

Humanitarian Intervention: What is it good for?

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TITELBILD

Ein bolivianischer Soldat bewacht einen Beobachtungsposten während einer Übung, 2002.
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ABSTRACT

In light of increasing conflicts and frequent discussions about the application of military force, this paper asks whether humanitarian interventions can do more good than harm. A qualitative approach that employs several examples is used in order to offer broad applicability while maintaining a precise and detail-oriented perspective on humanitarian intervention. The paper takes the stance that humanitarian interventions are not fit to bring long-lasting and structural peace to a conflict. It shows that, while some interventions certainly do achieve negative peace, others even instigate or intensify fighting.

KEYWORDS

humanitarian intervention, unintended consequences, moral hazard theory, United Nations

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The post-Cold War era turned out to be a time of increased conflict and geopolitical power play with the result of a clogged-if-not-incapacitated United Nations Security Council (UNSC).¹ At the same time, there are ever-echoing calls for external military involvement² to bring about a resolution to these conflicts – the most salient example being the case of Syria. It appears, however, that in politics, the efficiency of military intervention in resolving conflict and ending harm is being neglected and rather judged upon on the basis of political ideology or national vested interest.³ But necessarily, as Taylor Seybolt puts it, “humanitarian military intervention can be justified as a policy option only if decision makers can be reasonably sure that intervention will do more good than harm” (2007: 30). Whether that is the case will be scrutinized in this paper.

This is necessary because military interventions create risks at many levels. For one, an intervener will likely face costs, both financial and physical – i.e. human lives, infrastructure, and military equipment – which, for the other, might in turn put at stake public opinion, votes, and office. The target country of intervention similarly faces costs – financial, material, and particularly in terms of human lives, as the risk of casualties both among combatants and civilians is immense. Moreover, political settings and economic infrastructure will be at risk of destruction. Even if the change of the former is the goal of an intervention, the destruction of the latter is certainly not a condition for future peace.

This paper seeks to pinpoint the drawbacks of humanitarian intervention. It shows that intervention can exacerbate existing conflict and instigate hitherto peaceful conflict parties to fight (Crawford 2005) and yet, while

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- 1 Likely influenced by a neorealist perspective, the Cold War era was largely perceived on the pretext of *interstate* relations (Roe 1999: 188) and therefore, *intrastate* conflicts were often overlooked. It is not astonishing that at the end of this conflict and after the Soviet Union’s breakup, the intrastate level became more prominent in politics and scholarly observation. For one, there may have been a cognitive component, meaning that after the Cold War, researchers became more receptive to conflict on a sub-state level. For the other, the Soviet central government’s stronghold on its republics did have a flame-retardant effect, if not one of direct suppression. Hence, the Soviet Union’s disintegration gave way for more intrastate conflict. Obviously, there have been intrastate conflicts all along, which, especially through superpower involvement and by-proxy influence (see for instance Luansi 2001, Thomashausen 2002, Hinnebusch 2003) may have just been understood or framed as interstate conflicts. Nevertheless, as Alex Bellamy and Nicolas Williams (2011: 547) show, there has been a sharp and sudden jump in numbers of rebellions against governments right after the end of the Cold War. Bellamy’s and Williams’ numbers show a steady decline in rebellions after 1996. But their numbers end in 2008, hence not including the developments of the Arab Spring which posed a strong resurgence of intrastate conflict. Overall, their numbers show that the post-Cold War era is facing a lot more intrastate conflict than the Cold War period while in their sample and period of observation (1946-2008), Lotta Harbom and Peter Wallensteen (2009) show that the amount of intrastate conflict has significantly surpassed the amount of interstate conflict.
 - 2 The political circumstances after the Cold War have certainly fostered the emergence of the concept that is the Responsibility to Protect. To acquire an overview of its academic debate see Thakur (2005), Bellamy (2006), and Stahn (2007). With or without explicit mention of this concept, calls for intervention have been voiced in recent years (but not listed here in an exhaustive way) regarding the situations in Darfur and South Sudan, Yemen, Libya and Syria in connection with the civil wars that emerged from the Arab Spring movement as well as calls resulting from the emergence of the so-called “Islamic State”.
 - 3 A logically inverted perspective pointing out the negative economic effects – a disadvantage for German companies in the rebuilding of Libya - and thus criticizing Germany’s non-involvement in the 2011-intervention in Libya depicts some thought processes other than saving lives and averting human harm that revolve around third-party interventions (Murphy/Flauger 2011, Handelsblatt 2011, Brüggemann 2011).

