organization of Somali society is much more complex, and so is Somali public opinion. It is much less likely in a country like Somalia that a strong majority opinion regarding armed and/or political actors could be credibly identified than in countries with fewer factors defining local identities and loyalties. Somali identities are defined by a multitude of overlapping factors, not least the complex system of clans and sub-clans, but also several other cultural, political, and religious influences such as Arab culture and the Islamic faith, overlapping with ‘African’ culture and Somali national and civic identity (Prunier 1995).

However, despite these complexities, it seemed to be the case that during the latter part of 2006, Somali public opinion somewhat favoured the relative order that the UIC had been able to achieve, mostly in Mogadishu and the south (Ed No date). Although some favoured the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), the UIC was not given an adequate opportunity to emerge as a legitimate political leader, either instead
of, or in cooperation with, the TFG. Many Somalis did not want the 2006 intervention by Ethiopia’s forces with support from the United States, since it was this intervention that upset the modicum of stability they had been enjoying with the rising influence of the UIC (Ed No date).

Instead of using Somali public opinion to guide its actions, the United States, gripped with fear at the time of any potential for political leadership with links to Islam (however moderate), chose instead to support, and embark on, military actions against the UIC. The effect on local security was stark. During the five months (July – November 2006) that the UIC effectively held power in Somalia, the average number of deaths per month had shrunk to 38; the first six months after the US-supported Ethiopian invasion saw the average monthly death toll rise to 271.

The consequences of these actions, which the International Crisis Group has called “a strategic blunder” (International Crisis Group 2011, 10 (footnote 56)), were threefold. First, as illustrated above, it led to an increase in deaths. Second, it changed the course of war dynamics, and politics, in a country that was just starting to settle. Third, and most ominous for the future of Somalia, the demise of the UIC liberated the most extremist elements from its ranks to form the radical Islamist group al-Shabab, which has been tormenting the country ever since. In other words, the major brunt of this ‘strategic blunder’ was and still is being borne by the many victims of al-Shabab.

7.2. Biased Interventions as Official Policy Options to Stop Conflicts

Even though biased conflict-ending interventions have become more common in practice, thereby demonstrating policymakers’ increasing willingness to sidestep norms of impartiality, they still occur in an at-best semi-official context. Simply put, a biased intervention in which interveners “take sides” may sometimes be the quickest route to achieve peace and a stable post-conflict outcome. Policymakers should therefore have the room to consider this option more officially and comprehensively than global norms currently permit.
This recommendation does not mean that biased interventions would always be chosen, or would be chosen more frequently than they currently are. Rather, the basis for this particular factor is the idea that the best policy option in a given situation cannot be chosen if all potentially effective options are not even considered on a systematic and equal basis; i.e., if all options are not “on the table”. The exclusion of the biased option from official consideration increases the chances that interventions that are nevertheless biased in practice will be poorly conducted. This dissonance between expectations and realities risks the possibility of such interventions costing more lives than they save. If policymakers were able to fully consider biased options, this increases the chances of the most appropriate option being chosen, whether biased or impartial, and it increases the chances of biased interventions being more efficiently conducted. I discuss below some of the effects of the mismatch between expectations of impartiality and the demands of the realities on the ground.

7.2.1. Liberia and Sierra Leone

Impartiality in ECOMOG’s dealings with Taylor’s forces in Liberia was always likely to be “elusive” (Sesay 1996, 45); this reality was underscored by the 1990 revision to ECOMOG’s mandate from one of “peacekeeping” to “peace enforcement” (Sesay 1996, 42–43). However, what was needed was not an impartial peace enforcement mandate, but an even stronger basis to pursue Taylor’s forces and deliver a total military defeat. Instead, however, ECOMOG was criticized for its apparent lack of impartiality on the ground (Sesay 1996, 46).

The problem, however, was not ECOMOG’s inability or unwillingness to be impartial. The problem was the international community’s insistence that a force be impartial when dealing with at least one party – Taylor’s forces – who had no interest in a legitimate and equitable peace23. In 1996, it was noted that “[t]here can be no doubt that ECOMOG possesses comparatively superior military power, and therefore, the capability to end the war militarily”; the author suggested that given the opportunity,

23 One commentator notes that “[b]y [mid-1993], it was...clear that Taylor’s decision to sign cease-fire agreements was not an expression of his sincere commitment to a negotiated solution. He took advantage of the lull in the fighting to re-arm and relaunch his attacks...” See (Sesay 1996, 38).
ECOMOG could have delivered this military victory by 1994 (Sesay 1996, 49). War broke out again in 1999 in part because ECOMOG had been prevented from acting in a truly biased fashion against Taylor’s forces.

The situation in Sierra Leone with regard to this factor bore some resemblance to that in Liberia. The RUF, unsurprisingly, enjoyed little to no popular support and had demonstrated that its goals and tactics were not consistent with a peaceful Sierra Leonean society. Had ECOMOG been given the green light, and had sufficient funding and other support, it could most certainly have defeated the RUF militarily (Williams 2001, 152). In the end it was indeed a military defeat by a biased intervention (by British forces) that accomplished this goal. However, with sufficient official and practical support, ECOMOG could have achieved this earlier; one clear opportunity to do so would have been following their reinstatement of President Kabbah in early 1998.

7.2.2. Somalia

UNOSOM II was also a classic 1990s UN peace operation in its dedication to the concept of impartiality, despite the expectation of impartiality being described as an “illusion” (Clarke and Herbst 1996, 79), and “of little use” (Clarke and Herbst 1996, 80). As General Aideed’s provocative actions continued in 1993, the American soldiers that remained in the country conducted more offensive actions, expanding on their initial defensive role (Clarke and Herbst 1996, 79–80). On the ground, some of the forces and their actions (including those of UNOSOM II) were not impartial; there was a distinct mismatch between mandates and expectations, and the rather messier realities on the ground. Had an officially-condoned biased intervention option been available at the time, most actions of the international community in Somalia would have produced better results than what occurred, since the planning process would have been different and probably more efficient had the mandates and expectations matched what was occurring on the ground.
7.3. Commitment of Conflict Parties to Peace Processes

One major factor that should affect the decision on whether to mount an impartial or a biased (conflict-ending) intervention is the willingness of the combatants to lay down arms and transition to a peaceful political process. There are significant differences between situations in which two or more sides have grievances against each other but all else equal would prefer peaceful relations, and combatants who do not care if there is peace, or worse, stand to benefit from a continuation of war or abuse of fellow citizens.

An impartial intervention into a conflict in which at least one combatant is willing to fight indefinitely to achieve goals on which they are unwilling to compromise is unlikely to succeed. If an armed group refuses to cease its activities under any reasonably just conditions, it is by definition that only a military defeat of such a group (along with many post-conflict measures) will achieve peace. By contrast, a situation in which the relevant parties are willing to enter into a genuine dialogue for peace is a more appropriate context for the consideration of an impartial intervention. The willingness of armed groups to transition to peace is therefore linked fundamentally with the necessity for biased interventions to be considered legitimate policy options.

It would presumably be extremely difficult to assess the level of conflict parties’ commitment to peace from the beginning of a given peace process. However, several examples exist of conflicts in which certain parties repeatedly demonstrated their contempt of the process, and were nevertheless continually treated as credible and honest actors. However, recognition of these facts, where relevant, would certainly help in guiding future intervention actions. Military defeat is the only logical goal with respect to any conflict party that is not interested in any legitimate peace process, and this defeat could be achieved sooner if obvious signs of an individual or group’s insincerity or lack of interest in peace are acted on without delay once this becomes apparent.

7.3.1. Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, the murderous RUF demonstrated over and over their contempt for their fellow citizens, and their willingness to commit abuses in pursuit of their goals. A group capable of the unspeakable atrocities committed by the RUF should never have
been allowed a position at the negotiation table, since peace was not high on the RUF’s agenda. The only intervention-related solution to a conflict involving the RUF would have been, and ultimately was, a military victory. Indeed, one author listed the “treatment of the RUF as a legitimate and sincere participant in the peace process” as one of the major weaknesses of the 1999 Lomé Accord (Williams 2001, 151).

