INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS PEACEMAKERS: THE EVOLUTION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL INSTRUMENTS TO END CIVIL WAR

Magnus Lundgren
International organizations as peacemakers

The evolution and effectiveness of intergovernmental instruments to end civil war

Magnus Lundgren
In memory of my father,
Lennart Lundgren (1948–2012)
Abstract

This dissertation consists of four self-contained essays dealing with different aspects of conflict management by international organizations.

I. Conflict management capabilities of international organizations, 1945–2010: A new dataset

The expectation that international organizations (IOs) can play a role in the resolution of violent conflict has spawned a process of institutional growth in the post–World War II period. IOs at all levels have expanded existing instruments of conflict management and have gradually established new ones, such as mediation support units, early warning systems, and standby military forces. Empirical research on this process has suffered from a lack of systematic, cross-temporal data. Seeking to rectify this weakness, I introduce in this essay an original dataset on the institutional design of 21 peace-brokering IOs, with yearly observations on 14 variables during the 1945–2010 period. The dataset covers three key instruments of IO conflict management—mediation, economic sanctions, and peacekeeping—and related security arrangements, such as collective security. A preliminary descriptive analysis of the data shows that IOs vary significantly in terms of mandates, capabilities, and rates of change. I also illustrate possible applications of the dataset, including a reappraisal of a key study on IO effects on interstate dispute resolution, demonstrating the analytic benefits of having disaggregated measures of institutional design.

II. Which type of international organizations can settle civil wars?

IOs are taking on an increasing share of civil war mediation around the world. The determinants of IO mediation effectiveness remain poorly understood, partly because prior research has not adequately captured the institutional heterogeneity of peace-brokering IOs. In this essay, to explore how mediation effectiveness depends on institutional variation, I match a newly gathered dataset on the institutional design of IOs to existing data on 122 civil war mediation episodes during the 1945–2004 period. I find that IOs with institutionalized capabilities to deploy field missions, such as peacekeeping operations, outperform other IOs as mediators of civil wars and that, in contrast, information-gathering capabilities do not yield a significant advantage. My findings suggest that IO enforcement assistance has a forward-looking effect: that is, the ability to credibly signal, ex ante, that peacekeeping or monitoring forces will be deployed helps IOs facilitate
peace, ex post. While reaffirming the credible commitment theory of conflict resolution, the findings suggest that external guarantors vary considerably, which explains why some IOs can shift civil war disputants away from violent bargaining strategies whereas others cannot.

III. Interventions and civil war bargaining: How institutional characteristics shaped mediation and monitoring by the Arab League and the United Nations in Syria, 2011–2012

The Syrian civil war (2011–) has seen two major attempts at conflict resolution, one by the Arab League and another by the United Nations. Both attempts combined mediation efforts with military observation. While neither intervention succeeded in bringing the war to a conclusive end, the United Nations was more effective in the short term, establishing a temporary cease-fire and bringing about a significant reduction in violence. Using a most-similar-cases design, unique interview material, and microdata on fatalities, I find that variation in the scope and quality of interventions allowed the United Nations to address conflict drivers—information asymmetries and commitment problems—with somewhat greater efficacy. I find that intervention characteristics were conditioned on the institutional capabilities and preferences of IO member states, which explains differences in outcomes as well as the ultimate failure of both interventions. Beyond refining prior research on IO intervention capabilities, I elaborate the causal mechanisms at the center of bargaining-based theories of conflict management, and I illustrate how disaggregated data on fatalities can be used to the study the effectiveness of civil war interventions.

IV. Leanings and leverage: Exploring bias and trade leverage in civil war mediation by international organizations

Two characteristics of mediators—bias and leverage—are intensively discussed in the research on international mediation. However, although bias and leverage have been examined in mediation by states, relatively little is known about their role in mediation by IOs. The study described in this essay provides new ways of conceptualizing IO bias and leverage and uses unique data to measure the impact of IO bias and leverage on mediation outcomes. Exploring all cases of civil war mediation by IOs in the period from 1975 to 2004, my coauthor and I find that IOs whose member states provide support to both sides in a conflict outperform IOs whose member states remain disinterested. We find that mediation by IOs with significant trade leverage also increases the likelihood of success. We demonstrate that IOs rarely have a neutral relationship to civil war combatants, that mediation by IOs is rife with member state interests, and that such interests shape outcomes.
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>Akaike information criterion</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMU</td>
<td>Arab Maghreb Union</td>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>CAN</td>
<td>Andean Community</td>
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<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>Caribbean Community</td>
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<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<td>COW</td>
<td>Correlates of War</td>
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<td>CON</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Nations</td>
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<td>ECCAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of Central African States</td>
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<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>IGAD</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Authority on Development</td>
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<td>IO</td>
<td>international organization</td>
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<td>IOCM</td>
<td>International Organization Conflict Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>international relations</td>
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<td>LAS</td>
<td>League of Arab States (‘Arab League”)</td>
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<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<td>NC</td>
<td>Nordic Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>nongovernmental organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe</td>
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<td>OECS</td>
<td>Organization of East Caribbean States</td>
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<tr>
<td>OIC</td>
<td>Organization of Islamic Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRIO</td>
<td>Peace Research Institute Oslo</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAARC</td>
<td>South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>South African Development Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>SNC</td>
<td>Syrian National Council</td>
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<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>UNSMIS</td>
<td>United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria</td>
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Acknowledgements

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My work on this dissertation would not have happened had Renata Dessallien not recruited me to the United Nations, paving the way for me to learn about how international organizations may—or may not—ease social tension and dysfunction. Tamrat Samuel and other United Nations staff members, notably Tom Hill, Ahmad Fawzi, Martin Griffiths, Rania Hadra, and Crispin Stephen, improved my understanding of mediation and the situation in Syria.

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Essay 4 previously appeared in 2014 as “Leanings and dealings: Exploring bias and trade leverage in civil war mediation by international organizations” (International Negotiation, 19(2), 315–342). I thank Brill and my coauthor, Isak Svensson, for permission to reprint the article here.

Thanks to all those who opened doors and pointed to doorknobs. To Steven Morrissey, for writing songs that kept me company during coding. To Yoshiko, for being the sunshine of my life. And to my mother and father, for encouraging early sparks of curiosity, for always being there, and for helping me take advantage of academic opportunities not available to them.

After completion of a long project, the mood is one of fatigue, sprinkled with a curious blend of satisfaction and frustration, of things accomplished and things left undone. This state of mind is in tune with that described in Robert Frost’s poem “After Apple-Picking.” Like Frost, there are barrels that I didn’t fill, and, like him, I may have left apples upon some boughs. And, like him, I would say: I am done with apple-picking now. Enough. Genug. Basta. At the same time, I hope that this was just the start, the first tree. As rest gives way to restlessness, as the wanderlust of the scientific imagination reawakens, I hope to hear the swelling call inside: onward, onward, then, onward to the next tree!

Frankfurt, July 8, 2014
Introduction

War, a social ill and driver of human history, remains prevalent in the twenty-first century. The great majority of contemporary wars are civil wars, fought within countries rather than between them. Civil wars exact a heavy price on affected societies. From 2010 to 2014, the period during which I worked on this dissertation, an estimated 180,000 persons have been killed as a result of intrastate military violence.1 Civil wars traumatize populations, sever social bonds, and, by destroying human and material capital, reduce the prospects of durable socioeconomic progress. Domestic strife also generates costly externalities: refugee flows, arms trafficking, and increased risks of conflict in neighboring countries. Further, compared with interstate wars, civil wars last longer, are more likely to recur, and are more resistant to diplomatic settlement. This track record warrants the characterization of civil wars as “the most destructive form of violence in the world today” (Walter, 2013, p. 656).

Responding to shifts in the nature of modern conflict—and hence in the demand for mediation—the international community is increasingly busy dealing with civil wars. In the 1950s, four out of five mediation interventions were applied to interstate wars; in the 1990s, the ratio was reversed, with the great majority of mediation interventions involving civil wars (Greig & Diehl, 2012). More than half of all civil war mediation attempts in the 2000s were undertaken by international organizations (IOs),2 up from around 40% in the 1990s; the remainder of the interventions was left to states, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals. Reflecting this mobilization...

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1 The UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2014) records 101,548 civil war deaths between 2010 and 2013 (“best” estimate); the 180,000 figure also includes an estimated 75–80,000 in 2013 and the first half of 2014, predominantly in Syria. For more on the costs of civil war, see Blattman & Miguel (2010, p. 4). For arguments that war, despite its costs, may contribute to state building and institutional evolution, see Acemoglu & Robinson (2006), Tilly (1992), and Morris (2014).

2 Recent examples of mediation by international organizations abound. In June 2012, the Economic Community of West African States dispatched mediators to Mali, following violent attacks by separatists and jihadist groups in the northern part of the country. In the Central African Republic, following a diplomatic engagement in the fall of 2013, the African Union deployed a military force to the country, seeking to stem violence that has triggered ethnic separation and large-scale refugee flows. In Colombia in 2014, the Organization of American States continued to directly support the peace process many hoped would end the longstanding civil war. Finding itself at the center of the Arab upheavals, the Arab League mediated in Libya in 2011, in Syria during 2011 and 2012, and in Yemen starting in 2011.
tion, IOs have gradually expanded their arsenal of instruments for mediation and peacekeeping, a pattern that applies not only to global organizations like the United Nations (UN) but also to regional organizations like the African Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Indeed, scholars discuss the “rise of regional organizations as conflict managers” (Frazier & Dixon, 2006, p. 390) and describe the proliferation of regional IOs, often endowed with security functions, as “one of the most prominent features of the contemporary international environment” (Haftel, 2013, p. 2).

