LOVE THY NEIGHBOR: POST-CIVIL WAR RECONCILIATION AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

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ABSTRACT

Victoria Staub: Love Thy Neighbor: Post-Civil War Reconciliation and Social Inequality
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This thesis investigates the role of social inequality in the recurrence of civil war, arguing that prevailing peacebuilding strategies—such as power-sharing agreements and peacekeeping missions—are insufficient without a genuine commitment to social equity. Drawing on theories of relative deprivation and (re)humanization, I contend that unresolved grievances rooted in perceptions of civil and public inequality among social groups significantly undermine the durability of peace. Using a multilevel logistic regression analysis of post-conflict societies from 1992 to 2023, I find that greater equality in civil liberties and access to public services significantly reduces the likelihood of renewed conflict, even when controlling for established peacebuilding mechanisms. These findings are further illustrated through a comparative case study of the First and Second Liberian Civil Wars, which underscores the importance of inclusive governance and community-level reconciliation. This research contributes to the peacebuilding literature by highlighting the critical need to address social grievances in post-conflict societies to prevent cyclical violence and promote sustainable peace.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Post-civil war societies face the daunting task of establishing sustainable peace following the devastation of war. Conflict recurrence poses a formidable obstacle to the successful implementation of this task. The adage that "war begets war" encapsulates the significant correlation between previous conflicts and the likelihood of future unrest, as civil wars are often met with cyclical violence (Walter 2015; Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug 2013). The literature surrounding post-conflict peacebuilding identifies several critical factors that contribute to durable peace, notably the roles of power-sharing agreements (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003) and peacekeeping missions.

Despite the prominent role these frameworks play in establishing peace following a civil war, conflict recurrence persists fervently and frequently. In spite of these safeguards following a conflict, why do civil wars continue to recur? This paper argues that the focus on power-sharing and institutional reforms, while important, is insufficient without addressing the pervasive grievances rooted in societal perceptions of inequality. When entire social groups feel particularly discriminated against, it provides the optimal breeding ground for mobilizing grievances. If conflict has already occurred, especially one including the aggrieved social group, the mobilizing threshold is far less difficult to overcome, thereby making recurring conflict more likely. In this paper, I argue that when governments are unable to credibly signal intent to implement social equality, built-up grievances easily mobilize social groups, thus resulting in conflict recurrence.

Thus far, the focus of post-civil war literature has been on establishing order in the form of a functioning government and an immediate end to violence. However, during this time, it is also crucial to demonstrate willingness to address the concerns at the root of the conflict itself. Without addressing these inequalities, grievances fester, thereby resulting in resumed conflict despite safeguards that aim, but sometimes fail, to truly demonstrate a dedication to establishing long-lasting peace.

In this paper, I utilize multilevel logistic regression to evaluate civil war recurrence. I focus on the ways in which indicators of social inequality contribute to disruption of post-war peace. This methodology allows for a nuanced examination of how variations in civil liberties and access to public services among social groups impact the likelihood of conflict reemergence. I also examine the relevance of such indicators alongside current robust peacebuilding strategies, peacekeeping specifically, to determine how significant social inequalities truly are within the post-war atmosphere. In both cases, I find that greater levels of social equality significantly decrease the likelihood of conflict recurrence.

This paper is organized into various sections. I begin by introducing the concern of conflict recurrence which I then follow with key institutional methods of combating this problem. Next, I explain how and why social inequity disturbs the peacebuilding process, thus inhibiting durable peace. I empirically test my hypotheses by employing a multilevel logistic regression of conflict recurrence and discuss my results. Next, I apply my theory to two case studies, those of the First and Second Liberian Civil War, to supplement my empirical findings before finally concluding.

CHAPTER 2: THE PREVALENCE OF CONFLICT RECURRENCE

Conflict recurrence is a considerable threat to durable peace, especially in civil wars. Evidence suggests that war begets war (Walter 2015; Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug 2013), so the presence of one civil war often signals the occurrence of another. Due to concerns of credible commitment on the part of both government and rebel actors, civil wars that end with negotiated settlements often recur (DeRouen Jr and Bercovitch 2008), unlike those resolved by military victory, which tend to experience more durable peace (Licklider 1995). Some scholars argue that more specific agreements may help to combat this commitment problem (Fortna 2003) while others claim that civil war recurrence is less likely following a rebel victory, and the longer peace is sustained, the less likely war is to recur (Quinn, Mason and Gurses 2007). There is an extensive literature that aims to understand what conditions are most sustainable for peace primarily because recurrence is so common. In this paper, I aim to contribute to the discussion of mitigating the opportunity for conflict recurrence, and I will do so by drawing attention to a substantial, yet relatively untapped, area of peacebuilding that existing literature often does not consider.

CHAPTER 3: TOOLS AND TACTICS FOR POST-CIVIL WAR PEACE

While understanding the proper tactics that help to make peace more durable is incredibly important after a civil war, sometimes peace remains unachievable. Even though various strategies statistically demonstrate the ability to establish post-war peace, it is unreasonable to suggest that they can cover all important areas of healing. Instead, much of the post-conflict literature has focused specifically on institutional changes that can help sustain peace.

Perhaps one of the most well-known reconstruction strategies is power-sharing. Deriving from the theory of Lijphart (1997), power-sharing is defined as "rules that, in addition to defining how decisions will be made by groups within the polity, allocate decision-making rights, including access to state resources among collectives competing for power" (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003). In other words, power-sharing arrangements are meant to deter any one group from monopolizing power in a post-conflict or transitional government. These institutions take on various branches of government, and evidence suggests that more sharing provisions are better at providing durable peace (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003). Some arguments suggest that power-sharing leads to democratization, thus increasing the likelihood of peace (Hartzell and Hoddie 2015; Wolff 2011).