7.3.2. Liberia

A similar situation prevailed in Liberia; Charles Taylor’s actions with respect to ceasefire negotiations were neither sincere nor credible. Whatever his initial motives for beginning the armed struggle in the first place, his eventual goal was not peace but rather control of Liberia and his own enrichment. One commentary published even before his election victory in 1997 suggested that Taylor’s motives could be reduced to “the occupation of the prized Executive Mansion and the accumulation of wealth” (Sesay 1996, 48). He was willing to fight until he achieved those goals, which is consistent with his use of the threat of a return to war as part of his strategy to win the election. Taylor was an example of a rebel leader who needed to be militarily defeated, not accommodated, since he had no interest in a just peace.

7.3.3. Somalia

In Somalia, General Aideed’s slaughter of 24 Pakistani UN soldiers in June of 1993 erased any doubt that may have remained about whether his willingness to be peaceful. It therefore is no surprise that the American soldiers who were still in the country, as well as UNOSOM troops, got involved in active combat against Aideed’s forces. The UNOSOM II mission, along with the American Task Force Ranger troops, effectively pursued a revised mandate on the ground. However, the ad-hoc decision-making that accompanied these developments surely led to a less optimal result than may have been the case had the biased nature of the intervention been deliberate and properly planned.
7.4. Willingness and Ability of Intervening Parties to Stay Long Enough

One of the major debates that played out in various wars and interventions of the early 1990s was over the nature of the relationship between “humanitarian intervention” for short-term goals, and longer-term missions to end conflicts and achieve what at the time was described as “nation-building”. Within the category of interventions to end conflicts, there is further tension. “Staying the course” does not guarantee success in ending a war, and interveners who stay in a country for a long time may eventually be resented by local populations. On the other hand, those interventions in which foreign powers do not stay the course are guaranteed to fail.

7.4.1. Somalia

One of the main beliefs proven illusory by the Somalia experience was that an international body could mount a full-fledged military intervention, complete with troops on the ground, to accomplish the first goal, and hastily exit to leave accomplishment of the latter largely to the citizens of the post-conflict country. Another belief that overlapped with decisions on longevity of interventions was that forces entering ongoing conflicts to both make peace and then keep it would be able to do so without sustaining (significant) casualties. The present factor, then, has two sides: that interveners should plan to stay long enough to provide sufficient support for the development of the post-conflict state, and that the longevity of planned operations should not be affected midstream by the consequences of unrealistic expectations of low-to-no casualties.

The mandate of UNITAF was not one of conflict resolution (White No date); it was designed to provide security for the delivery of humanitarian aid to its intended beneficiaries, so it cannot be judged for failing to end the conflict. The folly of the UNITAF intervention in Somalia, however, was the expectation that one could enter a country at war, especially with Somalia’s particularly complex ethnic, political, and religious societal context, provide short-term assistance, and then leave the country with no adverse consequences. Indeed, one of the great lessons of early intervention in Somalia was that “no massive intervention in a failed state—even one for humanitarian purposes—can be assuredly short by plan, politically neutral in execution, or wisely
parsimonious in providing “nation-building” development aid” (Clarke and Herbst 1996, 71).

The Task Force Ranger aspect of the American presence in Somalia, counter to that which took place under the rubric of UNITAF, has been judged rather differently than UNITAF. The Americans were branded as “casualty-shy” (Williams 2001, 163) as a result of their departure from Somalia after the highly-publicized, but relatively low-casualty, Battle of Mogadishu in October 1993. By contrast, it was well-known that Nigeria bore the brunt of large numbers of casualties in its participation in ECOMOG interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It has been estimated that Nigeria suffered around 600 deaths in the Liberia conflict alone, and this was at a point when said conflict, and Nigeria’s participation in it, was still ongoing (Howe 1996-1997, 165). By contrast, the Battle of Mogadishu killed eighteen American soldiers (Frontline 2013).

7.4.2. Sierra Leone

While it is always too easy to criticize, it is true that the American departure from Somalia set a precedent for rebel group strategies in conflicts involving western interveners. During the British intervention into Sierra Leone, six British soldiers and one member of the Sierra Leonean Army were taken hostage by a relatively minor rebel group, the West Side Boys. The intention of this hostage-taking was to “‘do a Somalia’” (Roberson 2007, 21); the commander of the West Side Boys thought that “[i]f they could abuse some British soldiers on the BBC, the UK would leave the country” (Roberson 2007, 21). Fortunately, their attempt was unsuccessful, and the hostage rescue was a success.

The conduct of the British military during this incident, as well as the rest of their intervention, has been widely praised because it showed that “[t]hey were not averse to combat or casualties if provoked by the rebels” (Evoe 2008, 74). Another comment on British conduct in Sierra Leone noted that had they withdrawn following the hostage crisis, this would in fact have promoted the development of a dangerous precedent, by “simply encourag[ing] groups in other parts of the world to ensure they surpass the necessary casualty threshold” (Williams 2001, 163), knowing that interventionist forces would leave as a result.
In addition, there was another major difference in the conduct of the British military in Sierra Leone and that of the American military in Somalia that relates to the willingness to stay long enough. This difference comes to light by comparing the American-led UNITAF operation with the British actions in Sierra Leone. The British offered the government of Sierra Leone an "over-the-horizon" security guarantee, while the Americans had hoped that they could enter and exit very quickly.

The British commitment to Sierra Leone provides a strong contrast to American expectations in Somalia. One illustration of the relevant timeline in British policymakers’ minds was their commitment to lead the “International Military Advisory and Training Team” through 2010—ten years following their intervention (Roberson 2007, 23). Probably the most important of the longer-term measures enacted by the British, however, was the over-the-horizon military guarantee. This assured the government of Sierra Leone that British forces would remain prepared to return to the country within 72 hours should hostilities increase again (Roberson 2007, 23). It sent a strong message to warring factions that any efforts to restart the war would be fruitless. This deliberate shaping of the incentives of warring groups, and the credibility of the “threat” to return if needed, most certainly contributed to the difference in post-intervention outcomes seen in Somalia and Sierra Leone.

7.5. Financial and Logistical Support for Intervening Parties

The risk of failure increases when interventions are inadequately supported, particularly in the form of insufficient funding. On the other hand, interventions which are adequately funded and supported can be highly successful in ending, or supporting the end, of a conflict. Not only are interventions with sufficient funding more likely to succeed and save lives, but the expenditures on such interventions can represent a net savings for the international community. Ensuring that interventions are sufficiently strong and long-lasting to achieve their goals would lower the risk of a continuation or resurgence of hostilities, which, if these occurred, could prompt even more interventions at a greater net cost to interveners and donors.
7.5.1. Liberia

One of the main reasons why Nigeria and other troop-contributing countries were so stretched in Liberia and Sierra Leone had to do with the problem of inadequate funding for their missions – a problem which existed from the beginning (Howe 1996-1997, 152). ECOMOG operations were funded by the contributing countries, all of them poor countries themselves. “International passivity” (Howe 1996-1997, 153) toward the conflict in Liberia compounded these problems, leaving ECOMOG to fight messy and numerous battles with creaky equipment and without the ability to pay its soldiers fully or on time (Howe 1996-1997, 167–68).

This lack of funding and other support from the wider international community led to other negative consequences in Liberia. For example, the ECOMOG forces in Liberia were accused of such widespread looting that an alternate suggestion for the meaning of ECOMOG’s acronym became popular for its apparently more accurate description of the mission: “Every Car or Moving Object Gone” (Tuck 2000). Not receiving any pay for months at a time clearly presented strong incentives to take payment in other forms, from local people and humanitarian resources (Howe 1996-1997, 169). Even though some unprofessional behaviour may have persisted even with adequate pay, it would most certainly have not been as much of a problem had the ECOMOG soldiers been able to count on receiving their full pay in a timely manner.

The lack of sufficient funding and support for the ECOMOG missions led to consequences beyond the borders of Liberia. One account suggests strong links between the lack of pay for Sierra Leonean and Gambian soldiers in Liberia and the coups in 1992 and 1994 respectively in those countries (Howe 1996-1997, 160; 169). Sierra Leone in particular, with its own civil war raging, did not need any additional problems to complicate its already precarious situation.