being unable to address the root causes of conflict. In the short term, intervention may be able to save lives and thus alleviate a crisis, but it may at the same time fail to foster long-lasting peace. This paper will illustrate these issues by employing several interventions as case examples. Paul Diehl, Daniel Druckman, and James Wall have argued that single case studies do neither “assist us in building a theory of peacekeeping”, nor do they “provide much guidance in making policy” (1998: 34). In contrast, looking at a number of such cases is likely to produce a broader applicability of the findings. In addition, this approach achieves the detailed depiction that is needed to accommodate the fact that interventions are never one and the same in scope, conduct, and especially in relation to the conflict situation they are executed in. On the other hand, it is clear that no general findings can be derived from this paper. Therefore, it rather aims at calling to mind some major problems of intervention.

Harbom’s and Wallensteen’s (2009: 579) numbers show that the peak of intrastate conflict was in 1992, seconded by Bellamy’s and Williams’ numbers on rebellions against established governments peaking in 1991 and 1992, respectively (2011: 547). Today, particularly the Middle East is shaken up by the US-led Iraq War, the Arab Spring movements as well as civil wars and the emergence of the so-called “Islamic State” (IS). In this climate, interventions of differing scale were executed in Libya (2011), Yemen (2015/16), as well as in Syria and Iraq against IS since 2015. At the same time, for instance, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, since 1999 the UN mission MONUSCO is still operating to maintain peace. However, a comprehensive humanitarian intervention in direct response to the civil war in Syria has been prevented in several instances due to geopolitical power play in the UNSC. Hence, while the peak in intrastate conflicts has been overcome, the issue of international intervention retains great relevance.

This paper will not employ a hard and fast definition of humanitarian intervention as the issues presented occur on a spectrum of diverse types of external military involvement. That is because, as Diehl/Druckmann/Wall (1998: 34) point out,

“the functions of peacekeeping operations have moved beyond interposition and cease-fire monitoring to include election supervision, nation building, and a wide range of other functions. Peacekeeping has also adopted more coercive tactics and strategies, making it increasingly less distinct from collective enforcement actions”.

This paper will however specifically focus on humanitarian intervention executed by military personnel, thereby excluding diplomatic intervention and sanctions as much as intervention that is evidently not guided by humanitarian considerations.⁴ Brendan Simms and David Trim (2011: 1) define humanitarian intervention as “[...] action by governments [...] to prevent or to stop governments, organisations, or factions in a foreign state from violently oppressing, persecuting, or otherwise abusing the human rights of people within that state”. This definition points out sharply the motive behind such an intervention: preserving human rights and protecting people from human rights abuses. It also implies that interventions are executed by an external force, i.e. another government (or usually an alliance of several ones), in turn indicating that the intervention is executed without consent of the target state (Hehir 2010: 16, 18).

Some additions to this definition are in order. Firstly, an intervention can certainly consist of other than military means, as e.g. economic sanctions and embargoes; eviction or withdrawal of diplomats etc. Secondly, unlike traditional peacekeeping, for which target state consent is a precondition, the present paper understands an intervention as a forced entry which is not bound by target state consent (Bellamy/Williams/Griffin 2010: 196). Hence, the respective state is considered to be at least impartial but likely belligerent towards the humanitarian intervention.

INTENSIFYING OPPOSITION

If an intervention is not neutral but either implicitly or explicitly supporting one party to the conflict, it thereby adds to the military action against the opposing conflict party. That opposing party, the target of intervention, will likely increase its military action and in total cause more harm relative to no third-party intervention (Zartman 2003: 23-24). It has been shown that intensification of conflict, especially against civilians, is a common measure in civil war. Rebel groups that are poor in resources tend to perpetrate violence against civilians as an instrument to acquire resources as well as to prevent civilians from collaborating with the opposing conflict party. Strong rebel groups do, however, resort less to violence against civilians, as they are more capable of enticing civilians with resources towards supporting them (Wood 2010).⁵ An intervention, then, changes the conflict. That is, either deliberately or as an unintended side effect, if the entity targeted by the intervention tries to (re)gain the upper hand against the combined power of the opposing conflict party and the intervener, the conflict may intensify, spread over a wider area and hence endanger proportionately more civilians. Wood’s

4 For example, Emizet Kisangani and Jeffrey Pickering (2008: 9) have proposed the terms of “strategic” and “territorial” interventions in contrast to humanitarian intervention.

