

FROM KOSOVO TO DARFUR

The Regional Biases within
Humanitarian Military Interventionism



- Sidita Kushi

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Sidita Kushi

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To my brave family—Edmond, Shpresa, and Odeta Kushi.

We migrated across the ocean and turned our fears into strength and joy.

We made home wherever we are together.

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Preface

This book has its origins in Albania during the political chaos of 1997. At the time, the Albanian government had capitulated. Domestic anarchy reigned in my hometown of Durrës as civilians stormed the military garrisons for arms and supplies. I vividly remember my mother demanding that my sister and I hide behind the thickest wall of our house to protect us from the stray bullets. Back then, Italian ships had come to the rescue from across the Adriatic Sea. Soon after, swarms of exhausted refugees from nearby Kosovo entered our neighborhoods for shelter and protection. My mother's extended family was still in the heart of the storm in northern Kosovo, so we hoped for their safety and rescue too. We listened on our small, red television as US President Bill Clinton swore to protect the human rights of our fellow Albanians in Kosovo, suffering at the bloodied hands of Slobodan Milošević's regime.

I grew up thinking that when people were in lethal trouble, neighbors would come to the rescue. But this shining ideal in my mind would erode over time, mainly once I migrated across the Atlantic. Time and time again, when faced with undeniable narratives of man-made suffering outside of their borders, the US government and its public would often push them to the back burner or politicize the narrative toward political interests. Nonetheless, my experiences in the western Balkans stayed with me. Why did strangers seem to care about the suffering of my family members in Kosovo and Albania, but not the plight of families across Darfur, Rwanda, or Myanmar? Why help some and not others? How did the world make the decision to rescue one foreigner's life while letting another perish? Decades later, this core question led me to stand in the middle of the infamously divided Ibar Bridge in Mitrovica, research notebook in hand, evading the gaze of the guards as I made my way toward the Serbian-dominated side of the city. And

it is this same question that constitutes the heart of this book. Now armed with the theoretical lenses of international relations, robust statistical analysis, and three case studies built upon archival research, I can finally systematically explore the question that arose during the turbulence of my youth. Last, before undertaking this journey, I must recognize the many humans across the globe who may never have the same opportunities to pursue their talents, ideas, and questions in this same way, whether due to war, discrimination, poverty, or geography.

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I never dreamt that the little immigrant girl who didn't speak a word of English would get to write a book in her new language someday. This book was only possible thanks to the unwavering support of my family, friends, and mentors. I am eternally indebted to my former advisor at Northeastern University, Dr. Mai'a Davis Cross, who provided exceptional feedback and unparalleled encouragement along the way. She is the academic that I most aspire to emulate, not only because she is brilliant but because she is always kind.

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To the many wonderful professors in the Political Science Department at Northeastern University, thank you for supporting my academic career from day one of my studies as a wide-eyed first-generation student. To my colleagues at Bridgewater State University and to the Center for the Advancement of Research and Scholarship (CARS), thank you for welcoming me during the height of the pandemic, supporting my work despite scarce resources, and exemplifying compassion in academia.

I'm thankful to the manuscript reviewers for their vital feedback, which has made this book better in many ways. I am also grateful for my editor Dr. Katie LaPlant for her expertise, valuable comments, and advocacy throughout this journey, as well as for Kevin Rennells and the whole production team.

To my heroic parents, Shpresa and Edmond Kushi, I am eternally grateful for your love, wisdom, and endless sacrifices. You left all that you knew behind to migrate to a foreign land for the sake of your young children. The odds were stacked against us, but through sheer willpower, bravery, and toil, you made the impossible a reality for our family. Thank you for raising your

daughters to dream big and for being our pillars of strength and stability in the chaos of transition. We love and cherish you every day.

To my incredible younger sister, Odeta, you are my best friend and life-long support system. Thank you for literally blocking the door to our shared apartment in Boston when I was on the brink of quitting my program, withdrawal form in hand. Thank you for taking care of me, understanding me, and encouraging me to keep going during the most challenging times. You're an inspiration.

To my husband Iliya, I love your boundless wit and humor and your unwavering compassion ("your kind eyes," as my mom says). Thank you for supporting me even during the hardest of times. Thanks for editing the drafts that my sister Odeta was too busy to read (sorry, Od). Your talent with words and language is exceptional, and I have benefited from it regularly. I'm so glad that we get to build our lives together.

It would be impossible to adequately acknowledge here all the people who have contributed to this journey. Among my friends at Northeastern University, a special thanks goes to Aeshna for those essential coffee breaks, magnificent brunches, office pep talks, and the most delicious baked goods; Ian for being the best coauthor one could ask for; and Summer for our traditional conference hangouts. Thank you all for the bottomless coffees, venting sessions, and most of all—solidarity.

Last, but never least, a special thanks goes out to Tuli, Griffin, and Çuçi for bringing endless joy to my life, whether in the flesh or in precious memories.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AL	Arab League
AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
AU	African Union
COW	Correlates of War
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EU	European Union
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
GoS	Government of Sudan
HMI	Humanitarian Military Intervention
HRC	Human Rights Council
ICC	International Criminal Court
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
IMI	International Military Intervention Data
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
MRG	Minority Rights Group
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NTC	National Transitional Council
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
P5	Permanent Five Members of the UN Security Council
P5+1	Permanent Five Members of the UN Security Council plus Germany
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RSF	Rapid Support Forces

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SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
TANS	Transnational Advocacy Networks
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union)

From Kosovo to Darfur

1 • Where Are the Humanitarian Military Interventions?

Whether we can conceive of a way to think of morality that extends some form of sympathy further than our own group remains perhaps the fundamental moral question of contemporary life.

—Jean Tronto, 1993¹

In a forgotten corner of the Balkans in the winter of 1999, US ambassador William Walker stumbled upon a massacre. He was serving as the head of the Kosovo Verification Mission, tracking a short-lived ceasefire between the Serbian state and ethnic Albanian separatists. He had heard reports of another clash between Serbian forces and ethnic Albanian guerrillas in the southern village of Raçak and asked his Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) team to investigate, but his team could not fully access the area until the following day. Only one of their “little orange vehicles” had made it to the village late that afternoon, finding a dead woman and three other injured people. Yet Ambassador Walker’s British deputy insisted that the ambassador go up there himself. As Ambassador Walker recalled, his deputy swore that “there’s something fishy here. Something doesn’t smell right.”²

The next day, amidst the snow and frost, Ambassador Walker’s caravan drove to the small village, trailed by a team of journalists. There he witnessed the chilling aftermath with his own eyes: upon the grounds of Raçak, with no signs of battle about them, lay “the pile of bodies” of forty-five unarmed men, women, and children.³ “With no sign of uniforms or weapons, they were killed where they lay.”⁴ The first body that Walker encountered had a blanket where his head should have been. Walker recalled, “they lifted the blanket to show me that his head was gone. . . . He was obviously an old man. There were bullets all through the body, and blood all on the ground.”⁵ “Every 15 or 20 yards, there was another body,” he added.⁶

Horried and angered by what he had witnessed, Walker convened an impromptu press conference. Here, without a shadow of personal doubt, he unequivocally declared that Serbian security forces had committed an “unspeakable atrocity” and “a crime very much against humanity” against ethnic Albanian civilians.⁷ Surrounded by international journalists and political elites, Walker directly rejected the Serbian government’s claim that ethnic Albanian terrorists had died in battle at Raçak and their bodies were then rearranged by their comrades to look like victims of a massacre.⁸ For the first time, a member of the Western elite officially accused the Serbian government of main responsibility for the years of deadly violence in Kosovo.

Serbian President Slobodan Milošević immediately declared Ambassador Walker persona non grata and demanded his removal from the country.⁹ But Ambassador Walker’s accounts on the ground that January transformed the Kosovo conflict from a bothersome periphery issue to the litmus test of Western values and resolve. As Walker put it, “in the meantime, I was receiving a lot of calls from Dick Holbrooke. Madeleine Albright called me. Wes Clark was calling.”¹⁰ As Kosovo’s suffering transitioned from the realms of another Balkans civil war and into that of ethnic cleansing within Europe, it set the stage for the era’s most precedent-setting humanitarian military intervention, in the backdrop of countless other mass atrocities across the world.

March 24, 1999, denoted the first instance since the founding of the United Nations (UN) that a diverse group of state actors—acting outside of legal international and domestic institutions but under shared expectations of international behavior—overrode another state’s sovereignty primarily on humanitarian rhetoric.¹¹ The North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) military intervention against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), to prevent civilian atrocities in Kosovo, was a vital turning point, a precedent that continues to echo today. This act of *humanitarian military intervention* hinted at a more complicated international playing field than so readily assumed in the past, opening room for ethics and human rights to compete against *realpolitik*.¹² But as the years followed, this trend did not overtake the world evenly. The international community looked the other way just a few years later as the humanitarian crisis in Darfur grew worse, killing hundreds of thousands of people. More recently, powerful states and third-party actors have allowed the genocidal policies within Myanmar to continue, without rescue in sight. Some of these state actors even perpetuate the human suffering in contemporary Yemen and other regions of the world. At the same time, states and institutions have undertaken humanitarian-laden intervention in Libya, Syria, and the Balkans. Such patterns prompt the question: Why do states and global institutions wage humanitarian military interventions in reaction to certain violent crises and not others?

For hundreds of years and across geographies, leaders and experts have accepted national security interests as the most vital catalyst behind international political behavior. Today this consensus generally remains. States act to maximize their power capabilities, regardless of ethical considerations or norms.¹³ This dominant perspective, however, contradicts the trends of international military interventions that are seemingly activated by the suffering of distant foreigners.¹⁴ Yet military interventions in states experiencing internal humanitarian crises, broadly denoted as humanitarian military interventions, are not equally probable across regions.¹⁵ Instead, examining this phenomenon reveals many inconsistencies, prompting suspicions of veiled motives, such as the pursuit of cold national interests under the cover of humanitarian intent.¹⁶ For instance, why did Western states and institutions militaristically intervene to stop human rights abuses in Kosovo, without an approved UN resolution, while disregarding the larger-scale atrocities simultaneously and persistently occurring in South Sudan? And when they do occur, why are certain interventions in regions of internal crisis more robust than others?

As the most telling example of regional variation, over the past hundred years the intrastate conflicts within the small Balkan peninsula have prompted a disproportionate share of the twentieth century's military interventions. This small region experienced more than ten back-to-back interventions in the post-Yugoslavia era alone. More specifically, the UN initiated eight peacekeeping missions; NATO conducted four different operations; and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) supplemented the interventions with many assignments throughout the post-Yugoslavian Balkans.¹⁷ At first glance, these patterns reveal the Balkans as a nexus for the interplay of traditional security interests alongside values-based considerations such as human rights and democratization. In contrast, the genocides and violent intrastate conflicts within Africa, Asia, and the Middle East have largely remained in the realm of domestic politics or relegated to smaller, underfunded peacekeeping missions. The international interventions or noninterventions outside of the Western sphere have either illustrated a rare, lukewarm consensus on the protection of innocents or, most often, the apathy of power politics.

Moving beyond Dichotomies of Interest versus Human Rights

But the debate on these humanitarian interventions stagnates on dichotomies. Some international relations theorists have interpreted intervention trends as evidence of a more multilateral, ethically oriented international

society where human rights promotion across the globe may trump national security considerations or become permanently bounded within definitions of state security.¹⁸ Such normative discussions, including the phenomenon of humanitarian intervention, generally involve Western actors in the United States or EU. Others, however, have argued that humanitarian interventions only reflect the pursuit of Western power and interests, running rampant under the guise of morality, and that in reality primarily “humanitarian” military interventions do not exist.¹⁹ Both claims introduce universal arguments on either the importance of geopolitical interests or evolving human rights norms, but they lack context on how these forces behave or evolve across regions. What is required is a foundation that can begin to explain the stark regionality inherent in the phenomenon labeled as humanitarian intervention: Why do regions like the Balkans experience multiple military interventions during times of humanitarian crisis, while other systematically suffering regions receive less international attention or limited intervention, even in cases where interests and humanitarian need are similar?

From Kosovo to Darfur provides a regionally sensitive analysis of the driving forces behind the phenomenon of humanitarian military intervention since the end of the Cold War.²⁰ Conventional wisdom says that these interventions are driven by national interests, democratic values, shared values and norms, or economic ties. But as this book first reveals via aggregated analysis, while these conventional factors contribute to our understanding of humanitarian military intervention, they do not fully explain intervention selectivity. The book proposes a new argument founded upon the importance of region, defined both geographically and ideationally, and conflict perceptions as explanations of humanitarian intervention, and it tests the argument via three case studies.

Therefore, while most existing work on humanitarian interventions focus on the question of whether to intervene or not, or on the outcomes of such humanitarian interventions, *From Kosovo to Darfur* extends the debate to assessing the “selectivity gap” that this phenomenon has left behind decades after its origins. This book instead asks: What explains the international community’s choices to intervene or not to intervene in response to the many humanitarian atrocities that have plagued the globe since the end of the Cold War? The book does not focus on whether the choice to intervene is the moral or legal one, or whether such interventions produce positive outcomes on the ground, although these are important debates. The book investigates whether the patterns of intervention reflect important regional boundaries that mark global power hierarchies or biases on the protection of

human rights, the activation of global institutional mandates, and on the activation of security interests.

Through statistical and qualitative analysis, the book traces how both interests-driven dynamics as well as the humanitarian motives of military interventions are often created, altered, and defined by regional and institutional biases. In addition to testing the effects of national interests, economic benefits, and humanitarian need on a global scale, this book examines factors that are not primary explanations within main camps of international relations theory—such as constructed regional identities, institutional ties, and perceptions of the origins of the intrastate conflict—as triggers of military intervention. The argument of the book focuses on first delineating interacting paths between these factors, instead of outright refuting one theory over another, and then illustrating the paths through three cases: the Kosovo Crisis, the Libyan Crisis, and the Darfur Crisis.

The Argument and Approach in Brief

As future chapters will support, this book argues that biased *regional institutions*, fueled by Western *elites' perceptions of the conflict*, drive the selectivity of humanitarian military interventions, making interventions geographically and culturally closer to the West most probable and most intense. More specifically, a violent crisis occurring in or near a “Western neighborhood” is more likely to receive international attention, relative to one occurring outside of the highly institutionalized neighborhood.²¹ But the regional support must be activated by favorable conflict perceptions, such as Western media or elites portraying a crisis as systematic killings of civilians or genocide, not identity-based ethnic or religious civil wars. Such a perception impacts third-party policy outcomes whether or not it reflects the reality of the violence on the ground. By bridging levels of analysis and comparing several crises, *From Kosovo to Darfur* traces how a conflict with favorable perceptions, occurring near a “Western neighborhood,” interlinks with liberal norms and activates the missions and resource pooling of Western organizations.

Powerful states' and leaders' perceptions about a distant conflict can have pivotal effects on what these actors propose (if anything) as policy solutions to the violence. Thus, when discussing patterns of international interventions, we should be wary of accounts that only focus on national interests or humanitarian norms globally. Instead, this book shows that both the pursuit of national interests and humanitarian standards in international relations

are often functions of regional structures, conditionally activated by specific conflict narratives.

To this end, *From Kosovo to Darfur* collects new data of all post-Cold War internal armed conflicts and third-party responses as well as in-depth case studies. This book offers a distinctive synthesis of international relations theories as well as an innovative blend of statistical, historical case study, and mixed-methods approaches. By combining statistical analysis of a large number of humanitarian crises and international responses with a comparison of in-depth cases of humanitarian military intervention and nonintervention, the book offers a balance between generalizability and nuance.

In part I of the analysis, the book introduces a dataset of post-Cold War intrastate crises and international military responses (including noninterventions) from 1989 to 2014, including an intervention index that denotes the intensity of an undertaken operation. The dataset also includes multiple indicators for conventional explanations of humanitarian intervention, such as a national interest index, various measures of humanitarian need, institutional linkages, and democracy scores to test competing explanations. The statistical results from part I reveal that regional variations between Western versus non-Western spheres have the greatest impact on intervention probabilities, followed by a simple measure of conflict perceptions. Still, even when accounting for region as a crude proxy for resources and local capacity, anomalies appear in the statistical analysis, such as the strong impact of a dichotomous conflict perceptions variable. Thus, in part II, the book relies on multilingual fieldwork and case studies on Kosovo, Libya, and Darfur to reveal the full dimensions of the regional argument, showing that conflict perceptions interact in significant ways with geography and shifting cultural identities that further underpin the regional variations. The book then process-traces how conflict perceptions across predominantly Western audiences and political elites—from narrating a crisis as either a civil war or systematic killing/genocide—explicitly alter pathways of intervention and degrees of responsibility for Western actors especially.

While the initial statistical analysis explores the relationship between multiple conventional and nonconventional variables and the likelihood of humanitarian military intervention, the case analysis probes into the mechanisms behind the variables highlighted in the statistical results. Each method compensates for some of the weaknesses in the other.

Through such multilevel analysis, this book concludes that once a threshold of humanitarian suffering is met via the existence of an internal armed conflict, powerful states will intervene depending on (1) whether the conflict occurs near the Western neighborhood and (2) whether it is denoted as

an identity-based civil war. Perceptions of systematic killing of civilians within the Western neighborhood prompt the greatest odds of humanitarian intervention, while perceptions of identity-based civil war outside of the Western neighborhood dramatically mute the chances of third-party involvement.

The following sections in this chapter expand upon the need for a regional approach to intervention. Moreover, they foreshadow the book's argument, methodological approach, and contributions. The introductory chapter ends with a brief outline of the other chapters to come.

Filling in the Gaps: Regionalizing Humanitarian Military Intervention

Something is missing in the current analysis of the phenomenon so readily labeled as humanitarian military intervention. The literature demonstrates a consensus on the dearth of research conducted on the main determinants of these interventions.²² What is more, despite repeated clamors in the literature for regionally sensitive theories of intervention, "a sustained effort to theorize about why patterns and effects of foreign military intervention diverge across regions has been lacking." As Pickering and Mitchell further declare, "the time seems ripe for the thoughtful development of theories and tests bound by time and region."²³ The book answers this repeated call.

Thus the main question that motivates this journey is: What drives international actors in the post-Cold War era to forcefully intervene within internal conflicts in different regions of the world: humanitarian norms, narrow national interests, or perhaps factors unique to the affected region?²⁴ To some extent, the question attempts to specify the nature of norms-based arguments for humanitarian interventions in comparison to the reach of power politics. Similarly, the question focuses on degrees of explanatory power, not dichotomies of right and wrong between different theoretical camps. Perhaps there are no such things as humanitarian military interventions *within a particular region of the world*. Alternatively, perhaps many military interventions that occur within another region of the world, with different catalysts and conflict characteristics, are products of emerging norms of human rights, multilateralism, and calls for a global society.²⁵

The nature of humanitarian military intervention remains ambiguous, as the phenomenon encompasses missions with varying degrees of perceived humanitarian need and contexts of selectivity. Even the outcomes of an intervention cannot fully reveal the driving forces. Indeed, a humanitarian

intent may not necessarily translate into a successful mission; instead, purely humanitarian-driven actors may not possess enough resilience and resources to mount a successful operation.²⁶ In many instances, the humanitarian objective interlaces with security or geopolitical interests in the target state, as will be detailed later. In other cases, the humanitarian objective serves as a cover to pursue purely interest-driven intervention, as in the pivotal US intervention in Iraq in 2003.

Even the interventions triggered by undeniable humanitarian atrocities vary widely. The West hesitated to intervene in Bosnia until the humanitarian crisis arising from the three-way “civil war” reached the prospect of genocide, but it intervened in Kosovo within a year of reported mass, systematic human rights abuses.²⁷ Humanitarian need was quite evident in these two missions, but when compared to the more widespread, persistent, and graver atrocities taking place in Darfur, Sudan, or Rwanda, humanitarian need does not adequately explain the selectivity of the missions, which discounts the consistency of human-rights-driven arguments. Still, humanitarian need stands as the strongest impetus for Western intervention in Somalia in the early 1990s, thus keeping the possibility of normatively driven interventions on the table.²⁸ On the other side of the debate, national interests on their own do not easily explain the trajectory of the chosen regions of military intervention in the 1990s either. Both Bosnia and Kosovo appeared to hold similar levels of interest for Western actors, or no vital interests at all according to scholars and policymakers at the time.²⁹ If neither humanitarian norms nor national interests provide consistent explanations of the selectivity, then the debate must be expanded to encompass new dimensions.

This gap in the scholarship discourages optimal policymaking in times of violent international crises. Indeed, until these interactions are further untangled, the nature and label of humanitarian intervention will remain rife with suspicion and devoid of practical meaning. To narrow the gap, this book provides an explicit regional perspective of humanitarian interventions.³⁰

It is important to note, however, that regional dynamics of international intervention may also be indicative of global racial hierarchies following centuries of imperialism and colonialism by the Global North against the Global South. In fact, many have argued that the field of international relations holds to pervasive racial biases in its historical foundations and its modern-day assumptions about the state system.³¹ More recently, the field has been contending in a more direct and robust manner with the complex racial dynamics that underpin contemporary inter- and intra-state relations, often hidden within the field’s very theoretical assumptions or conceptual debates,

such as the process of interest formation, enforcement of international law, and state threat assessment.³² For instance, the redefinition of state sovereignty as a responsibility via the UN's Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine can promote paternalistic, neo-imperialistic foreign policy by Western actors toward non-Western counterparts, especially when noting that the UN has applied the R2P almost exclusively to African countries, thus perpetuating a racial hierarchy of power and order globally.³³ With four out of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council arising from Europe and the United States, many UN Security Council decisions to intervene and the peacekeeping mandates that follow disproportionately target countries in the Global South, shattering the sovereignty and autonomy of certain regions while preserving the sovereignty of others.³⁴

Additional support for such paternalistic racial biases comes from scholars who have found that US and Western foreign policy preferences may mirror a contemporary white man's burden, with white Americans more eager to send economic and foreign aid to African countries instead of European countries.³⁵ Others such as Robert Knox, however, have primarily explained racialization dynamics of intervention through the lens of inter-imperialist rivalries.³⁶

Recent studies showcase clear racial components to humanitarian interventions. For instance, Jonathan Chu and Carrie Lee discuss the impetus for their survey experiment on race and humanitarian impulses: "Observers might contrast the US's willingness to save white Kosovar Albanians but not black Rwandans and similarly wonder if the US would have acted to save the Syrian people if they were predominantly Christian instead of Muslim. After all, humanitarian interventions were once described as a phenomenon of 'Christians saving Christians.'"³⁷ They further connect the nature of humanitarian intervention to possible racialized biases given that such an intervention requires that citizens of a stable country feel empathy for the victims of the faraway violence. This often requires that citizens see their own identity in some way in the suffering of the innocent victims, thereby demanding a specific conflict perception as well. Thus, Chu and Lee examine whether the race and religion of the target population impact US public support for humanitarian military intervention, applying the framework of social identity theory, which argues that people are more likely to help others with whom they share an identity. The authors find that US citizens tend to prefer humanitarian intervention on behalf of Christians over Muslims, and to a lesser degree, they favor saving white European over black African lives during times of crisis, with religious and racial biases being strongest among co-identity members. More specifically, the co-identity bias "translates to an

approximately 7 point increase in support for an intervention that saves African civilians among Black respondents, and an approximately 4 point increase in support for saving European civilians amongst white respondents,” keeping in mind that the US is over 60 percent white.³⁸

Such research programs are imperative to further uncovering the racial or religious forces that may underlie patterns and expectations on international security, human rights promotions, and military interventions at the systemic or domestic levels. This book’s argument, however, explores the broad role of regionality in altering patterns of humanitarian intervention, as connected to conflict perceptions on the ground. Given that such a regionally sensitive approach to humanitarian intervention remains lacking in the literature, the book’s scope is narrower and does not extend to incorporating the complex racial hierarchies that may underpin conflict perceptions and regional spheres. I hope that future studies will continue to expand upon and center racial and religious dynamics as part of untangling the drivers and outcomes of humanitarian intervention at a regional and global scale.

The Argument: Pathways of Intervention

This book’s main argument is that different pathways within the Western versus the non-Western spheres drive international military interventions in the context of violent intrastate conflict (denoted as humanitarian interventions), making interventions closer to the West more probable and more intense. An interacting argument is that the perceived nature of an intrastate conflict activates these distinct regional pathways. Several stages of interaction will be proposed and evaluated throughout the book. This evaluation, however, occurs in the background of the initial analysis of standard factors. After standard factors such as national interests and humanitarian norms fail to adequately explain the phenomenon of humanitarian military intervention on their own, the book explores new regional forces that may help resolve the selectivity gap of intervention.

The book’s theoretical framework allows for the strong influence of national security interests, measured through strategic geographical proximity, ties of alliance, primary oil and natural resources, colonial history, and national power capabilities. Yet such interests may interact within a broader normative context. This normative foundation, characterized by the duties that states and leaders believe they hold to humans across their own borders, materializes through a values-based alliance or geographically bounded political narrative shaped by political elites and echoed by media. A values-

based alliance may have once started as a standard defense alliance, such as NATO, but over time the alliance mission may evolve to incorporate broader objectives, mandates, and expectations of member states. After the end of the Cold War, NATO moved beyond the confines of its defense pact and into the realm of predominantly values-based missions with mandates meant to safeguard liberal values and institutions across the transatlantic sphere, manage security crises within state borders, and sometimes rescue foreign citizens harmed by the aggressions of their own governments. Through values-based alliances, both the role of interests and norms become conditional upon time and place, sometimes enabling the formation and expansion of new interests within the alliance's regional bounds.

The theoretical framework acknowledges the role of both material and immaterial forces in driving international humanitarian military interventions, but it aims to divest both forces from claims of universality across regions and actors. It also claims different pathways between the necessary and sufficient conditions for humanitarian intervention in the Western sphere versus the non-Western sphere, differentiated by the existence of a strong values-based narrative founded on shared interstate institutions and regional identities. Below is an outline of the proposed pathways, to be refined and tested in the following chapters through quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Pathways of Intervention

For states that already have some interest in intervention, the normative context of an intrastate conflict, especially the grave humanitarian crisis, incentivizes greater responses than the context of interstate war or domestic status quo. At the minimum, this context lowers the costs at which a state can intervene in pursuit of their pre-existing interests without great international retaliation or risk, as it can instead appear to intervene for humanitarian purposes and the protection of shared values. But when no primary national interests exist in the region of possible intervention, the normative context may only incentivize those actors bounded within values-based institutions that claim responsibility over the region. These institutions allow for a material foundation to a normative mission and create secondary interests in the target region. A values-based alliance, such as NATO or the EU, is founded not only on collective security mechanisms but also around a set of beliefs that member states must promote and enforce so that the alliance may thrive and showcase its continued usefulness. These beliefs typically echo the identities that member states must hold for themselves

and their region. For instance, the United States and the EU reflect their own domestic identities that offer them credibility and soft power globally, centered on the promotion of democracy and human rights within the international sphere, a fiat I denote as “Material Normative Foundations.” Because values-based alliances inherently promote certain normative goals as part of their core objectives and military missions, they can transform normative beliefs of how things ought to be into material action abroad.

Regional distinctions, which encompass not only geographic borders but regional identities, can serve as proxies for institutional resource capabilities. As will be expanded upon later, a simple, narrow geographic construction of the West meant for statistical analysis includes North America, Western Europe and its proximate neighbors, Australia, and New Zealand, and in economic or cultural definitions, Japan, South Korea, and other developed countries with adapted “Western” institutions and espoused values, including Israel.³⁹ In a broader definition of the West, Turkey, Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, Colombia, and others are added to the Western sphere due to their proximity and/or strong structural ties to the Western neighborhood.⁴⁰ But as the case studies will later show, the West refers to both a material geographic entity as well as a shifting, perceptions-based arena in which liberal democracies hold legal, structural, and normative influence. The Western entity therefore may evolve, expand, or contract over time, as the Kosovo case study will reveal.

Due to the existence of values-based alliances in the Western realm, humanitarian interventions serve to magnify a normative image for primarily European and US actors. Thus, in the West, normative causes of intervention are common as they are intertwined with national identities and images, collective security, and economic interdependence. These normative causes range from the need to save the lives of civilians from oppressive, violent dictatorships in nearby regions, to returning refugees or internally displaced people to their homes, to promoting liberal democracy as part of a security alliance such as NATO. Such normative imperatives propel the creation of secondary interests, in which a state’s traditional security interests also become functions of how well the state can democratize their regions, come to the aid of struggling humans outside of their sovereign borders, or promote broad ideals for their community. As later analysis will show, such a mechanism has propelled NATO members to action several times in the past decade. The very phenomenon of humanitarian military intervention, of course, is predominantly driven by Western actors and their institutions.

In contrast, normative drivers of interventions outside of the West are less frequent and more difficult in their manifestations, and this regional distinc-

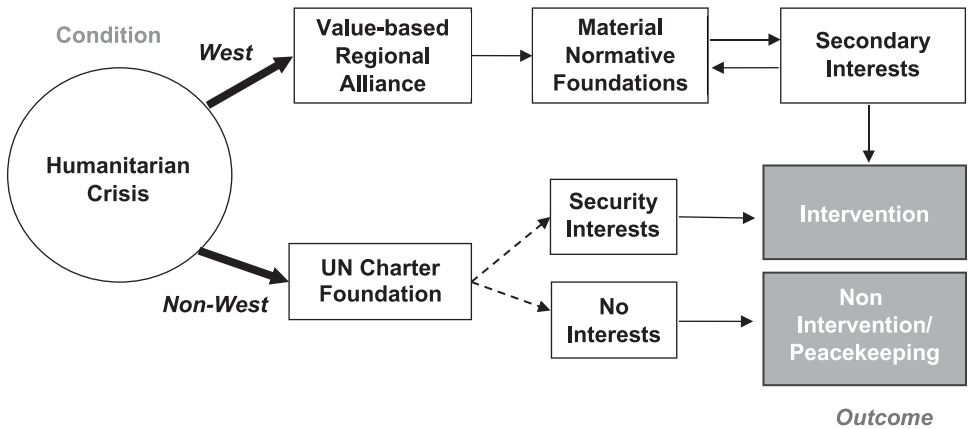


Fig. 1.1. General Pathway of Humanitarian Military Intervention

tion limits the usefulness of arguments on the emerging, universal influence of international norms via nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and nonstate actors. Without robust regional alliances that move beyond traditional military defense, the suffering of strangers across borders cannot be linked to state interests or any truly binding international duty. Instead, calls for military intervention in the non-Western sphere often drown or fade within the political paralysis of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This distinction may be one reason Western actors readily intervened militaristically during conflict in the Balkan region but were and remain hesitant to involve themselves in non-Western humanitarian military missions absent significant differences in vital national interests or humanitarian need. This dynamic is illustrated in figure 1.1, but it requires elaboration through the additional dimensions presented below.

Normative causes and secondary interests tied to potential interventions correlate with the perceptions that states and their elites have of the conflict, even if those perceptions are incorrect, manipulated, or overly simplistic. If powerful elites and audiences view a violent crisis as just another ethnic or religious civil war, they in turn distance themselves from the responsibility to act and to protect innocents, as the narratives of equal culpability and intractable, irrational “ancient hatreds” dominate such a perception. Perceptions of state-sponsored killings and systematic violence, such as ethnic cleansing or impending genocide, however, elicit a strong responsibility for third parties to act, especially Western institutions with mandates directly tied to the protection of human rights within a particular sphere of influence. The ability to

assign blame to one party and innocence to another further simplifies the actions, if any, that different international actors ought to take regarding a crisis. It also bodes well for the postintervention trajectory of the target country, as a monolithic source of conflict is, in theory, more amenable to intervention and policymaking than the complicated ones found within narratives of identity-based civil wars.

Via figure 1.2, I introduce the most probable pathway that leads to humanitarian military intervention, reserving discussion of other pathways for the following chapters. First, for the activation of all pathways, the threshold condition of human rights abuses must be present within a unit of intrastate conflict. Once this condition is satisfied, international actors and organizations will consider three main factors regarding potential intervention, factors that are highly interactive, dynamic, and complex: (1) geopolitical interests, (2) conflict perception, and (3) regional context. As the traditional literature confirms, the pathways first diverge via the degree of national interest that a target region elicits from key international players capable of intervening. But the innovation of this book arises from consideration of the other two factors and how they alter both interests and norms.

As figure 1.2 illustrates, when national interests are either constant or low across cases, other factors hold the key to intervention selectivity. Conflict perceptions of the target state's violence, also a product of regional identity formation, can alter both the cost/benefit analysis of the intervention and prospects of postintervention success. When national interests remain low, most international actors will stay away from intervening in conflicts denoted as identity-based civil wars between equally culpable sides, especially ones with seemingly perpetual, inevitable ethnic or religious hostilities. The reasons behind this pattern will be discussed in later chapters. International actors may, however, consider intervening in nonidentity conflicts perceived as international aggression or as manifestations of purposeful, systematic killing of civilians by one criminal side. Even then, international parties will also gauge the regional context of these humanitarian abuses. If an intrastate conflict occurs in or near a "Western neighborhood," with robust regional institutions available, which also create their own values-based narratives and interests, a humanitarian military intervention becomes much more probable. In contrast, an intrastate conflict far away from a Western neighborhood, far from robust, values-based institutions and political narratives—even if seen as systematic, one-sided killing—will most likely fall to the back of the international agenda or be delegated to a weak United Nations (UN) peace-keeping mission.