Another example of the negative consequences of an insufficiently-supported ECOMOG mission in Liberia is that, due to the sub-optimal numbers of ECOMOG troops in that country, it began to rely on anti-Taylor militias—in other words, other rebel groups—to attempt to keep Taylor’s forces in check, which itself led to more problems (Howe 1996-1997, 169). Surely, had funding been more forthcoming from international donors, troop-contributing countries would have been able to send more soldiers, since
citizens from those countries would have been more willing to participate, given a realistic chance of being paid for their willingness to risk their lives in combat.

7.5.2. **Sierra Leone**

In Sierra Leone, lack of sufficient funding and logistical support for ECOMOG led to similar effects, delaying the achievement of peace and ultimately costing more lives and money than would have been necessary had different decisions been taken. For example, it seems clear that "a major reason why the RUF [in 1999] still constituted a 'major aggressive force'...was the inability of international society to adequately support the Nigerian-led ECOMOG force in its earlier efforts to bring stability to Sierra Leone" (Williams 2001, 152). As mentioned above, the extremely-flawed Lomé peace process of 1999 was pursued primarily to allow the Nigerians to withdraw their military presence from Sierra Leone (Williams 2001, 151), not because the conditions on the ground were actually ripe for a negotiated settlement. Had ECOMOG received more significant international funding and support for this operation, it could have concluded when the situation on the ground called for such a conclusion, instead of concluding for practical reasons that had nothing to do with ending the conflict.

The section above has illustrated some of the most relevant factors affecting the conduct of military interventions and their effects on the outcomes of three civil wars; these factors represent the 'proto'-framework proposed in this capstone project. The factors identified above, plus various others that would be developed through similar research, form the comprehensive decision-making framework that should be developed for use in policy making in this area. The next section uses the identified factors to suggest alternate outcomes for each conflict had these factors been comprehensively considered at the time.
8. Alternate Outcomes Based on Use of Framework

This section proposes alternate end dates for each of the conflicts and explains how use of a framework such as that proposed in this analysis could have led to those end points. In short, the chapter illustrates how use of a systematic framework along the lines described herein would have vastly increased the probability of an earlier conclusion to the conflicts in which various interventions were deployed, in comparison to what actually did transpire in these conflicts. In each of the conflicts, I thus create a counterfactual to the actual events. The alternate end dates form the basis of the effectiveness and cost calculations in the section that evaluates the framework in relation to the status quo.

While it is inherently tricky to engage in counterfactuals, I do this exercise to illustrate the potential benefits of more systematic action concerning military interventions to stop civil wars. Certainly, different end dates could also be proposed, as I acknowledge in the country sections below. I have attempted to choose reasonably conservative alternate end dates, so as not to overstate the potential benefits to be gained from use of the framework.

8.1. Sierra Leone

8.1.1. Alternate Scenario and End of Conflict

There are two principal points at which the conflict in Sierra Leone arguably could have ended, had the framework been applied. One of those points was following the November 1996 Abidjan Accords, and the other was March of 1998, when President Kabbah was reinstated after ECOMOG’s offensive against the RUF and AFRC. Both of these potential end points would have become possible through use of the framework. However, I assess only the March 1998 scenario in this analysis, since it offers a more
conservative assessment of the resulting savings than the earlier end point, and therefore does not risk over-representing the benefits of the use of the framework.

8.1.2. Use of the Systematic Framework and the Alternate Scenario

Sierra Leoneans did not support the RUF, so paying attention to public opinion would have kept the RUF out of political power. And had a sufficiently-staffed and funded ECOMOG force been able to stay in Sierra Leone for a longer time, with an official “biased” mandate which recognized that the RUF needed to be defeated militarily as they had no interest in a just or equitable peace, ECOMOG would likely have been able to guard the peace for a longer period of time than they were in fact able to do following the reinstatement of Kabbah in March 1998 (Williams 2001, 153). Alternatively, had an over-the-horizon guarantee similar to that provided by the British after 2000 been possible in 1997 as a complement to a UN peacekeeping force, this would likely have achieved the same effect as it did three years later, by signaling to the RUF and other rebel groups that there was little point continuing the violent struggle. Both possibilities – with either a more robust ECOMOG or an over-the-horizon military guarantee – would have led to a better outcome than what actually happened.

8.2. Liberia

8.2.1. Alternate Scenario and End of Conflict

In Liberia, a ripe opportunity for peace would have been following the Cotonou Agreement of 25 July 1993. The agreement included plans for an election, and for a stepped-up ECOMOG presence to guard the fragile peace. Use of a systematic framework for decision-making, including especially the presence of a biased intervention as an official policy option, would have increased the likelihood of achieving peace much sooner than it was actually done. Allowing some time for what may have been a tenuous election period, the chosen end point of the conflict for Liberia in the alternate scenario is January 1994.
8.2.2. **Use of the Systematic Framework and the Alternate Scenario**

Had a biased military presence been a realistic policy option at the time, use of the proposed framework would have led to a change in mandate to a biased intervention against Taylor’s (and possibly other) forces once it became apparent that he had no interest in a just peace. Taylor could have been prevented from running in any post-Cotonou election on the basis of the war crimes he and his NPFL had committed, of which there was ample evidence (Human Rights Watch 1994). This exclusion also would likely have been consistent with Liberian public opinion of Charles Taylor. And had there been sufficient funding and other support for ECOMOG, it could have prevented or quashed potential “spoiler” activities by Taylor. An increased ECOMOG presence could also have addressed the resurgence of violence in 1994 that occurred in part because of the linkages between ECOMOG and Liberian armed groups who opposed Taylor, which had been made earlier as a result of insufficient ECOMOG presence in previous years (Howe 1996-1997, 159).

8.3. Somalia

8.3.1. **Alternate Scenario and End of Conflict**

As with Sierra Leone, multiple potential points exist at which the conflict in Somalia could have ended. Doyle and Sambanis have suggested that the right kind of force, had it been available or forthcoming at the time, “might have been decisive in Somalia in early 1992” (Doyle and Sambanis 2006, 347) following the February ceasefire agreement. Indeed, early 1992 saw a decline in violence before it increased again beginning in May. Another potential end point would have been following the conclusion of the UNITAF mission. Many observers agree that UNITAF was effective in reducing violence and increasing security. Had there been better-articulated goals following the handover to UNOSOM II, therefore, and more support for those goals, April 1993 could have marked the end of major hostilities (Doyle and Sambanis 2006, 346)\(^{24}\).

\(^{24}\) Doyle and Sambanis argue that “[t]he UNITAF to UNOSOM II handoff failed in part because peacemaking stopped short of negotiating a comprehensive, implementable agreement that included both the warlords and civil society” (p. 346).
Finally, even given the failures of the 1990s in Somalia, it is possible that peace could have been achieved in late 2006 and early 2007 had the United States and Ethiopia refrained from invading.

In this analysis, the potential end point that I assess is the middle option, in April 1993. I choose this end point because it is more conservative than the earliest potential end point, but it was also a more ripe opportunity for peace than in 2006.

8.3.2. Use of the Systematic Framework and the Alternate Scenario

In the case of Somalia in the early-to-mid 1990s, it would have been difficult, as discussed above, to credibly identify a strong current of public support for any given armed group, so use of this aspect of the framework may not have led to a markedly different outcome. However, it is likely that greater attempts to discern Somali public opinion would still have led to a better understanding of the complexities of the organization of Somali society than would be achieved without regard to this particular aspect of the framework. Scholars differ in their appraisals of the extent to which a lack of “local knowledge” affected the conduct of the interventions in Somalia (see e.g. the discussion in (Laitin 1999, 167–69), but more such knowledge could not possibly have hurt; seeking this knowledge would have been consistent with the application of the more systematic framework that is proposed in this analysis.