Most importantly, power-sharing is theorized to create a sense of security among former adversaries by promoting conditions that support self-enforcing peace and credibly signaling conciliatory intent through the implementation of these policies (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003; Hoddie and Hartzell 2003). Power-sharing is inherently costly as this cost is what makes peace agreements more credible. In other words, the actual implementation of power sharing agreements signals credibility because both sides face the heavy costs of both an immediate loss of political power to their competitor and the likely loss of support among members of their own groups that are more militant (Hoddie and Hartzell 2003). While this may assist in a longer-lasting peace agreement, it does not address the hatred and separation of the broader community. Forcing groups to work together at an institutional level does not inherently imply that the represented communities will improve their interactions

socially. To put it more simply, non-political discrimination remains an issue when prioritizing institutional structure.

An additional strategy for ensuring that peace agreements are complied with is to send in a third party. There is ample evidence that suggests the inclusion of an external actor, generally United Nations peacekeeping forces, can be instrumental in establishing more durable peace (e.g., DeRouen Jr et al. 2010; Quinn, Mason and Gurses 2007; Fortna 2003, 2004; Walter 1999; Beardsley and Schmidt 2012; Costalli 2014; Gilligan and Stedman 2003; Fortna 2008; Gilligan, Sergenti et al. 2008; Hegre, Hultman and Nygård 2019; Ruggeri, Dorussen and Gizelis 2017). The consistency and robustness of this finding is especially striking given that the UN usually only intervenes in the toughest cases (Walter, Howard and Fortna 2021). Peacekeeping forces are deployed to countries with a large amount of violence, particularly insufficient governments, and active conflict. Peacekeepers are used throughout conflict as forces of reducing civilian and combatant killing in civil wars and preventing the spread of violence, but they also play important roles in the establishment of peace agreements and the subsequent implementation of these agreements. Most importantly for the scope of this paper, peacekeepers are very efficient at reducing the risk of conflict recurrence (Fortna 2008; Doyle and Sambanis 2000, 2006; Sambanis 2008). They do this by containing the spread of conflict both within and across borders, reducing civilian and military deaths, and making settlements more likely. Statistically speaking, peacekeeping is successful.

Despite this, peacekeeping does not always work, and well-known cases such Bosnia and Rwanda are testaments to that. I argue that the area in which UN peacekeeping forces are insufficient is with regard to the reintegration process. The United Nations often turns toward Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programming when conducting peacekeeping operations. These programs aim to prevent war recurrence, reduce military spending, disrupt the control of armed groups, and enhance the lives of ex-combatants (Muggah 2010). Empirical evaluations of DDR in existing literature tend to focus on outputs, such as weapons collected and the amount of ex-combatants enrolled in the program (Theidon 2007). As such, DDR measurements are really only capable of measuring the disarmament and demobilization parts of DDR. This proves to be problematic in that the absence of weaponry alone does not constitute reconciliation between both combatants and their communities (Willems and Van Leeuwen 2015; Duthie 2005; Nilsson 2005; Brahimi 2000) and different communities with one another. Some scholars have made suggestions

regarding how to approach filling this gap. Banholzer (2014) stresses the need for context-specific DDR approaches that address unique local challenges. In fact, informal negotiations – those between former commanders, ex-combatants, elites and community members, and families and dependents – are often the key to the success or failure of DDR programs (Muggah 2010). This points toward the idea that peacekeeping and DDR do not sufficiently address problems held by more localized groups. By not being equipped to address these problems, existing post-civil war strategies are unable to assist societal grievances outside of the institutional sense.

CHAPTER 4: GRIEVANCES AND REBEL MOBILIZATION

Because institutional strategies can fail to address disputes between former combatants and additional group-level problems, post-conflict societies run the risk of providing opportunity for mobilization due to new or resurfaced grievances. The existing literature on grievances focuses primarily on economic inequalities as a mobilizing force for aggrieved groups and individuals (Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug 2013; Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch 2011). Notably, understanding mobilization is not solely relevant to conflict onset. When a conflict is resolved, remobilization is significantly more likely as prior conflict is strongly associated with conflict recurrence (Walter 2015; Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug 2013). For that reason, it is important to examine remobilizing grievances as post-conflict peace is already so fragile. Usually, discussions of grievance exist along the line of individual and groups, but I am far more interested in the distinction between grievances that are driven by concrete, empirically-derived inequalities from those that are driven by perceived inequality. These different perspectives are described as horizontal inequality and relative deprivation, respectively. Political scientists have traditionally focused on horizontal inequalities when considering mobilizing factors for rebel organizations (e.g., Bustikova 2014; Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug 2013; Collier and Sambanis 2002; Østby 2008; Sambanis and Milanovic 2014; Siroky and Hale 2017). Their evidence suggests that greater horizontal inequalities increase the likelihood of group conflict. Social psychology literature, on the other hand, thinks of grievances in terms of relative deprivation which prioritizes perception and subjectivity over objective indicators (Siroky et al. 2020). Relative deprivation emphasizes individual or group frustration owing to a gap between what one group has relative to what it feels it deserves, not necessarily to what others actually have. Because of this concept of *perceived* inequality, objective economic indicators may be unable to account for deeper-rooted agitators that may result in group remobilization.