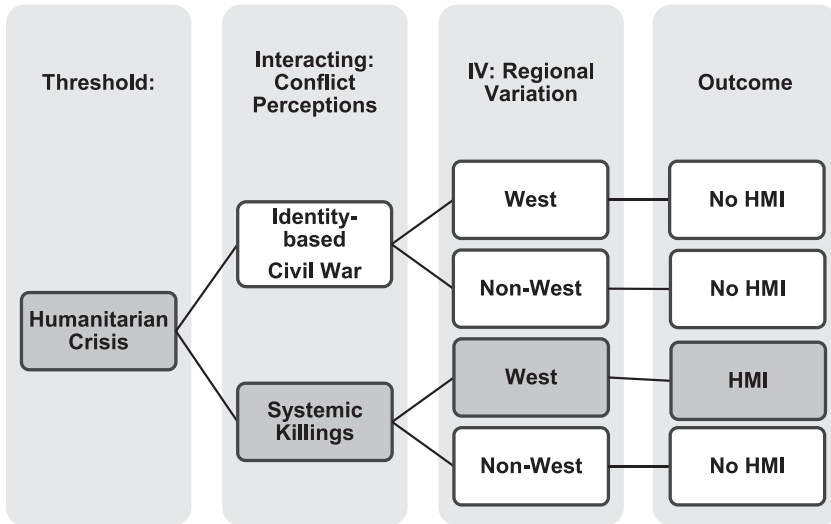


Fig. 1.2. Primary Pathway to Humanitarian Military Intervention

As the case study chapters will further explore, the regionality and conflict perceptions factors interact with one another in more fluid, complicated ways than the figure can itself illustrate (which is why graphics in later chapters represent this relationship with dashed lines in lieu of solid ones). For instance, a shift in conflict perceptions, from an unfavorable civil war narrative to a favorable systematic killings narrative, may prompt the Western neighborhood to bring some nearby countries into the Western regional identity and its institutionalized resources, hence expanding the Western neighborhood via a choice to intervene in a nearby humanitarian crisis. This is what occurred prior to NATO's 1999 intervention in Kosovo.

In sum, only conflicts *near or within Western neighborhoods* perceived as *one-sided systematic killings*, fomenting a narrative of regional identity transformation, will have a *high probability of intervention*. All others will either receive little attention, be remanded to the narrative of intractable conflicts, or incur fleeting peacekeeping missions. The next chapter provides greater theoretical and empirical foundations for these predictions, while the following chapters build on concepts such as national interest, economic benefits, and regional context. Ultimately, this two-pronged analysis assesses the pathways through both aggregated and in-depth cases of humanitarian military intervention and nonintervention.

Definitions and Theoretical Debates

Several concepts and goals demand further clarification before proceeding. First, taking inspiration from Holzgrefe and Finnemore, I define international humanitarian intervention as the use of military force by a state or a group of states (including through UN structures) to protect foreign nationals from man-made intrastate violence, without the consent of the sovereign power in the target territory. Therefore, what differentiates humanitarian interventions from general military interventions is the humanitarian calamity arising from the unit of analysis, which leads to perceptions of humanitarian motives or objectives. In keeping consistent with the literature, this definition excludes three types of actions that may sometimes relate to the term: (1) interventions without the direct use of force, such as threats or displays of force, the use of economic sanctions, or other diplomatic pressures;⁴¹ (2) military interventions that only seek to protect the intervening state(s)' own citizens or property;⁴² and (3) military interventions that protect citizens or foreigners from natural disasters, as the origins of the violent crisis must be man-made.⁴³

As will be discussed in more detail, I differentiate general military interventions from perceived humanitarian interventions via declared humanitarian objectives of the intervention, alongside the timing and the region of intervention. The chosen unit of analysis, intrastate conflict in a country-year, also allows for the inclusion of interventions that may have potential humanitarian causes, as they occur within the context of a grave humanitarian crisis. Even if other causes lie behind such interventions, they are perceived to be activated by the drastic humanitarian need of the affected region. Thus the subsequent occurrence of military intervention within an intrastate conflict alongside some level of stated humanitarian objectives is considered an international humanitarian intervention. Alternatively, the absence of international intervention during a year of intrastate conflict denotes a case of nonintervention.

Second, the current debates on humanitarian military interventions center around the role of national interests, human rights, and norms, broadly defined. These explanations also represent the divisions across primary theoretical camps of international relations: realism, liberalism, and constructivism, as shown in table 1.1. A brief review of the debates follows, summarized in the table. Further discussion is reserved for later chapters when these theoretical factors are tested as compelling explanations of the selectivity gap of humanitarian intervention.

Table 1.1. Main Perspectives on Humanitarian Military Intervention

	Realism	Liberalism	Constructivism
IMPORTANT	National Interests	Human Rights	International Norms
FACTORS:	Balance of Power	Democracy	Values and
	Power Maximization	Economic	Expectations
	State Sovereignty	Interdependence	Evolving Ideas
	Cost/Benefit	International	International
		Institutions	Consensus
		Domestic Politics	Leaders and
			Individuals

Dominant Realist Perspective—Interests

While some scholars accept the role of morality and a degree of “responsibility” within international politics,⁴⁴ realist scholars rarely do.⁴⁵ The theory of realism insists that under the condition of anarchy, in which there is no higher authority above the state to regulate actions, states behave in their own self-interest. They craft foreign policy aimed toward bolstering national power capabilities and ensuring their own survival and security, nothing more.⁴⁶ Regardless of the truthfulness of such realist assumptions, these views create self-fulfilling prophecies of egoistic, noncooperative states that must block ethical considerations for the sake of self-preservation.⁴⁷ Under such assumptions, it would be foolish to pursue an ethical agenda within the international system. By circumventing the only structures that provide fragile order to the international sphere, such as state sovereignty and the balance of power (BoP), states would invite further chaos. Ultimately, most realist scholars expect international military interventions only in pursuit of strong national interests. Interests-driven interventions are, of course, common and possible even when imbued with humanitarian rhetoric, but the limitations of broad realist theory stem from the theory’s definition of state interests as fixed and not amenable to interaction with other forces, such as norms or institutions.

Liberalism: Human Rights and Democratic Interventions

Liberals, on the other hand, argue that democratic values, common interests, and economic interdependence incentivize states to cooperate via mechanisms for collective security and perhaps pursue more ethical policy-making, despite the structural limitations of the international system.⁴⁸

International institutions such as the United Nations become pivotal to perpetuating interdependencies and mitigating the conflictual effects of anarchy.⁴⁹ From the liberal perspective, humanitarian military interventions reflect international responsibilities codified within international law, particularly for democratic powers who promote the strengthening of international legal standards.⁵⁰ While the realist international system relies on the assumption that sovereign governments exercise wide prerogatives within their borders, liberals would interject that “there are no states’ rights if the sovereign power has withdrawn its commitment to the very obligations that underwrite the state’s existence.”⁵¹ Therefore, unlike realists, liberals understand domestic politics as playing an important role in how states behave internationally, such as the influence of public opinion and national preferences. Liberals might explain humanitarian military interventions through the lens of sovereign state responsibilities, domestic pressures to act, democratic structures and values across and within states, and interstate organizational ties and values-based alliances.⁵²

Constructivism: Emerging Norms

While the liberal perspective allows for the interplay between interests and values at the domestic and international levels, it does so in the context of institutional mechanisms or democratic structures that can push states to work together through shared interests. But what happens if states don’t have common interests or no direct institutional platform to incentivize cooperation and ethical pursuits abroad? The constructivist perspective goes deeper into the nonmaterial forces that may drive state behavior. It focuses on the evolution of international norms and constructed identities that can create and alter a state’s very interests and their expectations of other actors. Constructivists envision a feedback loop where states’ and individuals’ expectations about one another can create self-fulfilling outcomes and bolster the underlying norms of the international system. Perhaps the most compelling dimension of this approach to understanding the triggers of “humanitarian” military interventions is that geopolitical interests are hard to pinpoint and objectively measure, as they are fluid rather than fixed.⁵³ While realists may always find some interest-based argument within a case of international intervention or nonintervention after the fact, they cannot uncover the actors’ true range of motivators, especially if international actors implicitly formulate their policy and even their own interests based on existing norms and expectations. After all, states define and pursue their interests based on what is deemed acceptable in their contemporary times and on how they expect other actors to generally behave.⁵⁴

For instance, in the contemporary international system, they may rely on the authority of international organizations, international legal codes, multilateral mandates, the Responsibility to Protect principle, the illegitimacy of the use of force, and expectations of democratic governance beyond domestic borders. Thus, constructivists argue that evolving human rights norms are the main drivers of HMI.

Theoretical Stalemates and Puzzles

None of the paradigms of international relations, however, can fully explain contemporary patterns of humanitarian military interventions and noninterventions. Many claim that the selectivity gap of intervention is driven by geopolitical national interests and strategic assessments toward preserving regional stability.⁵⁵ But other scholars find no support for this stand-alone interests-based argument.⁵⁶ Instead, these scholars find that democratic values, human rights norms, institutional ties and alliances, or historical milieu drive humanitarian military intervention patterns.⁵⁷ Overall, the empirical literature directs us to the general importance of geopolitical national interests, liberal values or structures, and human rights norms in decisions of intervention in regions of humanitarian need. Hidden within these traditional arguments are quiet mentions of “geographic proximity” or “geographic bias,” institutional structures, and “ideological linkages” with little explication in their own right.⁵⁸

This literature on humanitarian military intervention tends to treat all regions of the world as equally affected by the national interests of great powers, emerging international norms, or institutional interdependence and cooperation. While such competing dynamics (illustrated in table 1.1) may certainly be parts of the story, they disregard other important characteristics of the states intervened upon. Indeed, as Pickering and Mitchel claim, “it seems that most every decade scholars call for increased attention to regional patterns and the development of region-specific theory to understand interstate military force.”⁵⁹ This book explicitly explores regional variation in geopolitical interest and humanitarian norms, presenting regionality as both a geographic and identity-based dimension.

Contributions

From Kosovo to Darfur explores the resulting patterns of humanitarian military interventionism decades following the phenomenon’s 1990s origins. It highlights the regionalized nature of humanitarian intervention, under-

pinned by conflict perceptions and institutional resources within Western versus non-Western spheres. This book uncovers the regional bias that pervades humanitarian expectations within contemporary international security. It explores how we can preserve the advantages of regional norms and institutions while at the same time lessening the inequalities, biases, and exploitations that they may perpetuate across the world.

After all, if the regional bias within the humanitarian military intervention phenomenon is so rampant, then how can we speak of an international normative evolution or consensus on human rights? In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, the consequent Libyan and Syrian interventions and refugee crises, and ongoing interstate or intrastate violence in Ukraine, Yemen, Sudan, Palestine, and Myanmar, the international community must make tough decisions related to humanitarian need. These decisions, even if they have the potential to save lives, will be targets of public and political suspicion if we cannot better understand the regional components of humanitarian interventions. The interplay among interests, norms, and geography is crucial to assessing the nature and consequences of humanitarian military interventions in our future. This book presents distinct pathways of intervention across regions, which may help scholars and policymakers predict conflict trajectories and reactions to internal crises.

The framework presented in *From Kosovo to Darfur* is applicable to different cases around the world and different time periods. And, indeed, this framework should become increasingly relevant as regional organizations in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere consciously seek to patrol their own neighborhoods, whether via military, economic, or diplomatic means, instead of accepting Western institutions as the default solution to the limitations of sovereignty.

The book, thus, speaks to the past, present, and future of military humanitarianism when faced with the worst of human suffering outside of national borders. The findings open a space for larger discussions of what is deemed acceptable in the realm of international politics. Does contemporary international politics have room for ethical and moral discussions? If so, is it ethical to allow current patterns of humanitarian military interventions to go unchallenged? As our international community becomes increasingly interdependent and aware of human suffering across borders, this book becomes pivotal to uncovering the successes, mistakes, and biases that mark the line between state interests, sovereignty, and human rights promotion.

Beyond the policy importance is a consensus in the literature that the determinants of humanitarian intervention remain underexplored, especially at the regional level.⁶⁰ *From Kosovo to Darfur* takes a different approach

to tackling this problem. Unlike the main trend of research, this book is not interested in assessing or explaining the successes or failures of humanitarian interventions, but on the triggering forces behind the initial decision to intervene. Also, unlike the majority of works on humanitarian interventions, *From Kosovo to Darfur* does not characterize humanitarian interventions based on the “humanitarian” outcome of the missions, but on the perception of humanitarian need as the catalyst for humanitarian intentions. It then measures vital factors mentioned in the literature that may increase or decrease the probability of intervention within a confined region characterized by repetitive intrastate conflict. In this way, the analysis includes instances of humanitarian need that may not have received substantial international responses. Furthermore, the book updates and enlarges the sample size of cases—not limiting itself to UN- or US-only interventions—and provides robust measurements of main variables, including an intensity-based measure of intervention. Finally, *From Kosovo to Darfur* delves into deep case-study analysis of instances of intervention and nonintervention, examining but ultimately moving beyond the confines of isolated paradigms of international relations. The book breaks new ground by evaluating the merits and limitations of the dominant international relations paradigms and offering new pathways forward.

Chapter Overviews

Following a brief historical review, the next chapter expands on how major international relations theories of realism, liberalism, and constructivism perceive the phenomenon of international humanitarian military intervention. After evaluating the theoretical literature, this chapter delves into the empirical record of humanitarian military interventions, outlining studies that have proclaimed the supremacy of national geopolitical interests, international norms, liberal values, and geographic proximity as drivers of intervention. Last, the chapter builds the book’s theoretical framework, based upon less-cited perspectives that offer room for the interplay of complex forces in the selectivity of intervention. These factors include the type of perceived intrastate conflict, which evolves via social learning and cultural identities, as well as the impact of Western institutions and their “good neighborhoods.”⁶¹

Chapter 3 is the first analytical part of the book. It presents a new dataset of almost a thousand observations of intrastate conflict between 1989 and 2014, paired with international military responses and nonresponses, includ-

ing an Intervention Index accounting for the intensity of intervention. In other words, the analysis matches post–Cold War international intrastate conflicts to an occurrence or nonoccurrence of intervention during the progression of a conflict. It then applies ordered logistic regression modeling to test the effect of conventional literature–relevant variables, such as geopolitical national interests (measured via contiguity, alliances, former colonial histories, and mineral resources), economic interests, and humanitarian need, on the likelihood of humanitarian military intervention. Ultimately, the aggregated results discount the primacy of geopolitical national interests, human rights, and humanitarian suffering as predictors of humanitarian military interventions. Instead, regional dimensions (measured by Western versus non-Western geographic spheres of influence) and perceptions of the conflict (measured by the existence of an identity-based civil war in the state) operate as the most powerful explanations of humanitarian intervention patterns. Beyond its analytical models, this chapter introduces a range of regionally sensitive descriptive statistics and novel graphical illustrations of the humanitarian military intervention phenomenon.

The results of this first analytical chapter frame the second part of the book, which begins with chapter 4. Chapters 4 and 5, grounded in political elite dialogue, fieldwork, archival data, and historiography, delve into the Kosovo Crisis to examine the role of Western neighborhoods and favorable conflict perceptions in driving the NATO military intervention against Yugoslavia in 1999. Chapter 4 explores the limitations of standards accounts of the NATO intervention in Kosovo, while chapter 5 traces how shifting conflict perceptions activated Western institutions and finally prompted intervention in Kosovo. Chapter 6 then introduces the Libya Crisis as a case of NATO intervention in a region of both national interests and favorable conflict perceptions, albeit not at the center of the Western neighborhood. The chapter concludes that national interests predominantly drove Western powers to intervene in Libya but that favorable conflict perceptions and regional partners made intervention more probable and less costly. Finally, chapter 7 examines the case of UN-based, consensual peacekeeping in Darfur to compare degrees and pathways of intervention in the West and non-Western realms. Imperialist legacies also become paramount to the decision of nonintervention in the worst genocide of the twenty-first century. All qualitative chapters explore and compare the role of regional institutions, Western versus non-Western neighborhoods, and the perceived nature of the intrastate conflict across global humanitarian crises.

The concluding chapter offers a synthesis of the discovered relationships and trends of humanitarian military intervention. Its aim is to evaluate the

label of humanitarian military intervention in light of previous analysis, which is presented in a two-by-two typology of intervention pathways. Furthermore, the chapter provides a range of theoretical and policy implications for the international community at large. This last chapter outlines avenues for further research and the social benefits accrued by such endeavors. Greater knowledge would benefit future discussions on humanitarian military missions in war-torn regions. The knowledge gained from such studies could also serve as a general illustration of the factors that continue to matter in contemporary international politics. In other words, have morality and ethical concerns entered the realm of significance in international politics, or do state actors continue to vie only for more power, as traditionally assumed? Analyzing the selectivity of humanitarian military interventions across regions, diverse actors, and theoretical dynamics provides fertile ground for the exploration of such a complex question. It also opens the door to further discussion on the role of ethics and morality in international decision making, while the book's regional framework may contribute to additional studies on a range of regionally bounded biases within international security and global interventionist trends, such as the degrees of racial or ethnic hierarchies implicit in our international relations theories and policies.

2 • Beyond Dichotomies of Power Politics and Human Rights

International politics is never about democracy or human rights. It is about the interests of states. Remember that, no matter what they tell you in history lessons.

—Egon Bahr in a speech at Heidelberg University, 2013¹

The quandary of what to do regarding foreign citizens suffering atrocities at the hands of their own government has afflicted the international community for centuries. Along the way, however, the normative landscape and legal expectations within the arena of global politics have evolved. In the past decades, the United Nations (UN) has implemented stricter oversight and restrictions, at least on paper, on the conduct of national governments, including international mechanisms of multilateral military intervention against the gravest of domestic abuses.² With the 2005 adoption of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle within the UN charter, for instance, the domestic behavior of governments was exposed to further scrutiny and interference from the international community, in hopes that additional transparency within the formerly opaque borders of a sovereign state would stem future human rights abuses.³ At the 2005 UN World Summit, world leaders agreed that if national governments failed in their responsibility to ensure the safety of their populations against violence and deprivation, the international community was obligated to assume responsibility to protect all citizens from genocide and domestic atrocities, regardless of long-held notions of state sovereignty and the principle of noninterference. This norm effectively marked sovereignty as a conditional on the protection of human rights within state borders.

This norm, however, has proven difficult to enforce in practice, as the high rate of inaction in regions of mass domestic abuses—such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), northern Uganda, Darfur, and Syria—

has shown. The R2P norm has faced resistance similar to that of the concept of humanitarian military intervention from which it arises. Can a military mission activated by interest-wielding states ever be humanitarian, either in motivation or outcome? Politicization makes it difficult to assess whether such trends are widening venues for the pursuit of traditional national interests or strengthening global norms of humanitarianism.

Before addressing regional perspectives on humanitarian intervention, this chapter introduces general frameworks for understanding the main drivers of humanitarian military intervention and nonintervention.⁴ After a brief historical overview of the phenomenon, the chapter allocates considerable attention to the premises of realist theory and its applicability to international military interventions in regions of humanitarian need. This review, however, also elucidates the limitations of realist theory. In contrast to realism's disregard for normative explanations in cases of military intervention, I introduce other perspectives, which position humanitarian military interventions beyond the realm of traditional national interests. In other words, this chapter gives significant consideration to the debates between ideational-constructivist accounts and between materialist-realist explanations. The former anticipates a rise and some level of consistency in humanitarian initiatives in the past decades, while the latter expects humanitarian interventions to occur only in light of vital security or economic interests, leading to highly selective responses and to nonhumanitarian objectives.

Such a debate also highlights the trade-offs between state sovereignty, human rights, and international interventions. To transgress the unitary state-centric and universal approaches, the chapter then introduces regionally based perspectives of international relations that demand further exploration. It concludes with an outline of the book's main pathway of humanitarian military intervention that relies upon interactions between regional variability and conflict perceptions.

As briefly discussed in the previous chapter, international humanitarian interventions are characterized by third-party direct military action initiated during or immediately after an escalation of human rights abuses within a foreign land.⁵ As Michael Walzer first put it, a humanitarian intervention is a justified response against acts "that shock the moral conscience of mankind."⁶ Thus, the definition of "humanitarian" in the context of military interventions maintains two key dimensions: the existence of an acute humanitarian crisis in the region of potential intervention, and public and political perceptions of humanitarian-laden causes in the subsequent military intervention. The post-Cold War literature generally perceives the trend in which states militarily intervene in domestic conflict immediately

following or during a humanitarian crisis as the phenomenon of humanitarian interventions. The next chapter will discuss additional conceptualizations of the phenomenon to allow for a nuanced quantitative assessment.

An important dimension to recall is that a humanitarian intervention is intended to end the worst of the suffering within the target region, not establish a new political system, secure a permanent and perpetual peace, or implement postconflict state-building initiatives.⁷ While explicit political objectives tend to follow such interventions, they are themselves distinct from humanitarian objectives and the initial impetus to intervene. As Taylor Seybolt summarizes, “Humanitarian intervention is meant to protect fundamental human rights in extreme circumstances; it is not meant directly to protect or promote civil and political rights.”⁸ This distinction, however, is difficult to maintain in practice, as most policymakers expect that interventions will stop human suffering in the short run and promote political resolutions to crises in the long run as well. In general, humanitarian interventions almost always alter or promote political outcomes, ranging from nonmilitary economic and food aid that can disrupt local economies and alter distributions with a political system to peacekeeping missions that can alter civilian socioeconomic infrastructures or bolster a political faction over another.⁹ In fact, Seybolt argues that the existence of political goals alongside moral aspirations can produce more robust, resourceful, and ultimately more successful humanitarian missions.¹⁰

Historical Context of Military Humanitarianism

The norm and institution of nation-state sovereignty, originating in the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, have guided international relations into the modern age. But as Seybolt reminds us, before the institutionalization of modern sovereignty, international political behavior was judged by the much older tenets of natural law, founded upon religiously oriented reasoning. It recognized the duty of the sovereign to use violence as a means of promoting the common good across all of humanity.¹¹ The evolving European Westphalian system, however, activated a new standard over time: positive international law, driven by the political interests and will of nation-states.¹² This system proclaimed the nation-state as the autonomous, self-contained unit of international politics, bestowing upon it absolute authority within its own borders along with expectations that it, too, would respect the sovereignty of member states. These norms of noninterference and sovereignty, however, did not apply to the imperialistic conquests of

European powers or the practice of European colonialism that further came to define the Westphalian system, nor did they apply to powerful countries with enough might for territorial expansion and wars of choice.

Therefore, even at its birth, the norm of state sovereignty held to regional and power-driven bounds. Yet in Europe, if a state violated another state's sovereignty, as often happened during wars of territorial expansion and economic competition, the aggrieved state had the right to forceful self-defense. Furthermore, a state had the right to invoke the support of other allied states to return to the territorial and political status quo, even if that meant violently punishing the aggressor state.¹³ Under the influence of positive law, the consensus in Europe emerged that domestic governments had the right to rule any way they deemed fit within their territorial borders, without expecting third-party interferences. This left the enforcement of human rights to the whims and interests of the individual state.

By the end of World War II, the ravages of interstate violence, humanitarian atrocities, and multiple violations of sovereignty prompted the creation of more robust systems of global security, such as the UN, to oversee the application of interrelated norms of national sovereignty, self-defense, and collective security. The international community was also grappling with new norms of state behavior after already experiencing the international antislavery campaign, the decolonization movement, and the worst systematic violation of human rights within Europe, the Holocaust.¹⁴ The bedrock principle of state sovereignty was starting to sway amid weak international calls against human rights abuses occurring within domestic borders. The tension between traditional state sovereignty and universal human rights was best illustrated in the international system's most well-known collective agreement: the UN Charter. In it, states and international organizations are prohibited from using military force except in self-defense or when permitted by the UN Security Council to prevent or end grave threats to international security.¹⁵ But the UN Charter, via the Universal Declaration of Human Rights along with the 1948 Genocide Convention, also protects individual human rights outside of sovereign state structures.¹⁶ In the following decades, these institutional tensions would only grow. For instance, while the UN is supposed to hold jurisdiction over international problems, not issues within domestic arenas, the UN's peacekeeping operations especially since the 1990s have responded to internal instabilities such as civil wars and insurgencies.

The Cold War era generally muted the growing tension in favor of geopolitical, economic, and cultural competitions among the great powers, with a few exceptions. In 1971, due to unfavorable, threatening electoral outcomes, the Pakistani army murdered more than a million people and displaced mil-

lions of others into India.¹⁷ When the Indian military intervened in East Pakistan, it initially justified itself to the UN on humanitarian grounds. But Indian officials quickly changed their rhetoric to suit traditional national security considerations when other states balked at the breaching of the principles of sovereignty and nonintervention for the pursuit of nonvital interests. At the opposite end of the spectrum, some years later in 1979, Viet Nam overthrew Pol Pot's brutal regime in Cambodia, while Tanzania removed Idi Amin from power in Uganda, both moves promoting significant humanitarian outcomes. Yet both intervening regimes justified their actions through interests-based rhetoric and ignored humanitarian arguments.¹⁸ Alternatively, Anthony Arend and Robert Beck noted eleven instances of military intervention between 1948 and 1983 with underlying humanitarian mandates and rhetorical motives, yet the authors rejected every instance as practically driven by nonhumanitarian objectives.¹⁹

In the post-Cold War atmosphere, however, the principle of national sovereignty confronted stronger restrictions from the expanding doctrine of universal human rights. The concept and practice of humanitarian intervention challenges the scope of state sovereignty by assuming a responsibility to protect civilians outside of domestic state jurisdictions. Repeated humanitarian interventions since the end of the Cold War have echoed the rise of such a new "human security" approach on military force, at least in the West, centering the fundamental human rights of individuals, not states, as the key indicator of international security.²⁰ In fact, by 1993 and in the years to follow, some scholars proclaimed the emergence of a "normative consensus" regarding the conditions required for a legitimate international intervention into intrastate conflicts. The key agreed-upon conditions included the confirmed existence of grave abuses against moral and political standards in the target region, the need for a collective military mission, and a high probability of a positive humanitarian outcome.²¹ This line of "natural law" thought, which culminated in the acceptance of the R2P principle, declares human rights to be intrinsically more valuable than the preservation of state sovereignty. Even though bolstered in the post-Cold War context, practically, this "normative consensus" still takes a back seat to the positive law tradition of state sovereignty.

While the new normative doctrine has spurred stronger support in the Global North, it has incited controversy and fear in the South, where states are reeling from a deeply damaging legacy of colonial occupation and are thus determined to preserve their independent state building. For some, such evolving trends on sovereignty and cross-border human rights perpetuate paternalistic, neocolonial control over countries in the Global South as they

pursue domestic political agency.²² The concept of states' responsibility to protect civilians, especially as portrayed in the R2P principle, has drawn severe criticism from many non-Western governments in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, who see the R2P principle as a Western blank check for military intervention by powerful states, under the thin cover of humanitarian rescue.²³ Making matters worse, those same powerful states were the colonial oppressors of many non-Western states today, further cementing the racial hierarchies within the international system under the banner of human rights protection.²⁴

In addition, since the United States declared its international "war on terrorism" in September 2001, many now perceive the notion of humanitarian intervention as either a clever strategy for national security attainment or an obsolete practice of the 1990s, with governments shifting their focuses to the sole protection of vital national interests.²⁵ The United States's use of humanitarian rhetoric to invade Iraq in 2003, after its previous justifications were proven wrong, was a particularly suspicious moment for the doctrine of humanitarian intervention.²⁶

The international reluctance to act robustly against the atrocities ongoing in Darfur is a sobering reminder of the tensions between universal human rights, state sovereignty, and intervention. Since 2003, fighting between Sudanese government-sponsored militias and rebel groups has resulted in the murder of hundreds of thousands of people, with millions more displaced from their homes, with the United States officially accusing the Sudanese government of genocide.²⁷ Instead of justifying intervention via the disruptions to the international order caused by faltering Sudanese state capacity, supporters of intervention in Darfur most condemn the mass loss of human life.²⁸ Even with such widespread humanitarian rhetoric, the international response to the persistent systematic killings in Darfur have proven gravely insufficient to protect civilians, with UN peacekeeping mandates being careful to preserve Sudan's sovereignty, thus reflecting the tensions within the international community even when the humanitarian crisis causes both regional instability and indisputable civilian horrors.

The inherent dilemma is that preventive military action on behalf of humanitarian goals is difficult to justify, given the high probability of underlying interests and coupled with the potential destructiveness of a military operation. On the other hand, delayed military action can mean sacrificing thousands of civilian lives as well as regional stability while political elites deliberate on their options. All post-Cold War humanitarian crises have faced this dilemma, repeating with different outcomes in places such as Iraq in 1991, in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995, Somalia from 1993 to 1995,

Rwanda in 1994, Kosovo from 1998 to 1999, East Timor in 1999, Darfur from 2005 to 2006, and in Libya in 2011.²⁹ Although confronted with similar moral, practical, and political challenges, the international community has stepped up to confront certain humanitarian crises while ignoring others. Below, I explore the theoretical factors that may explain the selectivity gap of third-party interventions in regions of humanitarian crisis.

Theories of International Relations

Each dominant theoretical camp in international relations posits different explanations for the selectivity of humanitarian military intervention. They either proclaim geopolitical national interests, economic interests and democracy building, human rights, or constructed norms as the main driving force behind decisions to intervene within humanitarian crises. The empirical record behind these theoretical lenses, however, leaves much to be desired and encourages the implementation of multifaceted perspectives.

Dominant Realist Perspective—Interests

Realism is the strongest example of a theory that distances itself from ethical considerations, serving as the theory's biggest self-inflicted limitation in dealing with contemporary political questions of ethics versus interests. Realist theorists proclaim that all interferences in state sovereignty are mere guises for powerful states' national interests.³⁰ Indeed, a nation's external policies should be guided by national interest, the desire to maximize stability and minimize harm to their own power, status, and region, not the pursuit of ethics or morality. The literature associates national interests across history with achieving geopolitical influence and power projection in one's regional sphere as well as the pursuit of global hegemony.³¹ Thus, in pursuit of their geopolitical interests, a state ultimately attempts the preservation and imposition of a favorable distribution of power as well as stability proximate to their own location at any given time, often through temporary, strategic alliances and ongoing or former colonial legacies, thereby imbuing the concept with clear regional and racial hierarchies along the way.³² National interests further include the pursuit of political, natural resource-based, commodity-oriented, or other strategic positionings abroad.³³ Realists predict that unless core geopolitical, national interests exist or are under threat, states will not intervene, as doing so risks their soldiers' lives, comes

at high economic and political costs, and makes the state vulnerable to military retaliations, all for nonvital pursuits. Hence, the best the international community can hope for is “a happy coincidence where the promotion of national security also defends human rights.”³⁴ Therefore, when the international community proclaims a new humanitarian mission, realists assume actor rationality and note that the intervention is more likely triggered by the recognition of geopolitical stakes than by what is best for foreign victims.³⁵ In the realist approach, states’ national interests appear fixed and unaffected by trends in domestic politics, ideological leanings, regional variations, or other nonsystemic sources of potential change.

In one of the earliest works of modern realism, Carr emphasizes that theories of international morality or legitimacy are always “the products of dominant nations or groups of nations.”³⁶ Consequently, any normative or values-based dimension of a so-called humanitarian intervention still falls under the realist scope of national interests and prudent foreign policy. Most versions of realist theory assume that international law has no effect on legitimizing or condemning intervention.³⁷ As neorealists would elaborate, laws and norms mean little in international politics because the structure of the system forces states to behave in the same way. All states must act within the confining structure of international anarchy, in which no higher authority exists to regulate, adjudicate, or support individual state behavior. This self-help system leads to a zero-sum game, in which states must preserve their security via a constantly shifting balance of power. This structure of anarchy socializes states to behave in egoist ways to ensure their survival.³⁸ Regardless of the accuracy of the assumptions, they promote self-fulfilling prophecies of conflictual states that must sacrifice ethics for their own survival.

Since realists elevate the state as the most important agent, claims of state sovereignty become paramount as well. Sovereignty serves as the strictest rule, institution, and even implicit norm with which realism discourages ideologically driven state interventions and preserves order. Indeed, the guarantee of state sovereignty is one of the primary ways in which the international system may be institutionalized against anarchy.³⁹ Much of the arguments about humanitarian intervention can be summarized with the tension of “sovereignty versus suffering,” and for realists, the sovereign state is a necessary condition for the easement of suffering.⁴⁰ A military intervention that breaches the institution of sovereignty for anything other than overriding security interests or the reestablishment of a vital regional stability is not only improbable and unwise; it is also an attempt to destabilize an existing system of order meant to ensure a fragile peace.⁴¹ Thus humanitarian interventions are not only futile and misguided, but also may be harmful.

Such outlooks severely limit the role of norms, morality, and international conventions on humanitarian decisions; instead, they perpetuate the status quo and an international realm devoid of transformative change. In this perspective, state sovereignty remains the only robust, institutionalized norm in the international sphere. Yet this realist perspective fails to account for many observed changes in international dynamics since the 1940s and following the end of the Cold War. Contemporary international politics may be characterized by more than the pursuit of narrow, fixed national interests. Especially in the case of military interventions in intrastate conflict, fluid or evolving national interests are now one source of explanatory power, contending with the sway of ethical and normative expectations as well as institutional mandates. For example, countering the realist disregard for international law and normative power, Nicholas Wheeler argues that an emerging, legitimizing norm of UN-authorized humanitarian interventions can be seen through the analysis of UN Security Council justifications, but this norm permeates at the global level.⁴² If tested both quantitatively and qualitatively, how do such “imprudent” moral factors, easily dismissed by realism, influence intervention trends, if at all? Additionally, would there be room left for more regional explanations or actor-based differences? The following sections introduce theoretical perspectives that, unlike realism, examine the role of norms and values in international politics to varying degrees. Yet individually, neither of these theories provides a satisfying understanding of the phenomenon of humanitarian military intervention.