5 Wood’s methodology is founded on the binary opposition of rebels and the respective government.

findings show that outside support for the government decreases the relative capabilities of the rebels, which is why they need to resort to more violence against civilians “in order to control the population and enforce loyalty” (Wood 2010: 611). Furthermore, Wood et al. find that “the entrance of foreign troops on the side of an actor’s adversary leads the opposed group to escalate its anti-civilian violence” (Wood/Kathman/Gent 2012: 657). That can happen as *biased* third-party intervention likely changes the conflict party’s strategic calculus and hence its conduct (Balch-Lindsay/Enterline/Joyce 2008: 349). Equally important, Matthew Krain’s study has confirmed earlier work stating that *impartial* intervention is ineffective in stopping violence and should rather be focussed on rebuilding and reconciliation (2005: 383).⁶ Even purely peaceful humanitarian relief missions conducted in areas that are not yet struck by conflict violence but rather by accompanying effects such as poverty, hunger or disease may lead to a geographical stretch of troops of the forces opposed to the humanitarian intervention which then inflict more harm on civilians (Kuperman 2014: 196). That is because “a logistical operation to supply food and medicine to internally displaced people can, in the eyes of a militia, increase the value of attacking those people [...]” (Seybolt 2007: 39) – possibly as such operations are easy targets in comparison to armed operations but can still be claimed as success and used as motivation for the attacking troops. The case of Kosovo’s interest in secession from Serbia and NATO’s involvement is an example for the intensification of opposition. In 1999, NATO threatened to bomb Serbia if Slobodan Milosevic did not sign the proposed peace agreement. Rather than giving in, Milosevic responded with the ethnic cleansing of 850.000 Kosovo Albanians, internal displacement of the rest and a resulting ten thousands of deaths (Kuperman 2005: 159, 2008b: 64). The anticipated effect of the intervention did not unfold and rather than coercing Serbia to hold back, the intervention indeed antagonized the perpetrator. It illustrated the limits of humanitarian intervention as it made clear the possibility that “under coercive pressure to surrender sovereignty, a state may instead opt to perpetrate genocidal violence in hopes of retaining sovereignty” (Kuperman 2008b: 66).

WHO WANTS TO REBEL?

There is another dynamic of unintended effects of military intervention and intervention regimes such as the *Responsibility to Protect* (R2P). These effects are commonly known as “moral hazard” (Kuperman 2008a): in their goal to protect civilians from human rights violations, interventions create a false sense of military support for marginalized sub-state groups, militias, or rebels and hence unintentionally foster secessionist interest or violent conduct against the government “by lowering expected costs and increasing the likelihood of success” of such endeavours (Kuperman 2008b: 49). The contested regime, however, may in turn seek to secure its regime’s survival by weakening the challengers with measures of mass violence. Hence, interventions may even “create some genocidal violence that would otherwise not occur” (ibid.). Rebels are understood to know this dynamic and willingly accept it, as the long-term perspective for victory is perceived to compensate short-term losses of life. Hence, according to Kuperman, in some cases rebels even engage in fraudulent behaviour. They deliberately provoke genocidal retaliation against their kin’s civilian group by the regime they are fighting against in hopes that this will increase the likelihood of supportive outside intervention (2008b: 51).

Kuperman supports his thesis with several cases.⁷ Regarding Bosnia in the 1990s, he finds that the Bosnian Muslim secessionists knew about the military supremacy of Serbian and Yugoslavian troops but nevertheless proceeded secession, disregarding the high likelihood of military opposition and the resulting death toll on part of themselves (2008b: 56). A few years later in Kosovo, the secessionist drive was pursued, in spite of mounting oppression through Serbia, after a relatively peaceful conduct had been maintained for years. Here, the rebels did instigate the fighting, but Kuperman states that they still proceeded in the face of retributive small-scale violence and later larger-scale genocidal violence perpetrated by the Serbs because the NATO air campaign gave them the impression of outside support (2008b: 64).