Other elements of the framework, had they been applied, would more clearly have led to a better outcome than what occurred following the withdrawal of the international community. Had UNOSOM II been better funded, for example, it may have received more troop commitments and been otherwise more effective. This would have led to a more decisive presence in the country overall, and would certainly have been more effective in taking over the task of maintaining security following the departure of UNITAF. “Spoiler” activities such as the execution of the Pakistani peacekeepers would have been less likely to occur to begin with, and would have seen more forceful responses. Doyle and Sambanis note that “[i]n sharp contrast to UNITAF, which had ample resources and a narrow mandate, its successor, United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) in May 1993, was given fewer resources and a more expanded mandate” (Doyle and Sambanis 2006, 149). It should have been painfully obvious, then,
that without more funding and other support, UNOSOM II would struggle to accomplish its goals.

In addition, the activities of UNOSOM II soldiers along with Task Force Ranger troops, in June 1993, transitioned in practice to a biased intervention against Aideed’s forces. It is possible that had the interventions in Somali been more informed and deliberately planned from the outset, that a biased intervention, or biased phase of an intervention, would not have been necessary. However, even if we allow for the events that led to the increased bellicosity of Aideed and his forces, the availability of an official biased policy option may still have helped stem the tide of his destructive activities.

In short, while the situation in Somalia was, and remains, more complicated than in the West African examples in this analysis, use of the elements of the framework discussed here would still have been overwhelmingly likely to lead to a better outcome.

The section above demonstrated that more systematic consideration of the factors identified in this analysis could have helped end each of the three wars earlier than they did end in practice (or at all, in the case of Somalia). Table 2 below summarizes the alternate/counterfactual end dates chosen for this analysis and the actual end dates for each conflict.

Table 2. Actual and alternate conflict end dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict</th>
<th>Actual End Date</th>
<th>Alternate End Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>November 1999</td>
<td>March 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>October 2003</td>
<td>January 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>April 1993</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next section describes my criteria and measures, which sets the stage for the subsequent evaluation of the proposed ‘proto’-framework versus the status quo. This evaluation consists of comparing, in terms of the selected criteria, the outcomes that did occur in each country to what may have occurred had the framework been applied and adhered to.
9. Evaluating the Framework versus the Status Quo

The section above proposed hypothetical, counterfactual, end dates for each of the conflicts included in the analysis that could potentially have occurred had decisions regarding the interventions into these conflicts been guided by a systematic framework of the type exemplified herein. In this section, I apply three criteria to evaluate the outcomes resulting from the hypothetical application of the framework against the more ad-hoc decision-making that characterized the interventions in this analysis: effectiveness, cost, and moral legitimacy. These criteria are indicators of the extent of the differences in outcomes between systematic compared to ad-hoc action, thereby enabling an evaluation of the desirability and the practicality of a more systematic framework versus a continuation of the status quo.

I do not include political feasibility as a criterion. It is worth noting, however, that the political feasibility of using a more systematic framework for decision-making depends on how it would be introduced and/or employed. Policymakers involved in decisions on military interventions to stop civil wars would be extremely reluctant, for various reasons, to be bound to such a framework in any publicly-acknowledged fashion. Policymakers concerned with election cycles, for example, would not want to be held publicly accountable for a failure to adhere to agreed-upon standards since this could risk the likelihood of re-election. Policymakers in other contexts, who are perhaps not concerned with election cycles but with international organization budgets or credibility, would similarly not want to be held publicly accountable for a failure to act in concert with a hypothetically agreed-upon framework.

It is quite likely, however, that behind closed doors, such a framework may be seen as highly useful. Indeed, I assume that some forms of systematic frameworks already do guide at least some of these policy decisions; for example, military leaders in troop-contributing countries have a strong incentive to consider at least some of the
same factors proposed in the present analysis, to minimize the potential for casualties from their ranks.

9.1. Effectiveness

Effectiveness in this analysis refers to the number of lives potentially saved; I calculate the difference in total deaths for the framework option versus the status quo for each conflict. Overall, however, I score effectiveness on a low-medium-high scale. Low indicates that the policy – whether the framework or status quo – would not have saved a significant number of lives in any of the conflicts compared with the other option. Medium indicates a significant number of lives saved in either one or two of the conflicts, and high indicates a significant potential for saving lives in all three conflicts. For the purposes of the policy analysis, I consider a “significant” number of lives to be 1,000 or more. In each case, I exclude the deaths from the month following the alternate end point of the conflict from the calculation of avoided deaths, since the transition to peace does not happen instantly and at least sporadic violence would have continued for some time.

The definition of effectiveness in this analysis takes into account only the individual lives themselves, and does not examine the full socioeconomic implications of those potential survivors such as a possible ability to provide for families and neighbours, and various other possible implications of those avoided deaths.

9.2. Cost

I measure cost in US dollars, and I examine the difference in total cost of the status quo versus using the framework. As with effectiveness, I calculate this difference for each of the three conflicts. Overall, if the cost of a policy does not lead to savings in

\[25\] In reality, occasional violence probably normally occurs well after one month following the “end” of a conflict. However, any attempt to estimate levels of sporadic violence based on the actual figures in the existing data would be arbitrary, so I have chosen simply to count the full toll for one month after each conflict end point, to attempt to balance those facts.
any of the conflicts compared with the other alternative, the cost of that policy option is high. If the cost of a policy leads to savings in one or two of the conflicts, I rate it as medium, and if a policy leads to savings in all three conflicts, it is low.

The cost comparisons in this analysis consider only direct costs associated with interventions or lack thereof. The analysis excludes the many other associated costs such as those incurred by other countries taking in refugees, or additional financial and other aid required by countries that are in conflict compared to those at peace. This is an important limitation of the present study, since indirect costs may dwarf direct ones and their inclusion in an analysis would likely have a significant impact on the numbers. Almost certainly, a comprehensive examination of the costs of conflict would demonstrate even greater costs of conflict and greater financial benefits of peace. Paul Collier has estimated the average cost of a civil war to be at least $50 billion (Collier 2004, 1). In the case of Somalia, a comprehensive analysis by an American think tank suggested that as of 2011, the “[c]ost of failure in Somalia” since 1991 amounted to $55 billion (Norris and Bruton 2011).

### 9.3. Moral Legitimacy

The evaluation of moral legitimacy is the same as that for effectiveness. That is because, to the extent that application of either the framework or the status quo helps avoid deaths, it can be said to be morally justified. While many different definitions and categories of moral “goods” exist around the world, the saving of life is a fairly universal one and is therefore the least controversial measure for a “moral legitimacy” criterion.

Table 3 summarizes the criteria and measures employed in this analysis.
Table 3. **Criteria and measures to evaluate the framework and the status quo**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>“Per Conflict” Measure</th>
<th>Overall Measure</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>Number of avoided deaths relative to status quo</td>
<td>Number of conflicts in which deaths could have been avoided using a systematic framework</td>
<td>High = 3 \ Medium = 2 or 3 \ Low = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Difference in total expenditure relative to status quo ($USD)</td>
<td>Number of conflicts in which use of a systematic framework would have led to a net savings for donor countries</td>
<td>High = 3 \ Medium = 2 or 3 \ Low = 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Legitimacy</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Number of conflicts in which deaths could have been avoided using a systematic framework</td>
<td>High = 3 \ Medium = 2 or 3 \ Low = 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section compares the performance of the framework against the status quo using the criteria defined in Chapter 9. Given the actual and counterfactual end dates derived in Chapter 8, each conflict is examined to identify the effectiveness and cost saving under the framework compared to the status quo.

10.1. Moral Legitimacy

I discuss moral legitimacy once, instead of in the section for each country because while the numbers for each country vary, the broad outcome for assessment of this criterion does not. In each of the three conflicts, use of the proposed framework would have saved lives compared to the status quo, which means that the moral legitimacy of such a framework is high. The status quo, relative to the framework, scores low on this criterion.

10.2. Effectiveness

10.2.1. Sierra Leone

Had the war in Sierra Leone ended in March 1998 instead of late 2000, 3,572 deaths would have been prevented according to the monthly deaths data from the UCDP GED\textsuperscript{26} \textsuperscript{27}.

\textsuperscript{26} In each of the three conflicts, I only count “life” savings one month after the alternate end point of the conflict. This is because it reasonably could take some time for violence to die down even after the appropriate measures have been taken to end the conflict. In this example, I exclude deaths from April 1998 in my count of the number of deaths that could have been prevented.
10.2.2. Liberia

A January 1994 conclusion to the conflict in Liberia would have avoided up to 5,711 deaths through the end of December 2009, according to the UCDP GED.