Liberalism: Human Rights and Democratic Interventions

Liberalism, while primarily an extension of realist assumptions regarding the system baseline, allows for limited normative considerations in international relations. Although liberal theory accepts the structure of anarchy, the central role of the state, and the pursuit of national interests as the basis of international politics, it disputes many realist conclusions about the probability of cooperation, range of national interests, and the role of domestic politics.⁴³ Neoliberalism, especially, widens venues for cooperation by highlighting the role of international institutions in mitigating the conflictual, amoral effects of an anarchic international structure.⁴⁴ As Robert Keohane argues, international cooperation is possible through the benefits of international institutions, founded upon mutual shared state interests.⁴⁵ But according to this neoliberal view, institutions do not directly alter norms, nor do they exist due to ethical dimensions. They serve to alter

state calculations by decreasing uncertainty and making cooperation more beneficial for state interests.

Liberals also argue that an expansion of democracy will increase international cooperation, as democratic nations may be less likely to fight one another due to both institutional limitations and normative characteristics.⁴⁶ This democratic peace perspective extends the reach of the liberal Just War theory, which prioritizes justice and ethics over state interests, as democratic values and structures offer protections for individual-level human rights. For instance, Just War principles would permit a state to wage a war in defense of suffering civilians across borders, as long as a legitimate authority wages the war and fulfills all the criteria of proportionality, just conduct, and just ends.⁴⁷ But this approach can't account for the inconsistent application of Just War criteria across global humanitarian crises. The perspectives springing from liberal theory often reduce normative explanations to shared democratic values, economic liberalization, and the universal benefits of a Western international order, marking it as the quintessential, generalized Western lens on international relations.

Another liberal perspective on the possibility of international cooperation stems from interdependent economic policies, which connect states to one another in symbiotic ways and decrease the chances of conflict.⁴⁸ This perspective posits economic benefits and interdependencies as important factors that may drive the selectivity of humanitarian intervention. In general, this perspective fails to embrace norms as enablers of cooperation or as catalysts of foreign policy trends; instead, it keeps close to realist assumptions and alters them to leave room for greater economic incentives, rational cooperation around shared interests, and an assessment of internal political dynamics within a state. Even liberal theorist Stanley Hoffmann, who encourages the introduction of ethical standards internationally, is careful to delineate his argument around the more rationalist tenets of realism and liberalism, careful not to reach "moral absolutism."⁴⁹

But, on the other hand, the international institution of sovereignty may become a function of a state's domestic political record, not merely a function of the power and national interests of an intervening nation. This understanding of the construct of sovereignty allows liberal theorists to inject moral considerations into debates on humanitarian intervention, albeit without regional or specific conflict variations. Liberal theorists emphasize that military force should be employed against countries that propagate massive human rights violations, given that state sovereignty becomes conditional on internal political dynamics.⁵⁰ Under such circumstances, classic

sovereignty may need to be “unbundled” from its multifaceted definitions and functions so that human rights may triumph.⁵¹ In this conception, sovereignty becomes a continuum or gradation, not a constant force of the international system.⁵²

Liberal theorists may condone temporary or even systemic losses in Westphalian (external) sovereignty so that human rights conditions improve in the target state(s) and domestic sovereignty can be re-established, as Just War theory implicitly does. Theorists such as William Talbott even believe that the protection of universal human rights stands as the baseline necessary and sufficient condition for maintaining political legitimacy.⁵³ Hence, when ethnic cleansing campaigns or genocides harm civilian populations abroad, humanitarian military intervention becomes a valuable option if it has the potential to stop the atrocities and restore political legitimacy and thus also regional stability.⁵⁴ These liberal perspectives have proliferated since the end of the Cold War, normalizing expectations of states and international organizations launching a humanitarian intervention to stem humanitarian crises outside of their own borders, absent vital security interests.⁵⁵ Pearson et al. even claim that “humanitarian motives usually do little to further interveners’ power interests”; instead, they manifest as a means to stop the reign of governments that gravely violate the human rights of their people.⁵⁶ The problem with this view, similar to Just War theory, however, is that its moral duties and economic incentives do not appear to maintain consistency across international calls for rescue, and in many cases perpetuate neocolonial dynamics of control and paternalism.

Another issue to consider is that democratic regimes are likely to export liberal values and regime change through humanitarian militarism.⁵⁷ Thus, democratic state building, the protection of human rights across borders, and economic interdependence become hard to separate from states’ self-interest. In other words, spreading democracy and other liberal principles is perceived as essential to the attainment of an international harmony of interests.⁵⁸ These goals become so entangled with state interests that they can override the institution of sovereignty, just as realist geopolitical interests justify breaching the principle of nonintervention. The complexities grow, however, when recalling that liberal democratic states are on average more powerful than others in the international system, which brings some realist doubt to the relationship between liberal democracies and higher rates of humanitarian intervention.

Yet it is the role of institutions that serves as liberalism’s strongest and most adaptable contribution to this debate. Institutional liberals claim that morality and democratic values are most potent when bonded to an institutional framework. Membership in the same organization encourages states

to hold to common norms, rules, and principles, creating international regimes that reframe national interests, international agendas, and human rights.⁵⁹ Institutional membership also alters degrees of sovereignty as states must trade off some dimensions of the classic, unitary concept of Westphalian sovereignty for protection and cooperation. Thus, liberals may argue that shared membership in robust institutional platforms can strengthen and institutionalize interstate cooperation, human rights norms, and a regional or global moral obligation toward other countries, consequently making military interventions in regions of internal conflict more likely.⁶⁰ This institutional context can begin to offer a more regionally sensitive perspective on humanitarian interventions, considering that robust liberal institutions themselves are regionally bounded entities in a material and ideational sense.

The limitations of liberal theory toward humanitarian military intervention are best exemplified through the introduction of the R2P principle, first outlined by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty in 2001.⁶¹ According to the commission, R2P is an attempt to strengthen sovereignty by equipping it for modern-day challenges and by shifting the definition from “sovereignty as control to sovereignty as responsibility.”⁶² This principle declares that states have a responsibility to protect their own citizens from mass human rights atrocities. When states fail in this enforcement, the obligation then falls upon third-party actors, allowing for military humanitarian interventions as a last resort. The R2P, although unanimously adopted at the 2005 World Summit and a driving force behind UN interventions, remains nonbinding and open to endless interpretations by states and the international community. Herein lies the limitations of liberalism in explaining patterns of humanitarian military interventions. If R2P is just a norm, without consistent institutional or legal support, then how can we explain when this norm is activated and enforced? After all, many governments still get away with massive atrocities against their people, while the international community remains silent. Many governments remain highly undemocratic even when interacting with a range of international institutions and economic actors. For the most part, standard liberal factors, similar to realist interests, are too general in their global applications and ignore the direct influence of norms in shaping patterns of military interventions in regions of humanitarian need. Both the theory of realism and liberalism must be expanded to incorporate the role of norms, institutions, and shifting expectations beyond a uniform global lens. The theory of constructivism partially serves this purpose, but it too generalizes the phenomenon of humanitarian intervention without explicit regard to regional variations.

Constructivism: Emerging Norms

The constructivist perspective further rejects the realist worldview but does not rely solely on liberal values. Alexander Wendt, the founder of constructivism, argues that all interactions in the international sphere—from the motivations of states to the environment in which states act—are socially constructed.⁶³ This approach accuses the liberal and realist perspectives of being “undersocialized,” as the two theories pay little attention to ways in which state interests are founded upon ideas, not mere material capabilities. In fact, states are not predestined to showcase egoistic behavior internationally due to the confines of anarchy, as realists argue. Different “cultures of anarchy” can evolve between states. Because state identities and interests are grounded in constructed ideas, anarchy is a socially constructed institution too, altered by emergent and evolving norms, state relations, and expectations. Wendt introduces the Hobbesian culture of anarchy as a portrayal of realist expectations. States perceive each other as enemies and thus focus solely on relative power gains, self-interest, and notions of self-help to survive. But there is also the Lockean culture of anarchy, in which states see each other as rivals and legitimize basic international agreements and treaties, especially the institution and norm of sovereignty. Additionally, Kantian culture occurs when states are socialized to see one another as friends and share in common discourse and cooperative norms. In this Kantian culture, unique, value-laden relationships between states and even nonstate actors become possible and commonplace.⁶⁴ Constructivism opens the door to important normative dimensions as to how states form their expectations of what is acceptable in the international system. It presents alternatives to the norm of sovereignty and self-help, signifying more paths for the evolution of humanitarian interventions.

Grounding her analysis in similar constructivist perceptions of state behavior, Martha Finnemore claims that while security-driven international military interventions have been a common occurrence in history, the conditions in which states consider and partake in these interventions have evolved.⁶⁵ The ordering principle of the international system has shifted from a balance of power to today’s multilateral structures with blurred notions of sovereignty, changing how states define and preserve their interests. Within the contemporary multilateral system, international norms fundamentally influence state behavior and expectations of other states, heavily disincentivizing the unilateral, illegitimate use of force. In addition, this multilateral system arguably affords more space for normative framings and breaches in

state sovereignty for legitimate means, including the protection of human beings through sanctioned institutions. Finnemore further argues that neither realist nor liberal expectations of international relations can explain these patterns of military intervention.⁶⁶ Realist assumptions cannot explain it because the shift in intervention types, from unilateral debt-collecting military missions to multilateral humanitarian interventions, does not parallel the structural changes in the polarity, or power distribution, of the international system. For example, Finnemore finds that Somalia possessed no traditional interests for Western actors, hence dismissing the potency of a realist explanation of the intervention. Liberalism also has its limitations because nondemocratic, non-free-market states seem to practice and enforce many of the same sovereignty-based norms regarding intervention as democratic states.⁶⁷ In general, the liberals cannot fully explain why the Iraq intervention of 1991 and the Kosovo intervention of 1999 did not explicitly and directly enforce key liberal principles (i.e., democracy building and free-market promotion). Similarly, the idealist/moralistic view cannot explain why Western powers did not bother trying to prevent or lessen the severity of the Rwandan genocide, despite knowledge of the humanitarian horrors. Instead, Finnemore investigates how human rights and sovereignty-related norms have altered practices of international humanitarian intervention.⁶⁸ She contends that before 1945, most humanitarian interventions targeted white, Christian populations, seen as deserving of global protection beyond domestic borders. But after 1945, most humanitarian interventions occurred in non-Western, non-Christian populations, which some scholars would see as evidence of neocolonialism.⁶⁹ Aside from the regional deviation, these interventions also transitioned from being overwhelmingly unilateral in nature to being endorsed by international institutions.

Yet one of the most important and broad points within the constructivist approach relates to its core assumptions on national interest formation. National interests are not fixed entities across time and space, as realist theory generally assumes.⁷⁰ They are fluid, evolving conceptions that interact with historical events, individual and group tensions, and more. So while it may be easy to craft interest-based arguments in the aftermath of intervention, it is difficult to pinpoint the actors' reasoning in the moment of intervention, especially if existing norms have already altered the actors' own interests.⁷¹ The observed changes in international dynamics—including the growing phenomenon of humanitarian military interventions, the altered understandings of state sovereignty, and enforcement of human rights across state borders—do not have to occur in the context of strong international

law or tangible institutional frameworks, as liberal theorists might argue. They also do not require the existence of vital geopolitical interests in the realist sense. These changes may also be driven by abstract, fluid normative interactions between agents' identities to one another, their expectations of the international structure, and perceived relationship and responsibilities to the international "other."

But while such a perspective improves upon both realist and liberal limitations, it falls short in explaining the selectivity of humanitarian trends. The power of normative interactions is not only difficult to observe and isolate, but is inadvertently assumed to be homogeneous across regions and actors. Realists and liberals argue that the main problem with constructivist accounts is that they neglect the effects of power interests and only showcase the successful implementation of norms—not the many cases of failed norms compliance and rampant violations—designated by Stephen Krasner as "organized hypocrisy."⁷² The constructivist framework, however, holds great potential to grapple with more nuanced norm formation, as dependent on conflict context, interests, and institutional effects.

On their own, these theories offer important explanatory factors to consider in the upcoming analysis, but in isolation they fail to provide a complete explanation of the selectivity gap of humanitarian interventions in the post-Cold War era. The realist perspective on national interests and power politics ignores many significant contemporary dynamics, minimizing the role of morals and norms in redefining state interests and dismissing the role of nonstate agents in international interventions. Liberalism expands upon the notion of national interest and offers some regional demarcations via institutional formation, while constructivism directly introduces the influence of global norms in guiding the evolution of national interests and reactions to human rights abuses.

Most strikingly, none of these approaches explicitly addresses regional variations in relation to humanitarian intervention selectivity, preferring to blur these factors within larger, more general themes. In the following section, I highlight empirical studies that test the strengths of the major theoretical approaches in understanding international humanitarian interventions. I compare the explanatory power of interests, liberal values, and emerging nonmaterial norms. As the section will highlight, the current empirical literature on the selectivity of international humanitarian interventions presents many puzzles, yet it does direct us to dimensions worthy of further exploration, especially at the regional level.

Empirical Perceptions of Humanitarian Military Interventions

Especially in the post–Cold War era, international responses to intrastate humanitarian crises have increased considerably, but the selectivity gap in missions and resources remains a challenge. On a positive note, Martin Binder finds that the worst humanitarian emergencies from 1991 to 2004 received some degree of humanitarian international response, such as non-coercive humanitarian aid from states and NGOs, socioeconomic sanctions, and, increasingly, varying types of peacekeeping missions.⁷³ In contrast, out of the twenty-seven cases identified in Binder’s analysis of the most severe humanitarian crises, only half of the cases prompted UN and non-UN peacekeeping missions.⁷⁴ In sixteen of the cases, the international community imposed economic sanctions. Only seven of the crises prompted a military response by global institutions. Finally, and perhaps most revealing regarding the impact of conflict perceptions, the Security Council only deemed about half of these crises as global security threats. But once a crisis had been marked as a “threat to international peace and security,” the Security Council activated Chapter VII and either enforced sanctions or mandated a peace enforcement operation in response.⁷⁵

Such empirical patterns demand an explanation of the arising “selectivity gap,” particularly given the contending theoretical perspectives above. Binder begins to assess the reasons behind the inconsistent UN response to humanitarian crises, finding that the degree of human suffering and previous involvements by third-party actors predominantly drove Security Council military actions, but only when geopolitical impetus existed in the form of a spillover effect to surrounding areas.⁷⁶ This finding already presents with a regional dimension worthy of further investigation.⁷⁷

Many have explained the selectivity gap of intervention solely through variations in geopolitical national interests of potential intervenors.⁷⁸ For instance, in one of the earlier studies of humanitarian trends, surveying pre–World War II and post–World War II cases of possible humanitarian interventions, Franck and Rodley conclude that in “very few, if any, instances has the right been asserted under circumstances that appear more humanitarian than self-interested and power seeking.”⁷⁹ In a later study of eighteen UN peacekeeping missions from 1948 to 1990, Laura Neack investigates whether state participation in UN peacekeeping results from genuine commitments to human rights norms in the international community, or whether state involvement instead correlates with the intervenors’ national interests. Her

findings echo realist expectations of interest-driven interventions since “those states whose interests were better served by the continuation of the international status quo—that is, the states of the advanced industrialized West and non-Western states who have enjoyed some prestige in the international status quo—have dominated the UN peacekeeping.”⁸⁰ De Jonge Oudraat moderates the force of this interests-based argument by showing that UN military interventions occur when both the interests of one or more of the P5 are activated and when a conflict is labeled as a threat to international security, which implicates the role of conflict perceptions in interest formation.⁸¹

Yet other scholars find no support for an isolated interests-based explanation.⁸² Instead, they explore how democratic values and missions, shared economic linkages, human rights norms, or historical precedents may drive humanitarian military intervention trends, especially in the post–Cold War era.⁸³ For instance, in their model of coevolution and three case studies of intervention, Alynna J. Lyon and Chris J. Dolan find that patterns of American humanitarian military interventions are not purely altruistic nor purely interest-driven; they are the outcomes of evolving normative structures, complex historical milieu (one intervention influencing the likelihood of future interventions), and a range of domestic factors, such as public opinion, policy elites, and media.⁸⁴ Yet this study, which focuses only on US actions, relies on the interpretation of a limited number of narrated cases to code its model, not aggregate empirical data. Like the previous study, it does not assess the regional variations in the phenomenon of intervention.

Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James’s cross-national, time-series data analysis further reveals a more complicated perspective beyond the tug of interests: the United States is likely to undertake military campaigns for humanitarian objectives rather than for its security interests.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, despite the humanitarian intent, Choi and James also find that all forms of US intervention, including humanitarian military intervention, do not correlate with improved conditions of human rights in the target state, further complicating the debate on human rights versus national interest pursuits.⁸⁶

Combing theoretical lenses, Seybolt insists that states must have strategic as well as humanitarian interests when committing troops in international crises,⁸⁷ because an intervening state inspired only by humanitarian motives is more likely to abandon a harder, riskier mission where their own soldiers are killed in the violence. In contrast to the weak will of third-party actors, the local insurgents will generally attempt to safeguard their own interests at all costs. Thus it would be better for states to not intervene at all than to involve themselves minimally and insufficiently during an acute violent crisis.

But an intervenor in pursuit of both political and humanitarian interests is more willing to accept higher costs and more losses and consequently is more likely to intervene, better protect civilians, and successfully end the crisis.⁸⁸ In other words, Seybolt claims that the most successful of humanitarian interventions (measured by the number of lives saved) are the ones that hold both humanitarian and political motivations.⁸⁹

Interestingly, brief mentions of geographic effects abound throughout most interests-based and normative arguments in the literature. Michael Gilligan and Steven Stedman, for instance, find no national-interests-based explanations of UN interventions, except for geographical bias.⁹⁰ They examine whether the UN intervenes at higher rates within the former colonies of P5 members, among other related indicators such as primary commodity exports. The results reveal regional bias in the UN's mission patterns, although the authors do not provide a thorough explanation of the potential causes of this regional dimension. Such results could arise from stronger security interests in nearby regions as opposed to distant countries, but they could also manifest due to complex mechanisms between regional arenas and multifaceted interest-formation processes. Gilligan and Stedman's results further show that the UN is hesitant to intervene in the civil wars of countries with large and powerful armies. This echoes realist risk assessments as part of enacting prudent policymaking, noting that third-party actors may refuse to militaristically engage with a country that has higher capabilities to strike back and do them substantial harm.⁹¹

Jacob Kathman's study on the regional drivers of third-party interventions into civil wars also promotes a regionally sensitive analysis. In this case, the regional drivers relate predominantly to measures of proximity to the disruptive civil war, where nearby states have a geopolitical interest in maintaining the regional stability of their neighborhood via third-party involvement.⁹² In a study that comes closest to the aims of this book, Mark J. Mullenbach and Gerard P. Matthews argue that interactions between an array of international factors, particularly geographic proximity and ideological connections, influence US decisions to intervene in intrastate violent disputes.⁹³ As is the case with other similar studies, however, Mullenbach and Matthew's analysis incorporate only cases of military intervention, leaving out instances of humanitarian crisis that did not receive an international response.⁹⁴ While these important studies control for region and find some regional influence in the analysis, they do not directly compare regional variation against other variables or present a theory that incorporates these lingering regional effects beyond standard realist premises related to proximity and the preservation of stability. Ultimately, this empirical literature,

while comprehensive and vital to understanding the phenomenon, provides us with every conceivable path toward a homogenized occurrence of humanitarian military intervention.

Regional Variables as Distorters of Selectivity

Hidden within conventional assessments of intervention selectivity are faint whispers on the significance of “geographic proximity” or “geographic bias” mingled with interests, local institutions, and “ideological linkages.” These regional dimensions tend to be included as control variables, not as central factors of their own.⁹⁵ Even the standard liberal perspective on the importance of institutional membership demands an implicit regional dimension of humanitarian interventions. The number and depth of liberal institutions vary greatly across regions, while the institutions also uphold regionally bounded missions and values.⁹⁶ In other words, an explicitly regional empirical argument on the phenomenon of humanitarian intervention is highly in demand as “empirical studies often control for regional variation and find significant differences.”⁹⁷ We can begin the process by exploring how already existing explanations across theories implicate regional variability, typically molded by the existence of robust institutions and their ability to alter interest formation, cost-benefit analysis, and regional identities. Below, the book introduces two perspectives that provide initial ways in which region may impact patterns of humanitarian military intervention.

Unbundling Sovereignty: Good and Bad Neighborhoods in Humanitarian Intervention

The influence of regionally bounded institutions in intervention decisions or trajectories demands further exploration. These institutions may act as proxies for local resource capacity, resource pooling, the chances of intervention success or failure, and even as mirrors for the process of identity formation and the inclusion of actors into distinct spheres of influence. Robert Keohane’s more radical reconceptualization of classical state sovereignty, beyond the R2P argument, as well as his distinction between “good neighborhoods” versus “bad neighborhoods” can connect some of these key dimensions.⁹⁸ First, Keohane argues that the ideal type of sovereignty known as traditional Westphalian sovereignty or external sovereignty should be measured in degrees during times of humanitarian crisis and may

even take a back seat to other versions of sovereignty, such as domestic or legal sovereignty.⁹⁹ He summarizes it as reconceptualizing “the state as a political unit that can maintain internal order while being able to engage in international cooperation, without claiming the exclusive rights, or having the ‘winner-take-all’ quality, traditionally associated with sovereignty.”¹⁰⁰ Indeed, in cases of humanitarian intervention, the limitation of external sovereignty may be the antidote to restoring domestic sovereignty and stability. As in the case of R2P principle, however, if the practice is applied prominently to countries in the Global South, it may be akin to paternalistic neocolonialism. Second, because any potential humanitarian military intervention must be founded upon sound prospects for success and post-conflict stability and cooperation, the existence of interested regional actors and institutions that can design such “gradations of sovereignty” or can “unbundle” sovereignty for the region in crisis become imperative.¹⁰¹ For this process to work, Keohane emphasizes the existence of interested third parties, not only “disinterested altruists.”¹⁰²

According to Keohane, the effectiveness of third-party actors and institutions depends on the quality of the “neighborhoods” near the region of crisis, thus centering the importance of regional context.¹⁰³ He applies Myron Weiner’s framework of “good and bad neighborhoods” to distinguish the degrees and types of institutionalization within a region.¹⁰⁴ A good neighborhood is an effectively institutionalized region of states that trusts one another and may sometimes voluntarily constrain one another’s external sovereignty based on shared values, norms, or institutional mandates. While in a bad neighborhood, distrust, hatred, and low social capital come to define the nature of group relations, which requires high external sovereignty but produces low interstate cooperation and low chances of institutional success.

In good neighborhoods, where effective institutions with pooled resources and allied actors can temporarily take the reins of sovereignty in a target state, a military intervention may promote significant steps toward a sustainable liberal democracy (e.g., in West Germany, Kosovo, or Bosnia). Unfortunately, good neighborhoods cannot be created in the short run leading up to an intervention. Instead, humanitarian interventions with high probabilities of success or with highly transformative liberal goals must occur in or near an existing good neighborhood, such as the European community with its multiple levels of legal, normative, and economic dependencies evident through the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe, the European Stability Pact, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the European Union itself.¹⁰⁵ In the unique case of the Balkans, a redefinition of borders was also required.

The Balkans were perceived as a “bad neighborhood” in the 1990s, but since the Balkans are also a part of Europe, both in geographic proximity and political spillover effects, they could be redefined as part of the bordering “good neighborhood.” This possibility only arises, however, when the “good neighborhood” perceives the troubled region as part of its own sphere, teaches this redefinition to others, and provides resources, social capital, and political credibility to combat the internal crisis as if it were part of its neighborhood.¹⁰⁶ Conditional institutional memberships that offer economic and political benefits, such as NATO and the EU, can then entice local agents in an intrastate conflict to sacrifice external sovereignty for outside interference from the “good neighborhood.”

In this argument, the role of national interest remains salient since outside actors’ involvement is conditional on their self-interest in the region. But regional, institutional contexts reshape and often expand these interests. As Keohane further explains via the NATO example in the Balkans, “this self-interest can itself have been generated by prior institutions, valuable to their members. Interests are not exogenous or inherent; they are created by action. . . . Institutions ‘piggyback’ on strong existing institutions, on the basis both of organizational support and of the interests that have been created by the earlier institutions.”¹⁰⁷ Therefore, robust regional institutions, once cemented, will create path dependencies that magnify regional distinctions and create new interests on intervention over time, prioritizing their own “good neighborhoods” over others.

Alternatively, in bad neighborhoods of multiple failed states (e.g., in Somalia or Afghanistan), the goals of intervention become much less ambitious for intervening actors, typically limited to re-establishing internal order for the sake of global security or preventing acute starvation.¹⁰⁸ In such cases, the line between humanitarian intervention, neoimperialism, and self-defense (especially as related to threats of budding terrorist cells) becomes blurred. Finally, interventions in bad neighborhoods risk higher costs as well, by requiring longer periods of external rule that may echo colonial dynamics or involve higher risks from fragmented, often resentful societies.

The dynamics between good and bad neighborhoods can alter mutual interests and cost/benefit analysis for outside parties that may be contemplating humanitarian intervention. Thus, whether a humanitarian intervention is the right choice may depend not only on the target state or the interests of the intervenors directly, but also on whether the crisis is located near a good neighborhood. If so, the potential intervenors may be able to redefine and thus expand the good neighborhood to incorporate the crisis state, invest in institutional cohesion and functionalities, and redefine national interests and

norms in relation to the region.¹⁰⁹ If an intrastate conflict is instead taking place within a bad neighborhood, far from effective institutions, potential intervenors will have lower expectations of success and lower mutual interests as well, making intervention there a much more cautious, limited endeavor. To connect the dots further, as most “bad neighborhoods” currently exist outside of the Western sphere, many international actors are wary of the time and resources it would take to mobilize for a farther-away non-Western conflict in an underinstitutionalized region with few strategic interests at play. This then perpetuates a regional bias in humanitarian intervention selectivity in the first place, not only humanitarian outcomes after the fact.

Although Keohane introduces this “neighborhood” perspective, he does not test it empirically or compare it to other theoretical factors that may explain military intervention patterns.¹¹⁰ Indeed, Keohane does not discuss this perspective in the context of the selectivity of humanitarian military intervention debates.¹¹¹ But this perspective informs the foundational framework of this book, and I empirically trace how Western and non-Western spheres may act as proxies for the characteristics of good and bad neighborhoods and impact intervention selectivity. As will be further elaborated, the West refers to both a geographic entity and a fluid, perceptions-based arena in which liberal democracies hold institutional and normative influence.¹¹²

Regional Identities and Social Learning: The Case of Bosnia

But what perpetuates the regional differences in effective international institutions and good versus bad neighborhoods? How are the neighborhoods shaped or extended during a crisis? Despite their scarcity in political analysis, the narratives that are constructed and then repeated when crisis overtakes certain regions of the world may also impact the nature of the international response. For instance, international audiences can perceive distant crises as products of religious or ethnic civil wars fueled by ancient, irresolvable hatreds, or as products of systemic international aggression against an innocent side, which alters third-party responses to the crisis, especially if these conflict perceptions match to regional, institutional patterns. Although focused on an in-depth analysis of the Bosnian crisis, David Campbell’s critical interpretation provides convincing evidence of these more muted perspectives.¹¹³ He claims that the framing of Bosnia’s crisis through the ethnicization of the political field led to the interpretation of the 1990s Balkans conflict as an “intractable” identity-based problem, thus requiring the solution of ethnic partition and delaying and muting international responses.¹¹⁴ The outcome of this delay was tragic: the horrors of the

Srebrenica genocide took place right under the noses of UN peacekeepers in 1995. The Bosnia perspective can be extrapolated to other internal crises and the range of international responses, making conflict perceptions an important variable for consideration alongside region, perhaps one that may activate or mute regional responses.

For Bosnians, the atrocities committed in Srebrenica in 1995 were instances of “ethnic cleansing” or “genocide.” For the Serbs, they were perceived as the products of wartime “battle.” But the impact of these labels was not limited to the interactions and identities of the Balkans groups themselves, as the labels marked and encouraged divergent responsibilities for outside parties. The international community, media, and the majority of academic analysis at the time of the Bosnian crisis adapted the perceptions of the Bosnian Serb community: that the conflict was just another identity-based civil war involving an ethnic or religious clash between groups that simply could not coexist on the same land. Because the conflict was perceived as a civil war, the international community understood the violence as a product of the groups’ fervent hatred of coexistence, leading to acts of ethnic displacement, not ethnic cleansing. As Campbell illustrates in his analysis, the international community assigned equal blame to all parties and was “deeply infected with the view of the conflict as among three ethnic ‘sides’ with ancient and essentially irresolvable animosities.”¹¹⁵ Hence the narrative of civil war instead of an equally plausible narrative of international aggression or genocide overtook international perceptions of Bosnia from 1994 to 1995. As this civil war narrative continued, the option of a robust humanitarian military intervention remained largely muted.¹¹⁶

Perception of an irresolvable, identity-based civil war also implied very low chances of third-party success in attaining the goals of security and liberalization in the target region. This perception instead promoted the crisis as the state’s own internal business. Beyond this, it promoted the narrative of a complicated, chaotic chain of violence, with no innocent civilians to rescue or “good guys” to partner with. Campbell shows that had Bosnia been cast as an instance of systematic killings or international aggression—not as an identity-based civil war—the strategies might have looked different.¹¹⁷ Third parties may have seen Bosnia as a good candidate for robust, early intervention, amenable to stabilization, democratization, and liberal values.

Yet US president Bill Clinton, UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) commander Gen. Michael Rose, and other policymakers at the time echoed the civil war narrative and related sentiments when it came to potential involvement in Bosnia. The international community had no business altering the military balance in domestic civil wars and sacrificing soldiers over

repetitive, unstoppable ancient hatreds.¹¹⁸ The media bolstered this narrative by portraying Bosnia through the lens of fixed identities, shaped solely by centuries of Balkan hatred, which had defied all outside meddling.¹¹⁹

Western fixed views of the Balkans followed suit. The Balkans was rendered a land of war economies, colonial dependencies, and bipolar populations, “oscillating between extremes, with little propensity for moderation.”¹²⁰ Cultural norms of revenge reigned supreme while respect for life and the individual were nonexistent due to the land’s “collectivist climate.”¹²¹ Consequently, the Balkans were painted as backward, foreign, barbaric, uncivilized, and fundamentally different, separated from civilized Europe.¹²² These narratives, coupled with perceptions of the Bosnian conflict as an ethnic civil war, limited political possibilities by portraying the crisis as unmanageable by rational approaches. As a systematic Serbian policy to destroy Bosnian Muslims advanced, the international community simply allowed the Balkans’ presupposed nature to unleash. They muted the impact of many local and domestic counternarratives founded on multiculturalism and on the understanding that the unfolding violence was a product of strategic, government-led plans of political domination, instead of historically inevitable ethnic antagonism.¹²³

As Campbell details, the Bosnia narrative serves as a product of standard international relations, with its assumptions of “pre-given agents with autonomous, intractable, and observable identities.” Further, “[It] allows authors to portray a seamless, ethnically ordered world in which no other conceptions of identity have political import, and where group relations cannot be other than mutually exclusive and conflictual.”¹²⁴ Moreover, norms of territorial and cultural alignment, tying sovereignty to identity, are central to the construction of the Westphalian system. Thus the political will for intervention in Bosnia was lacking as there was no clear way to restore sovereignty and no traditional goals to aim for otherwise. But this understanding was only possible due to the favored and dominant narrative of the day, that of a raging civil war between irrational sides. This perception did not accurately depict the horrific violence on the ground in Bosnia, but the perception alone was enough to alter third-party responses.

This shared perspective of the Balkan region propelled years of diplomacy to resolve the “civil war” against a backdrop of systematically dying civilians in Bosnia. It was only after the crisis worsened into a clear case of genocide in 1995 that the international resolve to intervene grew, but only after the UN peacekeepers in Bosnia had utterly failed to protect the unarmed civilians under their guard. The international community did not prevent the Srebrenica genocide and the murder of more than eight thousand men

and boys.¹²⁵ Instead, following the worst of the horrors, they offered a delayed limited air intervention and an ethnic partition of Bosnia itself. Had Bosnia been cast as an instance of international aggression from the beginning, the third-party strategies may have looked vastly different and more innocent lives may have been saved.

The earlier review of conventional theoretical literature in this chapter serves to showcase the limitations that the international community and academics impose in interpreting intrastate crises such as Bosnia. Dominant perspectives are often hindered by narrow conceptions of national interest formation and fixed conceptions of state sovereignty. Furthermore, they do not account for important regional variations in institutional willpower and resources as well as constructed perceptions of intervention necessity or success. Even in the best-case scenario, these perspectives promote inconsistent, ad hoc interventions that don't even prevent the worst of the humanitarian suffering with their delayed limited airstrikes and weapons exclusion areas. In such instances, ongoing genocide is often framed as "civil war," "ancient hatreds," or "displacement," with dramatic differences in outcomes.