This manifests in interesting ways. For example, if one group's reference group has a much higher status, even well-off groups may still feel relatively deprived (Barbalet 1992; Crosby 1976; Merton

1938; Runciman 1966; Walker and Smith 2002). Thus, groups that may have come out of conflict relatively unscathed can still harbor resentment toward a group of higher status. This resentment derives from the fact that individuals and groups do not blame themselves for not having what they want or believe to be entitled to (Crosby 1976). Instead, they blame their misfortunes on a villainized "other" (Buštíková and Guasti 2019; Rauschenbach, Staerklé and Scalia 2016). These feelings of relative depravity can foster strong feelings of frustration, resentment, and grievance (Pettigrew 2002; Smith et al. 2012).

The concept of relative deprivation as a root of political conflict derives from Gurr (1970) who describes relative deprivation as the term used "to denote the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the 'ought' and the 'is' of collective value satisfaction, and that disposes men to violence" (Gurr 1970, 23). In other words, the link between relative deprivation and conflict is that groups perceive themselves as relatively deprived regardless of how poor they actually are. Later works reinforced this argument by providing further evidence that relative deprivation provides a motive to engage in conflict because of in- and out-group comparisons (Horowitz 1985; Turner 1981; Bustikova 2014; Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch 2011). That is to say, when individuals feel as though they are facing discrimination due to their social positioning, these individuals may become frustrated enough to seek retribution from the government. If the government does not provide a sufficient outlet for these frustrations to be addressed, a rebellion may be mobilized.

In a similar vein, Siroky et al. (2020) provide strong evidence to suggest that when paired with capacity for collective action, relative deprivation is far more predictive of conflict onset than horizontal inequalities. An additional work makes the similar argument that grievances require a catalyst of opportunity in order to actually mobilize groups, specifically those with ethnic ties (Lindemann and Wimmer 2018)[1]. While collective action capacity is crucial for conflict onset, for cases where conflict has already occurred, the catalyst of capacity becomes less of a concern. If mobilization already occurred once, it's less difficult to overcome collective action problems for subsequent conflicts. Therefore, when grievances among a group are strong enough following a civil war, the conflict can begin again.

[1]Ethnic and social groups are often interchangeable, so I take value in research regarding ethnic groups as relevant to that of social groups more broadly.

CHAPTER 5: THE NECESSITY FOR COMMUNITY-LEVEL ANALYSIS

While most scholars acknowledge that community is important to this process, they primarily understand it as the body to which ex-combatants return. This is absolutely true, but it also does not account for entire communities that are trying to integrate with the larger state. For example, in ethnic conflicts, members of the entire ethnic community must integrate with former enemies, and doing so requires that the healing process be intimate and relational, just as the violence was (Halpern and Weinstein 2004). This concept alone appreciably complicates the post-civil war peace process specifically. Unlike intrastate conflicts, both or all warring parties are required to co-habitate following a civil war. In order to live together, there must be some sense of (rebuilt) respect among various communities. The concern is greater than just integrating ex-combatants back into their own communities. Rather, various communities must be able to reintegrate into a single state (barring separatist cases).

Often, however, the greater community is not disengaged from the conflict at all. In fact, in cases of prolonged conflict, many rebel groups build up civilian infrastructures such as administrators, teachers, health personnel, judges, law enforcement officers, etc (De Waal 2002). The civilian members of guerrilla regimes are often forgotten in the broader integration process. Again, the primary motive behind existing peacebuilding practices is to reincorporate ex-combatants into their communities. But what if the community in its entirety has already been mobilized and engaged in the conflict? In such circumstances, reintegrating this community back into the country at large is acutely pertinent to the peace process.

It is also important to remember why combatants take up arms to begin with. In the case of Burundi, most of the ex-combatants joined due to political grievances (Willems and Van Leeuwen 2015). The sources of these grievances, in most cases, are impactful to a greater community than just those who go on to engage in combat. Those capable of fighting, often men, engage in actual combat, but they do so to represent a group greater than themselves. Post-conflict concerns are

often focused upon those who actively engaged in conflict, but doing so ignores the often group-level grievances that mobilized the combatants to begin with.

The integration literature lacks sufficient acknowledgment of the broader non-combatant community and their struggles of reintegrating into a state that was, presumably, hostile toward whatever group they may belong. What is missing is acceptance of former enemies, whether they be ex-combatants or not, as equals in a post-conflict state. In sum, civil war reconciliation tactics sometimes fail, and this is in part due to the missing piece of considering the greater community and their beliefs about their former adversaries. Therefore, if the differences between former combatant communities are stark, peace is less likely to be durable.

CHAPTER 6: THEORY

While common strategies for post-civil war reconciliation, such as power sharing and peacekeeping, are useful in mitigating violence, they usually lack the emphasis of promoting reconciliation among former enemies, instead favoring institutional reconstruction and intra-community reintegration. Without the reconciliation of differences, ex-combatant regimes run the risk of establishing reason for violence to reignite. It is because of this that grievances play a significant role even after a conflict has been (seemingly) resolved.