10.2.3. Somalia

Had the conflict in Somalia ended by April 1993, up to 11,931 lives could have been saved (through the end of 2009), according to the deaths estimates in the UCDP GED.

10.3. Cost

10.3.1. Sierra Leone

I calculate cost in the Sierra Leone case based on the kind of progression of events that occurred in reality, but starting in March 1998. This scenario entails ECOMOG handing the reins over to UNAMSIL, and the eventual British military actions plus the ensuing over-the-horizon military guarantee. The assessment simply moves up, by approximately a year and a half, events that did actually occur so that the process starts in March 1998 instead of November 1999.

The cost savings therefore equal part of the cost of the ECOMOG operation in Sierra Leone, since that presence lasted from June 1997 to around June of 2000. Had ECOMOG handed over to UNAMSIL in March 1998, the cost savings would have been the ECOMOG costs from April 1998 through October 1999. Nigerian leaders suggested

27 This is also an appropriate time for a reminder about the tendency of UCDP data to undercount the true number of deaths, due to its very strict coding rules. It is very likely that in each of the three conflicts, more deaths would have been prevented than what is indicated here.

28 While the handover to UNAMSIL began in November 1999, it was not complete until several months later. Data on ECOMOG troop levels were interpolated for the period November 1999 to June 2000 based on a statement by the Nigerian government (which provided the majority of ECOMOG troops) of its intent to draw down its presence by 2,000 troops per month, after UNAMSIL began to deploy, until it was left with a presence of 1,000 soldiers. See (Sierra Leone News 1999)
that its ECOMOG operation in Sierra Leone cost $1 million USD per day (Hirsch 2001, 74 and Olonisakin 2008, 44). It has been argued that this may have been an exaggeration, and/or that in fact a lot of the funds earmarked for ECOMOG in Nigeria were instead finding their way into the personal bank accounts of Nigerian politicians (Hirsch 2001, 74). It seems conservative, therefore, to halve that estimate.

On the other hand, however, other countries did contribute, and funded their own participation in ECOMOG. While Nigeria supplied the bulk of the funds and troops, there were several other contributing countries whose expenditures would not have been included in the Nigerian estimate. If Nigeria provided about 90% of the troops and funds (Pitts 1999) and spent $500,000 per day, and if the other contributions cost proportionately about the same, then the total cost would have been $550,000 per day.

The time difference from April 1998 through October 1999 is nineteen months. At a savings of $550,000 per day, this leads to a total savings of approximately $322 million. This estimate is based on both a conservative choice of alternate end point for the Sierra Leone conflict (if it had ended in 1996, many more lives and dollars would have been saved) as well as a conservative estimate for the daily financial costs of the ECOMOG operation. The true extent of the benefits of the elements of the framework applied to the Sierra Leone case would likely have been much greater than indicated here.

10.3.2. Liberia

Use of a systematic framework in the case of Liberia would have saved lives and money; however, it also would have been more financially costly, since extra resources would have been needed for ECOMOG to successfully guard the peace. ECOMOG’s operation in Liberia has been estimated to have cost “well over $500 million” from its outset to the latter half of 1993 (Human Rights Watch 1994). If we translate “well over” into an additional 50 percent – a total of $750 million from August 1990 to August 1993 – the average monthly cost was approximately $20.3 million. If we generously double the ECOMOG costs (to account for its increased presence) starting in January 1994, and if ECOMOG stayed in Liberia for two years following that date, the additional costs associated with use of the systematic framework would have been $486.5 million.
The financial savings resulting from this alternate scenario represent the absence of ECOMOG from January 1996 onward; this includes both the initial ECOMOG force as well as the ECOMIL operation. In addition, UNMIL would not have been necessary in this scenario, so all of its associated costs would have been saved. The UN would likely still have sent an observer mission following the ECOMOG presence, so I assume the costs associated with the existing observer mission (UNOMIL) to be the same in both scenarios.

The non-ECOMIL ECOMOG presence in Liberia wrapped up in October 1999, so the savings associated with avoided ECOMOG costs would have been those from January 1996 to October 1999. At a monthly cost of $20.3 million, this would have amounted to $932.4 million. However, in reality, ECOMOG was scaling down its presence during that time, so the average monthly cost would have also declined. To be conservative, I halved that number, and estimate non-ECOMIL ECOMOG savings to be approximately $466.2 million.

UNMIL is still ongoing, so its avoided costs for the purposes of this analysis are those from its inception in October 2003 to the end of the time period for the analysis, December 2009. Based on annual expenditure and/or proposal or appropriation data from the United Nations, the cost of UNMIL from its start until December 2009 was approximately $4.4 billion\(^{29}\), this figure represents the UNMIL savings that could have been achieved had the mission not been necessary. The proposed total budget for ECOMIL (actual expenditure figures were unavailable) was $104 million (Modern Ghana 2003), and represent the final source of savings assessed in this analysis.

The total net savings permitted by the alternate scenario in Liberia would have amounted to approximately $4.5 billion. It is also relevant to note, even though I do not count these savings as part of the alternate scenario, that a coup in Gambia may also have been avoided by concluding the war in Liberia in 1994. Certainly, there would have been many financial, social, economic, and political costs associated with that coup.

\(^{29}\) See Appendix C for details on the calculation of the cost of UNMIL.
10.3.3. Somalia

An April 1993 end to the conflict in Somalia would have saved many of the intervention-related costs that occurred after that date. However, it would also have necessitated additional costs for UNOSOM II since it is only with greater support, funding, troop numbers, and other factors that UNOSOM II would have been more able to sustain the level of security required for a long-term transition to peace. In addition, it is likely that UNOSOM II would under those circumstances have stayed longer than it actually did. UNOSOM II incurred $1.6 billion in costs over the course of its two years in Somalia ((United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) 2003a)). If we added another year to UNOSOM II’s existence and increase its costs by 50%, the total additional cost (the doubling of costs for the whole period, plus one extra year at this higher cost) would have been $2 billion.

Normally, at the end of a conflict, the UN presence transitions from a peacekeeping operation to an “office” which remains for several more years. Assessment of the costs of the alternate scenario compared with what did occur would require the incorporation of the different “office”-related costs in the two situations. UNOSOM II transitioned to an office at its conclusion in 1995, but if UNOSOM II had stayed longer, the costs associated with the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) in the alternate scenario would be lower since the transition would have occurred later. If UNOSOM II stayed for three years instead of two, the costs associated with UNPOS would be $8 million less, since the average annual cost of UNPOS is approximately $8 million (Norris and Bruton 2011, 30)\(^\text{30}\).

The other direct savings gained by ending the conflict in 1993 would have been those associated with the American Task Force Ranger intervention, the American support provided to Ethiopia in the December 2006 invasion, the Ethiopian costs of the invasion, and the eventual AMISOM force. Since the extent, and by association the costs, of both the Ethiopian invasion and American support for it are contested, I will ignore these potential savings and focus only on those from the Task Force Ranger intervention and the AMISOM mission. If the Task Force Ranger mission could have

\(^{30}\) The annual average was calculated by dividing $136 million by 17 years (1995-2011).
been avoided, which would have been possible with a more robust UNOSOM II presence, this would have saved approximately $6 million dollars\textsuperscript{31}. The avoided cost of AMISOM would have saved $343 million\textsuperscript{32}.

In net terms, taking into account the above savings and costs from the alternate scenario, the achievement of peace in Somalia in April 1993 would have cost an additional $1.643 billion. In this case, it may have cost more money to achieve peace in Somalia than it has done to maintain the ‘Band-Aid’ solutions that the international community has preferred since the mid-1990s withdrawal. However, were a comprehensive analysis to be conducted which included all of the associated and indirect costs – ranging from the care of refugees in other countries to increased funding for so-called ‘counter-terrorism’ measures dedicated to the Horn of Africa – it would certainly demonstrate a net savings. If the total cost of the conflict in Somalia has been even a fraction of the $55 billion suggested above, an additional expenditure of $1.6 billion pales in comparison to the total costs of the status quo, and would represent a net savings for the international community.