This dissertation addresses the questions of when, why, and how IOs can be effective conflict managers. Several studies have found that IOs can help shorten or terminate conflicts (Boehmer, Gartzke, & Nordstrom, 2004; Gartner, 2011; Goldstein, 2011; Sisk, 2009), but skeptics argue that IO conflict management is, on the whole, ineffectual (Bercovitch & Schneider, 2000; Regan, 2002) or even harmful, because it leads to fragile settlements prone to disintegration (Beardsley, 2008, 2011; Werner & Yuen, 2005). My central argument is that the performance of peace-brokering IOs cannot be accurately evaluated without taking institutional variation into account. Drawing on case studies and quantitative data, I demonstrate that, contrary to commonly held assumptions, IOs display considerable heterogeneity in design and capabilities and that this variation has implications for the nature and effectiveness of IO interventions. Highly institutionalized IOs—that is, IOs with strongly centralized instruments for supporting mediation and, in particular, peacekeeping missions—are more likely to bring civil war combatants to a settlement. IOs with such capabilities can engage in interventions of greater scope and credibility, enhancing their ability to shape the calculations of civil war disputants. Institutional capabilities are necessary for sustained effectiveness, but they are conditioned on other organizational attributes. IOs with high preference homogeneity can signal intervention durability, giving them an edge over IOs with divided memberships. IOs with member states that have provided direct support to civil war disputants outperform IOs that lack such members.

The analyses in this dissertation have several implications for scholarship on IOs. Most importantly, the dissertation demonstrates the analytic value of incorporating disaggregated measures of institutional design into research on IO conflict management, underlining the perils of neglecting such measures. The dissertation thus imparts additional momentum to a line of inquiry exploring the relationship between institutional design and conflict management performance (Boehmer et al., 2004; Hafner-Burton, von Stein, & Gartzke, 2008; Haftel, 2007, 2012; Hansen, McLaughlin Mitchell, & Nemeth, 2008). However, my studies contrast against this literature in several ways. Whereas previous studies of IO design in conflict management have focused on interstate war, I focus on today’s dominant type of armed conflict, intrastate (or civil) war. Consequently, I give more emphasis to IO
agency, especially IO intervention capabilities, than does a literature that prefers to model IOs as interstate fora. By gathering new data on IO design, I also take disaggregation further, across institutional features and across time, providing a more granular view of peace-brokering IOs than was previously available.

The dissertation reinforces the conclusion that international relations (IR) scholars should abandon the search for conclusive answers as to whether or not IOs matter and should instead opt for a more refined approach, seeking to elaborate which IOs matter, under what conditions, and in what ways. Going some way toward answering these questions, I identify in this dissertation five key factors that influence the performance of IOs in intrastate conflict management. First, validating the notion that commitment problems are the principal barrier to civil war resolution (Walter, 1997, 2002), I demonstrate that IO capabilities, such as peacekeeping operations, that facilitate the enforcement of agreements (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Fortna, 2008; Sisk, 2009) not only predict mediation success but also have a forward-looking effect, impacting the calculations of disputants long before there is a peace to keep. Second, my analyses do not consistently support earlier findings on the benefits of intelligence-gathering capabilities (Elgström, Bercovitch, & Skau, 2003; Savun, 2009) but rather suggest that IO mediators may serve orchestrating functions similar to those identified in other policy realms (Keohane, 1984; Tallberg, 2006). Third, I show that institutional capabilities are contingent on contextual factors, uncovering a negative relationship between conflict intensity and mediation success, which has implications for the debate about “ripeness,” that is, the most opportune time for external interventions (see Regan & Stam, 2000; Zartman, 2001). Fourth, findings on the relationships between member state preferences and mediation outcomes suggest that IO unity may have signaling properties comparable to those identified at the intergovernmental (Thompson, 2006) and domestic (Schultz, 2001) levels. Fifth, the analyses unambiguously debunk the idea that IO mediators are neutral, demonstrating that mediating IOs often contain interested parties and that the resulting bias predicts mediation success, confirming a relationship found for mediation by states (Kydd, 2003, 2006; Savun, 2008; Svensson, 2007).

Beyond the immediate target literature, the dissertation makes secondary contributions to the IO design literature, to bargaining theory, and to methodological approaches to the study of IO effects. With regard to the former, the dissertation provides descriptive evidence on the diversity of IOs that resonates with institutional trends in security (Haas, 1983; Haftel, 2012; Oneal & Russett, 1999) and in other policy fields (e.g., Acharya & Johnston, 2007; Tallberg, Sommerer, & Squatrito, 2013). As for bargaining theory, my analyses, taken together, suggest that it may benefit from elaboration beyond conventional single-level, dyadic formulations (Fearon, 1995; Powell, 1996), both vertically, by incorporating multilevel bargaining dynamics, and hori-
zontally, by better capturing the fragmented, multiactor nature of many contemporary civil wars. In a methodological contribution, the dissertation points to a way of developing impact-based measures of IO performance, by linking institutional features to intrastate political bargaining, which should be generalizable to IO interventions in other policy domains (cf. Gutner & Thompson 2010).

The rest of this introduction is structured as follows. After a few conceptual clarifications, I review the relevant literature on conflict management and IO design. Then I present the primary analytical framework, which is built around the bargaining theory of war and conflict resolution. Moving on, I describe and discuss the methodological choices involved in examining IO conflict management, presenting a research strategy that features both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In the next section, I summarize the individual essays, focusing my comments on research design and findings. I finish with a summary of the dissertation’s corporate findings, outlining implications, limitations, and opportunities for future research.

Definitions and terminology

In its widest definition, conflict management refers to interventions by third parties aspiring to facilitate dispute settlement between actors likely to engage, already engaged, or recently engaged in armed hostilities. A subtype of conflict management, mediation is understood here as a diplomatic instrument that provides negotiation assistance to two or more parties, with the aim of helping them reach an otherwise unattainable outcome (for various definitions of mediation, see Bercovitch, Anagnoson, & Wille, 1991, p. 8; Touval & Zartman, 1985, p. 177; Wall, Stark, & Standifer, 2001, p. 370). While generally noncoercive, mediation may include material incentives or disincentives (carrots and sticks), such as offering—or threatening to withdraw—development aid. The terms mediator, third party, and IO mediator will be used to designate nonwarring actors that engage in conflict resolution. Mediation generally refers to diplomatic interventions, but where a summary term is required, mediation is awarded a somewhat more extensive connotation, including a wider range of noncoercive conflict management activities by third parties. Mediation is the primary concern of this dissertation, but as mediation is often combined in sequence with other instruments of conflict management, these instruments are referred to throughout the analysis. A peacekeeping operation is an armed contingent, deployed to assist in the enforcement of peace agreements. A military observer force is a lightly armed peacekeeping operation acting under a noninterfering mandate to maintain a truce or cease-fire between warring parties.

A civil war, defined as “armed combat within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the
outset of the hostilities” (Kalyvas, 2006, p. 17), is a subtype of armed conflict, conventionally defined as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year” (Gleditsch, Wallensteen, Eriksson, Sollenberg, & Strand, 2002). This definition distinguishes civil war from interstate warfare and from other types of domestic violence, such as rioting or terrorism. Throughout the dissertation, the terms conflict parties, disputants, adversaries, and combatants are used synonymously to refer to the warring participants of a given civil war or crisis.

I conceptualize international organizations as actors composed of international bureaucracies and member states. IOs include both global organizations, such as the UN, and regional organizations; they exclude nongovernmental organizations and nonmaterial international institutions. The terms international organization, IO, and intergovernmental organization are all used interchangeably in this dissertation.

Four interconnected research questions

Seeking to identify which IOs are effective peacemakers and which features make them effective, this dissertation investigates four interconnected research questions, each of which is the focus of one essay.

The first research question concerns the evolution of IO intervention capabilities across time and organizations. One reason we still do not know for certain whether IOs can provide effective conflict resolution is that we have not been able to separate out different types of IOs and intervention instruments. Prior studies, especially in the large-n tradition, often assume that IOs are homogeneous, with comparable capacities and characteristics, thereby missing variation that may help explain why some IOs succeed where others do not. For the most part, scholars have been forced into unrealistic assumptions of IO homogeneity by the meagerness of available data: existing IO data sources do not adequately capture institutional diversity and cross-temporal change. This data problem impedes accurate inference as to the effects of IO mediation, contributing to existing controversies. Therefore, rigorous measures that capture institutional heterogeneity, across time and across organizations, are needed. How have institutional design and capabilities evolved in different IOs?

The second research question concerns the impact of variation in IO design and capabilities on mediation outcomes. Within the larger debate, we still do not know to what degree such capabilities affect outcomes and how important capabilities are compared with other factors, such as the intensity of the dispute, the timing of the intervention, and the conflict history. The ability of an IO to alleviate conflict drivers is suspected to be contingent on
variation in institutional characteristics, but the exact nature of such effects remains unknown. Which features of institutional design make some IOs more effective peacemakers than others?

The third research question concerns the ways in which IOs seek to address the root causes of civil war. While recent scholarship has drastically improved our understanding of civil war dynamics, we still know relatively little about how interventions by IO mediators relate to the mechanisms of conflict causation proposed by scholars. For example, while many studies assume that an external mediator can promote peace by providing information to disputants, few studies clearly specify how an IO mediator (or any other third party) operates during informational interventions. Similarly, research has indicated that combatants are more likely to comply with a peace agreement if there are credible external guarantees, but there is still much to be learned about how this operates in practice, especially in the mediation phase, before a peace agreement has been struck. In what ways do intervention characteristics shape the ability of IOs to address conflict drivers, specifically problems of information and credible commitment?

The fourth research question originates in the politics of conflict management and concerns the issue of mediator bias. The common conception of mediators as disinterested go-betweens, unaffiliated with either side, contrasts with historical evidence, which shows that mediators are often biased in favor of one side or the other. Scholarship has suggested that such bias may shape outcomes, but we still do not know exactly how. In particular, whereas the role of mediation bias has been discussed extensively in relation to mediation performed by states, our understanding of the role of mediation bias within the context of IOs remains limited. How do we conceptualize bias for nonsingular mediators, such as IOs, and how does it affect mediation outcomes?

All the research questions addressed in this dissertation relate to the exploration of the effect of institutional heterogeneity on IO conflict management behavior and outcomes. The first three questions, which focus on examining facets of the nature and consequences of IO institutional heterogeneity, may be considered the core of the dissertation; the fourth question, which is oriented toward exploring IO political heterogeneity, takes a somewhat different approach.

The state of the art: IO conflict management

The subject matter of this dissertation resonates with two bodies of social science research: (1) the literature on mediation and other forms of conflict management, a subliterature of conflict studies, and (2) the literature on the design and effects of IOs, a subfield of the study of IR. The two literatures are products of different research traditions and are often ventilated and
published in separate academic fora. Neither has systematically explored conflict management by IOs in civil war contexts. Yet by combining strands from the two literatures, we may construct a theoretical framework that yields testable empirical implications concerning the nature and outcome of such interventions.