Because feelings of relative deprivation, or the perception of deprivation relative to another social group, can lead to frustration and solidify grievances, thus mobilizing groups toward violence, this creates a commitment problem for the durability of peace. I make the key assumption that renewed fighting is more likely to occur when groups harbor grievances against the government (e.g., Cederman, Weidmann and Gleditsch 2011; Gurr 1970). In order to avoid conflict with rebels, the governing community must demonstrate to the rebels that their perceived deprivation, or grievance, will be mitigated to an extent that would reasonably demobilize future potential rebellions. Such a situation requires that belligerents and those for whom they fought overcome an inherent distrust of the other. At the institutional level, this may be more feasible as power sharing strategies usually help make peace more durable. At the societal level, however, average citizens must change their opinions of those they considered to be the enemy throughout the war. Knowing that the government is able to work together is hardly a credible signal to the rest of the country that it is time for peace. For this reason, some sense of authentic intention from the government is required in order to make credible commitments to peace. Building trust is not something that occurs overnight, but until that trust is earned, commitments to peace are simply not as credible. Thus, resurgence becomes more likely without observable changes in the treatment that led the rebel organization to be aggrieved in the first place.

I argue that one way of building trust is for governing communities to prioritize social equity. While some economic and political inequalities may fit into this definition, I define social inequality as anything that aims to dehumanize others based on their social class or group. In psychology literature, dehumanization is categorized as a psychological process that strips others of their group identity (Kelman 2017), places them outside of normal moral consideration (Bandura, Underwood and Fromson 1975; Opotow 1990), or highlights the differences between "their" values and "ours" (Struch and Schwartz 1989), all of which facilitate violence against the dehumanized group. Dehumanization of others is often required for the atrocities of war to feel justifiable for those committing such acts (e.g., Leyens et al. 2000; Kelman 2017; Staub 1989). Because dehumanization is so strongly tied to the psychology of combat, rehumanization must occur following conflict so that the understanding of former enemies still as enemies can be mitigated, thus allowing peace to be more attainable. For example, Anaya (2007) explains that by not emphasizing rehumanization of the enemy in post-war Colombia, the possibility of national reconciliation and sustainable peace was severely hindered. Additionally, in a study examining the rehumanization of out-groups in Israel (i.e., Palestinians), it was discovered that if Israeli-Jews witness other in-group members being of assistance and working with Palestinians, they are more likely to humanize Palestinians whereas they typically define them as animalistic. Notably, this only works when other members of the in-group are the ones helping, not third-party groups (Saguy et al. 2015). These examples demonstrate that rehumanization is a necessary part of establishing peace, but doing so is often a difficult task that requires dedication from the ruling class.

Unlearning this bias is can be a lengthy process, but if a government can credibly signal the genuine intention to treat former belligerents humanely, potential rebel revivals may be avoided. Because grievances are strong indicators for rebel mobilization, a lack of social equality and the feeling of being sub-human, I argue, is a considerable concern that existing post-conflict strategies do not focus on. When individuals feel relatively deprived in response to a government devoid of credible interests in (re)humanizing them, they continue to be aggrieved. In other words, I argue that social inequalities demonstrate non-credible commitments toward the process of (re)humanizing different social groups. Because there is no credible signal to these marginalized social groups, they form (or restore) grievances that (re)mobilize members of their respective communities. Thus, when social inequality is particularly strong, it can trigger relative deprivation, or grievances in general,

within certain social groups to a point where they remobilize and re-initiate conflict. **H1: Higher levels of social inequality in a post-conflict society make conflict more likely to recur.**

Existing post-conflict strategies, specifically power sharing governments (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003; Hoddie and Hartzell 2003) and the invitation of peacekeepers (e.g., DeRouen Jr et al. 2010; Quinn, Mason and Gurses 2007; Fortna 2003, 2004; Walter 1999; Beardsley and Schmidt 2012, etc.), have robustly demonstrated their ability to mitigate additional conflict after a civil war. Yet, civil wars continue to have a high recidivism rate (Collier and Sambanis 2002). This implies that these strategies are not always able to address all potential factors responsible for determining whether conflict is to recur. With that in mind, I contend that the consideration of social inequality remains a relevant explanation for the failure of peace even when existing peacebuilding strategies are already employed. Since my goal is to uncover the gap in existing strategies that allows for conflict to recur on occasion, the exploration of social equality, *in addition* to what we already know to be strong indicators of peace, should remain significant. Social inequality, I argue, is only one part of the peacebuilding puzzle. Therefore, both social equality and institutional restructuring tactics should demonstrate the ability to avoid conflict recurrence.

H2: The effects of social inequality will be significant despite structured efforts at reconciliation following a civil war, thus demonstrating that existing strategies are not addressing social grievances.

CHAPTER 7: METHODOLOGY

7.1 Dependent Variable and Dataset

My dependent variable is a binary measure of a conflict year with 1 demonstrating conflict and 0 otherwise. To measure conflict, I utilize the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict dataset (Gleditsch et al. 2002) to identify years in which a civil war occurred in 74 different countries from 1992-2023. I limit my dataset to these years to avoid inconsistencies with country names and foreign influences due to Soviet occupation and the Cold War era. Intrastate conflict is coded in this dataset as a conflict in which one side is always a government and the other side is one or more rebel groups. This is specifically without the involvement of foreign governments with troops. The conflict threshold for the UCDP/PRIO dataset is 25 battle-related deaths per calendar year. My dataset contains a total of 2,368 country-year observations, 710 of which are conflict years.

7.2 Independent Variables

In order to test my hypotheses, I make use of operationalized versions of what I refer to as social inequality. I turn toward civil liberties and access to public services as measures of social inequality because a lack of these services is dehumanizing. When there are clear differences among social groups regarding their civil liberties, those who are deprived of such freedoms are likely to harbor grievances strong enough to (re)mobilize them. Similarly, while unequal access to public services itself can be demonstrative of poor state capacity, if this unequal access is specific to certain social groups, it is more likely that this was a deliberate exclusion meant to dehumanize members of those underserved communities. These dehumanizing methods provide reasonable justification for these communities to engage in violence against this social repression.