10.4. Final Evaluation

Tables 4 and 5 summarize the evaluation of the framework. Table 4 summarizes the savings, in both lives and dollars, from use of a systematic decision-making framework compared with the status quo.

**Table 4. Effectiveness and cost evaluations for all three conflicts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sierra Leone</th>
<th>Liberia</th>
<th>Somalia</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>3,572</td>
<td>5,711</td>
<td>11,931</td>
<td>21,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(# lives saved)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>$322 million</td>
<td>$4.5 billion</td>
<td>-$1.6 billion</td>
<td>$3.2 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(dollars saved)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{31} See Appendix C for details on the calculation of the cost estimate for Task Force Ranger.
\textsuperscript{32} See Appendix C for details on the calculation of the cost estimate for AMISOM.
Table 5 presents the final evaluation. It shows that systematic decision-making as illustrated in the framework would be more effective and morally desirable than the ad-hoc, status quo method of designing intervention policies. While both the framework and the status quo are rated as a medium cost, it is highly likely that use of a more systematic framework would also be significantly less costly than the status quo method. While the present analysis has suggested that achieving peace in Somalia may have cost an additional $1.6 billion, it also results in a net savings when all three conflicts are taken together. In addition, if all of the indirect costs of a failure to act systematically were calculated, the net savings would almost certainly be overwhelming in the majority of cases.

Table 5. Final evaluation matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Framework</th>
<th>Status Quo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Legitimacy</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Concluding Comments and Future Research

This capstone project has demonstrated that use of a more systematic method for making decisions concerning military interventions to stop civil wars would likely lead to significantly better results for both the conflict-affected populations and the budgets of intervening and donor states. Certainly, more research would have to be conducted to fully develop the type of framework that is suggested here, given the multitude of factors and contextual situations which characterize different civil wars. Academic research on the topic has increased in recent years, identifying various critical factors which affect dynamics of armed conflict. More of this research is needed, but in addition, more research that is directly oriented toward policymaking, such as the present analysis, is also needed.

A fully-developed version of the framework exemplified in this analysis would include, as explained above, many additional factors relevant to the conduct of military interventions to stop civil wars. Doubtlessly, upon further research, various different categories of factors would emerge, and it is likely that some factors would be ‘prior’ to others in terms of chronology or level of importance. In addition, situations would certainly arise in which adhering to some factors would preclude adherence to others. However, with a comprehensive framework at their disposal, policymakers would at least have the means to consider all of the relevant factors in light of the individual circumstances of each conflict.

This analysis has suggested that application of the type of framework described in this analysis would have helped the international community ‘do better’ in all three of the countries included, by significantly increasing the probability of an earlier end to the violence (or any end, in the case of Somalia). I recognize, however, that the availability of policy options is affected by the geopolitical context of the day, which often limits the menu of options and unfortunately, often precludes the most effective ones. It is easy to suggest, for example, that officially-condoned biased intervention options would have been the most effective in ending the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone (and perhaps
in Somalia), but it is understandable that in the global context of the early-to-mid 1990s, this option was not officially available due to the sensitivities of the time concerning impartiality and national sovereignty (even today, biased actions to help end conflicts are often conducted outside of international institutions or outside of official mandates for this reason). The United Nations and other international actors emerged from the Cold War into a new and uncertain era. Underlying conditions in the early post-Cold War days changed rapidly, and many actors, and attempts at action were bold and courageous. The purpose of this analysis is not to criticize the past with the values, norms, or the available options of the present, but to learn from the past in order to better inform the future.

This project has presented extremely conservative estimates for both the human and financial savings of using a more systematic framework for decision-making for military interventions. For one, the UCDP dataset is known to (usually) undercount the true number of battle deaths from armed conflict, so the severity of the wars represented in this analysis, as well as the life savings from more effective action, are greater than the numbers represented here. In addition, most conflict datasets, such as those of the UCDP, count only “direct” deaths from combat, not including the many deaths from disease and malnutrition that accompany armed conflict.

Moreover, I have not quantified the vast number of additional costs associated with civil war, including the costs of supporting the displaced, the loss of livelihoods through injury, disease, infrastructural damage, and many other things. I have also not examined more indirect costs such as potentially increased budgets for ‘counter-terrorism’ activities in Somalia that may have resulted from allowing al-Shabab to increase its power in that country. Taken all together, these additional costs of war, and savings of peace, are enormous. Donor states, even if mostly concerned with budgetary bottom lines, would clearly save billions of dollars through more effective and considered action with respect to military interventions. The rationale based on enlightened self-interest should therefore pick up where the moral argument may be insufficient.

However, I also acknowledged that norms, and even more so, official practices, change very slowly. It is impressive that anything resembling the text of the R2P declaration in the 2005 World Summit was accomplished, meagre and watered down
though it is. There are understandable reasons for developing nations’ wariness of any official doctrine condoning military intervention for any reason; on the other side of the coin, policymakers in the international arena and donor countries have consistently resisted any idea of an official framework that could potentially hold them accountable for actions or lack thereof. However, it is ultimately the role of research in this field to maintain pressure for further normative and practical changes which many benefit some of the most vulnerable people in the world. More research and advocacy efforts are needed both to demonstrate the benefits of more effective action, and to illustrate the costs of failure.
References


Appendices
Appendix A.

Notes on Inclusion of Countries and Interventions in Table 1

1. Two interventions are listed in this table which are, strictly speaking, not included in the analysis: UNITAF in Somalia (because it was an impartial non-conflict-ending mission) and the Ethiopian invasion (with American support) into Somalia in late 2006 (because it was a biased non-conflict-ending intervention).

2. I have included events only up to the end of 2009. In Sierra Leone this makes no difference since there has been neither a resurgence of conflict nor further interventions past this point. However, the cut off points for Somalia in the table are set at 2009, even though at least one of those interventions (AMISOM), as well as the conflict, is still ongoing. In Liberia, there has been no resurgence of conflict but UNMIL troops were still in the country as of December 2009.

3. In occasional instances, information regarding the conclusion of an intervention conflicted (to a small extent) with data on troops on the ground for that intervention. For example, UNOSOM II, according to the information on its website, ended in March 1995 but data from the DPKO website showed that troops departed by January of that year. In cases with conflicting information such as this, I used the data indicating the actual presence or absence of troops.
Appendix B.

Extended Conflict Descriptions

This appendix provides extended descriptions of the conflicts in the three countries included in the analysis which build upon the versions included in the main text with more detail for interested readers.

Sierra Leone

The conflict in Sierra Leone featured mostly the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a particularly brutal and notorious rebel group. It began in 1991 as the RUF crossed the border from Liberia into Sierra Leone and began active combat against the unpopular and corrupt government. Although the stated goals of the RUF, to replace the dysfunctional and unjust government with a democratic and accountable system, resounded with many Sierra Leoneans, the RUF’s tactics were brutal and indiscriminate. Before long the RUF’s activities were no better than those of the government it wished to replace, and the group terrorized the very populace – ordinary citizens of Sierra Leone – that it claimed to represent. More often than fighting against the government, the RUF would instead attack civilians, their homes and their livelihoods, committing unimaginable abuses against scores of citizens.

With help from ECOMOG soldiers already stationed in Sierra Leone, as well as rebels hostile to Charles Taylor who had been expelled from Liberia, the weak Sierra Leonan army was able to prevent a victory by the RUF. As a military stalemate ensued, elections were planned for mid-1992 to ease the way out of the standoff to multiparty democratic rule. A coup by disgruntled members of the army, however, led instead to rule by a military junta between 1992 and 1996, which continued to fight against the RUF. By 1994, the RUF had made significant gains, including capturing primary mining locations essential to the revenue of the central government. This prompted the government to ask for UN support in peace negotiations, however these failed and much of the country was mired in the widespread hostilities.

By 1995, the Sierra Leonan government had employed two additional measures to attempt to get the RUF under control. The first was a private security firm called Executive Outcomes, and the second was the ECOMOG troops that had already been present in the country, mostly from Nigerian and Guinean contributions. Between these groups, the RUF was somewhat subdued, and elections were organized for 1996. These elections were successful in bringing civilian rule back to Sierra Leone, at least in theory; a civilian candidate named Ahmed Tejan Kabbah was elected to the presidency. Peace talks with the RUF which originated under the junta rule of previous years were revived, and conditions were set for the RUF to transform itself into a political party, which among other measures included amnesty for RUF combatants.