How noncombatants can help prevent and terminate violent conflict is a key question in (1) research on conflict management. Earlier work on mediation has allowed for the emergence of a rich and wide-ranging literature, including both theoretical work (e.g., Bercovitch & Jackson, 2009; Dixon, 1996; Princen, 1992; Zartman, 2001) and empirical work, in which mediator attributes (e.g., Bercovitch & Houston, 1993; Rauchhaus, 2006; Savun, 2009), the timing of interventions (Greig, 2001; Zartman, 2000), the nature of the conflict (Mattes & Savun, 2010; Regan & Stam, 2000), and the characteristics of the involved parties (Bercovitch & DeRouen, 2005; Clayton, 2013) have been identified as correlates of mediation outcomes. While many studies indicate positive outcomes from third party mediation, a less optimistic literature suggests that mediation suffers from severe limitations, only rarely generating the conditions for sustainable peace (Beardsley, 2008, 2011; Regan, 2002).

Several scholars (Gilady & Russett, 2002; Kleiboer, 1996; Wallensteen & Svensson, 2014) contend that mediation research long remained fragmented, privileging general policy-guiding frameworks with low explanatory power over the development of rigorous theories of conflict causation. This fragmentation retarded the emergence of cumulative scholarship. In the last decade, however, researchers have sought to overcome this barrier by incorporating components from the bargaining theory of war (Fearon, 1995; Powell, 1996) into the study of conflict management. This turn has provided a nucleus around which structured inquiry has crystallized, matured, and gradually evolved into a “dominant approach in conflict studies” (Lake, 2011, p. 7; see also Kydd, 2010; Walter, 2013). Within this rapidly expanding literature, much attention has focused on the circumstances under which a third party can facilitate the resolution of strategic dilemmas facing conflict parties, depending on the third party’s biases (Favretto, 2009; Kydd, 2003, 2006; Svensson, 2007), deterrent capabilities (Crawford, 2003), constitutional design (Crescenzi, Kadera, McLaughlin Mitchell, & Thyne 2005), and intelligence capabilities (Savun, 2008, 2009). Several studies have examined bargaining in civil war contexts; these include empirical studies of diplomatic, economic, and military interventions (Gartner, 2011; Mattes & Savun, 2010; Regan & Aydin, 2006) and of the central role played by postsettlement guarantees (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Fortna, 2008; Fortna & Howard, 2008; Sisk, 2009; Walter, 2002).³

³ Recent reviews of mediation research include Wallensteen & Svensson (2014), Greig & Diehl (2012), and Bercovitch & Jackson (2009). An authoritative reviews of the larger civil
The (2) second body of literature is focused on the design and effects of international treaties and organizations. One important research trajectory originates from functionalist theories, which argue that IOs can “focus expectations on a cooperative solution, reduce transaction costs, and provide a greater degree of transparency,” thereby assisting states in overcoming collective action problems (Martin & Simmons, 2012, p. 330). Functionalist scholars have criticized previous research for overlooking the institutional diversity and contingency of IO effects. An influential piece by Koremenos, Lipson, and Snidal (2001, p. 761–762) argued that IOs are “organized in radically different ways” and that “institutional design . . . affects outcomes,” prompting scholars to explore variation across organizational design variables such as membership, voting mechanisms, and patterns of delegation (e.g., Hawkins, Lake, Nielson, & Tierney, 2006; Nielson & Tierney, 2003; Stone, 2011). Building on the institutional design literature, researchers have recently called for further specification of causal mechanisms, arguing that the emphasis of research should shift from “whether IOs matter to how they work” (Hafner-Burton et al., 2008, p. 176).

Within the IO literature are many studies that deal with the substantive field of war and peace. An early debate concerned whether IOs facilitate peaceful relations among their membership. Proponents of the contention that IOs may facilitate peaceful relations suggested a range of causal mechanisms, including identity transformation, information provision, and facilitation of reciprocity (Deutsch, 1957; Dorussen & Ward, 2008; Haas, 1983; Johnston, 2001; Keohane, 1984; Nye, 1971; Oneal & Russett, 2001), whereas opponents argued that since IOs are epiphenomenal, they have limited causal effects (Mearsheimer, 1994; Waltz, 1979). However, these “big debate” studies generally do not grapple with institutional heterogeneity, partly owing to a lack of systematic, time-series cross-sectional data on IOs, leaving the studies dependent on “billiard ball” assumptions. Seeking to identify which features of institutional design have peace-promoting effects, some recent work (e.g., Haftel, 2007, 2012) has sought to include better measurements of IO capacities and also to develop more highly specified theory as to how IOs may play a beneficial role. Several studies have focused on informational explanations, arguing that IOs can function as mechanisms for credible signaling, which diminishes the propensity of conflict (e.g., Thompson, 2006). Besides comparative work (Kirchner & Dominguez, 2011; Tavares, 2009), large-n studies by Boehmer et al. (2004) and Hansen et al. (2008) found that highly institutionalized IOs,

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The otherwise sophisticated civil war literature has been “surprisingly neglectful of the international system” (Kalyvas & Balcells, 2010, p. 427), focusing instead on domestic explanations (cf. Collier & Hoeffler, 2002; Fearon & Laitin, 2003) and only recently seriously considering the international and transnational dimensions of civil war (Cederman, Gleditsch, & Buhaug, 2013; Checkel, 2013).
that is, centralized organizations with specialized instruments for conflict management, are more likely to bring about negotiated settlements than other IOs.

While the lion’s share of this research has focused on the effects of IOs on interstate cooperation and peace, there is a small literature that deals with how IOs perform under the different conditions that characterize the intra-state domain, both for mediation (e.g., Bercovitch & Schneider, 2000; Gartner, 2011; Regan, 2002) and peacekeeping interventions (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Fortna, 2004, 2008). In addition, an extensive case-based literature on IO civil war interventions (e.g., Autesserre, 2010; Howard, 2008) provides valuable casual process observations and nuanced case-specific explanations.

All the essays contained in this dissertation grow out of intellectual exchange between these two bodies of literature, exploiting unrealized “gains from trade.” The conflict literature provides a sophisticated theory of conflict causation but neglects IO institutional design; the IO literature provides insights about institutional design and capabilities but has so far failed to connect them to the domain of intrastate armed conflict. Connecting the two literatures unlocks a theoretical framework with strong explanatory promise in relation to the empirical problems at hand.

Theoretical framework: IO alleviation of the bargaining problems driving civil war

Gaining leverage over the four empirical questions outlined above requires a theoretical framework that can conceptualize intrastate dyadic interaction, identify the conditions under which violence is more or less likely, and incorporate interventions by third parties, linking these theoretical components to theories of institutional design and intergovernmental dynamics in IOs. Compared against alternatives, the bargaining theory of war provides the most suitable grounds for developing a framework that meets these criteria. First, while IR bargaining theory was originally focused on explaining the nature of dyadic interstate relationships, it is readily applicable to dyadic relationships at other levels, including the intrastate level, as illustrated by previous studies of bargaining in civil wars (Carment & Fisher, 2011; Kydd, 2010; Walter, 2013). Second, while the “explanatory engine” of the original theory is situated in the strategic interaction between two actors, the framework does not preclude the modeling of external interventions, by other actors or at other levels, including direct and indirect effects of IOs. Third, many of its theoretical premises—originating from models of social interac-

4 For overviews of theories of war causation, see Levy & Thompson (2010), Blattman & Miguel (2010), and Vasquez (2012), as well as Blainey (1988).
tion between rational, utility-maximizing actors—are shared with institutionalist IO theory, making it a suitable bridge over which to realize the gains from trade referred to above. In addition, bargaining theory combines parsimony with high leverage, is applicable to a wide range of social contexts, and provides high intra- and interdisciplinary relevance. In sum, it provides a compelling theoretical basis from which to explore the research questions at hand.

Any theoretic choice is a package deal, wedding the scholar to the premises and blemishes of the chosen theory. There is no need to critically examine the philosophical premises of rationalism or to dissect the alleged failings of rationality-based empirical studies of politics; these debates have been undertaken with great vigor elsewhere (e.g., Green & Shapiro, 1994). However, it should be recognized that the rationalist premises of the bargaining enterprise imply a few methodological vulnerabilities. These are highlighted in the essays as well as in the discussion below. The choice of a bargaining approach further implies that theoretical depth, novelty, and elaboration have been privileged over range, variation, and exploration of paradigmatic debates. This is a necessary move for a project that is essay based, implying textual limitations, and that speaks to literatures in subdisciplines with cumulative traditions and where empirical and theoretical specificity are steadily increasing (cf. Blattman & Miguel, 2010; Kydd, 2010; Walter, 2013).

**Bargaining theory of war and conflict management**

Bargaining theory is largely agnostic as to the structural reasons for war, which have occupied much previous scholarship. Whether a political conflict is incentivized by dissatisfaction (Gurr, 1993; Hegre & Sambanis, 2006; Horowitz, 1985) or by opportunities for enrichment, plunder, and extraction (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002), it need not turn violent, Fearon (1995) argues, unless there exist barriers to efficient bargaining. This argument originates from a central insight: since war is costly, there must exist peaceful compromises that both sides prefer to war. And yet, such compromises are sometimes not reached. Why? Scholars have suggested a range of explanations, but attention within the bargaining tradition has focused on two major causal pathways: information asymmetries and problems of credible commitment. These “bargaining problems” explain why wars break out, why they resist settlement, and why they often recur between the same parties.

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5 Bargaining theory is described as enjoying “clear and present domination” in conflict studies (Wallensten & Svensson, 2014, p. 310), as a “dominant approach” (Lake, 2011, p. 7), and as “very influential” (Levy & Thompson, 2010, p. 68) in IR, and it takes up the better part of several recent reviews of civil war and conflict management (Blattman & Miguel 2010; Kydd 2010; Walter 2013).