In case of the Darfur crisis, Kuperman presents findings supporting the hypothesis that different rebel groups instigated fighting, trying to reproduce the success of South Sudanese rebels to attract intervention, and also kept fighting even when faced with retaliatory violence by the regime in Khartoum. This is supported by evidence that two of three Sudanese rebel factions backed

6 Firstly, in his study, Krain focusses on ‘state-sponsored mass murder’ in intrastate war (2005: 364). Secondly, Krain’s study implies that biased interventions against perpetrators of state-sponsored mass murder are the only effective type of intervention to slow or stop the perpetration. It does, however, discuss the most effective way of intervening and does not consider side effects of intervention as presented in this paper.

7 For a comprehensive insight into moral hazard in Bosnia, Kosovo and dissenting views, see Kuperman (2005, 2008a, 2008b) as well as Jon Western (2005) and Arman Grigoryan (2005, 2010). For the case of Darfur, see Kuperman (2009); see also Belloni (2006) and Whitty (2008). In the case of NATO’s 2011 intervention in Libya, Kuperman argues that there is – however yet inconclusive – evidence for strategic violent provocation of the regime through rebels with the goal of provoking excessive state-led retaliation and a subsequent intervention to stop the regime’s violence and further the rebels’ goals (Kuperman 2013). For an excellent theoretical discussion of the moral hazard-concept see Timothy Crawford (2005).

down from violent conduct, only as it was made clear to them by a US negotiator that there would not be an intervention. This suggests that apart from underlying causes, a main driver for the outbreak of violence was the belief in a forthcoming supportive intervention (Kuperman 2009: 294).

One ought to be cautious about the credibility of this argument. There is a large body of criticism surrounding it, led especially by Bellamy and Williams (2011), who argue that the moral hazard theory oversimplifies conflict dynamics and “provides misleading accounts of actors’ motivations” (2011: 558). However, Kuperman’s findings as well as the underlying moral hazard theory need to be taken into account when evaluating interventions as a tool of dealing with conflict. That is, the unintended consequences can hardly be prevented while still pursuing military action. There has been criticism as to why the UN has not limited its R2P narrative to the message that intervention will only help marginalized groups that engage in “good” conduct, hence deterring fraudulent behaviour (Grigoryan 2010: 1143). However, doing this would practically disable the R2P-norm altogether and subsequently make interventions impossible as the already substantial threshold in the UNSC to reach consensus would mount even further. Then the community of states could only obviate the unintended consequences of intervention if it were to refrain from intervening altogether and therefore would not convey the message to certain sub-state groups that they might receive help (see also Kuperman 2014). Thus, humanitarian intervention is stuck in a dilemma: when executing a military intervention, through its unintended consequences, intervention can either be a policy tool doing more harm than good – or, when refraining from intervening to circumvent its unintended consequences, it becomes a dysfunctional and non-operable concept altogether.

THE PROBLEM WITH SAFE ZONES

Operations that are set out for the protection of civilians might even draw the perpetrator’s attention to people at risk, as it sometimes is the case with safe zones. This can be illustrated by the following examples: During the Bosnian war, the city of Srebrenica was declared a UN safe zone to keep away fighting from the already refugee-packed area (Landgren 1995: 447). Although a ceasefire within Srebrenica as well as its demilitarization had been agreed upon by the conflict parties, the Bosnian Serb military took over control of the zone and perpetrated a massacre in which roughly 8.000 male Bosnian Muslims were killed (Brunborg/Lyngstad/Urdal 2003: 229).

After the Rwandan genocide, a safe zone was arranged by the French Operation Turquoise in July 1994, comprising of ten camps for an estimated one million refugees. In February 1995, by the time the UN mission UNAMIR had taken over, the largest of the remaining camps, Kibeho, became scene of a massacre perpetrated by soldiers of the Rwandan Patriotic Army militia (RPA)⁸ (Landgren 1995: 450).

Following the 1991 Gulf war, Kurds and Shia Muslims rebelled against Saddam Hussein’s government in Northern and Southern Iraq, respectively. The Iraqi military struck back, causing 20.000 fatalities and capturing 100.000 people. The US Operation Provide Comfort provided assistance to people along the Turkish border and set up a safe zone. Then, however, Turkey launched attacks against this zone, targeting supporters of the separatist Kurdish Workers party (Landgren 1995: 443; Seybolt 2007: 51).