This optimistic state of affairs, however, did not last for long. Many difficulties were encountered in implementing the plans for the peaceful transition, and by May 1997, disaffected soldiers launched a coup and took over the central government. This group, calling itself the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), collaborated with the RUF who joined them in holding power over the country for several months after the coup. During this time, this new junta fought against Kamajor militias, who were made up of traditional hunters vowing to fight for the reinstatement of President Kabbah. Nigeria’s role also became more extensive at this time; a Nigerian-brokered peace plan between the AFRC and Kabbah provided for the return to peace and for Kabbah to re-assume the presidency. After the AFRC repeatedly delayed implementation of this plan, however, Nigeria and other West African countries increased their presence in Sierra Leone under the umbrella of ECOMOG. By early 1998, successful military actions by ECOMOG...
and the Kamajor militias paved the way for the reinstatement of Kabbah. The UN, around the same time, began the UNOMSIL observer mission to try to guarantee the peace process.

Neither the RUF nor the AFRC disbanded or halted their violent activities following Kabbah’s reinstatement. Both groups continued to fight against Kabbah’s government; the government received continued support from the Kamajors, and fighting continued into 1999. By May 1999, the AFRC/RUF forces had entered Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. Although ECOMOG, the government forces, and the Kamajors successfully prevented a takeover of the capital city, the international community applied much pressure to Kabbah following this offensive to negotiate with the rebels. Reluctantly, he did so, and another peace accord – the 1999 Lomé Accord – was signed.

With the Lomé Accord, not only would amnesty be bestowed upon rebel forces, but the commander of the RUF, Foday Sankoh, was given a ministerial position in charge of the mining industry in Sierra Leone. Eventually, Sankoh would become the vice president of the country, while other members of the RUF were also given parliamentary positions. During this time, the ECOMOG forces had retreated, and troops were added to the UN mission, transforming its mandate and presence compared to its original observer status, and changing its name to UNAMSIL. The presence of UN peacekeepers, however, did little to keep Sankoh at bay. He began to attack these forces, even taking hundreds of them hostage during an ambush and holding them in Liberia. By May of 2000, the RUF had advanced again on Freetown and their presence threatened to overrun what little international military presence remained.

It was at this point that the British military entered the picture. What began as a limited operation to evacuate British citizens turned into an active military mission against the RUF (the AFRC had essentially fallen victim to military defeat by government and allied forces by this time). In May of 2000, over the course of approximately two weeks, 1,200 British soldiers repelled the RUF from Freetown. British forces stayed for several months and on a few other occasions engaged rebels in combat. This included a hostage crisis of their own, in which a small group called the “West Side Boys” kidnapped British soldiers hoping to emulate what had happened to the United States forces in Mogadishu, leading to a withdrawal. The British military, however, conducted a successful hostage rescue and in doing so put to rest any doubt about whether they were willing to fight whatever battles needed to be fought in order to secure the country.

This decisive force in combination with the actions of ECOMOG troops and the strengthened UN force finally led to the end of hostilities. The British clarified to Kabbah that they would return should it become necessary to protect his government, providing what is called an ‘over the horizon military guarantee’ (Roberson 2007, 23). These developments allowed for the return to peace and provided room for the resumption of democratic processes. Disarmament and demobilization began, and elections were eventually held in 2002 which returned president Kabbah to power. There has been no return to war since these events, and no conflict-related fatalities were recorded in the UCDP GED after mid-2000.

Liberia

The armed conflict in Liberia basically consists of two distinct phases – the first being defined by Charles Taylor and his rebel group against the government of Samuel Doe from 1989 to 1997; the second, by Taylor’s presidency and opposition thereto from 1997 to 2003. The roots of the Liberian conflict reach far into the past, but the dynamics most relevant to the situation today began in 1989, when then-rebel Charles Taylor led his National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) across the border from Côte d’Ivoire into Liberia. The aim was to topple the autocratic government of dictator Samuel Doe, who had himself captured power in a bloody coup in 1980. Violent responses to initial progress of the NPFL by the Liberian Army led to a surge of people willing to fight with Taylor’s forces (Sesay 1996, 37). Meanwhile, the Liberian Army began to
fracture and there were many defections. The NPFL gained ground very quickly in this phase of the conflict and reached Monrovia by mid-1990. In June, a splinter faction of the NPFL, called the INPFL, found and killed President Samuel Doe.

At this time, a regional ‘peacekeeping’ force was dispatched by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), called ECOMOG – the “ECOWAS Monitoring Group”. This force was in effect not a peacekeeping force, since ECOMOG was tasked with protecting the new interim leadership against Taylor’s forces. Consistently plagued by lack of financial support, equipment, and training, ECOMOG bore the brunt of the fight against Taylor’s forces and suffered many casualties; meanwhile, the force was also condemned for widespread looting and theft in the context of their activities in Liberia. Various additional armed groups sprung up during this time – some would fight alongside ECOMOG forces against Taylor’s group, and some were related to the relative absence of a Liberian state military force. Groups on both sides also suffered from factional and infighting-related issues that led to the creation of various splinter groups of the original groups involved. Taylor’s forces experienced various successes during the early 1990s, and while not achieving control of Monrovia, at certain points they controlled up to 90% of Liberian territory which Taylor dubbed “Greater Liberia”.

During the early 1990s, along with the entry of ECOMOG forces into the fray, many attempts at negotiations were made. Taylor’s forces would participate in these talks, only to repeatedly violate the terms of the resulting deals (Sesay 1996, 38). After successive rounds of negotiations, another deal was struck between all of the warring parties in Abuja, Nigeria, in 1996, which also paved the way for elections in 1997. The elections in question gave Taylor the presidency of Liberia – less because Liberians actually wanted him in office than because of the widespread fear of the consequences of returning to war if Taylor was not elected. Indeed, Taylor’s infamous campaign slogan was “he killed my ma, he killed my pa, but I will vote for him” (Left 2003). In this way, Taylor successfully held most of the country hostage to his wishes, thereby capturing the presidency in 1997.

As President, Taylor was no less violent and brutal than he had been as a rebel leader. As a rebel he had exploited tensions across the border in Sierra Leone, working his way into the business of propping up rebel forces there (mostly the notorious “RUF”), who smuggled various resources but primarily diamonds, to finance both their campaign and Taylor’s. Taylor continued this sponsorship of the Sierra Leonean war as President of Liberia.

Eventually, resistance to Taylor’s rule resulted in a resurgence of armed hostilities as new groups (some of which made up of the same people who had been involved in previous hostilities) formed to oppose the Taylor government. This constituted the second stage of the Liberian conflict. Taylor had not only interfered in Sierra Leone but also the affairs of other bordering countries, leading the UN and other bodies to impose a succession of targeted sanctions, including arms embargoes, on him and his government. Violence had been on the increase since the early 2000s, and by 2002, large-scale hostilities were once again the norm as Taylor had refused to negotiate with these new rebel groups opposing his government.

By 2003, under much pressure, Taylor agreed to negotiate and ECOWAS sent a second force, called ECOMIL, to aid in stabilizing the situation and to facilitate negotiations by reducing violence on the ground. Taylor eventually agreed to step down from the Presidency, being offered amnesty in exile in Nigeria, and arrangements were made for an interim government to lead until new elections could be held. The peace deal also authorized a multinational peacekeeping force to guard these achievements and ensure continued stability; thus entered the UN mission UNMIL, into which many ECOMIL soldiers were integrated soon after their deployment.