6 There are various formal bargaining models of war onset (Fearon, 1995, 2004; Powell, 2002; Rauchhaus, 2006; Wagner, 2010), but they differ only minimally as to the general idea of
It deserves to be emphasized that bargaining is generally thought to incorporate both explicit (formal) and implicit (informal) forms of negotiation; the former is relatively straightforward, focused on linguistic exchange and counterproposals in a structured setting, whereas the latter also comprises nonlinguistic action. For example, military drills, mobilizations, threats, attacks, or other means of signaling preferences, capabilities, and intent can be seen as bargaining moves or “bids” (cf. Schelling, 1960). The implication is that bargaining between civil war disputants is frequently played out on parallel scenes: on the battlefield, in the media, and in the negotiation room.

One condition for efficient bargaining—that is, bargaining that produces nonviolent outcomes—between two actors is that they agree on the zone of agreement, the set of deals that are mutually acceptable. Since the extent of this zone is an expression of the parties’ expected utility from war, balanced (or at least comparable) estimates of their relative power means that war can be avoided. However, if either actor holds private information about its own power and resolve, the adversaries’ estimates of their relative power will diverge, creating an information asymmetry that can make war a rational strategy. Theoretically, disputants should have an interest in reducing such information asymmetries through communication, but the strategic value of military intelligence often rules out truthful communication between them. For example, an actor may withhold information about armaments if the military utility of such armaments depends on keeping them secret. Likewise, an actor may bluff about its military capability, seeking to influence the other’s estimate of its power so as to extract a more favorable agreement.

A second condition for efficient bargaining is that the disputants expect that agreements will be enforced. If either side cannot credibly commit to respecting an agreement, either or both parties may be presented with a choice set where the benefits of war outweigh the benefits of the alternatives. Commitment problems are especially pronounced in the context of swift power shifts or in situations that approximate the incentive structure of the prisoner’s dilemma: high incentives to cheat and high costs of being cheated. Civil war situations often present such incentives. For example, postconflict reintegrations of two adversaries into one political unit may require disarmament and secession of territory by one party, which leaves that party vulnerable to retribution or postsettlement exploitation (Walter, 1997, 2002). Overcoming this type of mistrust is a key challenge in sustainably ending civil wars.\(^8\)

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conceptualizing war as an inefficient outcome brought about by bargaining problems. For a presentation of alternative mechanisms, including indivisibilities and malignancy, see Anderton et al. (2010).

\(^7\) For a formal presentation of this condition, see Fearon (1995, pp. 410–414).

\(^8\) If one allows for a slight reduction of complexity, it may be helpful to think of the strategic structure of civil war settlement as a sequence of two games—a battle of the sexes game followed by a (repeated) prisoner’s dilemma game—each presenting a particular set of
IO alleviation of bargaining problems

Conflict bargaining hence implies the simultaneous relaxation of conditions assumed in formal (e.g., Rubinstein, 1982) or applied (e.g., Moravcsik, 1998) frameworks of noncoercive bargaining. Where noncoercive bargaining models assume that bargaining is nonviolent, that information is “plentiful and cheap” (Moravcsik, 1998, p. 61), and that contracts are enforced, models of conflict bargaining assume the presence of violent policy options, incomplete information, and the absence of established institutions to enforce contracts. These conditions explain why war may become a rational strategy. They simultaneously suggest a strategy for peace-interested third parties: if these conditions can be removed or ameliorated, efficient bargaining may ensue, shifting the disputants’ bargaining strategies away from violence.

If bargaining is hampered by information asymmetries, a mediator may engage in information provision, seeking to balance the adversaries’ estimates of the bargaining range and facilitate their coordination on a peaceful equilibrium. The mediator must then gather information on relevant variables, evaluate it to the best of its ability, and disseminate it to the adversaries. If the information is credible in the eyes of the conflict parties, it may reduce the risk of war breaking out or continuing.9

If bargaining is hampered by commitment problems, a mediator can provide guarantees to bring the parties to agreement, or to help enforce an existing agreement. Such interventions seek to diminish the risks of exploitation by either side. A mediator can threaten material punishment for reneging on the agreement, provide information on defections so as to make them more costly, or help devise domestic institutions that solidify cooperation-inducing incentive structures (e.g., territorial power-sharing, as in Bosnia, or political power-sharing, as in Lebanon). Scholars often think of peacekeeping as providing a mix of material incentives and monitoring, a dilemma. In the battle of the sexes game, the adversaries are challenged to coordinate on an outcome with joint gains, but where there is an underlying distributional conflict. This conflict motivates the parties to withhold or dissemble information, which complicates the process of coordinating on an efficient outcome. In the prisoner’s dilemma game stage, the challenge is to ensure compliance with that outcome—in a situation where the gains from cheating—reneging on a peace agreement—may outweigh those from short-term cooperation.

9 An empirical example of such information provision may be sourced from the annals of Kofi Annan, former secretary general of the UN. Relating his experience of mediating in a civil war in Indonesia in the early 1990s, Annan emphasized the informational role played by IO mediators: “I soon became a central node of communication between the various parties to the conflict, and, it seemed, the only one they all felt comfortable speaking with in trust and confidence. What this meant in many instances was that I often ended up with a better—and more up-to-date—understanding of the state of play and the positions of all parties to the crisis. Each party shared its interests, knowledge, and even some of its intelligence with me. While this would often represent biased or slanted information, designed to persuade me of the merits of each case, this was helpful because it enabled me to broker agreements with more insight and impact than otherwise” (Annan, 2012, p. 106).
form of ersatz trust that extends the shadow of the future and, if it provides credible reassurance, increases the disputants’ expectation of contractual adherence.

**Empirical expectations**

Bargaining theory thus suggests that IOs can provide a substitute for what is failing domestically: facilitation of agreement and its subsequent enforcement. This theory generates a set of empirical expectations. At the most general level, the expectation is that IOs intervening in civil wars will seek to address bargaining problems and that they will do so, at least partly, by providing information and guarantees.

Borrowing insights from the IO literature (citations above), the overarching proposition of this dissertation is that the ability of IOs to engage in such interventions is conditioned on their institutional characteristics, primarily the design and scope of their intervention capabilities and the nature of the members’ preferences. Intervention capabilities are defined as specialized instruments of conflict management lodged in permanent IO secretariats or similar bodies, staffed by international civil servants, providing technical and administrative expertise that help generate the “raw material” of bargaining-enhancing interventions: information and material incentives. I assume that the scope and permanence of such capabilities determine the degree of institutionalization. Membership preferences are defined as the distribution of IO member state preferences over available IO policies vis-à-vis a given civil war, methods of aggregating such preferences, and preferences over the distributional outcome of the war.

Since provision of credible information and guarantees is theorized to increase the efficiency of bargaining, capabilities that assist in their provision are expected to enhance the likelihood of agreement and enforcement. To alleviate information problems, an IO must have resources and expertise that allow it to gather, evaluate, and disseminate information relevant to the disputants. To address commitment problems, an IO must have resources and expertise that allow it to reassure the parties and change their calculations. Larger capabilities not only yield a larger volume of information and material incentives but also are likely to influence the credibility of an IO intervention. An IO that can demonstrate sophisticated informational capabilities, and a track record of mediation interventions, is more likely to convince disputants that it can accurately assess a situation and can help either or both of them. An IO that can demonstrate qualified military capabilities, such as peacekeeping or monitoring forces, is more likely to diminish disputants’

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10 As an example, the UN Department of Political Affairs, staffed by several hundred civil servants with expertise in political analysis and conflict management, would be considered the key component of the UN’s diplomatic intervention capability. Similarly, the absence of such functions at the Arab Maghreb Union, an IO with very low degrees of permanence and centralization, would be considered an indication of low diplomatic intervention capability.
fears of contractual breakdown and renewed conflict. The observable implication is that IOs with developed intervention capabilities will outperform other IOs in bringing civil war disputants to agreement.

Given that IOs are composed of both international bureaucracies and member states, intervention capabilities cannot be viewed in detachment from the latter. The theoretical expectation is that member state preferences influence both the nature and the effectiveness of IO civil war interventions. Member preferences regarding the preferred policy vis-à-vis a given civil war will affect the likelihood of an intervention enduring, with consequences for its credibility in the eyes of disputants. The observable implication is that interventions with strong member state support are more likely to bring disputants to agreement; and vice versa, absent member state support, the effectiveness of interventions is expected to be lower.

Member state preferences with regard to the outcome of a given civil war—that is, the aggregate bias of an IO—are also expected to affect intervention outcomes. The conventional wisdom is that third party mediators should not have preferences regarding the issue of dispute, but a line of theoretic work (Kydd, 2003, 2006; Svensson, 2007) suggests that interested mediators may have certain advantages. Without clear guidance as to direction, the implication is that we expect to observe variation in effectiveness across IOs, depending on the configuration of member state interests.

In sum, this theoretical framework generates propositions that can be subjected to empirical testing. These relate to the nature of IO interventions and the conditions under which IOs are likely to influence outcomes in civil war bargaining. Each of the essays in this dissertation elaborates these theoretical propositions further, specifying hypotheses and observable implications relevant for the topic at hand.

A mixed-methods approach across four essays

Each of the essays in this dissertation represents a methodologically sovereign, stand-alone piece of research, and all the essays contain detailed description of methodological choices relevant for the research problem at hand. This section accordingly focuses on methodological topics that cut across all the essays: general research strategy, measuring mediation effectiveness, addressing endogeneity, and overarching data selection.

General research strategy

Viewed as a whole, the dissertation approximates a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative (large-n) and qualitative (small-n) components. By combining separate lines of inquiry, I can leverage the strengths of each and, to some extent, balance out their respective weaknesses (cf. Brady & Collier, 2010; Fearon & Laitin, 2008). Large-n,
statistical methods are suitable when the research goal is descriptive (research question 1) or causal (research questions 2 and 4) inference about a social phenomenon that presents itself to us in high numbers and in comparable forms and that is driven by probabilistic rather than determinative processes (Freedman, 2009; King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994; Seawright & Gerring, 2008). Since IO mediation is a frequent phenomenon (cases count in the hundreds) with probabilistic outcomes—mediation may increase or decrease the likelihood of peace, but it does not automate a particular outcome—it is suitable for quantitative study. Small-n research (case study methods) is suitable when the goal is within-case inference (research question 3), including validation of causal mechanisms stipulated by theory or suggested by large-n correlational studies (George & Bennett, 2005; Rohlfing, 2012; Seawright & Gerring, 2008). Small-n research can also be used for cross-case inference, including for testing theories and confirming causal effects (George & Bennett, 2005; Rohlfing, 2012; Seawright & Gerring, 2008). A careful most-similar-cases design, as used in essay 3, arguably comes relatively close to the ideal of “design-based” inference (Angrist & Pischke, 2009; Dunning, 2012), which approximates the experimental setting, not through technical modeling but through identification of naturally occurring controlled environments.