For one, the creation of safe zones *per se* risks that they are turned against their purpose: rather than saving people at risk they place a large group of people in confined space and make them easy targets for perpetrators. For the other, it may be the inactivity or inability of the interveners combined with inappropriate composition of the respective operation due to a restricted mandate that puts the people in safe zones at risk. The Dutch battalion in Srebrenica was no match for the Serbian forces as it was understaffed and running out of resources (Honig/Both 1996: 4). UNAMIR had been reduced as the Rwandan genocide unfolded, then strengthened in May 1994 (UN.org 2014); yet, it was still not able to prevent the violence in the Kibeho camp. In contrast, Operation Provide Comfort constitutes an exception, as it was well equipped as well as sufficiently staffed and generally deemed successful (Bellamy/Wheeler 2011: 517). However, the international community “turned a blind eye” as Turkey attacked the safe zone (Seybolt 2007: 51).

These examples were safe zones with boundaries no one necessarily needed to abide by. To really render them safe, such zones would have to be agreed upon by all parties to the conflict (Landgren 1995: 454). Yet, given the typical conflict environment in which interventions take place, it is questionable in how far such an adherence could be guaranteed at all. As a result, safe zones have to be guarded heavily by the intervener in order to ensure that the lives they have been entrusted with will be protected. If the intervener fails to do so, as it was the case in Bosnia and Rwanda, the intervention brings more harm than good and should therefore rather not be undertaken at all.

8 The RPA was the Rwandan Patriotic Front’s (RPF) military arm (Seybolt 2007: 72), which from 1989 regularly invaded Rwanda mostly from Uganda, triggering the Rwandan Civil War and being part of the dynamic unfolding the 1994 Genocide (Kuperman 2004, 2000). As the Genocide was executed primarily against Tutsi, the Tutsi-RPA defeated the Rwandese Government Forces, enabling the RPF to cease political power, thus turning the page and putting Hutu at risk. This constituted the need for safe havens for internally displaced people, among which however thousands of perpetrators from the Genocide would hide, posing a justification for the RPA’s incursion and massacre in the camp (Landgren 1995: 450) .

DIGGING DEEPER FOR THE ROOT CAUSES?

In addition to the factors mentioned above, intervention has yet another major weakness. For example, Seybolt points out that Operation Provide Comfort “revealed the major powers’ preference for treating the humanitarian effects of crises while avoiding the difficult political issues that caused the suffering” (2007: 52). At first glance, it is a logical assumption that armed intervention disregards root causes of conflict. For example, the first and most stressed pillar of the original ‘R2P’ document is the pillar of prevention, which seeks to tackle the root causes of conflict before “rushing to embrace intervention” (ICISS 2001: 19). Hence military intervention is intrinsically distinguished from alleviating root causes. If interventions indeed only treat the symptoms of a conflict, violence is likely to break out again as the intervention will only have imposed or maintained a negative, but not, however, a positive peace.⁹ So the root causes remain untreated and are likely to result in conflict again.

In practice, it is, however, not correct that humanitarian intervention is detached from treating root causes. Seybolt points out that several interventions within his case selection did have a political scope. That is insofar as aside from the components of serving relief, rehabilitation, and providing aid to civilians, these interventions were also mandated to facilitate political reconciliation and re-establishment of political institutions. Among other things, the mandate of UNOSOM II in Somalia included exactly these two aspects (Seybolt 2007: 57). In East Timor, the military-led UNAMET organized and conducted a referendum dealing with the question of independence from Indonesia, whereas UNTAET was mandated to be the transitional legislative, executive and judicial authority (Seybolt 2007: 88-93). Hence, those two interventions set out to tackle threats to negative *and* positive peace, i.e. they included both aspects to conflict that are symptoms and root causes. Whereas these were no real *preventive* measures, as, strictly speaking, they were facilitated during or after a conflict and thus qualify as peacebuilding and peacekeeping rather than conflict prevention, both these interventions do qualify to be measures to prevent a next instance of conflict. And indeed, interventions in the post-cold war era that are mandated by the UNSC often are followed by peacebuilding measures.

Moreover, preventive intervention that deals with root causes before a conflict breaks out depends on the political decision for military engagement on part of the intervener. Hence, interventions can only deal with root causes

if the intervener recognizes an upcoming conflict. This is problematic, as oftentimes even grave conflicts show little warning signs but rather have their root causes simmer and then erupt suddenly. Interestingly, either way, preventive military deployments rather deal with imminent crises and not with structural violence (Ackermann 2003: 341-342). This task is generally rather executed – following the approach of Liberal Peace – by developmental programs, or, as for the EU, within its accession negotiations.¹⁰ To William Maley, expecting interventions to end conflict altogether is entirely unrealistic. “At best, one can hope to *civilize* political conflict so that violent or destructive forms of behaviour are avoided” (Maley 2002: 270). And while this may be the case, as effacing deep-seated issues, grievances or conflict is certainly not an easy task to fulfil, it still poses to be a deficiency of intervention and subsequently implies that potential interveners have recognized the inability of armed intervention as a true preventive measure. Here it is assumed that a slower, more incremental implementation of structures and values (like democracy and a free market) is more effective because it avoids the imposition of violent imposition that might be caused by an intervention.