I utilize two different independent variables from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset. I lag both of these variables by one year to avoid improper causation implications due to the

country-year makeup of my dataset. I also expect for the impacts of conflict to be reflective of the year prior, therefore making it appropriate to lag these independent variables by one year. The first of these two variables examines social group equality in respect for civil liberties within each country. Using expert surveys, this variable, *civ_lib*, is given a numeric value that corresponds to the following question: "Do all social groups, as distinguished by language, ethnicity, religion, race, region, or caste, enjoy the same level of civil liberties, or are some groups generally in a more favorable position?" (Pettersson 2023). Civil liberties, in this case, are considered to be access to justice, private property rights, freedom of movement, and freedom from forced labor. In my dataset, *civ_lib* varies from -2.698 to 2.698 with negative values demonstrating more extreme inequality between social groups. The mean value is 0.5. This variable is assigned to each country-year pairing and contains 2,349 observations.

My second independent variable, *pub_serv*, examines access to public services distributed by social group. Much like the first independent variable, *pub_serv* is assigned a numeric value corresponding to answers from expert surveys for each country-year dyad. This variable answers the question "Are basic public services, such as order and security, primary education, clean water, and healthcare, distributed equally across social groups?" (Pettersson 2023). In my dataset, *pub_serv* varies from -2.63 to 2.567 with a mean value of 0.05. This variable contains 2,346 observations.

These variables are, admittedly, imperfect, because these measures are distributed by social group, and often rebel groups belong to the same social groups, these measures can be considered sufficient proxies for social inequality among different potential rebel groups. While I cannot ascertain whether a change in these scores includes the rebels' social group, relative deprivation is dependent upon the status of other groups. So, such changes should still be reflective of greater societal changes that impact the grievances of a given rebel group. Furthermore, the nature of these variables deriving from expert surveys may also be problematic. These surveys are subjective, meaning these experts are not using solely quantitative evidence when deciding upon their answers. However, this may prove to be even more useful for the purposes of this paper because relative deprivation itself is subjective. If these experts are aware of evidence where individuals described their lived experiences relative to other social groups, this would better represent my variable of interest than strictly quantitative data. The years I examine are also fairly recent, so experts should have ample possibility to interact with individuals living through these years or have experienced them themselves.

7.3 Controls

I control for various factors that are known to be associated with conflict onset and recurrence. My first control variable is the natural log of each country-year's GDP per capita. As a proxy for economic well-being and development, wealthier nations tend to be negatively associated with conflict onset (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Sambanis 2004; Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner 2009; Bleaney and Dimico 2011). As is standard, I use the natural log to avoid too much influence from extremely high values.

Additionally, I include a control for peacekeeping operations (*pko*). These data were coded manually using the United Nations Peacekeeping website that lists all current and past missions. By controlling for the presence of peacekeepers, I can demonstrate that even with their assistance in a post-civil war environment, indicators of social inequality continue to contribute to the likelihood of conflict recurrence. This assists in reaffirming that my theory and indicators provide a novel contribution and do not simply reflect byproducts of existing post-conflict tools.

Because prior conflict strongly indicates the likelihood of restored conflict (Walter 2015; Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug 2013), I control for a count of prior conflicts. I use a variable from Reid et al. (2021), the running total of civil wars per country according to Correlates of War, to account for how many past civil wars a state has experienced in a given year.

Finally, I control for the polity score of a country-year dyad to ensure that my variables are not simply reflecting byproducts of democratic regimes. Because existing research points toward a curvilinear relationship between democracy and conflict (DeNardo 2014; Regan and Henderson 2002), I include a squared version the polity score provided by Polity V (Marshall, Jaggers and Gurr 2002) in addition to the original polity score.

7.4 Model

This empirical test will be useful in demonstrating the possibility that there are additional factors that are relevant to the likelihood of conflict recurrence that are not addressed by the existing popular strategies for post-conflict peace. To test my hypotheses, I utilize multilevel logistic regression. This model is appropriate because non-nested models could lead to biased results that inflate significance. This occurs due to the assumption that variance is constant across countries (Steenbergen and Jones

2002). In the case I provide here, a simple logistic regression would result in placing variance into a single error term, and this tends to result in underestimation of standard errors for level-2 covariates such as countries (Gelman and Hill 2007). In other words, not using a multilevel model runs the risk of overestimating effect size and underestimating confidence intervals for conflict-year variables. Multilevel analysis models measure variance at both observed levels, thus allowing me to account for variations across both my independent variables and across countries (Stojek and Chacha 2015). Not accounting for variance across countries as well as independent variables could be potentially problematic because my primary IVs have very different ranges over time depending on the country context.