The two methodological approaches of this dissertation are complementary and compatible. While using different forms of evidence, at different levels of analysis, both large-n correlational designs and small-n most-similar-cases designs are founded on the idea of making inference from comparison. Both approaches aspire to eliminate, via statistical means or via design choices, the effects of potential confounders, so as to separate out the causal effect of one variable on another. No essay relies singularly on either method of inference. Three of the four essays are dominated by the quantitative method, which consequently is the dominant method in this dissertation.

Measuring mediation effectiveness

Scholars of mediation face the recurrent challenge of establishing criteria for what should count as an effective intervention. It was observed some time ago that “we seem to lack a widely agreed upon Archimedean point for evaluating attempts at international mediation” (Kleiboer, 1996, p. 362). The lack of scholarly consensus, which remains largely unchanged, betrays the complexities involved in assessing mediation effectiveness. First, the effects of mediation sometimes materialize only after considerable delay. Time lags between the application of mediation and observable outcomes complicate the task of attributing effects to particular interventions. Second, the measurement of outcomes may be distorted by strategic action. Disputants sometimes have incentives to mislead, feigning behavior that carries the appearance of progress—such as agreeing to a truce—while preparing for a different course of action, including continued warfare. Third, there are time
inconsistencies, in that third party intervention may create short-term incentives favoring agreement without altering the underlying long-term incentives, making mediated agreements fragile (Beardsley, 2011). Fourth, there are questions of perspective, focusing discussion on whether success can be defined in any objective fashion or whether insider perspectives should be paramount (cf. Bercovitch & Jackson, 2009).

With several choices available for each of these complexities, the literature naturally presents an array of definitions. Mediation success has been defined in terms of whether offers of mediation are accepted (Frei, 1976), whether the parties’ own objectives are satisfied (Touval & Zartman, 1989, or whether the process promotes problem solving and dialogue (Fisher & Keashly, 1991). A common choice is to define mediation effectiveness in terms of agreement, that is, whether mediation brings disputants to a settlement that they are unlikely to have realized in the absence of external intervention (e.g., Rauchhaus, 2006; Savun, 2008; Svensson, 2007).

No single definition can simultaneously dissolve all complexities. The scholar is left with a balancing act, where the best course of action is to articulate a definition that harmonizes the above complexities in a manner optimal for the research question at hand. Ultimately, therefore, any definition of mediation success is theory dependent—it should be consistent with how we conceptualize mediation and with what we think mediation “does”—and subject to methodological constraints, in particular what is measurable and not. With a project founded in bargaining theory, it therefore makes sense to focus on whether mediation enhances bargaining efficiency, that is, helps to realize gains that the parties would not realize in the absence of the mediator. The most basic observable implication of bargaining efficiency is whether or not a bargaining process leads to an agreement, making it a natural choice for the primary outcome variable in this dissertation. Defining mediation success in terms of agreement also has the advantages of being literature relevant—procedural agreement-based definitions are the closest the literature has come to delivering an “Archimedean point” of reference—and readily observable, facilitating the process of empirical measurement and quantification.

Hence, the main definition of mediation effectiveness used in these essays is whether or not a mediation episode is associated with a procedural agreement between civil war disputants. To allow for more robust inference as to IO intervention effectiveness, several of the essays also contain substantive measures, such as implementation and duration of agreement (essays 2 and 4) and the intensity of violence (essay 3). There is slight variation in how outcomes are defined across the essays, but all are

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11 See Bercovitch & Jackson (2009) and Kleiboer (1996) for a more elaborate discussion of different conceptualizations of mediation success.
operationalizations of the same underlying theoretical concept, namely, improved bargaining between disputants.

Addressing endogeneity

Estimation of mediation outcomes requires consideration of two important sources of endogeneity. The first is the presence of confounding factors—in this case, underlying factors that explain both the application of mediation and the outcomes, or factors that explain institutional structure and outcomes—which would bias the estimate of intervention effects (Morgan & Winship, 2007; Pearl, 2000). To correct for such biases, the essays in this dissertation employ conventional conditioning strategies. In essays 1, 2, and 4, conditioning is implemented via regression designs that include control variables for suspected confounders, identified on the basis of previous research. In essay 3, I control for confounding by means of a most-similar-cases design, combined with assessment of alternative explanations.

Another source of endogeneity is the risk of selection bias, that is, the risk that the distribution of IO interventions (across wars) is somehow related to the likelihood of success (Heckman, 1979; Wooldridge, 2010). More concretely, it may be true that the most capable IOs tend to mediate the most challenging cases, in which case we would underestimate their average effect. Vice versa, it may be true that IOs select conflicts with an above average likelihood of imminent resolution, which would introduce an upward bias. Beyond controlling for confounders, I have sought to account for selection effects by employing statistical correction methods, such as the Heckman selection models used in essays 1 and 2. I also examine the balance on relevant characteristics between the civil wars that received IO mediation and those that did not (essays 1–4). Where such corrections have not been possible, I have sought to underline relevant scope conditions, so that generalization is not expanded beyond the class of IO interventions under consideration.

A related concern is intermediate dependency, that is, the fact that the application of IO mediation to one conflict affects later mediation episodes in the same conflict. There is no consensus in the literature on the direction of such possible biases (Greig & Diehl, 2012), but since the existence of intercase dependencies violates a key assumption of standard regression models (cf. Angrist & Pischke, 2009), they need to be taken into account. In the statistical analyses in essays 2 and 4, I do this by introducing a statistical correction that modifies the certainty of estimates, taking the “clustered” nature of the data into account. In the case studies in essay 3, I try to

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12 For further discussion of selection biases in the application of international mediation, see Gartner (2011), Savun (2008), and Regan & Stam (2000). For selection biases in the analysis of institutional macroeffects, see Haftel (2012).

Data and observations

Investigation of the above-described research questions requires, at a minimum, the following empirical data: (a) time-series cross-sectional data on features of IO design and membership characteristics; (b) time-series cross-sectional data on civil wars, including observations on intensity, duration, and other characteristics; (c) large-n data on IO civil war interventions, including location, duration, and outcome; (d) small-n data on IO civil war interventions, including causal process observations; (e) large-n data on IO member states’ relationships to conflict parties; and (f) small- and large-n data on control variables. Since no comprehensive data source existed that contained (a), I developed a dataset of my own. This dataset, which is presented in essay 1, is used as a source of explanatory variables in essays 2 and 4, and to some extent also in essay 3. For datasets (b) and (c), I relied on off-the-shelf datasets, modified as needed and complemented with observations drawn from the substantive literature on civil war and conflict resolution. The most frequently used datasets are the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset (Gleditsch et al., 2002), the Civil Wars Mediation dataset (DeRouen, Bercovitch, & Pospieszna, 2011), and the Diplomatic Interventions and Civil War dataset (Regan, Frank, & Aydin, 2009). For (d), I gathered extensive new data on two cases of mediation in the Syrian civil war, through desk review of thousands of news cables and dozens of reports and through interviews with IO officials, diplomats, and experts, conducted in Lebanon, as well as via telephone and other private correspondence. The Syrian case studies also relied on casualty data gathered by nongovernmental organizations on the ground inside Syria, data that I procured directly from two such organizations. Data on (e) was developed, based on my own conceptualizations, from re-coded observations drawn from UCDP External Support Data (Högbladh, Pettersson, & Themnér, 2011). For control variables and contextual historical data (f), I relied on a wide range of sources, including data from the UN, the World Bank, and several Correlates of War datasets, each of which is specified in the relevant essay.

The population of IOs varies slightly between essays. Being different subsets of the larger population, the IO populations may perhaps be thought of as different layers of a matryoshka doll. The outer layer exists in essay 1, where the number of examined IOs is the largest and is, as I argue in that essay, a reasonable approximation of the global population of conflict-managing IOs. In essays 2 and 4, I deal with a slightly smaller subset, the middle layer, consisting of those IOs that were active in civil war mediation in the post–World War II period. In other words, this subset is as large as it could be, given the research goal. In essay 3, I deal with the smallest subset, consisting of two IOs, both of which are members of the other two subsets.
As for the civil wars, the cases analyzed in essays 2 and 4 represent the full population of IO civil war mediation episodes from 1945 through 2004 in essay 2, and from 1975 through 2004 in essay 4.\textsuperscript{13} The Syrian civil war data analyzed in essay 3 thus fall outside the data used in essays 2 and 4. Thus the case studies are not, in the strict sense, nested within the large-$n$ structure (cf. Lieberman, 2005), but they nevertheless may convincingly be regarded as cases drawn from a population similar to the one studied in essays 2 and 4 (and hence may be thought of as nested-like).

Summary of the essays
This dissertation comprises four separate essays, each addressing one of the above research questions. All the essays have been written for placement in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Essay 1: Mapping the evolution of IO peacemakers
In the first essay, I introduce the International Organizations Conflict Management (IOCM) dataset, seeking to address the question of how IO institutional design and conflict management capacities have evolved over time. Taking stock of existing IO data sources, I find that they are often blind to institutional heterogeneity, focused on interstate conflict, and often lack cross-temporal observations. Hence, they constitute an inadequate empirical basis for research into the effects of institutional design on intrastate conflict resolution.

The essay describes the development of the IOCM dataset, explaining criteria for IO selection, coding rules, and source material. Beginning in 1945 and ending in 2010, the dataset tracks 21 IOs, providing yearly observations on a range of institutional design variables, authorization mechanisms, and membership characteristics. A descriptive analysis of the data reveals a number of empirical patterns. First, since the end of World War II, there has been a general surge of IOs mandated to do conflict management, with the number of IOs active in this domain increasing from 3 to 21. Second, this population of IOs has gone through three general phases: two phases of institutional deepening (c. 1945–1960 and c. 1990–2010), dominated by expansion of existing IOs, and one phase of institutional establishment (c. 1960–1990), dominated by the emergence of new IOs. Third, there is a high degree of variation across instruments. It is more common for IOs to institutionalize capabilities for diplomatic interventions than for economic sanctions or field missions. Fourth, there is a high degree of variation in the level of institutionalization across organizations, as some, such as the UN,
evolve their intervention instruments rapidly, whereas others, such as the League of Arab States, change slowly or not at all. Fifth, IOs tend to delegate authority more extensively for instruments with lower sovereignty costs, such as mediation, than for military instruments, such as peacekeeping.