HOW TO MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF INTERVENTIONS?

So far, this paper has provided a general view of theoretical problems and pitfalls regarding humanitarian intervention. What has not been dealt with so far is the question of success and failure as well as how that should be measured.

“Success” is an arbitrary parameter as its measurement depends on the party evaluating it and therefore it may significantly overlap with the very subjective motivation to intervene and whether this motivation is fulfilled. It can lie in the fulfilment of territorial acquisition, regional stability or perhaps in the cessation of fighting by “making the actual costs of fighting prohibitively high or by making the benefits of not fighting particularly attractive” (Regan 1996: 341). Seybolt (2007: 30) defines success in terms of saved lives, meaning “if in a humanitarian crisis some people would have died without assistance, but did not die because of the actions of military personnel”. The picture based on this definition is a grim one: apart from East Timor, the interventions in the other five countries included in Seybolt’s case selection saved significantly less lives than the amount of lives lost during the respective conflicts. That is, in either of those countries, several thousand and sometimes tens of thousands of lives were saved, having gained measurable suc-

9 This terminology is taken from the work of Johan Galtung. Peace is distinguished into negative and positive peace. The former signifies the absence of personal, physical violence whereas the latter also includes the absence of structural violence, which in its most basic form is an inequality in political power distribution (Galtung 1969).

10 There is a large body of work on ‘EU conditionality’. The EU holds the ‘carrot’ of EU-accession over the head of candidates to employ a variety of EU values and structures and in turn fosters economic development, thereby addressing root causes of conflict (Grabbe 1999, Schimmelpfennig/Sedelmeier 2004, Commission of the European Communities 2004a, 2004b).

cess. These amounts are, however, contradicted by significantly larger death tolls that could not be averted.

Seybolt then distinguishes the 17 interventions in his case selection to (1) *help deliver aid*, (2) *protect aid operations*, (3) *save victims*, (4) *defeat the perpetrators*, or (5) a mix of either of those classifications. Then, the grim picture becomes more colourful and some conclusions can be drawn from these differentiations. Out of the seven interventions to which *saving victims* was applicable, one was a failure (Operation Allied Force in Kosovo), four were mostly failures (UNAMIR, Operation Turquoise and the Rwandan Patriotic Army's intervention in Rwanda; UNPROFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina), one was mostly successful (KFOR in Kosovo) and one was a success (Operation Provide Comfort in Iraq). Contrarily, however, of those seven cases to which *help deliver aid* was applicable, one was a "small success" (Operation Support Hope in Rwanda) and six were deemed a success (Operation Provide Comfort in Iraq; Operations Provide Relief and Restore Hope in Somalia; UNPROFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Operations Allied Harbor in Albania and Joint Guardian in Kosovo. In total, of "the 17 interventions, nine succeeded in saving lives; four failed to save lives and two of these made life worse for at least a short time; and four had a mixed record, meaning that they saved lives but in the context of failing to save many more" (Seybolt 2007: 270).

Seybolt points out that the 'easiest' (*delivering aid*) and the 'hardest' (*defeating the perpetrator*) interventions were the most successful. Here, *defeating the perpetrator* was successful four out of five times (Operation Deliberate Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Rwandan Patriotic Army's intervention in Rwanda; Operation Allied Force in Kosovo and INTERFET in East Timor were successes, while UNOSOM II in Somalia was a failure) and *delivering aid* in seven out of seven times. Seybolt understands the former interventions to be successful as they are considered a rather easy task. The latter ones tend to be successful as interveners may be aware of the challenge and arrive well-prepared. *Protecting aid operations* and *saving victims*, on the other hand, earn such mixed to negative results as interveners may underestimate the full scope of necessary means to fulfil the given task (Seybolt 2007: 274). Another possible explanation for this is the lack of willingness on part of interveners to bear the costs of intervention as well as an aversion to casualties, leading to "half-baked efforts at peace-keeping on the cheap that may be insufficient to create successful peace-building" (Gizelis/Kosek 2005: 365).