CHAPTER 8: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Intercept	-0.76^{**}	-1.05^{***}	2.86^{***}	-1.15^{**}	-0.63^{*}	-0.17	1.68
	(0.26)	(0.26)	(0.74)	(0.44)	(0.28)	(0.31)	(1.16)
Civil Liberties	-1.01^{***}	-0.92^{***}	-0.85^{***}	-1.32^{***}	-1.06^{***}	-1.12^{***}	-0.87^{***}
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.21)	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.24)
PKO		1.14^{***}					1.04^{**}
		(0.26)					(0.33)
Log GDP per Capita			-0.52^{***}				-0.42^{*}
			(0.10)				(0.17)
Count Conflicts				0.19			0.27^{*}
				(0.12)			(0.12)
Polity					-0.01	0.01	-0.00
					(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Polity^2						-0.02^{***}	-0.02^{**}
						(0.00)	(0.01)
AIC	1874.93	1858.25	1823.09	1083.77	1553.29	1542.40	1033.96
BIC	1892.12	1881.17	1845.94	1104.65	1575.37	1570.00	1075.37
Log Likelihood	-934.47	-925.13	-907.55	-537.88	-772.64	-766.20	-508.98
Num. obs.	2275	2275	2235	1368	1845	1845	1308
Num. groups: country_name	74	74	74	72	74	74	72
Var: country_name (Intercept)	4.16	4.07	4.34	7.12	4.72	4.85	6.95

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{\cdot}p < 0.1$

Table 8.1: Civil Liberties Models

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Intercept	-1.23^{***}	-1.48^{***}	2.34^{**}	-1.67^{***}	-1.09^{***}	-0.80^{**}	0.98
	(0.24)	(0.25)	(0.78)	(0.43)	(0.27)	(0.30)	(1.22)
Public Services	-1.02^{***}	-0.89^{***}	-0.64^{***}	-1.52^{***}	-1.08^{***}	-1.04^{***}	-0.69^{*}
	(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.29)	(0.20)	(0.21)	(0.31)
PKO		1.18^{***}					1.13^{***}
		(0.26)					(0.33)
Log GDP per Capita			-0.50^{***}				-0.38^{*}
			(0.10)				(0.17)
Count Conflicts				0.14			0.26^{*}
				(0.12)			(0.12)
Polity					-0.05^{*}	-0.03	-0.03
					(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Polity^2						-0.01^{*}	-0.01^{*}
						(0.00)	(0.01)
AIC	1897.83	1879.70	1846.73	1101.51	1564.59	1560.85	1042.99
BIC	1915.02	1902.62	1869.57	1122.39	1586.67	1588.45	1084.40
Log Likelihood	-945.92	-935.85	-919.36	-546.76	-778.30	-775.43	-513.49
Num. obs.	2273	2273	2233	1368	1845	1845	1308
Num. groups: country_name	74	74	74	72	74	74	72
Var: country_name (Intercept)	4.00	3.90	4.50	7.01	4.74	4.87	7.23

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{\cdot}p < 0.1$

Table 8.2: Access to Public Services Models

The results after testing both independent variables primarily support my hypotheses. In Table 1, all models support Hypothesis 1. Without any controlling variables, a one unit increase in civil liberties alone makes the odds of conflict recurring about 64% less likely. With all controls, engaging in conflict becomes 58% less likely. Models 2, 3, and 6 also demonstrate that as equality for civil liberties among different social groups in a given country increases, the likelihood of conflict recurring decreases. Growth in GDP per capita and higher polity scores are also significantly less likely to result in restored conflict. I find no statistical significance in the number of conflicts as a sole control variable (Model 4), but when combined with all controls (Model 7), it does demonstrate conflict recurring to be about 31% more likely, which is consistent with the literature. Polity scores alone demonstrate no statistical significance across the board.

Unexpectedly, peacekeeping substantially increases the likelihood of conflict (Model 2 and 7). This result may be reflective of the idea that peacekeepers tend to be deployed to the most difficult cases, so failure to curb conflict is to be expected to some degree. Despite this unexpected result, this

also helps to support my second hypothesis that even with the presence of post-conflict strategies, promises of social equality remain a significant component in keeping conflict from recurring.

The results from Table 2 tell a similar story. As access to public services on its own increases (becomes more equal), the likelihood of conflict decreases by 64%. With all variables included, the likelihood of conflict decreases by about 50%. Again, peacekeeping missions increase the likelihood of conflict, and every other control presents as I had expected. This time, polity alone does demonstrate statistical significance (Model 5), but this only occurs when it is the sole control variable. It is consistent with my expectations and the literature as well. Overall, these results demonstrate that when social equality is prioritized, conflict is significantly less likely to recur. This is also true when taking into consideration successful post-conflict strategies such as peacekeeping. These observations assist in supporting my hypotheses as well as my more general argument that credible signals of social equality can assist in preventing restored conflict.

CHAPTER 9: CASE STUDIES

Due to the imperfection of the indicator variables in my empirical analysis, I supplement my argument with two case studies. Here, I examine the notable differences between the post-war environments of Liberia's First and Second Civil War. In these two conflicts, the consideration of societal cohesion varied greatly, thus providing two very different outcomes regarding conflict resurgence. Just as I do in my quantitative analysis, by limiting myself to just Liberia, I account for country-level factors that may influence my dependent variable, conflict recurrence. In this section, I point toward the inclusion of various social groups, as well as the demonstration of government commitment to improving the lives of various social groups, as indicators of greater social equity.

9.1 Case 1: The First Liberian Civil War (1989-1997)

Following the end of the First Liberian Civil War in 1997, the newly elected leader, Charles Taylor, initially took the right steps toward national reconciliation by inviting members of rival parties to join his cabinet, thereby initiating a power-sharing government. Initial demobilization efforts were successful as well with the demobilization of 2,200 out of 33,000 combatants within the first month (Adebajo 2002). Despite having engaged in post-conflict reconciliation tactics, Liberia quickly devolved back into a state of conflict. President Taylor swiftly turned to repressing the opposition and attempted to institutionalize his dominance and power. He was also responsible for the assassination of rivals, demonstrating that Taylor's goal was never to reconcile Liberia (Gerdes 2013).