Beyond the descriptive analysis, the essay discusses possible applications of the IOCM dataset. These data can be used for theory building (conceptual typologies) and as dependent and independent variables in correlational studies. Illustrating the latter, I replicate and reappraise an earlier study (Hansen, et al., 2008), showing that while IOs with a higher level of institutionalization are more likely to settle disputes successfully, there is variation across intervention instruments and institutional contexts. My analysis demonstrates that although the results of Hansen et al. (2008) are valid at a general level, their corporate measure of IO institutionalization conceals important dimensions of heterogeneity, which can be surfaced using the more subtle distinctions available in the IOCM dataset.

Essay 2: Different IO designs, different effects?
The second essay deals with the second research question, that is, the question of whether variation in IO performance can be explained with reference to variation in institutional design and capabilities. In the essay, I review the literature on mediation and find that there is considerable debate about which factors determine mediation success, generally, and that our understanding of the impact of IO characteristics on outcomes is underdeveloped. Key questions relate to, first, how IOs source information used in mediation and, second, how offers of postsettlement guarantees can be used as an inducement in the presettlement bargaining phase. Drawing on bargaining theory, I develop two hypotheses concerning the impact of IO capabilities on information and commitment problems. I test the hypotheses against data on 122 cases of IO civil war mediation in the 1945–2004 period, using the IOCM dataset as a source for key explanatory variables.

I find that highly institutionalized IOs are more effective peace brokers than less institutionalized IOs. More specifically, I demonstrate that IOs with an institutionalized capability to plan and deploy field missions are more likely to mediate effectively, whereas information-gathering capability does not yield a significant advantage. The benefit from field missions is robust across procedural and substantive measures of outcomes. This result underlines the already established value of third party guarantees in addressing problems of credible commitment (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Fortna, 2008; Walter, 1997, 2002), further corroborating the contention that such guarantees have a strategic, forward-looking effect: the latent ability to provide peacekeeping or monitoring forces can help an IO facilitate peace, even before such forces are deployed. My research demonstrates that such
guarantees are not uniformly effective and instead vary with the institutional characteristics of the mediator.

Essay 3: IO interventions and bargaining mechanisms

In the third essay, I explore how IOs can address bargaining problems that incentivize war, emphasizing the tracing of causal mechanisms. Comparing two interventions, one by the League of Arab States and one by the UN, in Syria in 2011–2012, the essay examines how the institutional capabilities of each IO shaped its attempts to address information and commitment problems. While neither IO succeeded in bringing the war to a durable settlement, analysis of microdata on negotiation progress and fatalities demonstrates variation in outcomes: the League of Arab States (LAS) had minimal procedural and substantive effect, but the UN managed to negotiate a cease-fire and temporarily reduce the intensity of fighting.

As expected, I find that outcomes covaried with institutional resources. The UN is endowed with greater instruments for civil war interventions, whereas the LAS has few and weakly institutionalized instruments. I also find that outcomes covaried with intergovernmental unity. At times when discord between member states was publicly signaled through the failure to reach consensual resolutions, IO interventions had no discernable impact on fatalities in Syria. These patterns of covariation help explain both variation between the two IOs and the longitudinal variation observed for the UN, which reduced fighting initially but failed to do so in the long term.

The primary contribution of this essay is to provide evidence on how institutional capabilities impact, via two causal mechanisms, the bargaining strategies of civil war disputants. The analysis identifies three mediation substrategies aimed at reducing information problems: counsel on the costs of conflict, provision of coordination points, and strategic management of the bargaining context. Drawing on greater institutional capabilities, the UN could maintain a greater scope and proficiency across all three strategies. It consulted more widely, designed a cease-fire that better reflected the nature of the conflict, and sought to sideline potential spoilers, including Islamist hardliners and the expatriate opposition. With lower institutional capabilities and expertise, the LAS mediation was constrained to regional engagements, produced a flawed cease-fire proposal, and did not structure its mediation process to sideline spoilers or reduce rebel fragmentation.

The essay also demonstrates that IO interventions are conditioned not only on capabilities but also on member state preferences, which have clear implications for the strategic behavior of civil war disputants. The Syrian cases thus underline that IO conflict management alone is not sufficient for promoting long-term peace.
Essay 4: The political context: Bias and leverage

The concluding fourth essay, co-authored with Isak Svensson of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University, directs attention to the influence of partiality and leverage on mediation outcomes. Previous research has indicated that mediator bias may be a source of credibility in the provision of information and guarantees (Kydd, 2003, 2006; Svensson, 2007), but our understanding of mediator bias is based largely on studies of mediation by states in interstate disputes. The essay argues that the interstate focus has left scholarship on mediation bias, and hence on mediation more generally, in a position where it cannot convincingly account for the effects of some of the most frequent mediators, IOs, in the realm where contemporary mediation is most prevalent, civil wars.

Drawing on theories of credible signaling and IOs as collective actors, the essay conceptualizes IO bias based on how member state preferences are distributed across the bargaining issue. Four different preference configurations translate into four types of IO biasedness: neutral, pro-government, pro-rebel, and balanced. Based on bargaining theory, the essay also devises a trade-based concept of IO mediator leverage vis-à-vis civil war governments.

Analyzing 116 cases of IO civil war mediation in the period from 1975 to 2004, the essay demonstrates that, contrary to what many scholars assume, IOs are rarely completely neutral. More often than not, political interests are present, and these interests appear to affect mediation outcomes. Statistical analysis shows that variation in bias and leverage help explain variation in how often IOs bring civil war disputants to negotiated settlements. By showing that bias is associated with mediation success, the essay extends to mediation by IOs in intrastate armed conflicts a correlational relationship that has been shown to exist for other mediators, such as states, in the interstate domain. The finding that balanced IOs are the most effective suggests that IOs that contain member states that support each side in a conflict may be able to draw on those relationships to address disputants’ fear of exploitation and to make guarantees more credible. The essay also finds that IOs with significant trade-based leverage over civil war governments mediate more effectively than IOs lacking such leverage, confirming the view that external incentives may play a beneficial role in conflict management.

Conclusions

Prior research has sought to establish whether third party conflict management, a much-used policy instrument, contributes to civil war termination, but the literature remains inconclusive as to a number of key questions.
Constrained by underspecified theories and inadequate data sources, scholars have failed to capture the impact of IO diversity on conflict management behavior and outcomes. We also lack understanding of exactly how IOs operate in civil war contexts and, more specifically, of the means through which IOs may manipulate causal mechanisms set out in leading theoretical frameworks. Further, while scholars have made good progress in determining the effect of mediator partiality on outcomes, there is debate about how to place nonsingular mediators, such as IOs, in relation to these results.

This dissertation investigates these issues. Across a series of four essays, each investigating one or several aspects of IO civil war management, I develop theoretical propositions, gather data, and carry out qualitative and quantitative empirical tests. The main results are essay specific and are summarized in the respective essay. Below, I set out the key findings of the dissertation as a whole, discuss their implications, and make suggestions for future research.

Key findings and implications

This dissertation demonstrates that peace-brokering IOs display considerable heterogeneity in design and capabilities. Heterogeneity cuts across organizations and across time and has consequences for the nature and outcomes of IO conflict management. Quantitative evidence demonstrates that highly institutionalized IOs—defined as IOs with centralized instruments for supporting mediation and, in particular, peacekeeping missions—are more likely to bring civil war combatants not only to settlement but to settlements that endure. Qualitative evidence shows that IOs with such capabilities can engage in interventions of greater scope and credibility, enhancing their ability to shape the calculations of civil war disputants, which may explain the relative advantage of such IOs. Combined, my studies suggest that although institutional capabilities are necessary for sustained intervention effectiveness, they are conditioned on other organizational attributes. IOs with high preference homogeneity can signal intervention durability, giving them an edge over IOs with divided memberships. IOs that contain member states that have provided direct support to civil war disputants outperform IOs that lack such member states.

The key results pertaining to the stronger performance of more-institutionalized IOs are robust across several essays using different types of evidence and approaches. Results converge strongly on the importance of security guarantees and IO unity, whereas the results are mixed with regard to the influence of informational capacities and member state support to combatants. While some of the results have wider applicability, the results should not be extended beyond the core empirical and temporal realm of this dissertation: IO conflict management in relatively recent civil wars. That said, it is reasonable to assume that modern civil wars have enough common
characteristics to make the knowledge extracted here applicable to out-of-sample IO interventions, those missing from the data and those yet to occur.

The dissertation is framed in terms of effectiveness, but it could be framed equally well in terms of ineffectiveness. Indeed, the evidence presented in these studies demonstrates that even when success is defined relatively generously, IO mediation fails more often than it succeeds. The Syrian case studies clearly illustrate the challenges facing a mediator trying to translate procedural progress into material and long-term stability. This empirical pattern serves as an important reminder about the limitations of mediation as an instrument of global governance.

It should be emphasized, however, that this dissertation is concerned less with the overall or average effectiveness of mediation than with the relative effectiveness (or, for the pessimist, relative ineffectiveness) of different IOs. The line of comparison is drawn not between mediated and nonmediated but between mediation episodes applied by IOs with different characteristics. By studying such differences, this dissertation has produced findings that contribute to the literatures on IO conflict management, IO design, and bargaining theory in IR. With an emphasis on the first, I discuss each of these in turn below and provide some notes on methodological contributions, caveats, and possibilities for future research.

**IO conflict management**

A primary contribution of this dissertation is to bring the institutional design research agenda firmly into the intervention-based study of IO conflict management. All four essays confirm the value of differentiating between IOs on the basis of design and capabilities (Abbott & Snidal, 2000; Acharya & Johnston, 2007; Koremenos et al., 2001). If institutional design has an independent effect on IO performance, ceteris paribus, a key implication is that the question of IO effects, which has attracted a lot of scholarly interest in IR, is in many ways misdirected. Rather than ask whether IOs are effective or not, we should ask which IOs are effective and under what conditions. As such, these studies constitute a departure from the ‘uniformity assumption’—the idea that IOs are homogenous, static, state-centric entities with uniform effects—arguably the most important reason why scholars have not been able to confidently determine whether interventions such as mediation are good, bad, or inconsequential.