Even beforehand, finding consensus on the questions whether to intervene and – if so – how to do it, is a troublesome process on the national level already, and per-

haps best described by Charles Lindblom's "science of muddling through" (1959). Suppose now that national governments further negotiate the matter of intervention on the international level, for instance in the UN: as reaching consensus is indeed so problematic, national negotiators may only have a rigid set of demands and concessions they can bring to the table in order to still be able to communicate their conduct as a success to their governments. The more levels a momentous issue like intervention has to be discussed on, the harder it gets to reach consensus, likely ending up in a dysfunctional compromise. If, however, only one state or a willing coalition conducts an intervention, it can be assumed that it is more likely to become a functional endeavour.¹¹

Hence, it is important *who* intervenes. UN missions have an inferior record than the ones conducted by unilateral actors or coalitions of states. Seybolt concludes that the UN should abstain from conducting humanitarian interventions as it does not have a standing army and is thus left to deal with the troops it is being offered (2007: 273). That may be a big disadvantage as the UN have to rely on differing amounts of troops or levels of training as well as the possibility that different troops bring different sets of values stemming from different cultural upbringings and may thus offer incoherent conduct on the ground.

Interestingly, Birger Heldt and Peter Wallensteen (2007: 34-37) find no significant difference in success rates when comparing UN operations with non-UN operations – neither by the proportion of peacekeeping operation deployment months of ongoing *interstate* or *intrastate* war, nor when looking at the ratio of peacekeeping operations experiencing transitions from war to peace (success) vis-à-vis transitions from peace to war (failure). They do find that there are more transitions from war to peace than vice versa. Based on similar methodological parameters, Heldt (2002) finds that UN-led *intrastate* peacekeeping operations are not less successful than *interstate* operations.¹² Their purported lesser record boils down to intrastate operations most often being deployed to environments of ongoing war and war inertia. This disparity stems from the difference in analytical focus. Unlike the abovementioned factors that Heldt and Wallensteen take into account, Seybolt focusses on success in terms of lives saved.

Based on these findings, it is indeed possible that within a certain frame, interventions can be a constructive answer to conflict. As Alex Bellamy and Nicholas Wheeler point out – matching Seybolt's findings mentioned above – interventions can have a short-term military success as they may be able to fulfil the short-term goal of stopping a conflict. Addressing root causes and maintaining a long-lasting peace are, however, a much harder task,

11 Similarly, one needs to be aware that the same argument could be used to legitimize an intervention driven by a single state's particular interest.

12 Success being defined as „absence of war“ (Heldt 2002: 128).

rendering military intervention less likely to succeed (Bellamy/Wheeler 2011: 517).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper has obviously not touched upon all or even a majority of facets the phenomenon of military intervention holds. Importantly, for instance, literature regarding the influence of third-party intervention on the duration of intrastate wars was not touched upon. Ibrahim Elbadawi and Nicholas Sambanis (2000) find a positive effect of external intervention on conflict duration, meaning intervention prolongs conflict; so do Dylan Balch-Lindsay and Andrew Enterline (2000). Patrick Regan (2002) finds a strong positive and robust impact of military intervention on the prolongation of conflict, with the likelihood of a biased intervention in either direction being higher to end conflict than any neutral approach. Paul Collier, Anke Hoeffler, and Måns Söderbom (2004: 267) find that a pro-government military intervention increases conflict duration while a pro-rebel military intervention decreases it. Both effects are however statistically negligible and, in their effect, lag far behind factors like, for example, income inequality and ethnic fractionalization of a society. Karl de Rouen and David Sobek find that UN operations, while increasing the likelihood of a truce or treaty, “increase the expected time needed for both government and rebel victories” (2004: 317).

Nevertheless, the examples presented in this paper pinpoint several problems of armed intervention. As it has been shown, intervention can have unintended effects such as antagonizing the perpetrator or spreading a conflict geographically and hence lead to an intensification of fighting. Also, intervention is an insufficient tool for addressing the root causes of conflict and sometimes, depending on the composition of an intervention, it is even insufficient in dealing with the symptoms. And although interventions can be successful in saving lives and can bring short-term success, they again may have the unintended effect of fostering secession or partition and causing more conflict. Therefore, it can be concluded that, in sum, interventions indeed cannot do more good than harm.

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