Notably, Taylor refused to allow peacekeepers any role in restructuring and training his security forces. Because peacekeepers are known to significantly reduce the likelihood of conflict recurrence (e.g., Collier, Hoeffler and Söderbom 2008; Hultman, Kathman and Shannon 2016, 2014), the deliberate exclusion of such a stabilizing tool clearly demonstrates the lack of genuine efforts from the Taylor regime in establishing durable peace.

Furthermore, Taylor ordered the demobilization and forced retirement of 2,628 soldiers from a rival faction, many of whom were ethnically Krahn. To replace those he excused, Taylor hired thousands of ethnic loyalists. Additionally, he established an Anti-Terrorist Unit as a private army that reported directly to him. According to Adebajo (2002), Taylor created conditions for the mobilization of ethnic groups to protect themselves against his partisan army. In other words, Taylor established a post-conflict environment that significantly favored one social (or ethnic, as often these are interchangeable) group, thus marginalizing other social groups, most explicitly the Krahns, and ultimately resulting in the mobilization of these groups.

Ultimately, because Taylor himself had quickly given up on, and likely never intended to engage in, the peace process, so too did Liberian citizens. Bouts of ethnic violence began to increase again during Taylor's presidency. Various armed ethnic groups were mobilized in support of rival warlords' agendas. There were reports of forced ethnic redistribution carried out against civilians by Krahn and Mandingo fighters. In the Liberian capital city of Monrovia, harassment of ethnic Krahns increased significantly following a violent incident at the United States Embassy in September of 1998. As a result of this, over four thousand Krahns fled to Cote d'Ivoire. Members of the Mandingo ethnic group were victims of violent attacks due to land and resource disputes as refugees returned to areas that were abandoned during the war. In particular, Lomas in Lofa County and Gios and Manos in Nimba County were responsible for these attacks, further demonstrating the ways in which ethnic groups were pitted against one another following an official conflict resolution (Adebajo 2002). The Muslim Mandingos faced further segregation and discrimination as arsonists burned down six mosques by June of 1998, less than a year after Taylor took office. All of these events are demonstrative of deliberate acts of discrimination that undoubtedly demonstrated inequality among social groups. The government's lack of care toward and, at times, direct instigation of ethnic violence does not bring about a post-civil war setting conducive of peace. As such, by 1999, Liberia was engaged in its Second Civil War.

In summary, when President Charles Taylor took office in 1997, he made half-hearted steps toward reconciliation by inviting power-sharing and DDR programs for the first few months of his presidency. Ultimately, he rejected reintegration assistance from third party peacekeepers and soon was complicit in reigniting inter-ethnic violence, particularly by ousting members of the Krahn ethnic group from the military. At the same time that Taylor himself was involved in targeted discrimination

toward an ethnic group, conflict continued and escalated among rival rebel organizations, most of which were formed along ethnic lines. Taylor demonstrated no willingness to reconcile with former adversaries, and in doing so, he set Liberia up for war again. When a government makes no genuine effort to provide all citizens with equal access to work and reconciliation efforts, instead discriminating against particular social groups, peace cannot be fostered, and conflict is likely to recur. This case demonstrates how the implementation of peace agreements is impossible under conditions in which particular social groups are significantly underserved and face discriminatory violence. It is important to note that these conditions occurred under what scholars have determined to contribute to peace and reconciliation: power-sharing and DDR. Therefore, even with the right tools, social discrimination is a significant factor in the absence of post-conflict peace.

9.2 Case Study 2: The Second Liberian Civil War (1999-2003)

The post-conflict approach and general environment in Liberia differed significantly from the First to the Second Civil War. While leadership under Charles Taylor directly resulted in the resurgence of conflict, Liberia is now considered to be in a state of peace following the Second Civil War. To a certain extent, this peace can be credited to the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Liberia (UNMIL) that began in September 2003 and completed its mission in March 2018. However, the permission of peacekeepers was just one of the main differences between the First and Second Civil War. Instead, reconciliation was actually made a priority after the success of the two rebel groups, the LURD and MODEL, in 2003.

The nature of the conflict itself was different during the Second Civil War. Violence against citizens was far more restricted and targeted in the Second War than in the First. The LURD, which was arguably more significant in the post-conflict reconciliation efforts than the MODEL, specifically emphasized the inclusion and protection of citizens. In fact, several combatants were executed for killing civilians, and by mid-2001, systematic violence against civilians largely ceased (Brabazon 2003). In treating civilians with a respect previous rebel groups neglected to provide, the LURD was helping to instill seeds of humanization necessary to the reconciliation process. Therefore, a significant winning rebel group, the LURD, initiated the first steps toward rehumanization and reconciliation by being generally protective of civilian lives regardless of ethnicity. This citizen-first

attitude carried into both the transitional and post-conflict governments, thus providing a solid basis for reconciliation.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in Accra on August 18, 2003 stipulated a two-year transitional power-sharing government and required the disarmament of all combatants as a primary step. UNMIL assisted in ensuring the adherence of this agreement. While there are similar provisions to those initially present at the beginning of the Taylor presidency, the allowance of third party peacekeeping forces provided much needed oversight for the implementation of the CPA. However, the conditions under which a transitional government accepts UN peacekeeping interference must, to some extent, demonstrate some form of commitment to reconciliation. It is important to note that there were additional signals of this dedication present following the Second Liberian Civil War that were not in any way associated with peacekeeping, but rather were emblematic of community reintegration goals.