Perceptions of internal conflicts as driven by irresolvable identity clashes, often tied to regional identities, can have political consequences within the international arena, regardless of whether they are correct or incorrect assessments of the abuses on the ground. As Stuart Kaufman analyzes in *Nationalist Passions*, perceptions about the complexities arising from identity-based civil wars are not unfounded. Conflicts that are truly driven by ethnic, nationalist, or other identity-based grievances may possess different causes and origins and thus require unique considerations for third-party actors too.¹²⁶

Yet few academic studies address the effects of conflict perception in a systematic, direct manner. If we are unable to explain the variance of humanitarian interventions on a global scale, we must alter our unit of analysis or change the variables that appear most prominent. Campbell's Bosnia study forcefully evinces the influence of conflict perceptions and regional identities in cementing the dynamics behind Keohane's (2003) good versus bad neighborhoods.¹²⁷ Yet neither of these perspectives has been tested on the full phenomenon of humanitarian military intervention relative to other key variables. Consequently, this book will test the explanatory power of conventional international relations wisdom, such as geopolitical national interest, economic linkages, and human rights norms, on humanitarian military intervention and nonintervention, alongside new mechanisms related to conflict perception and regional variation. The case studies assume the task of exploring the missing pieces from the aggregated analysis, focusing on regionally bounded interactions between norms and interests.

Brief Framework: Pathways of Intervention

In the backdrop of the review of the literature as well as the newly proposed approaches to the selectivity of intervention, I expand upon my earlier framework that connects national interest formation, regional variations, and conflict perception through institutionalization. This framework will be tested and refined in later chapters. In the three figures that follow (figs. 2.1, 2.2, 2.3), I differentiate among three distinct pathways that lead to humanitarian military intervention, albeit with different intensities. Any alternative pathways thus implicate an absence or low likelihood of intervention.

Once the threshold condition of human rights abuses is met, international actors will consider three interacting factors when considering humanitarian military intervention as a foreign policy choice: (1) geopolitical national interests (a standard theoretical variable); (2) conflict perception; and (3) regional context. In the first pathway, shown in figure 2.1, strong national interests, whether in the form of geopolitical security interests or vital economic interests, drive the decision to intervene militarily, although the context of humanitarian need is still a required threshold. But other factors related to conflict perception and regional context do not sway the ultimate decision of intervention; they sway only the degrees of intervention intensity, from observational missions, to airstrikes, to “boots-on-the-ground” troop incursions. This pathway represents the standard realist view of the phenomenon of waging traditional military intervention but veiling it in humanitarian rhetoric to lower intervention costs and instances of retaliation. All variable pathways are possible if strong national interests exist in the target region. In other words, this pathway represents the co-opting of humanitarian rhetoric and norms for more efficient geopolitical pursuits for the intervening state(s).

In the second pathway, in figure 2.2, national interests exist in the target region, but they are not vital to state security. In this case, other factors may explain intervention selectivity. Conflict perceptions of the violence engulfing the target state can alter the cost/benefit analysis for an intervenor and the prospects of intervention success. In the case of low national interests, many states will not intervene in conflicts denoted as identity-based civil wars between equally culpable sides, especially ones with seemingly irresolvable ethnic or religious hatreds. Most political elites and leaders understand identity conflicts as “problem[s] from hell,” as Warren Christopher, then the US secretary of state, declared in a 1993 statement regarding Bosnia.¹²⁸ Since a humanitarian intervention’s central objective is to save a substantial num-

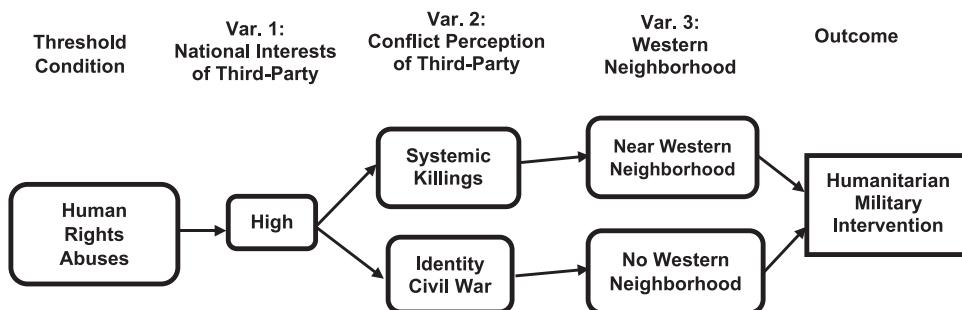


Fig. 2.1. Pathway 1 to Intervention during Intrastate Conflict

ber of lives and improve upon human rights on the ground, it becomes difficult to justify an intervention into a crisis that's perceived as “natural,” “ancient” or unsolvable by standard military or diplomatic means. Furthermore, the perceived intractable “primordial” origins of an identity civil war, such as ethnic or religious hatreds, discourage the framing of the conflict as one between aggressors and victims. Political elites within states and institutions will instead see all sides as culpable for the distant violence, with no innocent lives in need of saving, thus muting intervention.

These same states and their political elites, however, may consider intervening in nonidentity civil conflicts perceived as cases of international aggression or purposeful, systematic killing of civilians by one guilty side. Such “favorable” elite conflict perceptions may, in turn, activate the values-based missions of regional institutions, which increase the prospects of intervention. It is important to recall that “favorable” conflict perceptions may often differ dramatically from the true nature of the violence on the ground.

If an intrastate conflict occurs in or near a “Western neighborhood,” with robust regional institutions and resource-pooling mechanisms, a humanitarian military intervention becomes less risky, less costly, and more likely to promote the normative missions of the regional institutions. Hence, humanitarian crises near a Western neighborhood are more likely to prompt humanitarian military responses, and this chance increases if favorable conflict perceptions exist. But even with unfavorable conflict perceptions, a crisis with some level of geopolitical interest near the West may still be a target of intervention. In contrast, an intrastate conflict far away from a Western neighborhood, lacking linked institutions and political narratives—even if understood as systematic killings—will most likely be relegated to the back burner of international priorities. This is because national interests cannot be redefined or expanded to include values-based mandates that support the

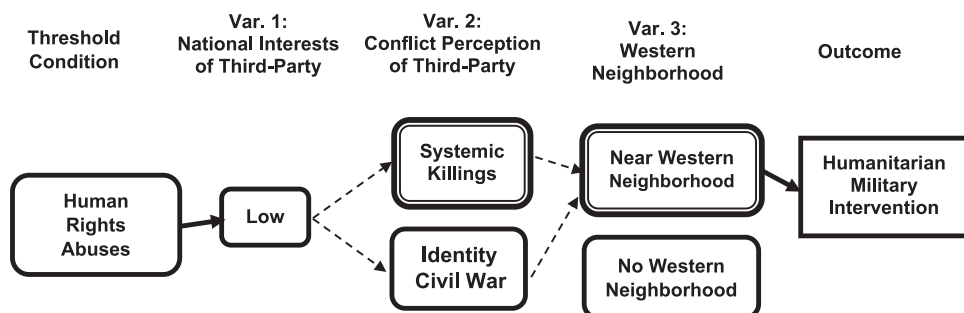


Fig. 2.2. Pathway 2 to Intervention during Intrastate Conflict

(Note: The dashed lines represent the choice of variables along the pathway, while the bolded sections represent the most favorable choice for intervention along the path.)

credibility and functionality of regional institutions meant to perpetuate value-laden visions for the neighborhood.

The most limiting pathway of intervention, illustrated in figure 2.3, presents no initial national interests to pursue within the troubled region of possible intervention. Thus, perceptions of the conflict alongside regional institutions become vital to selectivity. Only conflicts near or within Western neighborhoods that are seen as nonidentity civil wars, such as one-sided systematic killings, will have any substantial likelihood of intervention.

In sum, I advance the argument that regional variations particularly between Western versus non-Western neighborhoods drive the selectivity gap of humanitarian military interventions, even more than the explanatory power of conventional variables on their own, such as national interest, economic benefits, and human rights. I propose that this regional bias, often serving as a proxy for values-based institutional capacity and resource pooling, is interlinked with Western perceptions of the ongoing conflict. Therefore, I predict that an identity-based civil war outside of the Western sphere will have a low probability of third-party intervention, while non-civil-war violence within the Western sphere will have the highest probability of intervention. I theorize that regional biases and conflict perceptions influence third-party policy options and choices during times of humanitarian crisis, perhaps with conflict perceptions acting as activators or silencers of institutional mandates. To activate regional institutions, Western audiences must perceive the distant violence as a special type of violence—one of ethnic cleansing or systematic killings—not another intractable ethnic/religious civil war between equally guilty sides. Once this favorable conflict perception sets in, if a conflict unravels within or at the edge of a highly institution-

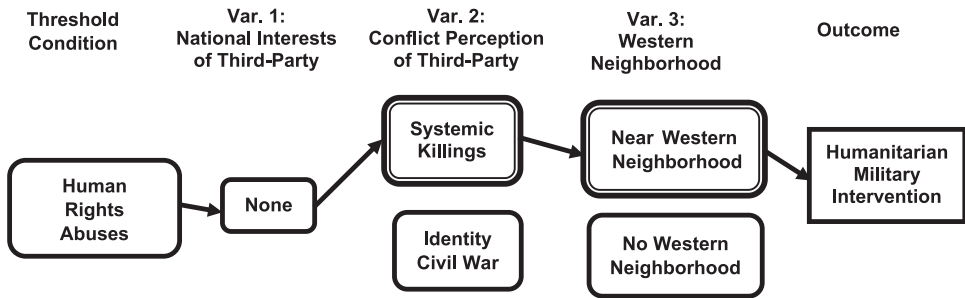


Fig. 2.3. Pathway 3 to Intervention during Intrastate Conflict

alized Western neighborhood, the likelihood of humanitarian military intervention rises.

In the next chapters, I test the key factors that distinguish these pathways in relation to more conventional explanations of intervention selectivity, both through statistical analysis and process tracing of three distinct case studies: the NATO Kosovo intervention (1999), the NATO Libya intervention (2011), and the Darfur UN nonintervention (2003–present). The next chapter will expand upon this case selection process, which seeks to maximize the regional, operational, temporal, and outcome variability in humanitarian military interventionism.

3 • Models of Intervention

Neighborhoods and Perceptions in International Politics

“[T]he legacies of geography, history and culture really do set limits on what can be accomplished in any given place. But the experience in the Balkans reinforced an idealist dictum that is equally true: One should always work near the limits of what is possible rather than cynically give up on any place. In this decade idealists went too far; in the previous one, it was realists who did not go far enough.”¹

—Robert Kaplan, 2013

As the literature reveals, the forces of geopolitical national interest, liberal values, or humanitarian norms do not explain patterns of intervention selectivity on their own, partially because these standard factors treat security interests, humanitarian need, and liberal institutions as similarly defined and equally relevant across regions. These shortcomings point to a lingering puzzle, prompting the need for a regionally sensitive lens. The first phase of this journey begins in this chapter with a broad statistical analysis that highlights empirical gaps and suggests venues beyond traditional theoretical expectations.² The statistical analysis acts as plausibility probe for the proposition that regional variations and conflict perceptions drive humanitarian military intervention selectivity. It does this by comparing the explanatory power of regional and perceptions-based forces to more conventional factors of intervention. In other words, this endeavor focuses on *whether* regional and perceptions distinctions matter, rather than *how* they matter. The main goal in this chapter is to allow different international relations theories to speak to one another in a more productive manner regarding the phenomenon of humanitarian interventions. A more nuanced process tracing will follow in the next chapters via three case studies of humanitarian crises.

To recall, humanitarian military interventions may hold to different regional dynamics, challenging the homogeneity of the theoretical camps introduced earlier. The small Balkans region, for instance, experienced eight UN peacekeeping missions and four NATO interventions following the breakup of Yugoslavia, while the same global actors either ignored the more persistent human rights abuses in Africa and the Middle East or grossly underfunded the military missions. Martha Finnemore's argument on the emergence of a humanitarian norm of intervention, hence, appears bounded within Western geography, while realist national interests may need further refinement as applied to the humanitarian missions within the Balkans relative to other targeted regions.³ Below are two hypotheses that arise from the book's theoretical premises. Both center regionally sensitive forces, Western versus non-Western neighborhoods and dominant perceptions of the nature of conflict, that interact and magnify each other's impact. This chapter will first test these hypotheses quantitatively alongside the conventional explanations of humanitarian military intervention. In part II of the book to follow, the case studies on Kosovo, Libya, and Darfur will further assess the interactions between these two propositions, uncovering that conflict perceptions interact heavily with geography and cultural identities.

Hypothesis 1 (*conflict perception*): Holding humanitarian need and geopolitical interests constant, states will be less likely to intervene in intrastate conflicts perceived as identity-based civil wars (whether or not the reality on the ground reflects this perception).

Hypothesis 2 (*region*): Holding humanitarian need and geopolitical interests constant, an intrastate conflict occurring in or near a Western neighborhood (with robust regional institutions), is more likely to become a target of a humanitarian military intervention, with higher intensity.

Thus, the key question posed and answered in this chapter is: Which of the factors introduced in chapter 2 make humanitarian military interventions more likely to occur? Moving forward, I outline the technical specifications of the data and models used to answer this question. Next I present several models that differ in their dependent variables, covariants, and statistical assumptions. Then I interpret the results in light of theoretical assumptions and hypotheses.

Overall, I discover that regional variation between Western vs. non-Western spheres has the greatest impact on intervention probabilities. In

fact, this regional variation supplants the explanatory power of all other conventional variables. For now, the regional component is a crude proxy for local capacity, resource pooling, and lowered costs of intervention. At the end of this chapter, I discuss lingering puzzles that quantitative analysis is unable to resolve, such as why and to what effect conflict perceptions interact with regional variation across cases of intervention and nonintervention. This dimension requires more nuanced analysis, which is taken up in later chapters.

Methods and Definitions

To test the two hypotheses relative to the standard explanations of national interest, economic ties, and human rights, I use post–Cold War (1989–2014) incidents of armed intrastate conflict from the UCDP/PRIO database and match each conflict to any international intervention with humanitarian objectives that occurred in that state, applying the Humanitarian objective coding from the International Military Intervention (IMI) universe of cases.⁴ The full case universe of humanitarian military interventions is available within table A3.1 in the chapter 3 appendix. The chapter appendix also includes visualizations of the case universe by region. To populate the universe of humanitarian military interventions, I rely on data from IMI (until 2005) and then supplement with a new dataset on humanitarian military interventions compiled by Gromes and Dembinski from the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF), extending the case universe to 2014.⁵ I also include cases of multidimensional and Chapter VII enforcement peacekeeping from Fortna’s peacekeeping dataset, with an additive Intervention Index accounting for the intensity of missions.⁶ According to Holzgrefe and applied similarly in the PRIF dataset, preventive peacekeeping operations and robust postwar peacekeeping can qualify as humanitarian military interventions as long as the intent to protect foreign nationals from an ongoing crisis is part of the mission mandate.⁷

As previously noted, the theory of realism does not account for true humanitarian military interventions, only military interventions driven by national interests and justified through humanitarian goals. As a result, the definition of humanitarian military intervention must begin with the definition of military interventions in general, followed by the definition of armed intrastate conflict, the study’s chosen unit of analysis.

As per Pearson and Baumann’s original coding, the book defines military intervention as “the movement of regular troops or forces (airborne, sea-

borne, shelling, etc.) of one country inside another, in the context of some political issue or dispute.”⁸ To separate higher-intensity interventions from smaller skirmishes, this definition excludes paramilitaries, government-backed militias, and other security forces outside of a state’s standard national military. Additionally, the military incidents must be intentional. The definition excludes accidental border crossings alongside any unintended clashes between military planes or naval ships. The definition further excludes military members involved in exercises in a foreign country, espionage, transporting people or supplies across borders, or concentrated in foreign bases.⁹ Furthermore, the study uses data that defines international military interventions by temporal parameters so that interventions are “continuous if repeated acts occur within six months of one another.” Therefore, if an intervening power withdraws its troops from a state and returns them there more than six months later, this becomes a new intervention, keeping in line with the original coding of the indicator.

According to Gleditsch et al. and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, the definition of armed conflict is “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year.” Also important is the intensity of the armed conflict within a year. The standard in the literature is to label a conflict “minor” if at least twenty-five but less than one thousand battle-related deaths occur in one calendar year, and “war” if at least one thousand battle-related deaths occur in a calendar year.¹⁰ Details on this operationalization based on Gleditsch et al.’s UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset can be found in table 3.1.

This chosen unit of analysis enables the differentiation between general international military interventions in a target state and military interventions that have perceived humanitarian dimensions. This is because all cases of intrastate conflict manifest with degrees of humanitarian need and crisis, as exemplified by battle-related deaths, civilian deaths, displacements, property damage, and more. In this way, the study’s case universe includes both military interventions and nonintervention during a humanitarian crisis, which is a rare methodological choice within the literature.

Similar to Holzgrefe and Finnemore, I define international humanitarian intervention as the application of military force by a state or a group of states (including UN peacekeeping) to protect foreign nationals from intrastate violence and abuse.¹¹ While the debate on humanitarian military interventions is complex, with many additional caveats to this definition, I rely on three main criteria within this analysis: (1) The threat or usage of force

abroad by a state, group of states, or international institutions, (2) with an identified intention of restoring human rights to noncitizens, and (3) in response to a violent, human-made crisis.¹² Therefore, what distinguishes humanitarian interventions from other military interventions is the humanitarian crisis stemming from the unit of analysis, which leads to perceptions of humanitarian motives and the objective to protect “individuals other than its own citizens”¹³ or “saving strangers,” as Wheeler has coined.¹⁴ Such motives separate humanitarian military interventions from interventions for self-defense, the rescue of a state’s own citizens, or purely self-interested military interventions in pursuit of territory, strategic interests, or regional or global hegemony. Thus, this study considers interventions with stated humanitarian aims, such as the stopping or reducing of violence and human rights abuses within the target country or the protection of civilians. But it is important to recall that humanitarian motivation/intent is almost always present alongside other motivations, including national self-interest and geopolitical considerations, such as preventing refugee spillovers or managing a failing state to prevent or stem instability in the respective region.¹⁵

The selected unit of analysis—armed intrastate conflict—fulfills the conditions of a humanitarian crisis, as all cases of intervention occur in regions of grave humanitarian need. Therefore, a military intervention during a year of armed intrastate conflict in a target country can be labeled a humanitarian military intervention as long as third-party humanitarian justifications exist. The humanitarian justifications are measured by extending the coding of the IMI’s Mission Objectives variable via individual case analysis of the fourteen post-2005 HMIs and through triangulation with PRIF’s dataset. Alternatively, a nonresponse during an armed intrastate conflict is measured as a case of nonintervention to fully capture the variability in the selectivity gap of intervention. It is also important to note that this study considers both the occurrence and nonoccurrence of the humanitarian intervention as well as the level of intervention intensity, measured through an additive index of the number of troops and naval and air incursions.¹⁶ Beyond the international response to intrastate crises, the study below measures a wide range of explanatory variables as related to each unit of intrastate conflict and the dependent variable of intervention (or nonintervention), including geopolitical national interest, economic benefits, degree of human rights abuses, and the hypothesis-relevant measures of regional variation and conflict perceptions.

To test hypothesis 1 on conflict perceptions, I use a dummy variable reflecting the perceptions of the conflict as per international elite and academic standards, denoting whether the unit of analysis represents perceptions of identity-based civil war or a non-identity-based civil war, which

leaves room for narratives of ethnic cleansing or genocide. Even if the reality of the violence differs from the dominant narrative perpetuated by key actors, the winning conflict perception is what drives policy options in real time. As discussed in earlier chapters, the perception of an intrastate conflict as either originating from ethnoreligious civil strife, international aggression, or one-sided acts of violence may shape international responses. If hypothesis 1 finds support in the data, I expect to see lower probabilities of intervention in conflicts labeled as identity-based civil wars, relative to other types of conflict.

Two conflict-type variables may begin to measure, at a basic level, the perceived dimensions of an intrastate conflict in the eyes of the international community. At this stage, several limitations on the conflict perceptions measurement must be made explicit. First, the measure of conflict perceptions is a dichotomous variable arising from Doyle and Sambanis's classification of conflict types and used in Fortna's work on peacekeeping as well, which I extend to newer cases of conflict by also triangulating when possible via the Center for Systemic Peace, Major Episodes of Political Violence dataset.¹⁷ This dataset offers two related but imperfectly corresponding variables, Ethnic Violence and Ethnic War, measured by the magnitude of societal-systemic impact of the particular ethnic or non-ethnic violent episode in a country during a year, ranging from 0 to 10. It contrasts this measure to one of civil violence, civil war, or revolutionary war in a country-year. For the post-2000 cases, I have further relied on this dataset to code Doyle and Sambanis's original measure of identity war, although missing values remain that were not amenable to either source, or the uncertainty was too high to code appropriately.¹⁸

Sambanis divides conflicts into identity versus nonidentity types, with identity conflicts occurring among communities (ethnic and/or religious) that "are in conflict over the power relationship that exists between those communities and the state."¹⁹ These communities do not simply want to control state territory or resources, they want to revise or divide the state along identity-based lines. Doyle and Sambanis further state that "identity wars are ethnic and religious wars. . . . Nonidentity wars are ideology-driven revolutions, loot-driven wars, or other nonethnic, nonreligious wars."²⁰ They code these categories of conflict type by consulting a range of State Department, country-specific, and Human Rights Groups reports and if there are disagreements, they reflect the majority opinion in the coding. Doyle and Sambanis's key definition to distinguish identity wars from nonidentity wars comes from Esty et al., listed as "episodes of violent conflict between governments and national, ethnic, religious, or other communal minorities (ethnic challengers) in which the challengers seek major changes in their status. . . . Rioting and

warfare between rival communal groups is not coded as ethnic warfare unless it involves conflict over political power or government policy.”²¹

As this quantitative measure denotes the academic consensus on the conflict type on the ground each year, it can serve as a crude proxy for conflict perceptions as well, given that the academic and policy consensus on the nature of a conflict also tends to match the political elite consensus and the standard understanding of the nature of the violence that is engulfing a distant region in real time. Although this measure of conflict perception offers a preliminary way to distinguish identity-based conflict from ideological or political conflict, it remains limited in its nuance and validity. Moreover, it cannot fully remove the possibility of reverse causality within the study. Since researchers cannot look inside the minds of decision makers, they assess perceptions by analyzing the decision makers’ declarations. The decision makers make declarations with their audiences in mind. Once intervention becomes a policy reality, leaders must convince their publics that the intervention is justified, and since interventions in endless civil wars are unpopular, leaders may instead frame them in more favorable ways. A decision to undertake a humanitarian military intervention may cause a change in conflict perceptions. While the following statistical analysis can control for some temporal elements through variable lags and measurement years, it cannot directly observe or measure leaders’ motivations. Thus, the argument predominantly revolves around whether conflict perceptions matter when it comes to intervention pathways and probabilities, relative to other factors, not the exact origins of these perceptions. Even if leaders intentionally seek to change perceptions, it does not alter the main pillar of the argument: that a change in conflict perceptions from an identity war to a nonidentity war must occur to make an intervention more likely. The case studies to follow improve upon the limitations of this quantitative conflict perceptions measure by explicitly tracing the fluidity of this concept and the importance of its shifts across time and space.

To test hypothesis 2 on regional variation, I categorize my unit of analysis and dependent variables by region: Western versus non-Western.²² This broad regional divide acts as a proxy variable for institutional robustness, Keohane’s “good neighborhood” versus “bad neighborhood” dynamics, and institutional resource sharing that might alter third-party calculations or interests toward intervention. For the following quantitative analysis, a narrow definition of West includes most member states of OECD, OSCE, and NATO. Generally, in geographic terms, it includes North America, western Europe and its proximate neighbors in southern Europe and the Balkans, Australia, and New Zealand; and in economic or cultural definitions, Japan,

South Korea, Israel, countries with adapted “Western” institutions and values.²³ In a broader definition of the West, I include countries within Russia’s sphere of influence and the United States’s sphere of influence in Latin America, as well as Turkey, which is vying for EU membership. The following countries are included in the broader definition but not the narrow one: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan, Russia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, and Turkey, due to both their proximity and historical, economic, and cultural ties to the Western neighborhood.²⁴ If the data supports hypothesis 2, I expect to see higher probabilities of humanitarian military intervention for conflicts occurring within the West, relative to non-Western conflicts. I argue that the regional and conflict perceptions measures in my models will explain much of the variability of humanitarian military intervention patterns in comparison to the leading theoretical variables included in the analysis.

Within the scope of the research question and theoretical approach, the most important concepts demanding rigorous measurement are (1) geopolitical national interests, (2) humanitarian need, (3) international humanitarian intervention, (4) economic benefits, (5) regional variations, and (6) conflict perceptions. Details on the unit of analysis measurements and sources are found in table 3.1 below. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 offer details on the dependent and independent variable measurements. In the chapter 3 appendix, figures A3.1 and A3.2 illustrate the subsample of interventions by region as well as rates of intervention by Western versus non-Western dimensions, while table A3.3 in the appendix separates the descriptive statistics by intervention versus nonintervention status.

To recall, the theory of realism—which provides foundational assumptions to all other theories under consideration—explains the international decisions of states solely through the uninhibited pursuit of national interests, especially geopolitical or security considerations. The theory then disapproves of the inclusion of moral and ethical dimensions when considering these interests.²⁵ Geopolitical national interests, as seen through the baseline realist lens, consist of any national pursuit that would directly increase a state’s relative power and influence internationally, hence increasing its security. I define geopolitical interests as direct effectors of a state’s military capabilities and power potential, such as a state’s extension of geopolitical influence within its regional sphere and beyond, the maintenance of a favorable distribution of power and preservation of regional stability, such as through increased military strength, natural resource access, commodities, or other strategic stakes in a region, as well as the strategic preservation of former or

Table 3.1. Unit of Analysis—Armed Intrastate Conflict

Category	Indicators	Source
Intrastate Conflict	(1) Intrastate armed conflict (2) Intrastate armed conflict with foreign involvement	UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict
Intensity	(1) Minor: between 25 and 999 battle-related deaths in year (2) War: at least 1,000 battle-related deaths in year	UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict
Cumulative Intensity	Coded 0 if conflict hasn't resulted in more than 1,000 battle-related deaths; coded 1 once conflict reaches threshold	UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict
Narrow West	Includes members of OECD, OSCE, and NATO. Generally, in geographic terms, North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. In economic or cultural definitions, Japan, South Korea, and Israel, countries with adapted "Western" institutions and values.	McNeill
Broad West2	Test of robustness: Includes Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Colombia, El Salvador, Georgia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Russia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Venezuela, Panama, Mexico, Uzbekistan, where West (narrow definition) does not include.	McNeill
Region	1—Europe 2—Middle East 3—Asia 4—Africa 5—Americas	UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict

Source: Data from Nils Petter Gleditsch, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg, and Håvard Strand, "Armed Conflict, 1946–2001: A New Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 39, no. 5 (2002): 615–37; UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset: <https://www.prio.org/data/4>; McNeill, "What We Mean by the West." Reprinted with revisions from Sidita Kushi, "Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises," *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022): 252–53 (table A2), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

ongoing colonial ties.²⁶ Therefore, to the traditional realist, states vie for military power and key resources to maximize their strength to ensure state security and progress toward regional or global hegemony.²⁷ In relation to humanitarian intervention, realists perceive any military intervention into foreign lands as primarily propelled by existing geopolitical interests in that region, yet often excused through humanitarian rhetoric.²⁸ Operationalizing geopolitical interests has proven difficult and has led to a narrow measure-

Table 3.2. Dependent Variables—Interventions
International Humanitarian Military Intervention

Variable	Indicators	Source
Troop Activity/ Intensity of Military Intervention	0. No Intervention 1. Intervention, but no troops 2. 1–1,000 troops 3. 1,001–5,000 troops 4. 5,001–10,000 troops 5. 10,000+ troops	International Military Intervention (IMI); for post-2005 cases, coded as per IMI by case review and PRIF and COW checks.
Troop Incursion	0. None 1. Evacuation of troops 2. Transport or negotiate-observe 3. Patrol/guard/defend (SAMS) 4. Intimidation 5. Combat	International Military Intervention (IMI); for post-2005 cases, coded as per IMI by case review and PRIF and COW checks.
Naval Incursion	0. None 1. Evacuation of troops 2. Transport troops or launch forces inside territorial waters for combat 3. Laying or removing mines in territorial waters/commando raid 4. Act of intimidation in waters 5. Shelling/firing	International Military Intervention (IMI); for post-2005 cases, coded as per IMI by case review and PRIF and COW checks.
Air Incursion	0. None 1. Evacuation of troops 2. Transport troops/personnel—supply/support 3. Act of intimidation/air defense/patrol 4. Bombing or strafing, firing	International Military Intervention (IMI); for post-2005 cases, coded as per IMI by case review and PRIF and COW checks.
Intervention Index	Ordinal Additive Index of: Troop Activity, Troop Incursion level, Naval Incursion level, and Air Incursion level. <i>(Requires existence of humanitarian objectives, measured via a dummy variable.)</i>	Constructed scale International Military Intervention (IMI)

Source: Reprinted with revisions from Sidita Kushi, "Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises," *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022): 252–53 (table A3), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

ment of this multidimensional concept. Although this study will not be able to account for all dimensions, it uses several variables to improve upon the concept's operational value. This study operationalizes the concept of geopolitical interests through the variables of: Oil Supply and Exports, Colonial History, Alliances, Geographic Proximity, and Affinity Scores as applied to the states experiencing intrastate conflict. These dimensions reflect the importance of primary natural resources, colonial ties, alliance systems, and geographic concerns related to crisis proximity (related to refugee spillover/regional destabilization). Ultimately, an ordinal additive index of National Interests that incorporates some of these indicators into one is constructed and applied in the analysis.²⁹

It is also important to test the explanatory power of geopolitical national interests relative to the explanatory power of other causes or norms. For instance, the concept of humanitarian need in a foreign land during the year of a potential or occurring military intervention must be explored to compare its influence to geopolitical considerations. Measures of humanitarian need serve as proxies for constructivist norms of protection of innocents, while economic benefits and institutionalization are proxies for liberal theoretical variables. In other words, I explore regionally sensitive interactions in comparison to the explanatory power of standard theoretical variables within the models. I follow the preliminary findings with three pivotal case studies, allowing for a much deeper dive into the two identity-laden hypotheses. Please see the tables below for concept measurements across theoretical camps and factors. For a detailed report and justification of all concept operationalizations used in this study, please refer to the supplemental documentation included in the shorter article version of the analysis in *International Relations*.³⁰

Model Specifications

The statistical analysis relies on a new dataset of post–Cold War humanitarian military interventions and noninterventions. The unit of analysis is the occurrence of intrastate conflict within a particular year from 1989 until 2014, resulting in 983 observations. The time period is selected to maximize sample size and data availability, but it also steers clear of pre–Cold War international security dynamics. The beginning year of 1989 captures conflicts and interventions that occurred during the transitional period between the Cold War and post–Cold War international arena.³¹ The main dependent variables are either ordinal or binary, requiring the usage of ordered logistic regression assumptions. The key dependent variable is an

Table 3.3. Independent Variables

Variable	Indicators	Source
<i>Geopolitical National Interests</i>		
Oil Supply	Dummy: Coded 1 when target state's oil exports exceed one-third of export revenues (<i>also tested with Fuel Exports as % of merchandise exports</i>)	World Bank ^a
Export Commodity	Ratio of primary commodity exports and GDP of target state	World Bank ^b
Colonial History	Does state experiencing intrastate conflict have colonial relationship with P5?	Correlates of War (COW) & International Military Intervention (IMI) ^c
Alliances	Is target state in military alliance, security treaty partners, or nonaggression pacts with P5? Dummy	Correlates of War (COW) ^d
Geographic Proximity	<i>Contiguity with P5 (up to 400m)</i> 0. not contiguous 1. contiguous by land or up to 400 miles of water <i>Contiguity with P5 (up to 150m)</i> 0. not contiguous 1. contiguous by land or up to 150 miles of water	Fortna and Correlates of War Project (COW) ^e
National Interest Index	Ordinal Additive Index = (Oil + Colonial History + Alliances + (Contiguity400 + Contiguity150)/2)	Constructed scale (see supplemental documentation in Kushi (2022), "Selective Humanitarians" for details on individual measures)
Maximum Affinity	Political affinity and alignment between target state and UN P5—measured via UN General Assembly voting records	Gartzke (2006) and Fortna (2008) ^f
Battle Casualties	Number of battle-related casualties inflicted upon intervenor countries	International Military Intervention (IMI)
<i>Humanitarian Need</i>		
Human Rights Abuses	CIRI Physical Integrity Rights Number of battle-rated deaths occurring during year: low, high, and best estimate measures	CIRI ^g UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset ^h
Human Dislocation	Number of refugees and internally displaced per year in country of intrastate conflict <i>Source:</i> Number of Refugees ($\times 1,000$) originating in country at end of year <i>IDP:</i> Number of Internally Displaced Persons ($\times 1,000$) in county at end of year <i>Host:</i> Number of Refugees ($\times 1,000$) hosted by country at end of year	World Refugee Survey Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) ⁱ
<i>Liberal/Economic Interests</i>		
Trade Linkages	Trade as % of GDP in target	World Bank ^j
Foreign Direct Investment	Foreign Direct Investment net inflows & outflows (as % of GDP)	World Bank

Mineral Resources	Mineral rents as % of GDP	World Bank
Intergovernmental Organizations	Natural resource rents % of GDP 0—No Joint Membership 1—Joint Full Membership IGO Rate—Country's total IGOs in year out of all IGOs Average IGO—from 0 to 1, average IGO membership across all IGOs within year.	Correlates of War (COW); Pevhouse et al. (2004) ^k Constructed Constructed
<i>Conflict Type</i>		
Identity Civil War	0—ideological, revolutionary, or other conflict (nonidentity) 1—ethnic, religious, or identity conflict (identity-based)	Doyle and Sambanis (2000); Fortna (2008); post-2000 conflicts triangulated via Major Episodes of Political Violence data
<i>Confounding Variables for State Military Power</i>		
National Material Capabilities	Total Population of Target Military Expenditures Military Personnel Primary Resource Consumption	Correlates of War (COW) ^l
<i>Control Variable for Democracy</i>		
Level of Democracy	Polity Democracy Score for Target	Polity ^m
Regime Stability	Regime durability: number of years since most recent regime change	Polity Durable Index ⁿ

Source: Reprinted from Sidita Kushi, "Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises," *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022), 252–53 (table A4), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

Note: Sources for the items listed in the final column are as follows:

a World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, 2015 (Washington, DC: World Bank), <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators>

b World Bank, World Development Indicators.

c Based on Frederic S. Pearson and Jeffrey J. Pickering, "Military Intervention and Realpolitik," in *Reconstructing Realpolitik*, ed. Frank W. Wayman and Paul F. Diehl (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 205–26; and Fortna, *Does Peacekeeping Work*.

d Correlates of War Project, *Formal Alliances Data, 1648–2008*, Version 4.1, <http://correlatesofwar.org>; Douglas M. Gibler, *International Military Alliances, 1648–2008* (CQ Press, 2009).

e Fortna, *Does Peacekeeping Work*; Correlates of War Project, *Direct Contiguity Data, 1816–2006*, Version 3.1, <http://correlatesofwar.org>

f Erik Gartzke, Codebook: *The Affinity of Nations Index, 1946–2002*, Version 4.0, 2006, 2; Fortna, *Does Peacekeeping Work*.

g David L. Cingranelli and David L. Richards, "The Cingranelli-Richards Human Rights Dataset Version 2008.03.12," available at <http://www.humanrightsdata.org>. The Physical Integrity Index is an additive index constructed from the Torture, Extrajudicial Killing, Political Imprisonment, and Disappearance indicators ranging from 0 (no government respect for rights) to 8 (full government respect).

h UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset v.5, *Uppsala Conflict Data Program: Uppsala University*, 2015. www.ucdp.uu.se

i Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), Global Figures, 2014, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-figures>; Monty G. Marshall, *Forcibly Displaced Populations, 1964–2008* (2008), <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>

j World Bank, World Development Indicators.

k Jon C. Pevhouse, Timothy Nordstrom, and Kevin Warnke, "The COW-2 International Organizations Dataset Version 2.0," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 21 (2004): 101–19.

l Correlates of War Project, *National Material Capabilities, 1816–2007*, Version 4, <http://www.correlatesofwar.org>

m Monty G. Marshall and Ted Robert Gurr, POLITY IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800–2013, *Center for Systemic Peace*. 2014. <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>

n Marshall and Gurr, POLITY IV.

intensity-based ordinal Intervention Index, tested using ordered logistic assumptions and with odds ratio coefficients as measures of substantive significance (denoting a lower probability of intervention occurrence when they are under 1, and a higher probability when above 1). The chapter also tests a simpler dummy variable of intervention occurrence.³²

Several dataset limitations must become explicit. First, the original merged dataset has many missing values, thus presenting problems for the maintenance of stable observations. To ameliorate this concern, missing data within several variables (labeled appropriately within the models) are filled via multiple chained imputation methods. In comparison to the previous version of this analysis, several variables have been updated with new observations as to limit the number of imputations whenever possible.³³ Second, the data do not concern themselves with gradual changes in intervention intensity once an intervention has occurred, both due to data limitations and to the scope of the research question. The question focuses on the primary causes of military intervention within a crisis, not on the mechanisms of mission trajectory and duration once in place.