By providing theoretical arguments and evidence to undermine the uniformity assumption, this dissertation throws into doubt those studies of conflict management that rely on undifferentiated measures of IOs (e.g., Crescenzi et al., 2011; Gartner, 2011) and studies that explore IO conflict resolution over long periods of time but neglect to take into account the evolving nature of IOs (e.g., Oneal, Russett, & Berbaum, 2003).

More importantly, the studies robustly vindicates scholarship that argues that to understand whether IOs promote peace or not, we need to disaggre-
gate IOs and understand the effects of their separate components (Boehmer et al., 2004; Hafner-Burton et al., 2008; Haftel, 2007, 2012; Hansen et al., 2008). At the same time, this dissertation contrasts with these disaggregation-oriented studies in at least three important ways: it emphasizes agency, it provides data that are more fine grained, and it focuses on different causal mechanisms.

Adopting an intervention-based perspective, this dissertation views IOs more as actors than as fora for interstate interaction. Stressing IO agency implies that certain institutional features, such as supranational bodies of expertise and pre-established frameworks for collaboration between IO staff and member states, are emphasized over purely interstate arrangements. Given that most contemporary wars are civil wars\textsuperscript{14} and given the increasing recognition that IOs often have some degree of independence (Hawkins et al., 2006), a shift to focus on civil wars and agency in IO conflict management seems overdue.

Moreover, I take disaggregation further, across institutional features and across time, providing a more granular view of IO institutionalization. For example, whereas Boehmer et al. (2004) rely on a three-level measure of institutionalization, my studies provide greater nuance, both quantitatively and qualitatively, leading to a wider range of possible institutional configurations. They also include a longitudinal perspective overlooked in several of the aforementioned studies (e.g., Hansen et al., 2008). This granularity opens up the possibility of higher specificity in theorizing of linkages between institutional design, interventions, and the strategic structure of cooperation problems facing disputants. As seen in essay 1, this allows me to demonstrate variation, even among the most institutionalized IOs, missed by less granular studies.

Last, while there is considerable theoretical overlap between this dissertation and the aforementioned studies, their interstate orientation leads them to focus on different explanatory pathways. For example, Haftel (2012) emphasizes economic interdependence and meetings between high-level state officials and Boehmer et al. (2004) privilege information transmission and signaling dynamics between states over the dual impact of information and material incentives on nonstate parties.

Turning to specific results, this dissertation identifies five determinants of IO intervention success.

First, I find that the ability of IOs to extend credible offers of enforcement assistance is positively associated with conflict resolution. This finding suggests that commitment problems are the most central bargaining barrier in contemporary civil wars, and that IOs that can eliminate this barrier have an advantage. The emergence of this result from two separate large-\textit{n} studies

\textsuperscript{14} In 2013, the population of 33 ongoing armed conflicts did not contain a single interstate war (Themnér & Wallensteen, 2013).
(described in essays 1 and 2), as well as from the Syrian case studies, all drawing on different data sources, indicates that the association is robust. My results suggest that guarantees are not uniformly effective; instead, they vary with the institutional characteristics of the mediator. More specifically, the evidence points to a logic favoring IOs with institutionalized capabilities to deploy, manage, and resource experienced field missions, in the form of peacekeeping or monitoring forces. Multiple regression analysis also demonstrates that field mission capabilities have a forward-looking effect, implying that disputants evaluate the credibility of a peace proposal on the basis of the capacity of IOs to provide enforcement assistance in the future.

Since the utility of peacekeeping forces is fairly well cemented in the literature (Collier, Hoeffler, & Söderbom, 2008; Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Fortna, 2008; Sisk, 2009; Walter, 1997, 2002), the primary extensions here are, first, to provide a more highly specified theory of guarantee-related institutional capabilities; second, to suggest linkages between IO unity and intervention effectiveness; and, third, to demonstrate not only that peacekeeping guarantees work ex post but also that they may be instrumental in bringing about a deal ex ante. The theoretical argument for a forward-looking strategic effect of implementation guarantees has been discussed in the literature (Walter, 2002) but has not, as far as I know, been subjected to empirical tests in relation to IO mediation.

Second, I describe an unanticipated finding concerning the information-gathering capability of IOs. Evidence presented in two essays diverges and does not lend itself to clear conclusions. Essay 3 describes a comparative case study of two IO interventions in the Syrian civil war, which seem to indicate that information-gathering capacities matter, at least at the margins. In the essay, I conclude that greater information-gathering capabilities allowed one IO to consult with a wider selection of stakeholders and, thereby, to more accurately assess relevant bargaining variables, specifically the relative resolve and power of the disputants. However, large-n evidence provided in essay 2 does not bear these conclusions out and instead reveals that various measures of information capability are insignificant or negatively correlated with negotiated outcomes. In sum, the larger quantity of observations in essay 2 is balanced against more-detailed evidence on a smaller number of cases in Syria.  

Hence, these studies lend mixed support to (but do not invalidate) previous findings on the relationships between information-gathering and mediation outcomes (Elgström et al., 2003; Savun, 2009). There are several possible reasons for this difference from prior results. For example, it may be that the critical bargaining barrier, on average, consists of commitment

15 In essay 1, I find a significant and positive result for informational capabilities in model 1, the replication of Hansen et al. (2008), but the temporal domain of the study of Hansen et al. (1816–2001) does not allow reliable comparison with the other results.
problems rather than information problems. This certainly would be the case in extended conflicts, where conflict parties have had much time to update themselves and accurately estimate relative capabilities (cf. Fearon, 2004), but would not clarify why IOs could not play an informational role in newly erupted wars. Notwithstanding these limitations, the study suggests some alternative ways in which IOs may alleviate information problems. These alternatives focus not on the direct provision of information but on orchestrating functions, which diminish information asymmetries primarily by coordinating and shaping the bargaining setting. In Syria, for example, both the UN and the LAS attempted to achieve unity among the fragmented opposition, to in effect make the opposition into a coalition with a coherent bargaining position, and the UN clearly sought to sideline potential spoilers, hardline actors with extreme preferences. This suggests that supranational IO agents, when operating in an intrastate context, behave in accordance with some of their long-established intergovernmental roles, including the provision of coordination points and the shaping of the bargaining context (Keohane, 1984; Tallberg, 2006).

Third, my studies reveal that institutional effects are contingent on contextual factors. Both the large-\(n\) analyses and the Syrian case studies indicate that, irrespective of the level of institutional capability, the effectiveness of IOs is greatly diminished if mediation takes place in highly intense civil wars (those with more than 1,000 yearly battle deaths). That is, if conflict parties have strong and persistent incentives to pursue violent strategies, IOs operate with dramatically weakened odds of success. My findings lend support to studies that argue that higher intensity has negative implications for conflict management (e.g., Regan & Stam, 2002), raise questions about work that has argued the opposite (e.g., Fearon, 2004), and feed into the debate over the most opportune moment for (that is, the ripeness of) mediation interventions (cf. Zartman, 2001).

Fourth, the leveraging of institutional capacities is subject to political constraints, both internally, via member state influence inside IOs, and externally, via power politics in the international system as a whole. The Syrian cases provide excellent illustrations of how IO mediation can be circumscribed by adverse macropolitical conditions. The strong connection between member state unity and improved outcomes found in the case studies also suggests that intergovernmental signaling has implications for the credibility and durability of IO interventions. I find that disputants factored in these dynamics and that it shaped their expectations as to the enforcement of cease-fire agreements. This connection suggests that in addition to the resource logic sketched above, there is a strategic logic, favoring IOs that can credibly signal that they will remain engaged in a given civil war. Qualitative evidence suggests that IO voting on issues relating to a given crisis may function as a mechanism of such signaling. Were this logic to receive further empirical support, it would line up with previous work by
Thompson (2006) and Thyne (2009) on the signaling properties of IOs. It also has some correspondence to mechanisms identified in the literature on the liberal peace (e.g., Doyle, 2005; Oneal et al., 2003) and on the signaling effects of domestic institutions in foreign policy (Fearon, 1994; Schultz, 2001)

Fifth, and further to the politics of IO interventions, the analysis of member state biases in essay 4 invalidates the idea that IOs—or mediators more generally—are neutral. In about half of the civil war dyads examined, IO member states provided active support to one side, and in about a quarter of the cases, to both sides. Regression evidence described in the same essay points to a robust relationship between such support and negotiated agreement, suggesting that the benefits of biased mediation (Menninga, 2013; Savun, 2008; Svensson, 2007) extend to IOs. Interestingly, the most effective IOs were balanced IOs, indicating that the negative aspects of bias, such as difficulties in building trust, may be ameliorated if a mediator’s bias in favor of one side is balanced by bias in favor of the other.

At first sight, my findings on membership preferences may appear to diverge. In the Syrian cases, it was argued that preference homogeneity was beneficial, whereas it was associated with a lower probability of negotiated agreement in the study of IO bias. The critical distinction is that the Syrian cases examined preferences as to IO intervention policies, whereas the latter study looked at preferences as to the outcome of the war. It is perfectly possible for member states to support different sides in a civil war while simultaneously uniting around an IO policy to resolve that same civil war. Vice versa, member states may be at odds over the best approach to a given conflict yet be uniformly disinterested in its outcome. If my findings are reliable, the former combination predicts success, whereas the latter would likely be associated with failure.

**IO design**

My studies resonate with scholarship on IO design and performance beyond conflict management. First, they add descriptive evidence to a body of research concerned with mapping the diversity of international cooperative arrangements, both in the security field (Haas, 1983; Haftel, 2007, 2012; Kirchner & Dominguez, 2011; Oneal & Russett, 1999; Tavares, 2009) and in other policy fields (e.g., Acharya & Johnston, 2007; Tallberg et al., 2013). Several of the institutional trends identified in essay 1 resonate with findings in the comparative literature on international governance arrangements (e.g., Edward & Milner, 1999; Katzenstein, 1996), suggesting isomorphic variation across regions, issue areas, and levels. Note, for example, that the regional variation in civil war response mechanisms displays similarities with the institutional configuration in international trade (Hoekman & Kostecki, 2009) and environmental cooperation (Young, 2011), where areas of deeper institutionalization (such as Europe) are balanced against areas with more
shallow arrangements (such as South Asia). Similarly, the variation in depth of institutionalization of different intervention instruments appears to be a local expression of the more general pattern of covariation between autonomy and sovereignty costs discussed in the IO design literature (Abbott & Snidal, 2000; Haftel & Thompson, 2006; Hooghe & Marks, 2014). Further, the clear capacity gap between the global level, here represented by the UN, and most regional organizations is analogous to the organizational configuration in other policy spheres, such as trade and human rights (cf. Mansfield & Milner, 1999).