Civilian actors played a major role in the new government. In the 76-member National Transitional Legislative Assembly (NTLA), civilian actors held the majority. Every warring party in the conflict was awarded twelve seats with the remaining spots being reserved for civilians. Every county named a civilian representative, and seven further seats were given to "Special Interest Groups" defined in the CPA as the National Bar Association, Liberian business associations, refugees, women organizations, youth organizations, unions and the US diaspora (CPA 2003, Art. XXIV). The opportunity for various voices to be heard and have constructive roles within the peace process provided a far more inclusive post-conflict environment. Ethnic and other social groups were given a spot at the discussion table, thus providing an official outlet to air grievances. In fact, various members of different armed groups joined civilian elites in privately seizing public resources, leading to increased state job opportunities as elites assisted their supporters in gaining benefits from political power (Gerdes 2013). This period was marked by political cooperation and a reduction in political inequalities. This focus on social group inclusion was carried from the transitional period to that of the first president elected after the Second Civil War.

The former president of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, ran her campaign with an emphasis on her associations with members of other parties, civil society organizations (Sawyer 2008), and renowned human rights activists such as Kofi Samuel Woods and Tiawon Gongloe (Gerdes 2013). According to Gerdes (2013), "Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's election victory was to an important extent

due to alliances with a variety of individuals representing diverse social forces. Her government strongly reflected these alliances, and was as heterogeneous (and inclusive) as the coalition that had supported her." Furthermore, her time in office was characterized by prioritizing citizens, as they provided her with significant but necessary power in the post-war setting. Being inclusive, while beneficial to the greater community, was a strategic choice by Johnson Sirleaf. As Gerdes (2013) notes, personal political networks have the ability to be constructed far quicker than institutions, thus allowing for her to address post-conflict exigencies with haste. Regardless of intent, Johnson Sirleaf's government garnered an excellent international reputation.

9.3 Analysis

The First and Second Liberian Civil Wars were fought almost consecutively with just two years of "peace" separating the conflicts. However, these conflicts were considerably different with regard to post-war strategy and outcome. Unlike the period following the First Liberian Civil War, reconciliation and peace was, according to the United Nations, achieved after the Second Civil War. After the LURD and MODEL victory in 2003, the post-war period could be categorized by the inclusion and consideration of various social groups, many of which were ethnic groups that had been sidelined during and following the First Civil War.

Even while the Second War was in progress, civilians were prioritized and treated with far more respect, an aspect that demonstrated a shift regarding the formerly military-centric Liberia. The transitional government included power-sharing provisions that addressed the needs of various affected groups, thus theoretically providing an outlet for grievances to be aired in such a way that would allow for gaps in relative deprivation to decrease. While political representation does not always equate to feeling less relatively deprived, but when there was almost no prior consideration, it is reasonable to assume that different social groups felt that they were on par rather than in contest with one another. When such an attitude toward protecting civilians and focusing on humanitarianism transferred into the first presidency following the Second Liberian Civil War, that of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, there was far less opportunity for grievances to simmer and result in resumed conflict.

On top of this, United Nations peacekeepers were allowed to act as safeguards for the reconciliation phase with UNMIL. They remained in Liberia, ensuring that the peace processes were achieved under a watchful eye, from 2003 to 2018 when they determined that peace had been made in Liberia. Without the consideration of various social groups in the reconciliation process, grievances very easily could have remained and resulted in conflict again, even in spite of the presence of UN peacekeepers. While peacekeepers do tend to make peace more durable, they may not always be successful. It is impossible to say what would have happened had peacekeepers not been involved, but there is reason to believe that peacekeepers were not the only factor that kept violence from breaking out again. Instead, I argue that the consideration of civilians and their various social groups played a significant role in establishing peace in Liberia following the Second Civil War.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

The post-civil war landscape is fraught with challenges that transcend mere institutional frameworks; it is a complex interplay of societal dynamics, perceptions, and the historical grievances that resonate within communities. This paper has argued that while conventional approaches such as power-sharing agreements and peacekeeping missions are essential in addressing immediate stability, they often fail to mitigate the deeper, more insidious causes of conflict recurrence, namely, grievances rooted in social inequality among social groups.

The findings of this study substantiate the notion that perceptions of inequality and exclusion not only persist post-conflict but significantly influence the likelihood of renewed violence. With the use of a multilevel logistic regression analysis, this research demonstrates that improvements in civil liberties and access to public services – critical markers of social equity – are robust predictors of durable peace. The empirical results reveal that as disparities diminish, the risk of conflict recurrence abates, underlining the necessity of addressing community concerns and perceptions in peacebuilding efforts.

Moreover, the case studies of Liberia's Civil Wars illustrate the profound impact of social dynamics in shaping post-conflict realities. The stark contrast between the outcomes of the First and Second Liberian Civil Wars is emblematic of the urgent need for reconciliation efforts that genuinely incorporate all societal groups. Taylor's administration, marked by exclusion and discrimination, was notably distinct from the more inclusive and citizen-centric governance that emerged after the Second Civil War, reinforcing the premise that sustainable peace hinges on a collective movement towards social healing and integration.

In conclusion, this paper contributes to the discourse on post-conflict peacebuilding by emphasizing the critical role of social equality in shaping societal stability. To forge a path towards lasting peace, policymakers and practitioners must recognize that the healing of societies requires more than structural reforms; it necessitates an unwavering commitment to addressing the grievances that lie

at the heart of civil conflicts. By acknowledging and actively remedying social inequalities, post-civil war societies can lay the groundwork for a more peaceful and equitable future, thereby breaking the cycle of violence.

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