Patterns in the Data

Before delving into the predictive models, figure 3.1 shows the historical trend in the proportion of military interventions that occurred during each year of intrastate conflict. As is already evident from the discussion in previous chapters, most humanitarian military interventions occurred in the 1990s, predominantly in the western Balkans. The following years experienced a decrease in these interventions, yet 2014 saw a mild increase, hinting at the lingering importance of such a phenomenon in international relations, a phenomenon that best captures the evolving tensions among international human rights promotion, national sovereignty, and geopolitical national interests in this day and age.

Table 3.4 lists descriptive measures for the key variables in the dataset. Table A3.2 in the appendix also sorts the same variable measurements by region, Western versus non-Western. A great discrepancy in Polity scores of democratization and refugee numbers can be seen between these two groups of data, with the West showing drastically greater measures of democratization and much lower numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Surprisingly, the National Interest Index as connected to the Permanent 5 (P5) members of the UN Security Council stands at a higher average within the Non-Western group than the Western one, possibly driven by for-

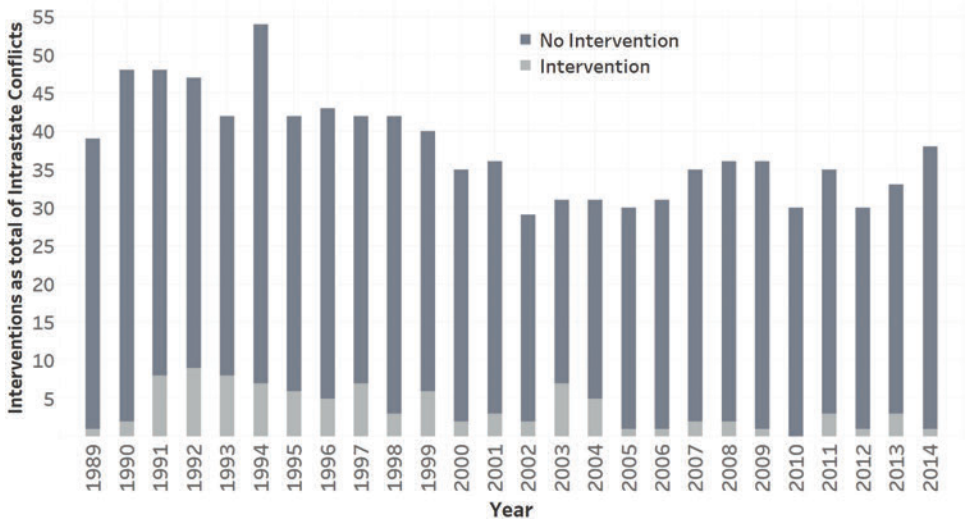


Fig. 3.1. Interventions as Total of Armed Intrastate Conflict, 1989–2014 (Country-Year)

Source: Reproduced from Sidita Kushi, “Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises,” *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022), 229 (fig. 1), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

mer colonial ties, contiguity, and oil exporter countries outside of the West. This indicator of National Interest may more accurately reflect great power spheres of influence that can mute humanitarian interventions or other inferences by other powers or international institutions. Moreover, figure 3.2 shows that national interest trends do not appear to increase across the sub-sample of interventions versus noninterventions, as realist scholars would expect. Instead, the average national interest index across the years for cases of intervention is lower than for cases of nonintervention. Figure 3.3 reveals a similarly puzzling trend on measures of human rights via the Physical Integrity Index.³⁴ It appears that states intervene in countries with better records of human rights, not worse records, which contradicts expectations of a human-rights-based approach to the phenomenon. The average Physical Integrity Index score for targets of intervention across the years is 2.08, while the score for noninterventions is 1.75. Higher scores represent greater state protection for citizens’ physical integrity. Perhaps such patterns occur due to powerful states and institutions choosing to intervene within “easier” cases of humanitarian crisis, while ignoring the more complicated cases due to low chances of policy success. But as discussed earlier, the chances of intervention success and perceptions of more complicated conflicts are heavily connected

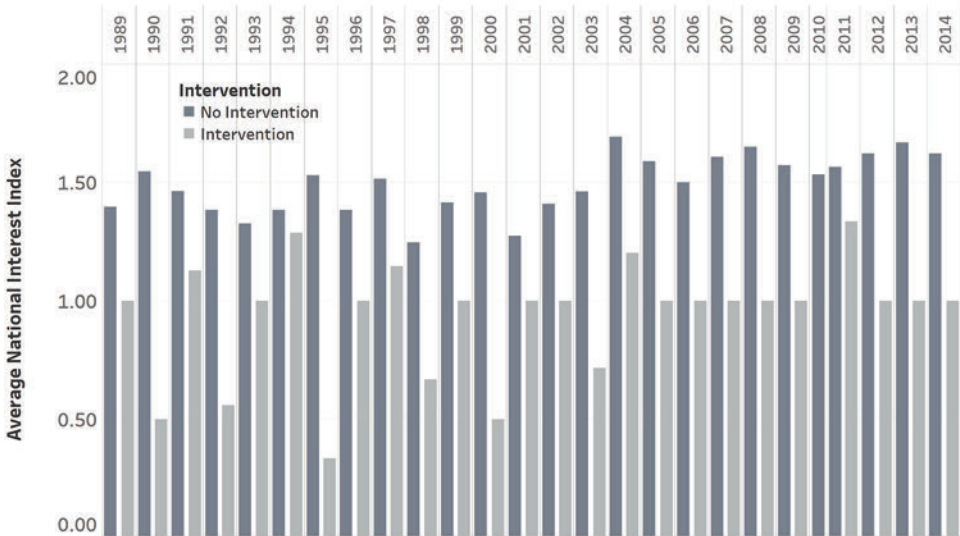


Fig. 3.2. National Interest Trends across Cases of Intervention and Nonintervention, 1989–2014

Source: Data from Sidita Kushi, “Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises,” *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022): 229 (fig. 2), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

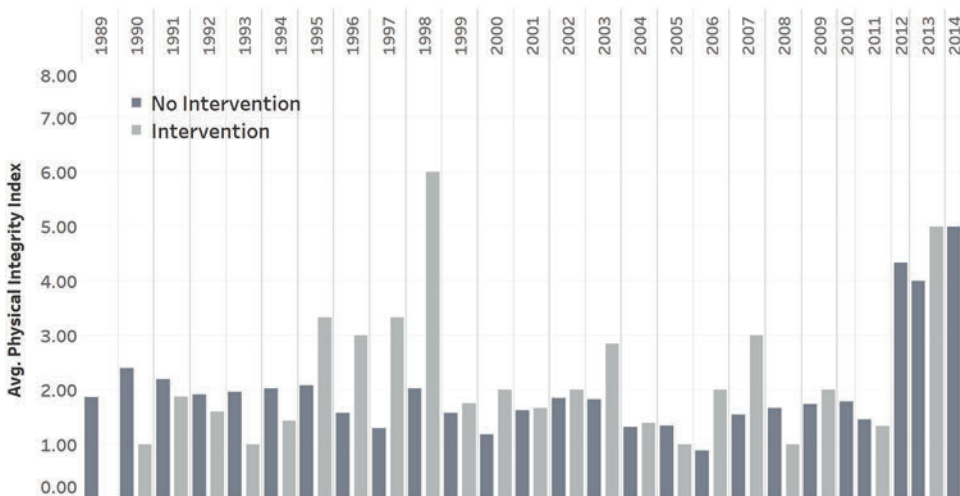


Fig. 3.3. Physical Integrity Trends across Cases of Intervention and Nonintervention, 1989–2014

Source: Reproduced from Sidita Kushi, “Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises,” *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022), 230 (fig. 3), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

Table 3.4. Descriptive Statistics (no imputations), 1989–2014

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Battle Deaths High	946	1,306	3,551	25	53,948
Intervention Index	983	0.777	2.607	0	18
Identity War	753	0.855	0.352	0	1
Affinity Score P5	851	0.802	0.169	0.375	1
Oil Rents of GDP	829	5.614	12.17	0	67.33
GDP Growth	893	3.881	8.998	−64.05	88.96
FDI Inflows	827	2.329	6.995	−82.89	89.48
GDP per capita	828	2,288	4,385	73.83	33,635
Mineral Rents	847	0.889	3.261	0	43.73
Natural Resource Rents	786	13.06	14.82	0.002	80.75
Trade Flows	851	54.93	32.57	0.021	199.7
Exports	851	24.42	16.74	0.005	98.76
Fuel Exports	598	18.73	30.17	0	99.79
Oil Exporter	979	0.180	0.384	0	1
Polity2	956	1.629	6.016	−9	10
Durability Index	981	18.57	21.48	0	118
CINC	741	0.013	0.023	1.27e-05	0.124
Refugee Source	777	252.8	638.6	0	6,601
IDP	769	562.2	880.1	0	6,000
Refugee Host	776	168.1	354.5	0	3,677
IGO Rate	673	32.88	10.65	0.567	60.68
Average IGO Membership	673	0.538	0.172	0.001	1.030
Physical Integrity Index	828	1.779	1.691	0	8
National Interest Index	983	1.430	0.876	0	3
Intervention	983	0.0977	0.297	0	1

Source: Reprinted from Sidita Kushi, “Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises,” *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022), 254 (table A5), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

Note: Some variables have been updated with newly available data in comparison to previous version of the analysis.

to regional institutions and identities. Already, we see strong contradictions in the most prominent approaches and variables related to the phenomenon, hence meriting further inquiry.

Predictors of Intervention and Intervention Intensity

The following models employ the Intervention Index as the dependent variable, with clustered standard errors around each country unit. The index is an ordinal scale (0–18) of existing troop activity and levels and naval and air incursions within a unit of intrastate conflict. It measures the dichotomy of intervention versus nonintervention as well as the intensity of interven-

tion. Table 3.5 applies combinations of independent and control variables, including both lagged and unlagged variable versions and alternative measures of the same concept (such as export commodities, oil exporter status, and mineral rents to measure strategic resources, or battle deaths, conflict intensity, and the Physical Integrity Index as measures of human rights conditions on the ground). These differing configurations serve as tests of robustness. All model specifications denote high statistical significance for the narrow definition of the Western region (West), while the broader (West2) definition remains significant in some instances, but it is not nearly as substantively significant. Therefore, countries in Latin America or the Russian sphere of influence appear to lower the explanatory power of the Western variable in prompting humanitarian military intervention. In other words, the impact of Western region, in this case, may serve as a proxy for NATO and EU institutional neighborhoods. An intrastate conflict in “the West” is more than eight times as likely to be the target of intervention relative to other countries. A move from a non-Western region to a Western one increases the odds of HMI by 700 percent, holding all else constant. Conflict perception also becomes statistically and substantively significant in these models, with perceptions of an identity civil war greatly decreasing the odds of intervention. An internal conflict perceived as either a product of ancient ethnoreligious hatred between intrastate populations or as a simple civil war tends to mute international calls for intervention, regardless of whether this perception represents the reality on the ground. The narrative of civil war that drives conflict perceptions is the important dimension in this case. The moral responsibility and the incentivizing normative context to intervene diminish when international actors understand or frame the crisis as driven by several equally culpable sides that are capable of inflicting harm. In addition, the norm of sovereignty is harder to overcome since civil wars occur in the traditional domestic sphere of conduct. Moreover, the usual perception is that ethnoreligious civil wars are intractable and inevitable; thus, international actors can do little in the long run. Alternatively, an intrastate conflict perceived as international aggression or as a campaign of systematic killing allows international actors to employ either existing national interest motivations to combat the aggressor state or to override state sovereignty for human rights promotion and protection via institutional channels and mandates.³⁵

Humanitarian-oriented variables such as battle deaths or the Physical Integrity Index do not show any consistent, statistically significant relationships, contrary to predictions by many constructivist scholars. IGO membership appears statistically significant in some models, but it shows a small

negative relationship to intervention probability. Affinity scores, the Polity Index, the Durability Index, and Foreign Direct Investment inflows remain either statistically or substantively insignificant across models, decreasing the relevance of these primary liberal variables.³⁶ The National Interest Index shows some significant relationships, but the relationship is an inverse one and is not consistently seen across model specifications. As the results below will further reveal, this inverse relationship is driven primarily by contiguity to the P5 members indicator, reflecting a “sphere of influence” effect that mutes humanitarian interventions in the neighborhood of other great powers. When this contiguity indicator is removed from the National Interest Index, the index loses significance across all model specifications.

The models in table 3.6 continue the analysis of intervention intensity, but they disaggregate the indices into their individual indicators and offer alternative measures of economic forces. They also present comparisons between the dependent Intervention Index variable and the simpler Intervention dummy variable. Many relationships from above continue in these alternate models. The West variable becomes more relevant, now increasing the odds of intervention by more than thirty times in some models. The Identity War variable remains statistically and practically significant with an inverse relationship to intervention intensity and occurrence. In terms of indicators of geopolitical national interest, the contiguity to the P5 countries as well as alliances with the P5 UN member states decrease the odds of intervention and intensity.

Such findings hint at dynamics of power politics within regional confines, in which an intrastate conflict near great powers may become the unilateral responsibility of the regional great power (if an alliance exists and favors governmental forces). These great powers can further maintain a favorable status quo in their spheres of influence that discourages humanitarian-driven interventions by other countries or international institutions. Ultimately, the regional and conflict perceptions variables remain both significant and substantive in explanatory power across the models.

Several core relationships exist across all models: (1) the strong, direct impact of a narrow definition of Western versus non-Western region of intrastate conflict on intervention probability; (2) the strong, inverse relationship between identity conflict perceptions and intervention probability; and (3) the strong, inverse impact of geographic proximity to the P5 on intervention likelihood and intensity. Figures 3.4 and 3.5 illustrate the relative results of the models across these variables through odds ratio plots, both in aggregated and disaggregated form. Figure 3.6 graphs the regional bias in intervention intensity between Western and non-Western spheres, noting that

Table 3.5. Ordered Logistic Models of Intervention Index—Aggregated Variables

Variables	Intervention Index							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
West	8.506*** (5.817)	8.551*** (5.921)	6.705** (5.096)	7.457*** (4.632)	6.775*** (4.828)			4.627* (4.255)
Im_IdentityWar	0.334*** (0.119)	0.268*** (0.101)	0.279*** (0.111)	0.311*** (0.117)	0.399*** (0.131)	0.446** (0.170)	0.443** (0.167)	0.414** (0.161)
NationalInterestLag	0.643* (0.150)	0.754 (0.177)		0.668* (0.158)	0.537*** (0.118)	0.511*** (0.115)		0.543** (0.140)
Im_AffinityscoreP5	14.273 (23.795)	1.327 (1.690)	2.178 (3.064)	2.191 (3.236)	30.457 (63.398)	24.913* (45.657)	19.656* (34.670)	3.158 (5.530)
Im_AverageI_GOM	0.383 (0.438)	0.307 (0.463)	0.485 (0.661)	0.353 (0.502)	0.231 (0.287)	0.099** (0.105)	0.127* (0.134)	0.255 (0.386)
Im_GDPcapita	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000*** (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000** (0.000)
Im_PHYSINT	0.906 (0.069)	0.958 (0.084)	0.928 (0.083)					
Im_FDIinflows	1.041*** (0.010)	1.041** (0.017)	1.040*** (0.015)	1.036*** (0.014)	1.039*** (0.009)	1.036*** (0.009)	1.035*** (0.009)	1.037*** (0.013)
Polity2	0.992 (0.031)	0.990 (0.028)	0.976 (0.032)					
DurableLag	0.983 (0.018)	0.967 (0.023)	0.977 (0.022)	0.986 (0.023)	0.990 (0.018)	0.993 (0.018)	0.992 (0.018)	0.996 (0.023)
Im_MineralRents		1.009 (0.034)						
Export Commodity		1.025 (0.027)	1.007 (0.011)					1.014 (0.011)

Trade Flows	0.988 (0.014)	1.003 (0.005)		
NationalInterestIndex	0.768 (0.210)		0.524*** (0.113)	
Im_PHYSINTlag		0.993 (0.071)	0.964 (0.061)	0.975 (0.079)
Polity2Lag		0.980 (0.035)	0.985 (0.039)	0.965 (0.041)
BattleDeathsHighLag			1.000 (0.000)	
West2			2.411* (1.142)	2.375* (1.162)
Im_CumulativeIntensity				1.017 (0.319)
Observations	954	825	827	798
r2_p	0.0999	0.117	0.108	0.0924
			0.105	0.0989

Note: The Im prefix denotes an imputed variable. Odds Ratios displayed for substantive significance. Country Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table 3.6. Ordered Logistic Models of Intervention—Disaggregated Variables

Variables	Intervention Index			Intervention		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
West	11.266*** (9.116)	11.493*** (10.859)		35.623** (54.826)	23.874*** (27.690)	
Im_IdentityWar	0.277*** (0.102)	0.301*** (0.113)	0.350*** (0.119)	0.312*** (0.119)	0.330*** (0.128)	0.369*** (0.139)
Im_AllianceP5	0.670 (0.410)	0.949 (0.607)	0.201** (0.139)	0.927 (0.442)	1.174 (0.683)	0.157** (0.131)
OilExport	1.965 (0.886)	2.126 (1.117)		1.727 (0.772)	2.304 (1.224)	
Im_FormerColony	1.075 (0.603)	1.273 (0.713)	1.019 (0.481)	1.214 (0.534)	1.084 (0.534)	1.059 (0.566)
Im_CINC	0.000*** (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)	0.000* (0.000)	0.000** (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)	0.000 (0.000)
Im_AffinityscoreP5	11.520* (16.395)	4.590 (6.165)	7.747 (11.257)	8.678 (11.690)	11.262* (14.209)	3.271 (4.125)
Im_AverageIGOM	0.395 (0.507)	0.306 (0.547)	0.143 (0.214)	0.177 (0.275)	0.117 (0.205)	0.093 (0.155)
Im_GDPcapita	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000*** (0.000)	1.000*** (0.000)	1.000*** (0.000)
Im_PHYSINT	0.891 (0.074)	0.905 (0.083)	0.908 (0.074)			
Im_FDIinflows	1.037*** (0.010)	1.046*** (0.015)	1.030** (0.012)	1.021*** (0.008)	1.025* (0.013)	1.016 (0.016)
Polity2	1.013 (0.033)	1.001 (0.028)	1.008 (0.031)			
DurableLag	0.980 (0.019)	0.981 (0.021)	0.989 (0.018)	0.990 (0.016)	0.993 (0.018)	0.996 (0.019)
Im_RefugeeSource	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)
Im_IDP	1.000** (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000** (0.000)	1.000* (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)
P5_Contiguity150		0.337* (0.204)	0.208** (0.127)		0.294* (0.193)	0.184** (0.127)
TradeFlows		0.997 (0.007)			1.000 (0.006)	
West2			6.672*** (4.438)			12.377*** (10.021)
Im_FuelExports			1.006 (0.005)			1.004 (0.006)
Im_PHYSINTLag				1.015 (0.083)	1.017 (0.084)	1.005 (0.082)
Polity2Lag				1.016 (0.029)	1.004 (0.027)	0.998 (0.032)
Im_MineralRents				1.020 (0.030)		

Table 3.6—Continued

Variables	Intervention Index			Intervention		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
ExportCommodity						1.009 (0.011)
Observations	950	825	954	823	827	827
r2_p	0.113	0.122	0.123	0.236	0.229	0.230

Note: The Im prefix denotes an imputed variable. Odds Ratios displayed for substantive significance. Country Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

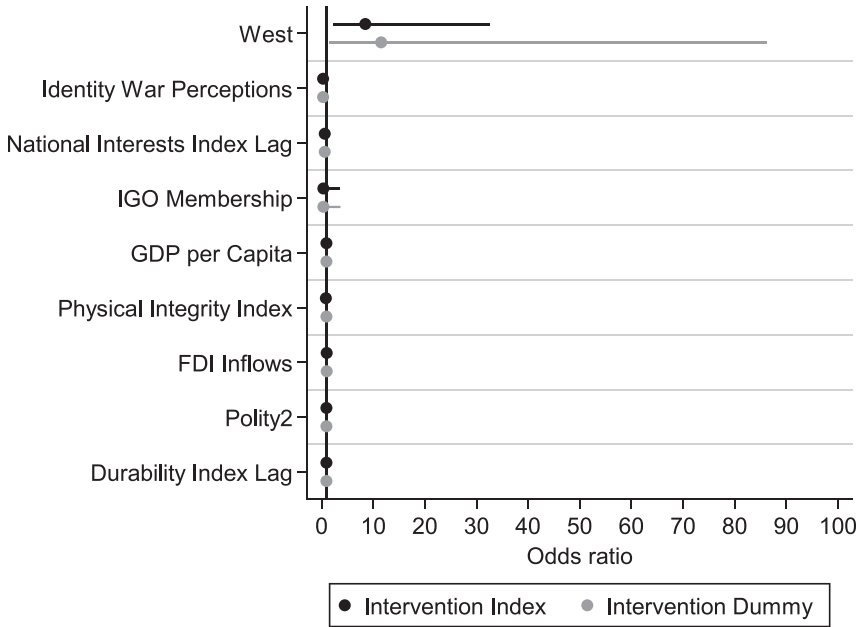


Fig. 3.4. Odds Ratio Plots Predicting Intervention

Source: Sidita Kushi, “Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises,” *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022): 216–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

(Note: Affinity Score P5 dropped from plot results due to insignificant effect but wide confidence intervals that impair the visualization of significant key variables.)

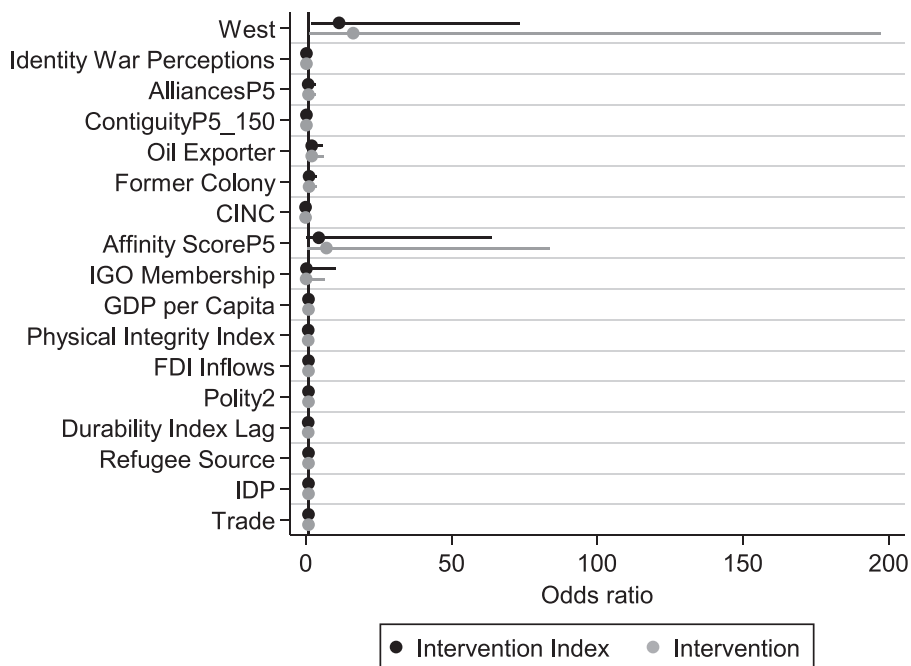


Fig. 3.5. Odds Ratio Plots Predicting Intervention, Disaggregated

Source: Sidita Kushi, "Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises," *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022): 216–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

most humanitarian crises occur in the non-Western sphere. Moreover, figure 3.7 reveals that while most intrastate conflicts are identity wars, most humanitarian military interventions occur within the smaller subsample of ideological or other types of conflict.

In tables A3.4 and A3.5 in the chapter appendix, I present the predicted probabilities of the key variables to further contextualize the odds ratios. The models applied are the ones with the more conservative results regarding these variables. They show that a move from a nonidentity war to an identity war decreases the predicted probability of intervention, moving from 15 percent to 5 percent. A move from a non-Western to a Western region increases the predicted probability of intervention from 5 percent to 38 percent.³⁷

Table 3.7 simplifies these relationships by only predicting the likelihood of military intervention as compared to nonintervention, removing the intensity-based measure as a further test of robustness. The same key relationships persist when predicting such a measure as when predicting the more complicated intervention intensity. In some of these models, however,

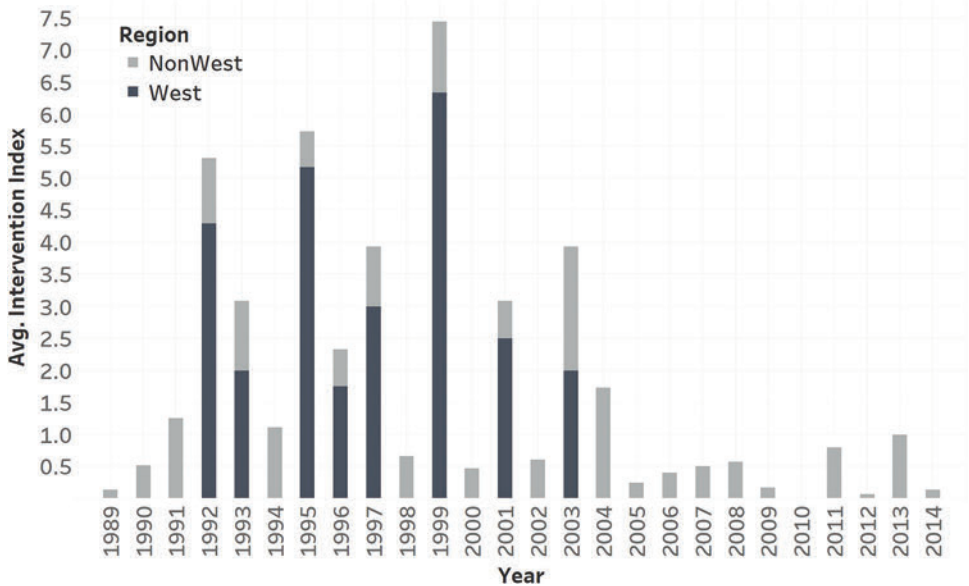


Fig. 3.6. Impact of Region on Intervention, 1989–2014

Source: Reproduced from Sidita Kushi, “Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises,” *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022), 235 (fig. 6), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

the greater political affinity with the P5 UN member states increases the odds of intervention as well.

The political affinity variable may be soaking up some regional dynamics as well, since it is more than a measure of interest and strategy, but one of political preferences, shared values, and regional blocks and identities exhibited within the UN arena. Ultimately, it is safe to assume that the same drivers that propel great powers to intervene militaristically during humanitarian crises also impact their preliminary decisions on the allocation of force and resources. It is important to note, however, that the progression of such interventions into the future is not within the scope of this book.

Testing Arguments

Prompted by the findings from the various models, this section places the pieces of information within theoretical categories. I return to the hypotheses of the study and evaluate their merits.

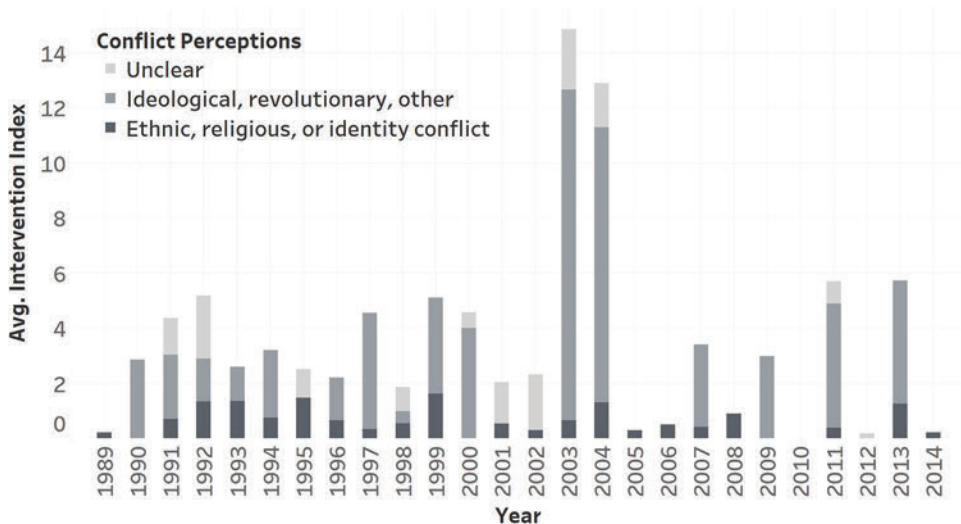


Fig. 3.7. Impact of Conflict Perceptions on Intervention, 1989–2014

Source: Reproduced from Sidita Kushi, “Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises,” *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022), 236 (fig. 7), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

Hypothesis 1 (*conflict perception*): States will be less likely to intervene in intrastate conflicts perceived as identity-based civil wars.

The hypothesis on conflict perceptions gains strong, consistent support in the quantitative analysis. Increased perceptions of identity wars decrease the probability of all third-party interventions within an intrastate conflict. In other words, if a distant crisis is understood or narrated as a two-sided civil war, whether or not the reality on the ground matches, that crisis will have lower chances of intervention than a crisis that is not perceived as a two-sided civil war. Moreover, these conflict perception variables stand as some of the most statistically and substantively significant within the models of intervention, even outdoing measures of geopolitical national interests.

Hypothesis 2 (*region*): An intrastate conflict occurring in or near a Western neighborhood (with robust regional institutions), is more likely to become a target of a humanitarian military intervention, with higher intensity.

Regional variation is the most significant predictor of all types of intervention outcomes in the models, supplanting standard theoretical variables.