While this dissertation privileges the exploration of the effects of such variation, it also, less conspicuously, provides descriptive analysis of institutional patterns that open up for investigation of their causes. The existence of design analogies across domains suggests the possibility of parallel drivers of institutionalization. These remain to be confirmed, but the evidence provided in this dissertation, in particular the IOCM dataset described in essay 1, offers opportunities for causal analysis of institutional evolution, preferably through large-n, longitudinal studies using methodological approaches pioneered elsewhere (Tallberg et al., in press).

A premise common to the studies in this dissertation is that IOs may be grouped into classes that share common features but also may be studied as individual members, each endowed with particular characteristics. Some characteristics are foregrounded, whereas others operate in the background. One form of variation that operates in the background in all the essays except essay 3 is the difference between global and regional organizations. The UN is an outlier in the population of peace-brokering IOs, as in many other areas: the UN has evolved the most sophisticated intervention instruments; it has a larger membership than any other IO; and, being the prototypical institution of global governance, it enjoys a unique symbolic status. Throughout these studies, I have accounted for the UN’s uniqueness by including control variables for institutional fixed effects (or “UN fixed effects”) in most statistical models, by analyzing data subsets that exclude the UN, and, in the Syrian case studies, by including qualitative discussion of key differences between the UN and the Arab League. It would have been possible to cut the cake differently and opt for an analysis that emphasized the difference between global and regional organizations—indeed, there is a literature that draws its analytical energy from an underlining of this dichotomy (e.g., Gartner, 2011; Peck, 1998)—but the essays in this dissertation demonstrate that it is feasible to analyze IO variation while maintaining the conventional conceptualization of global and regional organizations as members of the same class of actors.

*Bargaining theory in IR*

With regard to bargaining theory, evidence from several of my essays is consistent with expectations about the behavior of third parties and the general
nature of the main causal mechanisms of information and commitment problems. While my analyses provide stronger support for the commitment mechanism, observations of the strategies undertaken by mediating IOs are consistent with both mechanisms: IOs engage in behaviors that can be understood as aiming to reduce information and commitment problems. However, my analyses have also yielded data on dynamics that do not emerge immediately from standard bargaining models. These data are not inconsistent with the bargaining framework, so rather than point to invalidation, they imply possible pathways for theoretical development.\(^{16}\) For example, the Syrian case studies show that civil war bargaining is linked to bargaining at other levels of the international system. Most conspicuously, bargaining between primary disputants is affected by bargaining between IO member states. Theorizing such links is an area of possible elaboration, which might take inspiration from multilevel bargaining models developed for other policy areas, such as trade (Putnam, 1988) and foreign policy (Fearon, 1994; Schultz, 2001).

Further, it may be worthwhile to expand the bargaining theory of war—at least of civil war—to better capture the multitude of rebel actors commonly involved in this type of conflict. As is suggested in the Syrian case studies, rather than follow the standard idea of dyadic warfare between one government and one rebel movement, it may be more accurate to conceive of the some civil wars as aggregations of multiple dyadic microdisputes or sub-dyads. As explained in essay 3, a theoretical move of this kind may help us to better theorize the impact of certain IO instruments. It may also help us understand strategic effects across subdyads, akin to strategic effects between the international and intrastate levels, which may help explain why some peace agreements are enforced whereas others unravel. Some of these issues have been addressed in the literature on spoilers (Cunningham, 2006; Stedman, Rothchild, & Cousins, 2002), but further conceptual work is required to understand how strategic effects may cascade across subdyads and what third parties can do to prevent such unraveling.

**Methodological contributions**

While advancing the research tools available to political scientists was not a primary ambition of this dissertation, the lack of clear-cut templates for measurement of IO performance in the literature triggered some minor methodological developments that may be worthy of wider consideration. The overarching approach—identifying theoretical linkages between IO

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\(^{16}\) Naturally, any recommendation for theoretical elaboration must be weighed against the costs of reducing the scope of theoretical applicability. Most of the formal models, including standard bargaining models of war (e.g., Fearon, 1995; Powell, 1996), are best thought of as heuristic devices, parsimoniously capturing the dimensions of social interaction most relevant to the topic at hand.
capabilities and bargaining mechanisms, with concomitant operationalizations—should be generalizable to issues that can be feasibly captured by bargaining-theoretic approaches. While identifying impact-oriented measures of IO performance that generalize across policy realms may be difficult (cf. Gutner & Thompson, 2010), this dissertation shows that construction of performance measures that generalize across IOs within a clearly defined area is possible. Here it was civil war mediation; alternatives may include IO interventions in domestic collective labor bargaining—which is structurally analogous to conflict bargaining—or policy areas that entail clear externalities or costs of failure, such as the environment (Young, 2011; Young, King, & Schroeder, 2008).

The case studies in essay 3 take the analysis of these linkages even further, as they connect IO behavior to fine-grained longitudinal data on outcomes. By combining qualitative and quantitative evidence, at a high degree of disaggregation, these studies not only allow for more-detailed analysis of intervention effects but also strengthen the credibility of causal attribution, given that the co-temporality of intervention behaviors and outcomes rules out several alternative explanations. Capturing co-temporality was possible because of the high disaggregation of the data that I gathered for both sides of the explanatory equation. Absent such data, it may not be possible to engage in similar analysis in other areas; but wherever the data conditions are favorable, such analysis should be undertaken. The more general methodological point is that the quest for disaggregation should be pursued across all steps in a causal process: from explanatory factors, via mechanisms, to outcomes.

Limitations and future research

Several improvements over the present research design are possible. Any research project subject to temporal and monetary constraints faces the challenge of reconciling competing priorities, compelling the researcher to adopt nonoptimal solutions in some instances. This study is no different. The results and implications of the study should be read in the context of the following caveats, all of which point forward to new research tasks.

First, in large-n research, we are rarely able to determine exactly which of the main bargaining problems drives a given conflict. Rather, we assume that such problems may be present, and we focus the study on indirect linkages provided by institutional capabilities geared toward a given bargaining problem. This approach is comme il faut in the literature, which contains few serious attempts to pre-identify bargaining problems empirically, but it is nevertheless a methodological weakness, in some ways similar to the uniformity assumption criticized above. Relatedly, as hinted at in a previous section, the study of informational dynamics—such as the existence of information asymmetries and their alleviation by third parties—is
hampered by methodological limitations. The primary challenge is to accurately measure beliefs while retaining the benefits of the large-\(n\) approach. Absent access to the minds of the primary parties, the researcher must rely on indirect measures, and sometimes such proxies imply questions about the validity of measurements (cf. Gleditsch, Metternich, & Ruggeri, 2014). Hence, attaining better ways to identify bargaining problems as they exist on the ground would be highly beneficial for empirical tests of this widely used theoretical paradigm. The Syrian case studies provide some evidence (most of it had to be excluded from essay 3) on the types of bargaining problems existing in Syria. That most of the evidence emerged from case studies is symptomatic, since much of the evidence provided in the literature is similarly case based. But how do we aggregate such case-particular information into a comparative framework? Are there ways in which we can develop credible indicators for bargaining problems for large-\(n\) analyses?

Second, as mentioned above, this dissertation has largely sacrificed theoretical width for depth and disaggregation. While I have accounted for alternative explanations throughout, via control variables and design choices, the focus has been on estimating causal effects and mechanisms within the bargaining framework. Consequently, many opportunities for in-depth exploration of alternative mechanisms have been left on the table. Attention should be directed to fleshing out the theoretical linkages within both rationalist approaches and nonrationalist approaches. In the former, more attention could be directed toward exploring how IO design factors matter in mediating conflicts driven by indivisibilities (cf. Fearon, 1995). While it has been argued that indivisibilities are not really a separate mechanism of conflict causation (Powell, 2006), they appear to have empirical resonance (Toft, 2003) and have attracted some interest in related studies (Haftel, 2012). Which institutional capabilities would be the most relevant for IOs seeking to relax indivisibilities materially or to change perceptions of them discursively? This is an interesting question for future research.

Another avenue of research within the rationalist paradigm would be to explore the ways in which IO design may affect the ability of an IO mediator to promote concessions by providing political cover (Beardsley, 2010) or build a reputation as an effective mediator (Greig & Regan, 2008). Similarly, research should explore nonrationalist mechanisms that link variation in IO characteristics with variation in outcomes. Here, one would imagine that certain IO capabilities could provide an advantage in helping to transform identities (Deutsch, 1957; Lederach, 1995) and to address social grievances (Cederman, Gleditsch, & Buhaug, 2013), or legitimacy concerns (Hegre, Ellingsen, Gates, & Gleditsch, 2001).

Third, further research on the political constraints of IO interventions is recommended. Power and interests resonate through all the essays of this dissertation, but much can be done to improve our understanding of the interplay between the national and supranational and of how the former
affects the latter in the area of conflict management. Naturally, there are plenty of “big debate” writings related to this topic, but more work is needed that maintains proximity to the subjects and mechanisms at the heart of this dissertation, namely, IO capabilities and their interaction with causal processes driving civil war.

Fourth, this dissertation analyses the effectiveness of IOs at the level of separate interventions. This approach has several advantages—for example, it diminishes the influence of certain confounders—but it also sidesteps an alternative perspective, namely, the overall, structural effects of IOs on the prevalence of conflict within their areas of influence. Such an approach would view the family of peace-brokering IOs as an institutional overlay or architecture, assuming that it functions as a permanent incentive structure that influences the incentives of possible disputants at the domestic level. While this approach raises new endogeneity concerns—primarily that the scope of IO capabilities in a given region is likely to be driven, at least in part, by the history of violent conflict in that area—it provides for analysis of aggregate institutional effects on civil war, including the important question of whether IOs may not only terminate wars but stop them from breaking out in the first place.

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