Elections were eventually held in 2005, with former World Bank economist Ellen Johnson Sirleaf winning the presidency. By the end of the period of the present analysis, 2009 (and indeed until the present day), UNMIL retains a significant presence in Liberia. Although there has been little to no armed violence in the country since late 2003, the political process has been understandably difficult and the development of Liberian institutions, as well as the rule of law,
The conflict in Somalia began well before the 1990s, but during the time period covered in this analysis it has had roughly three phases. The first phase included the coup which forced Mohamed Siad Barre from power in 1991 and its aftermath, along with a UN observer mission (UNOSOM I) and the first three military interventions: UNITAF; UNOSOM II; and the American military. The second phase encompasses the relative vacuum of power that followed the complete military withdrawal of the international community in 1995 and the general lack of a functioning central government. The third phase covers most of the new millennium and includes the locally unpopular, internationally-supported transitional governments of 2000 and 2004, the rise of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), the American and Ethiopian response thereto in late 2006, the AMISOM mission beginning in 2007, the eventual rise of al-Shabaab, a second intervention by the Ethiopians, and present day realities.

The violence that followed Barre’s deposition from power in 1991 principally involved the United Somali Congress (USC), the group that had led the struggle and the coup against Barre, and a faction thereof which did not recognize the USC as the new government. The leader of the breakaway faction, Mohammad Farrah Aideed, became notorious in the West, as the quest to capture him led eventually to the infamous firefight in Mogadishu in October 1993 which killed 18 special US forces, wounded 84 more, and led to the total American withdrawal from Somalia.

Soon after the coup, fighting was intense enough that a major famine resulted from the inability of UNOSOM I to establish a sufficiently secure environment for relief organizations to deliver aid to their intended beneficiaries. This led to a United Nations request to member states to provide military assistance to ensure this security; outgoing US president George Bush responded to this request and thus began Operation Restore Hope, which led to the formation of the US-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF). UNITAF was meant to be a short-term mission; this fact was highly publicized in the United States and elsewhere. It was relatively successful in its aims, and once the situation stabilized somewhat, UNITAF officially handed the reins to UNOSOM II in early May 1993.

UNOSOM II struggled to fulfil its expansive mandate to “take appropriate action, including enforcement measures” (United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) 2003b) to maintain security across the country. In June, the ambush and execution of 24 Pakistani UN soldiers prompted a call from the Security Council for the capture of those responsible. Eventually, the American Task Force Ranger was deployed in response to this call, and the hunt for General Aideed intensified. From June to October of 1993, the American forces, numbering some 1,200, fought with UNSOM II troops against Aideed’s forces. The culmination of this phase of the conflict occurred during the October firefight in Mogadishu in which the 18 American soldiers were killed, their bodies dragged through the streets of Mogadishu for all to see. Soon after this, the American soldiers withdrew from Somalia for good, leaving a beleaguered UNOSOM II force to deal with the aftermath.

Because of their strict coding rules, UCDP data often undercount the number of battle deaths in conflicts (see the discussion in Human Security Report Project 2012 for more information). In addition, neither the UCDP nor any other credible data tracking project estimates the number of non-violent deaths – from disease and malnutrition – that also result from armed conflict. This means that the true number of deaths associated with a given conflict is likely to be significantly higher than the UCDP estimate thereof.
UNOSOM II withdrew in early 1995, after various rounds of negotiations had taken place and a few agreements signed, none of which led to the end of the conflict. Following this withdrawal, fighting continued apace for the next few years; no firm control over the central government was exercised by any party, and the next few years were characterized by occasional negotiations and largely clan-based groups fighting one another. In 1996, Aideed died from wounds sustained during fighting, and an opportunity for a settlement seemed to emerge. An agreement signed by many groups in 1997 was never fully implemented, but in practice, Aideed’s son Hussein, who had replaced his deceased father, began to cooperate with the leader of the USC.

By 2000, a conference had been arranged in neighbouring Djibouti to elect a transitional government, known as the Transitional National Government (TNG). It was ineffective from the start, and armed opposition to it rose quickly, under the rubric of the Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC). Another attempt at creating a central government was made in 2004, this time with a federalist theme – but the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) experienced many of the same types of problems as its predecessor, and did not successfully achieve control over the country or indeed even over Mogadishu; its base was located in the safer city of Baidoa.

In 2006, the armed opposition to the internationally propped-up transitional government had again grown strong. By the end of the year, a group calling itself first the Supreme Islamic Council of Somalia (SICS), and then ARS/UIC (Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia/Union of Islamic Courts) (here referred to as the UIC) controlled Mogadishu and other areas, bringing a measure of stability to the country for the first time in years. This relative calm was not to last for long, however. Then-American President George W. Bush, concerned with potential terrorist havens and Islamist groups, provided American support (Prince 2010) for an Ethiopian invasion into Somalia. In December 2006 Ethiopian forces entered Somalia, and in early January 2007 their activities were occasionally backed by American air power (Rice 2007). Within a short time, the UIC had left Mogadishu, the TFG moved in, and Ethiopian and Somali government forces battled the remnants of UIC fighters. In addition, AMISOM, the African Union mission in Somalia, was authorized in January 2007, with deployment starting by March.

AMISOM soon found itself battling a new enemy, however, as some of the more extremist members of the disempowered UIC would resurface later in the form of the much more radical al-Shabab rebel group. It was also ostensibly because of the threat posed by al-Shabab that the Ethiopians re-invaded Somalia in late 2009, after having withdrawn many of their forces some months earlier. The situation in Somalia today remains fragile and tenuous. Despite the fact that fighting is less intense than during some years in the early 1990s, and the efforts of AMISOM members have borne some fruit over the years, most of the country remains unstable. Al-Shabab remains a credible threat to the security of Somalis, and the central government still enjoys little support from locals while being propped up by the international community.
Appendix C.

Notes on Selected Cost Calculations

UNMIL (Liberia)
I estimated the cost of UNMIL based on various UN General Assembly (UNGA) reviews of UNMIL’s budget. Where I was unable to obtain actual expenses, I used the planned appropriation figures instead. For the year 2005 I used data from the annual Yearbook of the United Nations as I was unable to locate the original UNGA document. See (United Nations General Assembly 2003); (United Nations General Assembly 2005); (United Nations 2005, 257); (United Nations General Assembly 2006); and (United Nations General Assembly 2008a).

Each document defined a year starting from 1 July until 30 June the following year; for the last half of 2009 I estimated the cost of UNMIL to be half of the 2008 annual budget.

Task Force Ranger (Somalia)
I was unable to locate any figures specific to the cost of Task Force Ranger; in the absence of such figures my estimate was based on the following method: Norris and Bruton (2011, 22) estimate the combined costs to the United States for UNITAF, UNOSOM I, UNOSOM II, and other “US forces” in Somalia to be $2 billion. I estimate the cost of Task Force Ranger based on calculating a ‘per soldier, per month’ cost using data on US troop contributions to the above operations. US troop contributions to UN operations were obtained from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) website. US troop contributions to Task Force Ranger and the extra US troops who remained after the conclusion of UNITAF were obtained from the various academic, governmental, and other sources described in the general methodology for this section, and US troop contributions to UNITAF were obtained from Political Economy Research Institute (No date). This method is surely problematic for at least a few reasons. For example, funds for a mission are also used for varying amounts of equipment, and similar levels of troop numbers could involve different levels of equipment. This and other factors mean the monthly costs are variable, which reduces the accuracy of a constant measure of cost per soldier. However, this was the only method feasible given the available information on the cost of American participation in interventions in Somalia. The per soldier, per month estimate was $8,726; this rate led to a total cost estimate for Task Force Ranger of nearly $6 million.

AMISOM (Somalia)
Straightforward details of the costs involved with AMISOM were also unavailable, so the method used to calculate the estimate for AMISOM’s cost from 2007 to 2009 was the following: Norris and Bruton (2011, 23-24) provide complete estimates of the funding for AMISOM for the years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. Even though 2010 and 2011 are outside of the time period covered in the present analysis, these figures were among the only estimates available, so they were nevertheless used to calculate an estimate for the years 2007 to 2009. The average of both years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 was used to estimate the costs for 2008 and 2009, and the year 2007 was estimated to be half that since the mission began deployment partway through the year, and it took some time to reach significant strength, so the costs for 2007 would have been
less than in 2008 or 2009. I neither inflated nor deflated cost estimates done at different time periods to reflect any inflationary trends. To do so would involve assessing inflation rates in all these countries plus the intervening countries – something outside the scope of this analysis.