But only the narrow definition of Western prompts explanatory power in this case. An intrastate conflict occurring in the narrow definition of “the West” is more likely to receive all types of military interventions, with greater intensity. Keohane’s claims of good Western neighborhoods, encompassing European as well as NATO members and institutional resources and values, are supported, alongside conflict perceptions, as discussed by Campbell.³⁸

At this point in the journey, we can declare with a robust margin of certainty that regional variations and conflict perceptions do matter when it comes to the selectivity gap of humanitarian military interventions. Indeed, they appear to matter more than the vast majority of traditional explanatory factors.

Remaining Puzzles

As it stands, however, the statistical analysis can only shed light on foundational forces that drive the selectivity of the phenomenon of humanitarian military interventions. It has placed certain variables at the forefront of the analysis while relegating others to the background. In fact, the statistical models have so far shown that traditionally important realist variables, such as geopolitical national interests, are not consistently important in explaining such interventions, and where certain dimensions of national interests become relevant, their causal direction is disputed. Furthermore, the “humanitarian” aspect of the interventions remains suspect, according to the statistical results. Greater human rights abuses and refugee flows do not consistently alter probabilities of intervention during intrastate crises. Thus the general normative arguments of humanitarianism, stemming from the constructivists, and of human rights promotions, originating from the liberals, are not supported on a global scale. Ultimately, many traditional theoretical variables do not stand as relevant in these models, creating opportunities and even a necessity to explore other relationships in the aggregated data.

Many questions still abound. Certain dimensions of national interest, such as contiguity and alliances, appear relevant in the aggregated models. Thus the concept of national interest demands greater, more contextually based analysis, given its inherent measurement difficulties and situational nuances. Beyond this, the quantitative models cannot show how national interests interact with regional variations, conflict perceptions, and other more fluid forces that are not fully amenable to quantification. Due to data limitations, the models also cannot move beyond the overly simplified dichotomy of conflict perceptions as an identity civil war, nonidentity civil

Table 3.7. Ordered Logistic Models of Intervention—Aggregated Variables

Variables	Intervention							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
West	10.430** (11.028)	11.592** (11.869)	13.588*** (13.073)	19.112** (22.135)	8.958** (9.571)	12.124** (13.708)		
Im_IdentityWar	0.316*** (0.114)	0.326*** (0.122)	0.338*** (0.124)	0.261*** (0.105)	0.289*** (0.114)	0.279*** (0.113)	0.323*** (0.137)	0.388** (0.172)
NationalInterestLag	0.665* (0.161)	0.672* (0.159)			0.551** (0.135)	0.777 (0.196)	0.398** (0.144)	
Im_AffinityScoreP5	18.228* (28.196)	17.967* (27.074)	22.778** (35.577)			3.335 (4.232)	3.377 (4.549)	4.121 (5.759)
Im_AverageIGOM	0.337 (0.386)	0.378 (0.438)	0.235 (0.282)	0.242 (0.349)		0.419 (0.563)	0.263 (0.424)	0.167 (0.217)
Im_GDPPcapita	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000*** (0.000)	1.000*** (0.000)	1.000 (0.000)	1.000** (0.000)	1.000** (0.000)
Im_PHYSINT	0.976 (0.077)	0.964 (0.076)		1.065 (0.102)		0.984 (0.094)		1.037 (0.098)
Im_FDIinflows		1.030** (0.013)			1.031** (0.015)	1.028* (0.016)	0.998 (0.017)	1.024 (0.016)
Polity2	0.992 (0.032)	0.994 (0.032)				0.978 (0.032)		
DurableLag	0.984 (0.017)	0.983 (0.015)	0.988 (0.018)	0.981 (0.021)		0.980 (0.021)		
NationalInterestIndex			0.695 (0.181)	0.858 (0.224)				0.517*** (0.130)

Im_PHYSINTlag		0.995 (0.079)				1.114 (0.097)
PolityLag		0.996 (0.035)	0.984 (0.031)	0.952 (0.039)		0.983 (0.031)
Im_MineralRents			1.002 (0.030)			
Export Commodity			1.013 (0.011)		1.009 (0.010)	1.000 (0.014)
Trade Flows				1.007 (0.005)		1.005 (0.005)
BattleDeathsHighLag				1.000 (0.000)		
West2						3.572** (2.238)
NaturalResourceRents						1.032** (0.015)
Observations	954	954	957	770	825	827
r2_p	0.165	0.175	0.176	0.173	0.176	0.172

Note: The Im prefix denotes an imputed variable. Odds Ratios displayed for substantive significance. Country Clustered Standard Errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

war, or neither/uncertain. For now, the models solely posit that an identity-based civil war decreases the odds of humanitarian military intervention. But how would perceptions of systematic killings, genocide, or international aggression alter the probabilities of intervention? Why would they alter these odds at all, and what occurs when conflict perceptions shift due to external forces or crisis trajectories? Moreover, why is the Western region so distinct in its intervention dynamics, even though it experiences the least number of intrastate conflicts? Is it due to Western democratic norms, structures, informational channels, ties of identity, or something unique to the conflict, actors, or intervention? Greater attention must be paid to conflict perceptions in the upcoming qualitative analysis to shed light on why, how, and when they become significant drivers of humanitarian intervention and when they may instead inhibit such interventions.

None of the above questions on variable interactions and potential relationships can be resolved solely through quantitative analysis. The proposed causal pathways of the study, while greatly supported by the aggregated data analysis, require additional exploration via more nuanced methods, moving away from general patterns and toward individual cases of intrastate conflict and respective intervention outcomes. Consequently, the chapters that follow undertake case study analysis of individual units of humanitarian military intervention and nonintervention so as to further refine relationships among fluid national interests, humanitarian and democratization norms, conflict perceptions, and regional variations. The case selection depends on the degree of data access and on the range of desired variation within regional explanatory variables and intervention outcomes. Thus I include two positive cases of intervention, one within Europe and one within North Africa, and one case of nonintervention, or minor levels of intervention defined by a consensual UN mission that deployed four years following a violent emergency in sub-Saharan Africa. As a priority, I select cases of intervention and nonintervention across the spectrum of the Western versus non-Western spheres of influence to test the key portions of my regional theoretical framework. Moreover, the case selection attempts to maximize the variance within intervention type, ranging from UN-led, NATO-led, hybrid, limited air strikes operations, to boots-on-the-ground mission types. In addition, the cases must include different time points across the post-Cold War years, starting in the 1990s, progressing to the 2010s, and continuing into the present day. Based on such factors, the cases selected are: (1) high-intensity non-UN-sanctioned NATO military intervention in Kosovo (1999); (2) high-intensity NATO- and UN-sanctioned military intervention in Libya (2011); and (3) nonintervention as reflected in the limited, delayed, and now defunct

UN–African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur (2003–present). Kosovo represents the case closest to the Western neighborhood and a precedent-setting instance of humanitarian intervention in the 1990s, while Libya represents a crisis that occurred outside but proximate to the Western neighborhood in the following decades. Lastly, Darfur represents an ongoing humanitarian crisis that has raged for decades without international rescue, far away from the Western neighborhood.

The first two of these chapters begin the process tracing of the precedent-setting NATO humanitarian military intervention in Kosovo, prompted by the “Kosovo Crisis” intrastate conflict. The next chapter assesses the accuracy of conventional wisdom on NATO’s intervention in Kosovo, ultimately finding inconsistencies and limitations in the isolated interests-based and humanitarian-based arguments. In chapter 5, the flagship Kosovo case study relies on newly released NATO archival data, elite dialogues, fieldwork, and other primary sources to build a narrative of the interacting forces that propelled the Western military intervention, beyond the limitations of conventional wisdom. The Kosovo case study chapters also help to set the groundwork on both theoretical interactions and empirical methods for the following cases of intervention and nonintervention in Libya and Darfur, respectively. Ultimately, the comparative case study analysis facilitates the creation of a two-by-two typology of causal pathways toward military interventions or noninterventions during intrastate crises.

4 • Western Intervention in Kosovo

Exposing the Limitations of Conventional Wisdom

That there could be death camps and a siege and civilians slaughtered by the thousands and thrown into mass graves on European soil fifty years after the end of the Second World War gave the war in Bosnia and the Serb campaign of killing in Kosovo their special, anachronistic interest. But one of the main ways of understanding the war crimes committed in southeastern Europe in the 1990s has been to say that the Balkans, after all, were never really part of Europe.¹

—Susan Sontag, 2004

The Kosovo Crisis stands as a precedent-setting case of humanitarian military intervention, hailed as a milestone and the start of a new era of human rights enforcement across state borders.² The NATO intervention showcased both the power and benevolence of the West.³ Yet NATO's decision to intervene between ethnic Albanian separatists and the Serbian military and paramilitaries was neither fast nor trivial.⁴ It emerged against a backdrop of years of intrastate violence within Kosovo, thirteen months following the beginning of a violent emergency and after almost a decade of violence within the Balkans as a whole.⁵ Moreover, it came as an explicit rejection of the UN Security Council's inactivity in the region. The NATO intervention within this Western neighborhood transpired while regions in Africa experienced worsening campaigns of violence and genocide. The Kosovo intervention served as a standard for later instances of intrastate violence confronting the global community, helping to usher in the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, although many future conflicts did not receive a robust international response. The 1999 intervention also permanently altered the Euro-

pean Union's priorities toward greater integrated security policies. Alternatively, disingenuous actors have co-opted NATO's Kosovo intervention to justify wars of aggression and conquest under the guise of humanitarianism. For instance, Russia's Vladimir Putin has repeatedly justified his invasion of Crimea in 2014 as well as his war of aggression against Ukraine using NATO's Kosovo precedent.⁶ Despite Kosovo's precedent-setting legacy, its humanitarian suffering and instability was not always at the top of Western agendas. What altered the course of the Kosovo Crisis, from a relatively ignored domestic event until 1997 to a systematic atrocity that threatened to destroy the fabric of European and Western identity by 1999? How did the plight of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo become an international concern, warranting forceful reactions?

If national interests drove the NATO intervention in 1999, we would expect the United States and other NATO members to intervene in Kosovo only if their national interest calculations changed from 1998 to 1999 to favor intervention. On the other hand, if the humanitarian context drove the intervention timeline, we would expect the United States and the European policy communities to respond directly to increasing human rights abuses in Kosovo with progressively heavier measures, including humanitarian military intervention. But as this chapter will explore and the next chapter will reveal, both the conventional national interests and humanitarian arguments fall short on their own in explaining the timeline of the Kosovo intervention. Instead, the forces of national interest and humanitarian context interact within a regional arena activated by shifting perceptions of the conflict. By 1999, the Kosovo Crisis had fulfilled two key interacting conditions that made it a prime candidate for Western aid and intervention. First, Kosovo had proven to Western audiences that it was suffering from a special type of internal conflict: one of ethnic cleansing, not another endless civil war between equally culpable parties. The worsening humanitarian context wasn't enough on its own to prompt intervention. It needed to match the mandates of regional institutions. In other words, the perceptions of Kosovo needed to transform into a conflict with one aggressive, guilty party and one distinct class of innocent, greatly outmatched victims, eventually prompting a wide range of genocide analogies. Once this favorable conflict perception had been established, it complemented the grandest Western ideals of liberalism, the emerging post-Cold War norm of protecting innocents across borders, and collective institutional security mechanisms that had grown into values-based alliances. It also spurred secondary interests where there previously were none. Now the failure to respond to the Kosovo Crisis symbolized the failure of Western ideals, community, and institutions. Since

Kosovo unraveled at the edge of the Western neighborhood, the one-sided violence (often labeled an impending genocide) activated the values-based missions of Western institutions and players.

The following diagram (fig. 4.1) illustrates such a proposed pathway of intervention in Kosovo that will be evaluated in the following chapters. The internal crisis between ethnic Albanians and the Serbian state in the mid-1990s quickly led to the breach of human rights in the region; and while geopolitical national interests in Kosovo from powerful Western actors appeared vague and peripheral at best (as will be detailed below), the shift in perceptions of Kosovo as ethnic cleansing or even potential genocide in the heart of Europe prompted the rise of particular regional interests, such as protecting innocent civilians, promoting democratic values within Europe, and enforcing a liberal standard of human rights through important regional structures that could not fail. These motivations, however, only manifested because Kosovo was clinging to the edge of a robust Western neighborhood, with institutions that existed solely to ensure collective security and regional stability. This ordering and interaction of forces increased the likelihood of an intensive humanitarian military intervention in Kosovo, as opposed to one in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, or other concurrent regions of internal strife.

Several trends predominate the decision-making processes leading to the Kosovo military intervention, echoing the main variables of conflict perception, Western region, and institutional resources. These trends include (1) the changing perception of the conflict as systematic killing of civilians instead of ethnic civil war; (2) the existence of a Western-centric alliance to bring Kosovo into the Western neighborhood; and (3) the potential for democratization and reform within Kosovo, as incorporated in the European identity. As illustrated in figure 4.1, each of these key factors feeds into the next. In other words, had Kosovo not been relabeled as systematic killing, the resources of the Western neighborhood may not have mobilized toward eradicating its violence. Thus, no particular trend would have prevailed in isolation from the rest.

This first chapter outlines the background leading up to the internationalized Kosovo Crisis and showcases the many limitations of general explanations of NATO's Kosovo intervention. The next chapter applies the book's theoretical framework to build the causal pathway of the Kosovo Crisis intervention, focusing on the role of conflict perceptions, Western neighbors, and institutions. The primary evidence across the two chapters originates from declassified NATO archives, including daily press briefings by NATO spokesman Jamie Shea and guests (often including Gen. Wesley

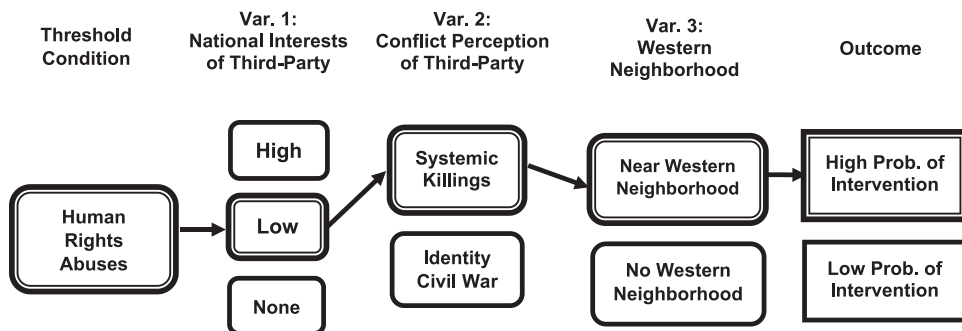


Fig. 4.1. The Kosovo Crisis Intervention Pathway

Clark and an array of world leaders), operational updates, telephone calls, speeches by national leaders and NATO generals, conferences, and recordings. These are supplemented by the US Department of State and congressional archives and international elite dialogue mainly via the Foreign Affairs Oral History (FAOH) Collection.⁷

NATO as an institution drove the Kosovo military intervention from start to finish. As the documents in the following chapters will reveal, the majority of choices made throughout the mission depended on maintaining consensus across NATO member states, so as to ensure the flow of funding, military resources, and manpower. The NATO archives further reflect the growing Western willingness to invest greater resources into the mission to ensure a democratic postconflict Kosovo for the sake of Europe. These archives and dialogues represent the rhetorical choices, abstractions, and ideals as well as the decision-making timeline and justifications of an institution that had almost absolute influence in the progression of the crisis. They reflect elite opinions, negotiations, and updates as they occurred in real time, as the mission in Kosovo moved from hypothetical policy plan to military reality and then continued to alter course for months to come. The next section begins with a historical overview and timeline of the NATO intervention in Kosovo, followed by an assessment of conventional wisdom on the drivers of the Kosovo intervention, from interest-based explanations to humanitarian motives.

Background and Timeline on Kosovo

Kosovo serves as a vital geographical arena for both Serbian and Albanian identities.⁸ This Balkan province holds about 2.2 million people, 93 per-

cent of whom identify themselves as ethnic Albanians and the rest as Serbs, Roma, Turks, Bosnians, and Croats.⁹ Many Serbians see Kosovo as the cradle of their civilization. It is the site of the legendary battle of Kosovo Polje where, in 1389, the Ottoman Turks defeated a largely Serbian army.¹⁰ Alternatively, Kosovo has permeated Albanian national identity since ancient times and was perceived as theirs before the sixth-century Slavic arrival in the Balkans, and it marked the center of the Albanian nationalist rebirth in the nineteenth century.¹¹ After the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and until 1912, Kosovo belonged to the Albanian-dominated provinces of the Ottoman Empire. But by the end of the First Balkan Wars, when the international community eventually recognized Albania's independence in 1913, the main European powers split many Albanian territories between Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro, leaving more than half of Albanians outside of the new country. Kosovo later entered the Yugoslavian Federation and, following World War II, gained autonomy and greater political representation within the Republic of Serbia, especially under Josip Tito's rule in the 1970s. Yet even with greater self-rule, Serbian institutions treated ethnic Albanians as second-class citizens, often using brutal force to quell protests for greater economic opportunities and republic status, a trend that culminated during Slobodan Milošević's rise to power.¹²

By 1989, as ethnic Serbs steadily left Kosovo and Albanians became a more dominant political force, Milošević's regime instituted colonization programs to draw in Serbian settlers and remove much of Kosovo's previous autonomy, prompting riots that left many dead or in prison. By 1990, Milošević had fully revoked Kosovo's autonomous status, suspended Kosovo's parliament, and imposed direct Serbian rule by controlling the police, schools and curriculum, the media, most state industry, and government offices.¹³ The Milošević regime and its police force fired and barred hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanians from jobs in the public sector and further intensified the oppression of the ethnic Albanian identity, such as by punishing and restricting the expression of the Albanian language in the media, schools, or other public spheres.¹⁴ The Albanian deputies in Kosovo's parliament, consisting of four-fifths of the representation, had met in 1989 and declared Kosovo a separate republic of Yugoslavia. In 1990, they passed a new constitution. In 1991, they declared Kosovo independent, and by 1992, they held semisecret elections for president and parliament. Until 1995, the Albanian majority in Kosovo wielded the tools of nonviolent resistance and diplomatic pressure to garner international support for independence.¹⁵

Kosovo's increased efforts for independence in the 1980s and 1990s translated into greater oppression for Kosovar Albanians, as it threatened the

existing Serbian authority and played into the nationalist rhetoric of President Slobodan Milošević's regime. In 1994, Human Rights Watch likened the human rights situation in Kosovo to that of a police state.¹⁶ The International Crisis Group further declared that since 1989, Serbia had treated Kosovo "in ways reminiscent of apartheid with the aid of a massive police and military presence," perpetuating systematic abuse, killings, torture, restrictions in speech and expression, discrimination in work and education, and more.¹⁷

Escalating from previous nonviolent tactics, in the mid-1990s ethnic Albanians reacted to these worsening conditions through the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The KLA grew into the makeshift militia, often labeled a dangerous terrorist group by both Serbian and Western sources, which fought the Serbian army during the crisis. In the 1990s, the Albanian majority within Kosovo suffered from a pervasive set of human rights abuses, including random firings, school closures, reforms that "in effect outlawed teaching in the Albanian language," arrests and imprisonment without charge, torture, and extrajudicial killings of civilians.¹⁸

Although the intrastate violence in Kosovo was evident years before, the year 1998 made Kosovo and its humanitarian emergency impossible to silence or ignore throughout Europe. In a brief summary of events, from just February until September 1998, Serbian forces had attacked 391 of the 1,335 villages in Kosovo. They shelled 266 villages, left 217 of them deserted, and ransacked many more. Up until September 1998, 417,483 people had fled their homes to other regions of Kosovo, Montenegro, Albania, and Macedonia.¹⁹

By the end of 1998, the intrastate violence between Albanians and Serbians garnered the attention of the West, but Milošević ignored third-party, diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis. By 1999, Milošević's ethnic cleansing policies had displaced 1.5 million Albanians from Kosovo and murdered more than ten thousand civilians.²⁰ During the war, Serbian military and paramilitary members committed mass rape against more than twenty thousand women.²¹

In March 1999, as a last resort, NATO commenced airstrikes over Serbia that lasted seventy-seven days.²² The limited air war ended with the signing of the Military-Technical Agreement between NATO and Yugoslavia that dictated the withdrawal of Serbian forces.²³ NATO and the KLA also signed an agreement to fully disarm the KLA.²⁴ Shortly after, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1244, prompting the deployment of international presences under UN auspices.²⁵ Negotiations for Kosovo's status began in 2000, but they came to an impasse when Russia, Serbia's traditional

ally, threatened to veto any UN resolution that permitted steps to future independence. Because the UN-backed pathway appeared blocked, Kosovo declared unilateral independence in 2008.²⁶ At the time of this book's publication, 116 of the United Nations' (UN) 193 countries, including twenty-three European Union (EU) members, have recognized Kosovo's independence.²⁷

The Failure of Balkan Diplomacy

As briefly summarized above, Kosovo experienced ethnicity-driven violence and repression long before the late 1990s, with the Milošević-led waves taking place since the late 1980s and intensifying in the early 1990s during the Bosnian and Croatian conflicts.²⁸ Yet before 1998, the West had actively discouraged peaceful protests against Milošević's regime in Kosovo, in an attempt to regulate the region with minimal explicit intervention.

As per Thomas P. H. Dunlop's experiences as US political counselor in Belgrade in 1980s Yugoslavia, the perception then was simply that "Serbs and Albanians are always knifing each other and shooting each other up."²⁹ After discussing the suffering of ethnic Albanians at the hands of Serbian policies in the 1990s, Ambassador Rudolf V. Perina, US chief of mission in Belgrade (1993–96), added in a 2006 interview, "in fairness, one must say that many Serbs in Kosovo were also beaten up by Albanians when opportunities presented themselves for this. The gulf and the hatred between Serbs and Albanians were enormous. . . . To me, it was clear that the situation was untenable and would lead to a crisis at some point. What we tried to do in the interim was to urge both sides toward moderation and nonviolence."³⁰ Thus, as the violence escalated, a "both sides" understanding of the conflict dominated even during the 1990s.

The Kosovar Albanian nonviolent resistance in the early 1990s was a vital moment for international actors to mitigate the domestic tensions through active diplomacy and to prevent a war. But they never did. At that point, Kosovar Albanians envisioned a narrow scope of independence that consisted of a neutral and demilitarized state with open borders. Politicians were even willing to negotiate for less ambitious outcomes as long as Kosovo did not have to yield to full Serbian authority and its oppressive tactics. In 1993, Kosovo's "president," Ibrahim Rugova, suggested that Kosovo take on the status of a UN protectorate, while Adem Demaçi, Kosovo's famous political prisoner, recommended that Kosovo join a federation of Serbia and Montenegro as an equal partner.³¹ In spite of this chance for compromise, the Serbian government and Western diplomats demanded that Kosovar Albanians

resign themselves to the “Serbian-imposed reality.”³² Diplomats told Rugova, “You have to give up your demands for independence,” to which Rugova replied, “Not before talks even begin.”³³ Ambassador Perina recalled that “He [Rugova] promoted peaceful resistance to Serbia and did so very effectively. Rugova almost never came to Belgrade but he told me that he would be willing to come if he had an opportunity to meet Holbrooke. I tried to interest Holbrooke in this but he turned it down.”³⁴ By 1997, similar dynamics pressured Rugova to postpone student demonstrations. When the students retorted and defended their right to protest for their precious education, they eventually encountered twelve senior diplomats—including US, British, and Dutch ambassadors—who had entered Prishtina in an attempt to stop the demonstrations.³⁵ This pacification dynamic worsened in the aftermath of the Dayton negotiations in Bosnia. Ambassador Perina added, “One got the impression they [the Europeans in this case] were secretly hoping that the Serbs would keep the Albanians in line so that there would not be an explosion.”³⁶

After 1996, the KLA overwhelmed the nonviolent factions of the Kosovo resistance against Serbian institutions, prompting more international attention. It was not until 1997 that the UN, NATO, EU, OSCE, and the Contact Group (including France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the UK, and the United States) began to mediate between Serbia and the ethnic Albanian KLA rebels, with little to show. Concurrently, the UN Security Council placed an arms embargo on Serbia to push both parties toward compromise, maintaining a clear “both sides” narrative on the violence at hand.³⁷ While the international community was aware of systematic human rights abuses within Kosovo at this time, it had not yet considered the use of force as an option. It was not until more than sixty Albanian civilians were murdered in a Serbian operation that the international community increased its pressure on Milošević.³⁸ In September 1998, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1199, expressing alarm at the impending humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo and demanding a ceasefire, the withdrawal of Serbian forces, and the start of genuine political dialogue.³⁹ The next day, NATO issued an activation warning (ACTWARN), denoting its increased military readiness for both a limited air strike and a phased air campaign option in Kosovo.⁴⁰ Therefore, the international community invoked the threat of military force only after the intensification of human rights abuses in Kosovo. Under this threat of airstrikes, Milošević finally agreed to a ceasefire on October 1998, with the supplemental condition of deploying an OSCE verification mission within Kosovo.⁴¹

The ceasefire did not hold, however, as Serbian forces unleashed an indis-

criminate attack against the KLA in December 1998. But it was on January 15, 1999, when the Serbian security forces murdered forty-five ethnic Albanians, including women and children, that a fervent wave of media attention and protests raged throughout the West. Asserting the potential for air-strikes, the Contact Group issued an ultimatum to the ethnic Albanians and the Serbian state to negotiate.⁴² These negotiations started at the Rambouillet conference on February 6, 1999, in Rambouillet, France. By February 23, 1999, the Albanians had agreed to the negotiated settlement, but the Serbian party asked for a two-week moratorium and eventually rejected any settlement option. At this moment, the crisis transformed from a primarily internal or regional conflict to an international crisis between Serbia and NATO, led by the United States.

US envoy Richard Holbrooke, who had succeeded in brokering peace in Bosnia, flew to Belgrade in March 1999 in a final bid to convince Milošević to yield to diplomacy. Milošević's response during an earlier meeting with Holbrooke in 1998 offers compelling evidence regarding the Serbian leader's strategy: He said that if NATO decided to bomb Serbia, "I am sure the bombing will be very polite."⁴³ Milošević, holding realist views of humanitarian endeavors, underestimated the probability and unity of an international military intervention in Kosovo and disregarded the intensity of such a mission as well.

According to official NATO archives, elite dialogues, and the diplomatic timeline, NATO acted in accordance with moral demands the international community repeatedly made to Milošević.⁴⁴ The most important objective was to bring an end to the intrastate conflict and civilian killings in Kosovo. Consequently, the international community has labeled the Kosovo Crisis a robust case of humanitarian intervention, driven primarily by humanitarian need and perhaps secondarily by underlying national interests. But these standard explanations of intervention present many contradictions and puzzles, as the following analysis will reveal.

Standard Explanations of NATO Intervention

This section seeks to introduce the standard arguments made in the literature to explain the Kosovo intervention, ranging from the absolute reign of human rights to traditional realist arguments on power politics and interests. This chapter showcases the flaws and limitations inherent in such arguments and further reveals how the standard views dismiss the variables of region and conflict perception, even when these forces implicitly make

their way into traditional accounts of the crisis. After having critiqued the standard dimensions of the NATO intervention in Kosovo, the next chapter introduces and further supports the book's proposed pathway of intervention, relying on a dramatic shift in conflict perception followed by the activation of the Western neighborhood in all its functionalities and institutions.

Delayed Humanitarian Motives

Accounts of humanitarian catalysts in Kosovo are dimmed by evidence that US elites were initially unsupportive of intervening in Kosovo, even after persistent updates on mass human rights violations raging for decades. The West knew of the brutal crimes occurring in Kosovo long before the 1990s. Thomas P. H. Dunlop, US political counselor in Belgrade (1978–82), recalls the atmosphere in the 1970s and 1980s when the Yugoslav government responded only “to give minimal lip service to negotiations and then hit them [the Albanians] just as hard as they could.” Dunlop adds, “[a]s I see it, the only way that it can change now is for the lid to blow off and a bloodcurdling, Ruanda-like pogrom to occur.”⁴⁵ Ambassador Rudolf V. Perina, US chief of mission in Belgrade (1993–96), echoed a similar sentiment by the mid-1990s: “The conventional wisdom was that it would blow up someday, but no one knew when. The fact that it had not blown up, however, invariably led to it being relegated to the back burner.”⁴⁶ Therefore, humanitarian need was always evident in Kosovo, yet it only activated an international military response decades later.

Even by March 1998, when Gen. Wesley Clark faxed the Pentagon to warn of brewing trouble in Kosovo, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joseph Ralston, responded, “Look, Wes, we’ve got a lot on our plates back here. . . . We can’t deal with any more problems.”⁴⁷ Even by May 1998, politicians and policymakers in Washington paid minimal attention to Kosovo’s intrastate violence. As Victor C. Comras, part of the Kosovo War Sanctions Team in 1998, recalls in a 2002 interview, “We appeared to be less and less interested in events in Kosovo and more and more eager to get out of the Balkans simply.” But that was not due to a lack of knowledge of what the Serbs were doing. He continues, “The Serbian forces shot first and asked questions later. More and more Albanian villages went up in smoke. Kosovo was becoming a new major Balkan crisis. . . . The Contact group was still concentrating on Bosnia and was slow to pick up on the growing Kosovo crisis.”⁴⁸ At this point in time, neither human rights nor national interests were propelling a Western response to Kosovo.

By the summer of 1998, Alexander Vershbow, US ambassador to NATO wrote a memo that outlined a Dayton-style solution for Kosovo's troubles (with US troops serving as part of an international peacekeeping mission), yet he found no takers in the White House.⁴⁹ As late as December 1998, Maj. Gen. Dennis Reimer, the Army chief of staff, responded to Clark's warning that there may be an impending war situation in Kosovo with, "But we don't want to fight there," showcasing both a clear lack of interest and humanitarian motivations.⁵⁰ As Republican senator William Cohen echoed during a postintervention interview, most US congress members were hesitant to send even a small peacekeeping force to Kosovo in 1998, despite the horrific Srebrenica genocide in neighboring Bosnia a few years prior.⁵¹ Noting such years of hesitation despite the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Kosovo, most standard explanations of the Kosovo intervention rely on the existence of vital US national interests, yet as will be further revealed, the interests-based narrative was crafted postcrisis and did not exist during the years of ongoing intrastate conflict in the region.

The United States's Geopolitical Interests in Kosovo

Since humanitarian catalysts are not readily apparent in the lead up to the Kosovo Crisis, many assume that the United States, acting through NATO, may have merely veiled geopolitical interests through humanitarian rhetoric and multilateral structures. On the first night of Operation Allied Force, President Clinton explicitly justified military force through national interest reminders. Addressing the nation from the Oval Office, he explained that Serbian forces had launched "an attack by tanks and artillery on a largely defenseless people whose leaders already have agreed to peace."⁵² While Clinton argued that "ending this tragedy is a moral imperative," he also greatly emphasized that it was "also important to America's national interest."⁵³ A "prosperous, secure, undivided, and free" Europe was essential to the United States's own prosperity and security.⁵⁴ Moreover, the Balkans region was a powder keg that had exploded before, and if a fire were allowed to burn in this area again, "the flames will spread."⁵⁵ The former president stated that the conflict could grow, drawing in important allies, and eventually forcing the United States to intervene at greater risk and higher cost. NATO's credibility was also at stake: "Imagine what would happen if we and our allies instead decided to look the other way, as these people were massacred on NATO's doorstep. That would discredit NATO, the cornerstone on which our security has rested for 50 years now." "By acting now," Clinton explained, "we are upholding our values, protecting our interests,

and advancing the cause of peace.”⁵⁶ This rhetoric, uttered the day of the intervention, colors much of the perceived causes of the intervention, while intentionally ignoring the dynamics of years prior.

According to many such standard accounts, redefining NATO’s mission and maintaining its credibility in European affairs was a priority in US political agendas during the 1990s, as the Cold War world order dissolved and US hegemony led the way forward. By the time the Kosovo Crisis emerged from the back burner of Western policy agendas in 1998, NATO’s credibility was already on the line in southeast Europe, particularly via its supervisory role of the Bosnian settlement.⁵⁷ Having initiated diplomacy and military threats, NATO member states could have lost faith in NATO’s will and ability to preserve and reestablish regional security if no successful action was taken against Milošević.⁵⁸ Sen. John McCain was also quoted as saying that “credibility is our most precious asset [in this campaign]. We have purchased our credibility with American blood.”⁵⁹ Even in the Pentagon’s *After-Action Report* on Kosovo, “ensuring NATO’s credibility” was one of the US’s “primary interests.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, the British House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs in May 2000 even claimed that the humanitarian justifications for the NATO intervention served as a rhetorical ploy to offer NATO more opportunities to showcase its importance, credibility, and functionality.⁶¹

As a founder and leader of the alliance, the United States aimed to preserve NATO’s functionality and credibility, and thus preserve its own hegemonic position in Europe, assert itself over European security policies, and assert its economic interests within Europe and the Western sphere.⁶² In economic terms, the United States could not afford to lose this position. According to the Institute for National Strategic Studies, about 50 percent of the United States’s international direct investment was in Europe, and more than 60 percent of foreign direct investment in the United States arose from European sources.⁶³ Clinton did not shy away from discussing this nonhumanitarian motivating factor in his national speeches prior to the Kosovo aerial campaign. As reported by the *Washington Post*, in his March 23 address, amid humanitarian calls against ethnic cleansing, Clinton explained that “a strong US-European partnership ‘is what this Kosovo thing is all about.’”⁶⁴ In the same speech, the president directly discussed why the transatlantic alliance required saving: “If we’re going to have a strong economic relationship, that includes our ability to sell around the world, Europe has got to be a key.”⁶⁵ The US’s multilateral approach within NATO, based on its own geopolitical interests at the time, moved NATO beyond its origins as a regional defense alliance to a values-based peacebuilding institution, while at the

same time preserving the United States' hegemony in Europe. Yet this was only possible by catering to existing multilateral, humanitarian norms. As Gilles Andréani et al. concluded: "If the Kosovo crisis found [NATO members] united, it was not because events in the region affected both sides of the Atlantic in the same way, or because of any intrinsic strategic value of Balkan territory, but because the governments elevated the crisis into a test for the credibility of an Alliance which they could not allow to collapse."⁶⁶ Missing from this discussion, however, is temporal context; merely a year prior to the Kosovo intervention, the Kosovo conflict was seen as a civil war, especially one between terrorists and government agents. Then, the United States, neither alone nor through NATO, did not want to come to the aid of terrorists. As the following chapter will detail, these standard accounts skip over an important step that suddenly put NATO's credibility on the line in Kosovo and led to postintervention discussions of vital interests where previously there were none.

In addition to NATO's credibility, the standard realist argument is that a predicted refugee spillover effect motivated Western powers to intervene in Kosovo. A state that falls into civil war also endangers its neighborhood, especially through refugee flows.⁶⁷ According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), following the revocation of Kosovo's autonomy in 1989, about 350,000 ethnic Albanians fled Kosovo for western Europe. As the crisis worsened in 1998, another 100,000 fled to bordering countries in the Balkans.⁶⁸ Considering that neighboring countries such as Albania and Macedonia were experiencing their own internal crises, the United States and its allies were alarmed and worried that greater refugee flows from Kosovo could usher in an era of worsening political turmoil for Europe. But then again, the refugee problem stemming from the Balkans existed years prior to discussions of military intervention. What changed?

To counter the humanitarian argument further, realists point out that had the primary motivation behind the Kosovo intervention been humanitarian need, not geopolitical interests, the United States and its allies would have been expected to protect as many innocent lives as possible through their planned actions. In a one-on-one briefing with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, however, General Clark told her the Serbs were certain to attack the civilian population if airstrikes were launched. When asked whether he still thought the administration should go through with the aerial attack, he replied, "Yes, we have to. We put NATO's credibility on the line. We have to follow through. . . . There's no real alternative now."⁶⁹ Albright agreed. In such dialogue, humanitarian context served as the needed catalyst that would ease the pursuits of national interests. As US lead-

ership had predicted and was well aware of, about ten thousand people died in Kosovo during the bombing campaign.⁷⁰ Most of them were Albanian civilians killed by the Serbian regime, but an estimated 488 to 527 were actually civilian victims of the NATO airstrikes.⁷¹ In comparison, before NATO intervened militarily in March 1999, an estimated 2,500 people had died in the aftermath of the violence between the Serb military and the ethnic Albanian separatists.⁷²

Inconsistent Interests and the Influence of Humanitarian Need

Despite an initially weak response to the humanitarian crisis, inconsistencies linger within the interests-based narrative too. If geopolitical interests were the primary catalysts of the Kosovo intervention, why did US and NATO leaders consistently reference humanitarian arguments? Why did they have to constantly defend their positions to suspicious citizens? Furthermore, it appears that national interests in Kosovo only took foreign policy precedence once the normative dimensions and demands had become inescapable. Most discussions of national interests in Kosovo took place after the initiation of the intervention or weeks prior to intervention. Before late 1998, the US government did not appear to hold strong policy incentives to act. Instead, it had placed all its Balkans resources on the Bosnia settlement. As neorealist John Mearsheimer even stated, “Most realists are offshore balancers, and most of us do not see any such threat emerging as a result of Kosovo.”⁷³ In the strongest of realist circles, the NATO intervention in Kosovo was seen as a fundamental rejection of state principles and as an example of ruling with imprudence, given the lack of security interests, high costs, and exacerbated hostilities with Russia and China.⁷⁴ Charles Krauthammer denounced the intervention as a liberal mistake, calling it “righteous self-delusion,” and “impossibly moralistic and universal.”⁷⁵ In other words, Krauthammer saw no signs of realism’s calculative, prudent policies in the Kosovo intervention—just the inconsistent, hypocritical application of ethics and morality—recalling the US’s recent inactions in Rwanda and Krajina, Croatia. According to this view, instead of preventing further conflict, the US intervention in Kosovo internationalized a small civil war, without stopping the ethnic violence or refugee flows.⁷⁶ Hence, the inconsistencies in the interests-based argument give us strong reason to suspect that the Kosovo Crisis resulted from the interplay of different causes and contexts, rather than just pure national interest or moral imperatives, which constitute the standard arguments.

Key to the alleged humanitarian motivation in Kosovo was “the Bosnia syndrome.”⁷⁷ The argument is that the United States regretted what had occurred in Bosnia and had a genuine desire to avoid a repeat of the human rights violations. Coming after Rwanda and Bosnia, Kosovo was an opportunity for the United States to show that it had learned its lessons and held to the sincere goal of preventing humanitarian crises and ethnic cleansing campaigns, wherever they may be.⁷⁸ Clinton recalled in his memoirs that “the killings were all too reminiscent of the early days of Bosnia, which, like Kosovo, bridged the divide between European Muslims and Serb Orthodox Christians. . . . I was determined not to allow Kosovo to become another Bosnia.”⁷⁹ Albright claimed similar sentiments: “When we saw pictures of massacres, it was like reliving Srebrenica, and the terrible things that had happened in Bosnia.” She continues, “It is not often that you get a second chance.”⁸⁰ Such justifications hint at a much more complicated picture between human rights protection, Western interest construction, and historical analogies or lessons, which are further entangled in the archival analysis to follow.

Ultimately, the Kosovo air campaign occurred in the context of great humanitarian rhetoric and demand. Yet it may now be argued that a lack of vital national interests limited the scope of the Kosovo intervention, ruling out ground troops in favor of a narrow, often ineffective air campaign. Albright had a different interpretation of the limited scope of the intervention as 1999 approached. “They’re misunderstanding things,” she said. “We never took the ground option totally off the table.”⁸¹ Instead, she claims that had the air campaign not been so successful, the ground troops option may have been implemented. The US national security advisor at the time, Samuel Berger, confirms this perspective: the United States alongside its NATO alliance was ready to do all that was necessary to win the war in Kosovo, a war that initially provoked minimal national attention and little policy interest from Western elites overall. Indeed, a large number of political elites confirm in postcrisis interviews that US and UK leaders were quietly planning a ground campaign because losing in Kosovo was no longer an option.⁸² Gen. Wesley Clark was also certain that had the air campaign not succeeded, group troops would have been the next step.⁸³ In EU circles, the importance of the Kosovo mission was about learning from the historical lessons of Bosnia and never again pacifying nationalistic sentiments on the periphery of liberal Europe. By 1999, the Council of Europe had also formed a consensus on the vital importance of the Kosovo mission to Western identity, tied to Europe’s “responsibility” to defend human rights.⁸⁴ Would the intervention have occurred regardless of the buildup of humanitarian context? Repeated

governmental discussions on the irrelevance of Kosovo before 1998 might argue no.

Many other sources and leaders echoed similar sentiments regarding the Kosovo Crisis. In the spring and summer of 1999, official NATO statements often claimed that Operation Allied Force was values-based, not based on traditional interests.⁸⁵ These statements dominated rhetoric across NATO member states. For instance, Czech president Václav Havel, in an address to the Canadian Parliament on April 29, 1999, said, "This is probably the first war ever fought that is not being fought in the name of interests, but in the name of certain principles and values. . . . Kosovo has no oil fields whose output might perhaps attract somebody's interest; no member country of the Alliance has any territorial claims there; and, Milošević is not threatening either the territorial integrity, or any other integrity, of any NATO member. Nevertheless, the Alliance is fighting."⁸⁶ Similarly, Javier Solana, NATO secretary general, referred to a values-based argument in a speech in Berlin in June 1999, before the end of the airstrikes campaign:

What makes NATO so united in this crisis is the fact that in Kosovo our long term interests and our values converge. . . . The conflict between Belgrade and the rest of the international community is a conflict between two visions of Europe. One vision—Milošević's vision—is a Europe of ethnically pure states, a Europe of nationalism, authoritarianism and xenophobia. The other vision, upheld by NATO and the European Union and many other countries, is of a Europe of integration, democracy and ethnic pluralism. . . . If this positive vision of Europe is to prevail . . . we simply cannot tolerate this carnage at its centre.⁸⁷

Even years before the development of the Kosovo Crisis, US leaders were wary of human rights abuses occurring at the hands of the Serbian military and signaled their preparation to protect the lives of future victims. In his last days in office in late 1992, President Bush instructed Secretary of State Eagleburger to send a classified cable to Belgrade. The US ambassador was to read it personally to Milošević. It read, "In the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian action, the US will be prepared to employ military force against Serbians in Kosovo and in Serbia proper."⁸⁸ This so-called Christmas ultimatum was reaffirmed twice in Clinton's first year in office.⁸⁹ Although this statement may also signal latent US interests in Kosovo, it communicates that the United States was concerned about potential human rights abuses in Kosovo years before it decided to intervene. Moreover, the United States

took clear coercive steps against Serbia long before it acted militaristically. Samuel Berger, then US national security advisor, has claimed that US leadership was awaiting, attempting to promote a unified NATO response to the Kosovo issue at this time; the United States did not want to act unilaterally.⁹⁰ If vital geopolitical interests had been the only catalysts of the Kosovo intervention, such a long US policy lag would be unlikely to occur, and multiple direct threats to Serbia's leadership over the decade would serve little purpose on their own. A greater normative context needed to develop before multilateral coercive action could be taken.

Summary of Lingering Puzzles

In this case, the primacy of humanitarian motivations need not be only condition for an international humanitarian intervention.⁹¹ The moral imperative may exist as one of many overlapping and mutually reinforcing causes that lead to humanitarian intervention. Under broader interpretations, the NATO intervention symbolized an international consensus—partially based on shared Western values and rising post-Cold War humanitarian norms—that Serbia had wronged in its domestic governance and had thus lost its right to sovereignty.⁹²

Standard arguments about either national interests or humanitarian intent are not without merit. But each one of these pathways presents inconsistencies in the timeline of actions, and both pathways appear to feed into one another. The intervention cannot be explained without both the activation of interests and the humanitarian context. Most importantly, neither one of these standard views can explain why the Kosovo Crisis rose to the top of the Western agenda by 1999, not years before or after. In other words, why did the humanitarian context suddenly become important to Western elites and leaders when it had been ignored years prior (as above records reveal)? Figure 4.2 traces the Political Terror Scale (PTS) for Yugoslavia. The PTS is an increasing five-level scale that measures state-sanctioned killings, torture, disappearances and political imprisonment from the yearly country reports of Amnesty International, US State Department, and Human Rights Watch's World Reports.⁹³ For Yugoslavia, this measure had already hit its highest peaks of state-sponsored human rights abuses before 1999. Yugoslavia hovered consistently at a level 4 or 5 during the 1990s, with a short-lived dip in 1996 due to the end of the Bosnian war. In other words, there was no sudden increased intensity of the regional humanitarian crisis that might have prompted international intervention in Kosovo in 1999 rather than in years prior.

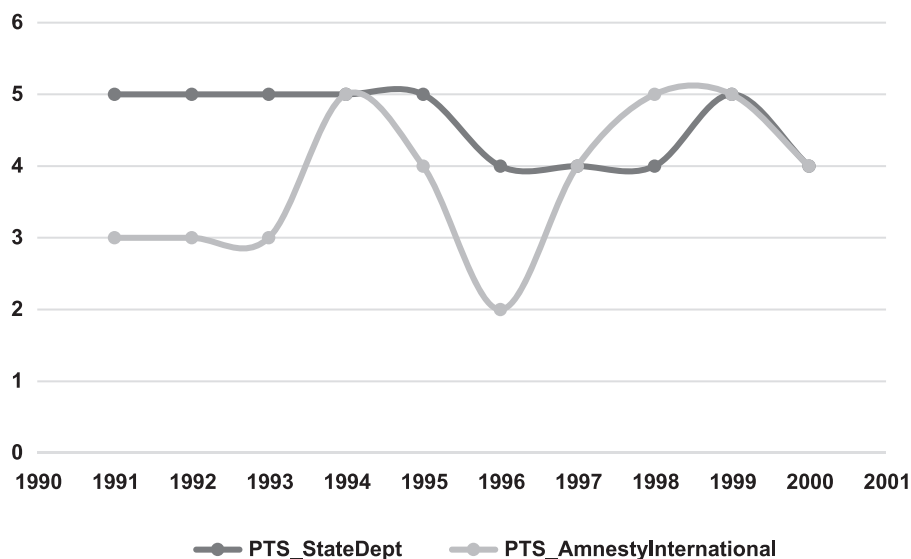


Fig. 4.2. Political Terror Scale (PTS) in Yugoslavia, 1991–2000

Source: Sidita Kushi, “Just Another Civil War? The Influence of Conflict Perceptions on Western Conflict Management in Kosovo & Beyond,” *World Affairs* 186, no. 2 (2023): 284–322, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00438200231154296>

(Note: PTS data is only available for Yugoslavia beginning in 1991. This data was not available for Serbia or Kosovo for the required years. The CIRI Physical Integrity Index also did not have measures for Kosovo, Serbia, or Yugoslavia.)

For the realists, why did geopolitical national interests manifest in Kosovo after repeated discussions of Kosovo as an unimportant periphery years prior? Why is most of the realist argument on interests founded upon post-conflict justifications? Moreover, the isolation of interests from discussions of human rights dimensions becomes incredibly problematic in Kosovo’s timeline of events. After all, NATO’s credibility only became relevant in Kosovo once the internal violence was recognized as ethnic cleansing or potential genocide. Finally, why did the humanitarian justifications only apply successfully to Kosovo and not to the many other concurrent internal crises across the globe?

Clinton’s famous speech in 1999, interpreted through the lens of humanitarianism by some observers and geopolitical interests by others, hints at a deeper storyline of intervention.⁹⁴ He used phrases like “defenseless people” and offered historical lessons and parallels to Bosnia, and every strong promise he uttered related solely to the European continent and the preservation of Western values. What truly connects the humanitarian arguments to the realist ones in Kosovo are the interactions between the understanding of the

conflict, founded upon past lessons learned, and the Western ideals and missions that such a conflict perception activated. Kosovo received third-party aid only once it successfully tied its own suffering to the Western narrative. Every new killing of ethnic Albanians shamed the West into action because inaction would have revealed the weaknesses of Western liberal ideals and institutions. It would have marked the failure of the West to protect its neighbors from potential genocide, again. After the West's humanitarian failures in Bosnia and Rwanda, Kosovo also benefited from faster "lessons learned" and shifts in narratives. As the following chapter will explore, NATO's credibility only became relevant in Kosovo once the internal violence was recognized as ethnic cleansing or impending genocide, in the backdrop of growing elite and media analogies to past genocides. Such are the interactions I explore next, evidenced by NATO archives, press releases, and other primary sources that allow us a window into the conversations that states, leaders, and organizations were having before, during, and following the Kosovo intervention.

5 • Beyond Standard Explanations of Kosovo

Transformed Perceptions and Institutionalized Neighborhoods

All of us in NATO are convinced that those crimes are an assault on the values that NATO was born to defend 50 years ago, and these are the values which NATO is defending in Kosovo today and the reason of course why NATO is acting.¹

—Jamie Shea, 1999

On the surface of the dialogue introduced in the previous chapter, the military intervention in Kosovo held both security and humanitarian dimensions, which made it more likely to occur. Still, neither one of these dimensions fully explains this particular intervention nor others that followed. Kosovo was not a key strategic region for the United States at the beginning of the intrastate conflict, nor was the intensity of Kosovo's humanitarian plight greater than or even equal to other past and concurrent internal wars. Moreover, the humanitarian plight in Kosovo did not directly and swiftly prompt the intervention. NATO intervened years after the beginning of the humanitarian atrocities. Yet within such security and humanitarian justifications, a thematic commonality emerges, one lacking in the overwhelmingly ignored internal conflicts within Africa that occurred concurrently with Kosovo's internationalized "civil war." A regional approach to the Kosovo Crisis begins with a shift in conflict perceptions, which then opened Kosovo to Western sympathies, principles, attention, and, finally, humanitarian intervention. After all, the intrastate conflict within Kosovo had always evolved and intensified next to the Western neighborhood, but not until late 1998 did Western actors start to pay attention and begin to assign blame. As late as December 1998, US political elites opposed any one-sided involve-

ment. “Apparently, our Yugoslav team had already decided on a somewhat different course. They did not believe that we should appear to choose sides in the Kosovo crisis,” said Victor Comras, who was part of the Kosovo War Sanctions Team in 1998.² Western actors first needed to relabel the conflict as systematic killings, not the typical ethnic civil war, before “Western values” kicked into force.³

The conflict perception needed to undergo a swift, dramatic transformation before NATO and its partners considered acting in Kosovo and encasing it in Western protection. This chapter applies predominantly NATO sources and archives as well as elite dialogue via the Foreign Affairs Oral History (FAOH) collection to trace the shifting conflict perceptions that altered Western institutional responsibility to the violence in Kosovo. As will be traced below, the Kosovo perceptions transformation relied on a feedback mechanism between elite interpretations of ongoing events, analogies to past lessons learned and genocide narratives, growing media accounts of Kosovo’s suffering, and ultimately the relabeling of conflict actors altogether. Eventually, this iterative process redefined the Kosovo conflict as systematic killings, not the typical ethnic civil war. It marked Kosovo as a Western identity conflict requiring the pooling of Western values and resources.

This chapter shows that the Kosovo Crisis “earned” a Western military intervention because of shifting, favorable conflict perceptions, which then encouraged and even demanded the involvement of liberal Western institutions. Such institutional, values-based missions were activated by the characteristics of the Kosovo conflict as well as its location in the heart of Europe, the continent of “good neighborhoods.”

From Terrorists to Defenseless People: Catering to Western Sympathies and Ideals

Long before Kosovo had made headlines, when violence raged within Bosnia, most Western actors perceived the conflict as another Balkan civil war, three equally culpable sides battling for ancient territorial claims, founded upon ancient group animosities. As Campbell has examined in great nuance, Western actors hesitated to intervene in Bosnia until the narrative changed from one of ethnoreligious civil war into one of systematic killings of civilians and ongoing genocide.⁴ Until 1998, the Western and US approach to Milošević wavered between denouncing his atrocities in the region to perceiving him as the guarantor of peace in the Balkans (given his negotiating role in Bosnia’s Dayton Conference in 1995). In fact, in 1998,

Robert Gelbard, then the United States' special envoy to the Balkans, in an attempt to distance Milošević from blame in Kosovo, publicly declared the KLA as "without any questions, a terrorist group."⁵ For conflict perceptions to change in favor of military intervention, Milošević had to be seen as the problem, as the primary aggressor, before third parties could begin to craft solutions. It is one thing for the West to ignore a war between a government and terrorist factions, quite another for the West to ignore ethnic cleansing or genocide within its own borders.

From 1990 until 1998, the international community, including European and US counterparts, handled Kosovo's calls for autonomy and aid with extreme trepidation, bordering on indifference. Western actors spoke of diplomacy, negotiations, and perhaps slight increases in observer missions in Kosovo, bringing the UN to the forefront of policymaking.⁶ For a long time, Western leaders relied on ethnic Albanian compliance and cooperation to delay outright war instead of formulating policy to prevent the spread of human rights abuses.

This delay occurred because Kosovo still had to earn its integration into the Western democratic community, with its values-based alliances and governance mechanisms. Kosovo had to prove itself innocent of crimes of aggression, religious extremism, and petty ethnic war making. Only when these crimes were effectively blamed on the Serbian state, instead of equally assigned to all parties, did the United States, NATO, and European nations move Kosovo's violence to the top of the international agenda. This shift required a reinterpretation of the KLA, the separatist paramilitary of the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Up until 1998, the West had labeled the KLA a terrorist organization, as per Serbian leadership standards, hence perceiving the Kosovo Crisis as another case of ethnic civil war. Such narratives of equally culpable parties in a standard "ethnic" or "religious" civil war were the norm in elite dialogue and press briefings prior to 1999.

Even after the Serbian government had repressed peaceful demonstrations in Kosovo in March of 1998, the North Atlantic Council's statement affirmed the equally culpable narrative, calling "on all sides to take immediate steps to reduce the tensions."⁷ Similar statements followed, condemning "the unacceptable use of force by Serbian police against peaceful demonstrators as well as terrorist actions by the Kosovo Liberation Army or any other group." In such statements, the term "Kosovar extremists" was widely utilized. Western actors were adamant in "rejecting all use of violence, either by state security forces to suppress political dissent or by terrorist groups to seek political change."⁸

As this narrative persisted in the Western media and elite dialogues, the

Kosovo humanitarian crisis remained untouched. By June 1998, as the narrative was slowly beginning to shift, the third-party responses amounted to symbolic air exercises in Albania and Macedonia to signal NATO's power potential, the maintenance of observer missions in neighboring countries, and talks of funding UN and OSCE monitoring missions in Serbia as a way of promoting greater political dialogue. There were no talks yet of moving beyond a diplomatic solution to a violent crisis that had plagued Kosovo for years.

This diplomatic route led to a very short-lived ceasefire in October 1998, primarily promoted by several UN Security Council resolutions discussed earlier. During the progression of this ceasefire, the civil war narrative continued to dominate Western discussions of the crisis, with NATO and Western state officials adhering to the same neutral chains of culpability. "Since the beginning of November, violent incidents provoked in some cases by Serbian security forces and in others by armed Kosovar elements have increased tension. These incidents show that both the Belgrade authorities and the armed Kosovar elements have failed to comply fully with the requirements set out in UN Security Council Resolutions."⁹

But the failure of the ceasefire, due to Serbian military progression, prompted a NATO air verification mission but no clear talks of direct intervention. As Ivo Daalder, who served as director for European affairs at the National Security Council, explained, the West was wary of serving as the KLA's personal military against an established, sovereign state:

There's a change in dynamic for the international community, particularly the Europeans, but also many in the United States, who believe that the KLA are a bunch of thugs, and these thugs are now winning. All of a sudden, a policy designed to oppose Milošević creates a situation where the more we oppose Milošević, the more these thugs will win—at what point are the KLA thugs the problem? . . . "We don't want to be the air force of the KLA," is the standard stock answer of the allies to bombing the Serbs. At that point, the allies decide to stand back, to say, wait a minute, we've got to find a political solution—not because Milošević might otherwise do bad things—but otherwise, the KLA will win.¹⁰

The Specter of Past Genocides

Due to the Bosnian precedent, with its damaging Western delay, perceptions of Kosovo changed more quickly, especially since a political elite soon

bore witness to the civilian massacres. From 1998 to 1999, we observe a change from narratives of civil war to ones of ethnic cleansing and then to potential genocide in the heart of Europe. Past events helped propel the required narrative of defenseless people, as opposed to equally culpable civil war factions. The conflict occurred against the historical backdrop of the Bosnian and Rwandan genocides. In postconflict Western perceptions, both of these historical tragedies were founded upon analogies of genocide unrestrained by the international community. In Bosnia, as Serbian campaigns of ethnic cleansing escalated, the Western media turned to analogies of Nazi Germany to contextualize photos and eyewitness reports of mass crimes.¹¹ Indeed, the West remained passive in Bosnia until such Holocaust imagery and symbolism gained great traction internationally, as journalists reported from “concentration camps” within Bosnia.¹² By the mid-1990s, Bosnia was in the Western collective identity, the first instance of genocide allowed on European soil since the Holocaust, and by the end of 1998 many began to worry that Kosovo would be next.¹³

Secretary Albright’s spokesperson James Rubin put it simply in 1999, months before the intervention, “In order to move towards military action, it has to be clear that the Serbs were responsible.”¹⁴ Even President Clinton recognized the benefits of such a shift in conflict perception in the backdrop of the Bosnian tragedy partially caused by Western passivity in the face of “ancient hatreds” and their civil wars. He later critiqued the primary narrative on Kosovo:

Now, at the time, a lot of people said, “Well, there’s nothing you can do about it, Mr. President. That’s the way those people are. They’ve been fighting for hundreds of years.” So I heard all that, and I actually started reading up on the history of that area. And I found out that in fact they had been fighting on and off for hundreds of years, but there was more off than on. And it was an insult to them to say that somehow they were intrinsically made to murder one another. That was the excuse used by countries and leaders for too long—“Well, they’re just that way.”¹⁵

Many years later, other political elites such as Comras also admitted to the fatal faults of labeling the Kosovars terrorists. “I think we made a big mistake, however, when we referred to them as “terrorists.” If they were terrorists, then Milošević could feel justified in dealing with them as terrorists. This appeared to give him an okay to take a freer hand in dealing with them.”¹⁶

Accordingly, Western elites needed to view the Kosovo conflict as a cam-

paing of ethnic cleansing at the very least and as an attempted genocide at the most; to be labeled a civil war would have delayed or muted intervention as in Bosnia. Not until summer 1998 did the view of Kosovo as a civil war between two equally culpable factions begin to slowly dissipate, paralleling changes in media attention to Kosovar refugees.¹⁷ It was also around this time that NATO commenced an aerial exercise with more than one hundred aircraft over Kosovo, Albania, and Macedonia to show NATO capacity and strength against the Yugoslav government. But it would take a direct elite witness to the civilian massacres to shift the narrative for good, which only came at the beginning of 1999. Until a conflict perception of “systematic violations of human rights” had monopolized the Kosovo Crisis narrative, intervention remained unlikely and highly muted in international political circles.

So what finally and permanently shifted perceptions of the Kosovo conflict to that of ethnic cleansing and potential genocide in the heart of Europe? By early 1999, an elite witness left no doubt for the international community, ignited a wide range of Holocaust analogies in the media and political circles, and left Western institutions with no choice but to act.

The Raçak Massacre Turning Point That Altered Western Perceptions

Coming after the relative international inactivity of Bosnia and Rwanda, Kosovo benefited immensely from historically freighted analogies to the (nonprevented) Holocaust, as will be further detailed below.¹⁸ But Kosovo still needed the smoking gun. After the Raçak massacre (January 1999) of forty-five ethnic Albanians by Serbian soldiers, media reports and elites alike latched on to the Holocaust narrative for good.¹⁹ Ambassador William Walker, also serving as the head of the Kosovo Verification Mission (the international monitoring group meant to track compliance with the ceasefire and human rights situation in Kosovo), personally witnessed the aftermath of the Raçak massacre and subsequently held an impromptu, rage-fueled press conference, where he declared that Serbian forces had committed crimes against humanity on ethnic Albanian civilians.²⁰ He also stated that the government-sponsored stories of KLA setups and clashes with armed, uniformed men were outrageous lies. This reaction was so imperative to altering the narrative on Kosovo that Milošević immediately declared Ambassador Walker *persona non grata*.

Before this internationalized massacre, US and NATO elites had issued

empty threats of force and had failed to enforce them against Milošević. Instead, they had strong hopes that additional negotiation sessions and implemented ceasefires with Milošević would be enough to broker a fragile peace in Kosovo. Up until the grim day of the Račak massacre, Western policymaking in Kosovo relied on the unified assumption that the direct usage of force would be neither needed nor warranted given the both-sided nature of the conflict. The West did not wish to serve as the *de facto* military of the KLA, a group of thugs perceived as equally as violent and problematic as their Serbian counterparts. Daalder explains in his Frontline interview:

Just as the principals meet on January 15 in the White House, Serb forces are engaged in yet another massacre of 45 people in Račak. That's on the front page of the newspaper. The next day, the OSCE monitors are there on the scene, and report what happened. The head of the OSCE monitors says this is a crime against humanity. We again have pictures of bodies, of heads torn off, of torsos. Within four days, there is an immediate agreement in the White House that the very option that Madeleine Albright put on the table four days earlier, which was not acceptable, now becomes acceptable. We have to have decisive action. Muddling through is no longer possible. We can't postpone the moment of deciding what to do. On January 19, the decision is to have decisive action, start threatening force, and to do that to get an agreement.²¹

Ambassador Walker's account of the one-sided nature of the violence in Račak also altered perceptions of the KLA in Kosovo. The West was no longer dealing with two equally culpable warring factions, but with one main state aggressor and a group of fighters defending themselves against systematic state oppression. As Ambassador Walker's narrative below reveals, the West was beginning to distinguish between the scope and nature of the offenses committed by the warring parties within Kosovo.²²

Even though they've committed some acts that were to be condemned—kidnappings, killings, assassinations—I found that the KLA tried to keep promises they made to me . . . as opposed to Milošević, who made all sorts of promises and so help me God, lived up to none of them. I also found when the KLA committed one of these offenses, it was usually limited in scale. One, two, or three people might be targeted, usually policemen, or military—there was some reason they could point to as to why they had done it. On the other

side, the Milošević forces would go in and destroy a whole village and its people to chase one KLA terrorist. There was not a moral equivalency between what they were doing.

A shift in conflict perception soon dominated all talks of Kosovo within the United States, the UK, and the NATO alliance, while Kosovo's civilian suffering made its way across top Western media outlets as my media content analysis in *World Affairs* reveals.²³ By the end of January 1999, this dramatic shift in perceptions would prompt threats of airstrikes in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) if political negotiations did not yield a lasting peace between the state and its ethnic Albanian population. As the months passed without the cessation of violence, the narrative against Serbia only strengthened with more details from on-the-ground reports. Such a narrative allowed NATO to join humanitarian relief efforts in Kosovo, coordinating with the OSCE, UNHCR, and the Council of Europe. Official NATO press briefings would repeat how "the grave humanitarian crisis was brought on by the actions of President Milošević's forces in Kosovo," without mention of Kosovo separatists or terrorist nonstate actors.²⁴ By the end of March 1999, this same narrative led to a firm consensus between Western countries and institutions on the urgency of airstrikes against FRY:

The unrestrained assault by Yugoslav military, police and paramilitary forces, under the direction of President Milošević, on Kosovar civilians has created a massive humanitarian catastrophe which also threatens to destabilise the surrounding region. Hundreds of thousands of people have been expelled ruthlessly from Kosovo by the FRY authorities. We condemn these appalling violations of human rights and the indiscriminate use of force by the Yugoslav government. These extreme and criminally irresponsible policies, which cannot be defended on any grounds, have made necessary and justify the military action by NATO. Those who are responsible for the systematic campaign of violence and destruction against innocent Kosovar civilians and for the forced deportation of hundreds of thousands of refugees will be held accountable for their actions.²⁵

As Gen. Wesley Clark discussed, "People had finally come to terms with the fact that it wasn't just an ordinary reaction to some domestic terrorism that was taking place—they were seeing the first stages of unfolding drama that was likely to culminate in ethnic cleansing."²⁶

"My Mindset Is Munich": Solidified Holocaust Analogies

Beyond Ambassador Walker's role, the outcome of the Rambouillet Conference in March of 1999 solidified Kosovo's new conflict perceptions, with the ethnic Albanian factions signing on to a peace deal, with several great concessions, while Serbian factions refused to discuss key terms of the agreements. This portrayed ethnic Albanians as the peace seekers, while Serbia continued to mobilize its military around Kosovo. So the Holocaust imagery only intensified for Kosovo. Repeated meetings with President Milošević had furthered this narrative, as Milošević's talks of ethnic cleansing the "bandit" Albanians, blocking international investigators from sites of violence, and breaking diplomatic promises to NATO became the overwhelming norm of such encounters.²⁷ Nonintervention in Kosovo was now synonymous with complicity in campaigns of systematic killing. Nothing could be more anti-Western, and for Europe and the United States, nothing could be so far away from the hard lessons learned. As Clinton further affirmed and expanded upon in 1999, the intrastate conflict in Kosovo was no longer a typical non-Western petty civil war. It was no longer seen as an ethnic or religious civil war fought by equally guilty parties. By 1999, the violence in Kosovo was being understood as an act of aggression by the Serbian authorities against a "largely defenseless people," represented by peaceful, cooperating leaders.²⁸

Clinton contributed to the narrative himself: "They've now started rolling from village to village, predominantly in north central Kosovo, shelling civilians, torching their homes so they can't come back. In a number of villages, Serbian police have dragged the male members of Kosovar families from their homes, lined up fathers with sons, and shot them in cold blood."²⁹ Reports from refugee camps in nearby countries predicted a repeat of the recent Bosnian terror, which by now Western audiences equated with Nazi Germany genocide. Pacifism and delayed reactions meant tragedy.

Madeleine Albright explained her views of the military intervention in response to the humanitarian atrocities: "We all knew that he best understood the use of force. He didn't see the light in Bosnia until the NATO bombing... it's difficult to deal with someone who only understands force."³⁰ Milošević only knew aggression and violence; thus the West needed to react accordingly so as not to repeat the worst of history. Albright remarked of Kosovo in 1999, "My mindset is Munich," hinting at the legacy of European appeasement of ruthless, genocidal leaders more than fifty years before.³¹ Strong Holocaust imagery also frequently found its way into Clinton's

speeches on the Kosovo conflict, founded upon the main lessons learned in Bosnia, as this example in March of 1999:

What if someone had listened to Winston Churchill and stood up to Adolph Hitler earlier? How many people's lives might have been saved? And how many American lives might have been saved? . . . When President Milošević started the war in Bosnia 7 years ago, the world did not act quickly enough to stop him. Let's don't forget what happened: Innocent people were herded into concentration camps. Children were gunned down by snipers on their way to school. Soccer fields and parks were turned into cemeteries. A quarter of a million people—in a country with only 6 million population—were killed, and a couple of million refugees were created—not because of anything they had done but because of who they were and because of the thirst of Mr. Milošević and his allies to dominate, indeed, to crush people who were of different ethnic and religious affiliations. Now, this was a genocide in the heart of Europe. It did not happen in 1945; it was going on in 1995.³²

Before, during, and following the intervention, NATO repeatedly claimed ethnic cleansing and possible genocide to justify military involvement. As Secretary General Solana said, "NATO faced the prospect of either witnessing a deliberately engineered mass expulsion of people in a region bordering NATO and the EU or addressing the Kosovo crisis in full. . . . We decided that these risks were worth taking, for not to have acted would have meant that the Atlantic community legitimized ethnic cleansing in its immediate neighborhood."³³

In sum, the historical perceptions of the Kosovo conflict itself changed within the year before military intervention, turning terrorists, separatists, and extremists into innocent Kosovar civilians fighting against a terrorist state. This perception came out of greater learning on the part of the media, population, and political elites regarding both the origins of the Kosovo Crisis as well as the on-the-ground reporting of Serbian military actions and counteractions. NATO spokesperson Dr. Jamie Shea summarized this process of learning and interpretation of behavior and history in his April 29 press conference:

They [ethnic Albanians] only embraced independence once it became clear that they would not be allowed to have their autonomy under Milošević but for many years all they asked for in the passive resis-

tance organised by Ibrahim Rugova and others was simply for their human rights, their ethnic identity, their autonomy, to be respected. If people have left Yugoslavia since 1991, it's not because of any desire first and foremost to have so much their own state, it's because the policy of rabid nationalism in Belgrade gave them the impression that if they stayed within the Yugoslav Federation, they would not be able to survive or have their rights protected.³⁴

The Kosovar Albanians were now justified in the eyes of the Western elites in their rebellions against the Serbian government, and hence they deserved intervention. Past Western doubts about ethnic Albanian protests, requests for autonomy, and complaints of human rights abuses seemed to have faded a few months before military intervention, and they evaporated fully during the months of military intervention. The key to such a transformation was the shifting rhetorical arsenal that political elites drew upon with one another, the media, and international organizations. They moved from discussions of civil war, ethnic hatreds, separatists, and terrorists to discussions of mass graves, systematic executions, civilian exodus, and mentions of concentration camps, prison camps, helpless refugees, and scorched villages. NATO briefings consistently mentioned the displacement of ethnic Albanian families, the revocation of passports and identities by Serbian authorities, the selling of property in exchange for "train tickets to nowhere," and the use of human shields in battles. Accusation of war crimes against the Serbian state abounded as the narrative shifted from terrorist ethnic Albanians to hotels full of abused ethnic Albanian women, disappearing military-age ethnic Albanian men, and children massacred in front of their parents.

By March 1999, NATO spokesman Jamie Shea was quoting statistics on refugees and civilian killings to the press three times a day. For example, "800,000 Kosovar Albanians have fled Kosovo since March 1998, 650,000 are internally displaced, at least 100,000 men of military age are missing, at least 4,000 victims of summary executions are reported since the beginning of the year, nearly 1.5 million Kosovar Albanians—or 90 per cent of the population—have been expelled from their homes. We have reports of mass executions in 65 towns and villages and mass graves in at least seven locations."³⁵ Typically, after announcing the raw numbers, which grew worse across the weeks, Dr. Shea, as well as several generals at such press briefings and conferences, would reiterate the justifications behind a military intervention in Kosovo. "What we can do is to stop what clearly is a systematic, planned, organized government-directed strategy and not some kind of automatic, spontaneous outpouring of violence."³⁶ Often, such statements

would defend the KLA (a.k.a. UCK) as well, an organization labeled as terrorist just months prior. NATO spokesperson Shea and SHAPE spokesperson Maj. Gen. Walter Jertz justify this dynamic below: “No, we are not, we are the Air Force of the Kosovar Albanian people, Freddie, and there is a very big distinction there. And the fighting is not simply fighting against the UCK. Ask the 9,800 refugees who were pushed into Albania yesterday if the only violence is against the UCK. Clearly it is not, those refugees showed clearly that the violence is still being directed against the civilian population at large.”³⁷ The goals of the Kosovo mission and subsequent bombings were clear, which further aided the mission trajectory and alliance cohesion: (1) Control internally displaced persons; (2) Safely return all refugees to their homes; and (3) Complete withdrawal of the Serbian military from Kosovo, to be replaced by an international security force. Due to the humanitarian narrative now activated within all elite circles, the mission in Kosovo would be halted only once Serbia had accepted all NATO terms in negotiation—not one minute earlier—no matter the cost.

Jamie Shea even went as far as to quote a famous survivor of the Holocaust to explain the West’s commitment to Kosovo and worries about being a bystander to horrors once more: “Elie Wiesel, the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, once said: ‘What hurts the victims most is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander.’ Well NATO is not going to be a silent bystander, we are going to be a vocal actor and we are going to ensure, as soon as we can, that all of these suffering people are allowed to go back to their homes.”³⁸ Indeed, all NATO operational updates in 1999 explicitly mentioned “targeting Serbs responsible for ethnic cleansing.”³⁹ During the NATO campaign itself, the Holocaust analogies intensified further. Prisons where Kosovar Albanians were kept were transformed into “virtually a concentration camp . . . and the inmates have not been sentenced for any crime unless their ethnic identity is a sentence of death.”⁴⁰ The image of freed prisoners lingered in the eyes of Western media, elites, and leaders, strengthening analogies to past genocides:

The terrible spectre of about 1,000 young men, old men, men apparently of military age, but not showing signs of having done any military service, certainly not in the Kosovo Liberation Army, being released from a prison near Mitrovica. People I’ve called the living dead and certainly these are the kind of images which we have become used to seeing on our movie screens recollecting former days of European history, but certainly not live on our TV screens, reflecting the reality of the present.⁴¹

Kosovo—with its human shields, protecting the Serbian military against NATO airstrikes, its systematic rapes, with innocents “herded” from their homes and into forced labor camps, and endless mass graves—was reminiscent not merely of Bosnia, but also of all previous campaigns of systematic killing and genocide. Kosovo was denounced as the worst in decades. Stfan de Mistoura, a senior official at the UN who had worked in seventeen conflict zones, stated that Kosovo was “the most cynical, calculated, glacially coldly planned humanitarian tragedy that I have seen in 29 years working for the United Nations.”⁴² Most importantly, NATO was in full agreement with Ambassador Kuka of Albania that “Milošević is the chief architect of the genocide and the ethnic cleansing campaign in Kosovo,” removing any blame from the Albanian counterparts.⁴³

US ambassador David Scheffer’s statement below clearly showcases this dynamic and also acts to justify the selection of Kosovo for humanitarian intervention, while muting other international calls for help.

With the exception of Rwanda in 1994 and Cambodia in 1975, you would be hard pressed to find a crime scene anywhere in the world since World War II where a defenceless civilian population have been assaulted with such ferocity and criminal intent and suffered so many multiple violations of international humanitarian law in such a short period of time as in Kosovo since mid-March 1999. There are hideous crime scenes elsewhere recently—Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan come to mind—but Kosovo represents a government-planned campaign to eliminate either through forced deportation or killing, most of an ethnic population from its home. . . . The list of war crimes and crimes against *[sic]* humanity being committed in Kosovo is diverse, covering such a wide range of criminal behaviour that it represents almost a text-book example of how not to wage warfare.⁴⁴

The analogies to past genocide campaigns helped locate all the blame for the Kosovo conflict solely with Milošević’s regime, revoking any gradations of victimhood from the Serbian nation, its narratives, and its demands. As Air Commodore David Wilby stated for NATO in April 1999, “[Milošević] has not been able to convince public opinion that Serbia is the victim. All too clearly, we have seen who is the victim and who is the victimizer, and he remains the person who bears the full responsibility for the human tragedy that we have witnessed in Kosovo.”⁴⁵ The victimizer, in this case, was guilty of the worst of the worst in liberal Western minds: a preconceived plan to erad-

icate an ethnic identity, a pending genocide. The systematic nature of Serbia's violence against its ethnic Albanians allied the West behind the rebels, not the state. Wilby went on to say: "These actions of the Serb forces have been following a pre-arranged pattern. This type of humanitarian disaster is not improvised. It represents a master plan that was conceived and well on its way to being executed before the first NATO bomb was dropped against a military target."⁴⁶

Analogies to genocide were evident within the US Congress by 1999 as well, although such discussions were absent in years prior. Members discussed "a level of atrocity not seen since World War II . . . in the heart of Europe."⁴⁷ Senate discussions frequently equated Milošević to Hitler.⁴⁸ Then-Senator Joe Biden (D-DE) vehemently opposed any weakening of the genocidal character of the Kosovo conflict, often referring to the Račak massacre as an echo of Hitler's campaigns.⁴⁹ The rhetoric of Kosovo as a pending genocide meant that inaction was tantamount to the crimes of complicity in the face of the worst of human suffering. Such analogies monopolized US domestic narratives and increased support for military intervention when none existed a year prior.⁵⁰ It was even claimed multiple times by congressmen that Hitler and Stalin served as Milošević's "role models."⁵¹

Former UK prime minister Tony Blair was one of the staunchest supporters of a concentrated military intervention in Kosovo because of these very perceptions of the conflict. "I felt that this was the closest thing to racial genocide that I've seen in Europe since the Second World War," he claimed in postintervention interviews.⁵² Perceptions, and then outcomes, of ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Serbian government were imperative in continuing the NATO bombing until Milošević agreed to Western demands.

The US State Department also went out of its way to publicize and denounce the war crimes committed by the Serbian military during the NATO bombing, ensuring that the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia would prosecute the crimes. Press briefings, longer reports, and photographic evidence of the violations of human rights in Kosovo were regularly verified by the United States and then publicized widely.⁵³

The narrative of genocide solidified internationally as UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, in his keynote speech to the 54th session of the UN General Assembly in September 1999, tempered his arguments on the need for Security Council–approved use of force in humanitarian endeavors. As the postconflict outcome in Kosovo loomed large on the international agenda, Annan posed the following question: "If, in those dark days and hours leading up to the genocide [in Rwanda], a coalition of states had been

prepared to act in defense of the Tutsi population, but did not receive prompt Council authorization, should such a coalition have stood aside and allowed the horror to unfold?”⁵⁴ This question inherently arises from the belief, from the perception, that the Kosovo conflict was, like the Rwandan conflict, an act of systematic slaughter by one side and massive civilian deaths on the other. In fact, Annan stated this directly as he encouraged UN members to “forge unity behind the principle that massive and systematic violations of human rights—wherever they may take place—should not be allowed to stand.”⁵⁵

Public Opinion

As the genocide analogies grew amidst the political elites, public opinion became more and more favorable to a NATO intervention, at the same time that NATO began to publicly discuss plans to involve itself. Since the breakdown of the Rambouillet peace negotiations in February 1999—which depicted Serbian elites as unyielding to diplomacy and ethnic Albanian elites as highly cooperative—American public support for a military intervention in Kosovo steadily grew, alongside knowledge of the political context in Kosovo. Before March 1999, only 70 percent of Americans had “seen, heard, or read” about Kosovo; by April, that number had grown to 96 percent.⁵⁶ Before Rambouillet, only 43 percent of Americans supported US participation in a NATO mission, but by April 1999, public support had risen to over 61 percent.⁵⁷ As the NATO mission progressed and the media released more images and background stories of Kosovar refugees, the American public even began supporting the idea of ground troops in Kosovo. More than half of the respondents supported the option of ground troops if the air mission failed, while more than 67 percent of Americans favored the use of ground troops to fulfill a moral obligation to help Kosovar refugees.⁵⁸ This progression echoed patterns of public perceptions of national interests in Kosovo. In early March 1999, only 27 percent of respondents agreed that vital national interests were at stake in Kosovo, but by April the rate stood at almost 50 percent. The prevention of a larger war, the need for the United States to “protect the world against such events,” and worries over a refugee spillover were cited as the most significant interests. Nevertheless, in all polls, the moral imperative for Kosovo greatly outweighed the national interest arguments for the sample of respondents.⁵⁹

Across the Western sphere, public support for the Kosovo mission had risen by April 1999, primarily due to the shifting humanitarian context and blame placing. In Canada, 65 percent of respondents strongly agreed that

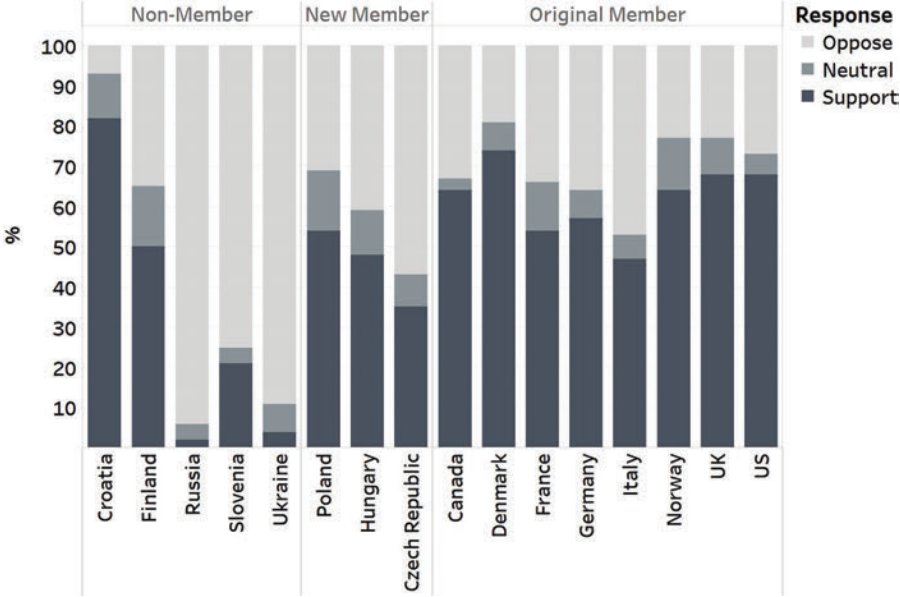


Fig. 5.1. Public Opinion on the NATO Kosovo Intervention
Source: Data from Angus Reid Group/The Economist ($n = 500$).

there was a moral obligation to help the victims (with 28 percent being somewhat in agreement). In Denmark, 59 percent agreed that one should be prepared to use military force when human rights are endangered, as in the case of Kosovo. In German and Spanish polls, more than 50 percent of respondents agreed that a NATO war in Kosovo was justified. In the UK, more than 65 percent of those surveyed agreed that Kosovo constituted a “humanitarian outrage” that should not be tolerated by the international community, and almost 90 percent of people agreed that the UK had a moral duty to prevent further killings and abuses in Kosovo. In the United States, more than 70 percent of respondents believed that the United States had a moral obligation to establish peace in Kosovo, and more than 80 percent agreed that the United States had a responsibility to provide humanitarian assistance to Kosovar refugees.⁶⁰ The numbers were consistently higher when applying the argument of suspected genocide in Kosovo. Figure 5.1 compares approval and opposition rates (averages from March–April 1999) of a NATO intervention in Kosovo across different Western and select non-Western countries, distinguished by their status as a NATO member or nonmember.

The transformed perception of the Kosovo conflict, partially due to the

publicized suffering of innocent families, was a crucial factor in the rise of public support for the intervention. For instance, in France, by early April, more than 77 percent of respondents said that President Milošević was fully to blame for the conflict in Kosovo and thus was also responsible for the air bombings. German and Slovakian citizens believed, by 68 percent, that Serbia was to blame for the extension of the Kosovo Crisis, while Spanish citizens held Milošević responsible at 64 percent. Similar polls reflected the trend that the airstrikes against Serbia were fully justified.

Even Russian public opinion, which stood as an exception to the larger European pattern, can be explained by conflict perceptions on Kosovo. In early 1999, Russian respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the causes of the Yugoslavian conflict were aggressive US/NATO policies and Albanian provocation, not Milošević's brutal regime. Due to such perceptions, these respondents believed that the Kosovo conflict was merely "Yugoslavia's business," not a concern for the world community. Yet by April 1999, almost one-third of Russian respondents said that Yugoslavia should allow NATO's deployment of its forces in Kosovo to stop the bombing of Yugoslavian towns, altering the narrative from a state's internal business to an international crisis, even while still holding to anti-NATO sentiment.⁶¹

The shift in narratives that proclaimed Kosovo a case of ethnic cleansing or even genocide, starting with elite opinions and ending with public opinion consensus, opened the way for a robust regional reaction to the crisis. Now the West had to fend off acts of potential genocide on its doorstep, not simply tolerate another Balkan ethnic war. Inaction, in this case, amounted to the non-enforcement of basic liberal, Western values and the futility of Western institutions.

Defending Western Identities and Institutions through Humanitarianism

Kosovo was now about the solidification of Western identity, the hope of Western institutional change, and the expansion of the Western neighborhood. The now one-sided atrocities unfolding within Kosovo challenged the most fundamental of Western values and mechanisms of collective security. To repeat Solana's rhetoric, the Kosovo intervention was a conflict between "two visions of Europe."⁶² One vision maintains a divided European neighborhood, with regions like the Balkans symbolizing a Europe of ethnic purity, authoritarianism, and nationalistic obsessions; while European Union members represent the other vision, defined by democratic, pluralistic, and cosmopolitan values. The Kosovo intervention sought to integrate the whole continent within the latter vision. Indeed, Kosovo was

right on “NATO’s doorstep,” the pillar of Western collective security.⁶³ It may first appear as a mere rhetorical embellishment, but Clinton’s and NATO’s repeated references to crafting an “undivided Europe” propelled Kosovo onto the international agenda, but only after the violence became understood as ethnic cleansing, not civil war.⁶⁴ The European-US partnership, as consistently reaffirmed during the Kosovo Crisis by all Western elites, further extended the normative power and functionality of the evolving neighborhood. As Ivo Daalder, then serving as director for European affairs at the National Security Council, summarized, “On the one hand lies integration in the rest of Europe at one fork of the road; at the other, is utter darkness.”⁶⁵ The international response to Serbia’s aggression demarcated the borders of the Western civilization, and NATO enforced this border, both physically and normatively.

By the late 1990s, even the “Christmas ultimatum” of 1992—which threatened the use of US force against Serbian aggression in Kosovo—was revoked due to the need for a unified Western response. To Daalder, it was imperative that the “threat of force had to be a NATO threat.”⁶⁶ In other words, had Kosovo not existed near Western institutions, easily adaptable to the European identity, the intervention may have never materialized. Gen. Wesley Clark affirmed that NATO was the key to the beginning and continuation of the Kosovo intervention until Milošević’s capitulation. It was “do or die” for NATO, he said. “That was one of Milošević’s other great miscalculations—that somehow because NATO was far away and Serbia was close, that he would maintain the interest and the commitment to Kosovo, and NATO would lose interest. He failed to understand NATO.”⁶⁷ The ultimate concern was that ethnic cleansing campaigns simply could not be tolerated *within Europe*—each time this phrase was mentioned, it always ended with “in Europe,” implying that similar campaigns of violence elsewhere may be more easily tolerated by the international community.

The dialogue introduced in this section highlights that beyond geopolitical national interests or humanitarian need, the Kosovo mission was about bringing the Balkans into the “European mainstream,” with the help of all Western institutions and resources. A humanitarian emergency, not just another peripheral ethnic war, was taking place in the heart of the West. “NATO prevailing is the best long-term recipe for the stability and economic lift-off of the area in which everybody has an interest,” said NATO spokesperson Jamie Shea, reminding the audience of elites that “an impressive array of countries are willing to put their long term interests in a secure and democratic Balkans, ahead of their short term economic gain.”⁶⁸ Paradoxically, Kosovo was in the long-term interests of Western actors, but it was also not

about their short-term national gains. Beyond such contradictions, Kosovo was not “mobiliz[ed] for strategic purposes, not for sort of classical interests but for humanitarian purposes.”⁶⁹ “This is perhaps one of the very few genuine humanitarian conflicts in modern times,” concluded Shea and Brigadier General Marani, effectively dismissing the many other bloody (and often bloodier) intrastate conflicts occurring before and alongside Kosovo in non-Western regions of the world.⁷⁰

Mobilizing and Sharing Resources in “the Heart of Europe”

Once the Kosovo Crisis became synonymous with ethnic cleansing, attempted genocide, and the death of innocents, the response became about the enforcement of nonnegotiable liberal expectations and values in Europe. The hard-won peace within the walls of the EU was not sufficient if it occurred simultaneously with violence just outside of its borders or within “the heart of Europe,” as claimed several key elites, including Prime Minister Blair of the UK.⁷¹ But the institutions of the Western neighborhood were necessary catalysts. They made the choice to intervene in the Kosovo Crisis possible by lessening the burdens and risks for involved countries and leaders and by making liberal end goals attainable. The highly institutionalized neighborhood allowed for an intervention robust enough to fulfill its value-laden mission, as Jamie Shea assured in a morning briefing in 1999:

You know I have used the phrase, which is wholly mine, the Teddy Roosevelt force, in other words it will speak softly, it will be impartial, it will be nice to people but it will carry a big stick, in other words that it will be willing to fight, it will be willing to defend itself, it will be willing to pursue its mandate robustly if necessary. And of course we are going to make sure that force is adequately equipped.⁷²

Beyond the “Teddy Roosevelt force,” Western partners pooled resources for refugee monitoring and management, including providing financial aid to outsider countries willing to host refugees (which convinced the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia). This resource pooling applied broadly to humanitarian aid, the construction of refugee camps, water sanitation, all levels of civil and computer engineering, and security monitoring. Through the shared will and resources of partner countries and regional institutions, the West was easily able to enforce visa restrictions as well as economic and trade sanctions against Yugoslavia.⁷³ In addition, NATO, the EU, and the

OSCE provided security assurances to nonmember countries willing to help in the crisis. Thus, even intelligence sharing, media strategies, and the prospects for postconflict rebuilding were deemed easier in the case of Kosovo and made normatively easier through the rhetorical support of the UN via its many resolutions against Milošević's regime.⁷⁴

Due to a broad normative consensus to act in Kosovo, NATO countries could afford to offer economic aid to any and all countries willing to join the efforts, such as "with balance of payments; with debt rescheduling; for instance with grants to help them to offset the lost trade resulting from this crisis; and finally we are helping with institutional links."⁷⁵ Pooled Western resources went to work beyond the borders of Serbia and Kosovo. These resources and coordinated units were responsible for dramatic improvements to Albania's infrastructure as well, which were intended to aid transportation into Kosovo by NATO troops, who were heavily involved in repairing Albania's roads and airfield capabilities and expanding and setting up new refugee camps. In such NATO-friendly countries, NATO had *carte blanche* to operate, and, in exchange, such countries benefited from NATO's shared resources. This trajectory enforced the continued importance of the Kosovo intervention and its intensity levels. Western organizations were well aware of such a sharing dynamic, encouraging it to ensure a military intervention in the Balkans:

But this is not something that we intend to try and handle alone. NATO is only one international organisation. The European Union, obviously is going to have a crucial role to play in economic stabilisation and economic reconstruction as well as humanitarian aid and its playing that role already . . . we are going to have to look to the special skills of the humanitarian relief organisations that we ourselves do not have. The OSCE clearly is going to come back into the picture before too long with its work on human rights and elections and the rest, so I think that NATO is going to play its role, like in Bosnia in the long term stabilisation and reconstruction of this region which we want to address as soon as the Kosovo crisis has been ended but we will only be one of the actors on the stage.⁷⁶

In other words, before the Kosovo mission began, Western countries were almost certain that they would not be in it alone. Instead, they would have the material backing and political and moral support of several specialized Western institutions, indeed, all of them. While the mission required a "NATO core" to ensure trust between third parties and ethnic Albanians,

maintain credibility for participating member states, and strengthen the military effects of the mission (noting past historical lessons in Bosnia), the Kosovo mission was more than just NATO.⁷⁷ NATO was only to provide military and security resources, while the OSCE focused on democratization, election monitoring, and civilian rebuilding. Individual countries volunteered troops, finances, and specialized expertise, as the UN indirectly condoned the mission through its rhetoric, statements, and inaction against regional institutions.

In fact, NATO spokesman Jamie Shea was adamant in revoking labels of Kosovo as a “NATO protectorate,” instead offering the term “international protectorate,” adding that the mission would involve “all the resources of the international community” and that NATO merely helped coordinate the flow of aid in the humanitarian efforts.⁷⁸ NATO’s ultimate goal was to be replaced by several civil organizations and specialized units, such as UNHCR teams. Financial assistance from international governmental organizations (IGOs) was also readily expected, as the secretary general of NATO discussed in official statements and interviews. “This is just the beginning of the international community’s investment in the longer-term stability of the region,” Solana stated in relation to IGO funding and aid, “and this stability will extend to include a democratic Yugoslavia.”⁷⁹

Bringing Kosovo into the Good Neighborhood

The NATO and Western dialogues fully depict the propensities of a “good neighborhood,” as per Keohane.⁸⁰ Sovereignty is shared and often surrendered by members for the collective interests of the neighborhood. The neighborhood’s institutions then get to work on solving regional issues instead of relying on individual states with isolated resources and unique interests. In a good neighborhood, the likelihood of successful third-party missions also increases dramatically, given the knowledge that institutions will continue to contribute to postconflict rebuilding and institutionalization of the conflict zone. This was surely the case in the NATO discussions that occurred months prior to the end of the Kosovo Crisis, as Shea declared. “I will be obviously reporting to you on the contribution that NATO intends to make towards the long-term reconstruction of the south-east European area, particularly in the field of security. . . . As I always emphasise, NATO is not simply interested in fighting the conflict. We are even more interested in building the peace that will follow.”⁸¹

Western institutions planned for robust postconflict rebuilding in Kosovo, pooling their resources due to one of the underlying themes of the

mission: the fostering of democracy. NATO envisioned itself as a group of strong democratic countries with a unifying democratic ethos driving them to action. Naturally, a violence-free Kosovo would be on its way to a democratic Kosovo, finally bringing the Balkans in line with the rest of democratic, "civilized," "rational" Europe. Such were the exact words repeated over and over in most comparisons between NATO, the EU, and the United States and its Yugoslavian nemesis. For fifty years, NATO had defended the "values of any civilized democratic community of nations, and every leader of this Alliance shares this conviction."⁸² The countries of such a community are so civilized that they are expected to cooperate "fully with international law because [they] are the people who promote and defend international law," unlike the barbaric others who break this international law.⁸³ As Shea and Air Commodore Wilby discussed, "it's very difficult for rational people in Western democracies to anticipate what irrational people are going to do."⁸⁴ Gen. Wesley Clark (SACEUR) reaffirmed, "Liberal democracies have a hard time truly appreciating what's happening right now in Kosovo . . . perpetrated largely against defenceless civilians by the last vestige of a hard-core communist dictatorship in Europe."⁸⁵ In the same conference, NATO secretary general Solana even used the term "barbarous age in Europe" to refer to the nature of non-EU countries.⁸⁶ When Bulgaria allowed NATO to use its airspace against Yugoslavia, the terminology was that NATO now had a "ring of steel around Yugoslavia . . . a circle of democratic solidarity" against the brutal, non-European leader, Milošević.⁸⁷

Western public opinion echoed such sentiments on Yugoslavia as well. In the Netherlands, respondents overwhelmingly viewed Milošević as power-hungry, untrustworthy, and aggressive (with rates at over 80 percent in 1999). US citizens had a very unfavorable view of Yugoslavia, with 45 percent of respondents having mostly unfavorable views and 27 percent having very unfavorable views. Similarly, US citizens considered the Serbian attacks against ethnic Albanians to be a form of barbaric genocide. These numbers stood at 60 percent in early 1999 and increased to 67 percent right before the aerial campaign in the spring. At the same time, the public opinion of Milošević as a war criminal stood at almost 70 percent agreement.⁸⁸

Hopes for a Democratic Serbia

Thankfully, there was hope for the uncivilized Balkans, as Western elites vigilantly sought hints of democratic counterforces and the revitalization of democracy within dictatorial Yugoslavia. Press briefings and internal dialogues were rife with both personal and official stories of Yugoslavian and

Serbian politicians, citizens, and officials “breaking rank” from Milošević and joining Western forces. There was “a democratic Serbia lurking in the underground,” something that fortified the goals of the Kosovo mission before its occurrence and long after the last bomb had dropped.⁸⁹ According to Shea, “We are offering the Yugoslav people an alternative to the counter-productive policies of the government, an alternative of democratisation, of reform, of integration into the European mainstream, of security based on co-operation not confrontation, that the door is open to the rest of Europe.”⁹⁰ The West could not wait to “welcome a democratic Yugoslavia back into the European family, as part of a stable Balkan region.”⁹¹ Indeed, the West simply needed to “exercise once and for all the demon of ethnic nationalism in that part of Europe . . . ‘the bleeding wound of Europe,’” for the sake of the West as a whole.⁹² This feat would also be done with the help of institutional resource pooling and a robust postconflict vision. As Shea stated in April 1999, “We are not simply thinking about dropping bombs, we are already turning our minds to the moment when . . . we can then get on with that job of trying to develop an overall plan and of course, a democratic Serbia will have a key role to play in all of that.”⁹³

Public opinion was also optimistic about the prospects of a democratic peace in the Balkans after a NATO intervention. In the United States, in particular, 50 percent of respondents in March 1999 believed that military involvement would bring peace to the region, and these numbers grew by April.⁹⁴

NATO's Western Bias

Perhaps the most telling sign that Kosovo was truly a regional reaction and phenomenon all about European identity (in contrast to the barbaric non-European ways) and Western institutional tools is NATO secretary general Solana's response to a key question posed during an interview: Is the Kosovo mission a warning to all dictators throughout the world? In other words, do dictators elsewhere have to worry that their domestic atrocities would be met with the same NATO response as in Kosovo? Solana's answer was a concise, unabashed no—unless the region was just right. “Let me say first of all that NATO is not a global organisation. When you say whatever it is, it is too broad a concept, but in the region of our responsibilities I think that what has happened in the last months is more important than whatever I could say now. Look at the facts and that is the behaviour of an Alliance of democratic countries that is able to act in a coherent matter to stop something that never could have happened, or should have happened, in Europe.”⁹⁵

In less ambiguous terms, Solana was admitting that had Kosovo not been situated in Europe—with all that this neighborhood provided—it would *not* have experienced a humanitarian military intervention. The world would not have reacted with a military mandate. Solana was justifying and predicting NATO's and general international inactivity within future intrastate conflicts outside the Western neighborhood.⁹⁶ US public opinion echoed this regional argument quite strongly. When asked, "Should the US be willing to intervene in Africa and Asia as much as in Bosnia and Kosovo," only 41 percent of respondents agreed that the United States should intervene equally across regions, while 45 percent said that the United States should intervene less in Africa and Asia.⁹⁷

The European Perspective

From the European perspective, Kosovo was unique as well due to its ability to showcase the grave need for European collective security. Kosovo incentivized broader political discussions on the future of the region. As Joschka Fischer, the German foreign minister and vice-chancellor, explained at the European Council meeting during the German presidency, "Unlike 1991/92, the EU pursued a common line in the Balkans this time, which can be explained by the fact that the European States had at last recognized that it was not just about moral duty or the future of a region on the periphery of Europe, but about their own security, indeed our collective security."⁹⁸ He continued the discussion on security, adding elements of Western identity and regional neighborhoods, just like his US counterparts had:

In Europe, there is just one single, indivisible kind of security; that is, the logical conclusion we can draw from our experience of the tragedy in Kosovo. If we had stood idly by in the face of bloodthirsty, aggressive nationalism on our continent, then ultimately the fate of European integration itself, the greatest achievement in recent European history, would have been placed in jeopardy. We could not and would not allow this to happen. The Kosovo conflict has propagated two important ideas in the EU. Firstly, Southeastern Europe is now widely and unreservedly accepted as being part of Europe.⁹⁹

This discussion overtook almost the full session of the European Parliament meeting in 1999, centering on the need for greater economic cooperation between western Europe and its new eastern neighbors, increased free

trade agreements, and—most importantly—prioritizing democratization in Serbia and extending the Western rule of law throughout the Balkans. All participants agreed that “the key to the lasting stabilisation of the region will be the democratisation of Serbia.”¹⁰⁰

In statements to follow, Fischer merged dimensions of Western identity and region to explain the Kosovo Crisis and even drew parallels to post-World War II Western Europe as a fragile but reconstructed neighborhood of stability and democracy: “For the first time in its history, South-Eastern Europe now has a real opportunity to break with nationalism and violence forever and draw closer to an integrated Europe. Reconciliation was able to take place in Western Europe after 1945 and so it can in the Balkans today . . . it is important that the European Union should make the securing of peace in Southeastern Europe a priority in peacetime too.”¹⁰¹ His colleagues agreed, particularly on the need to preserve Western civilization and the significance of regional institutions and values in maintaining and expanding the Western neighborhood. Hans-Gert Pottering, a German conservative politician and later president of the European Parliament, added that “Our message on the threshold of the year 2000 must be: never again are people in Europe to be driven from their homes, from their homeland. Human rights, human dignity, the right to a homeland are the foundation of our European civilisation.”¹⁰² Next, Bas Belder from the Netherlands expanded upon the importance of Western institutions and the aspiration to behave as good Western neighbors:

If we are to consolidate the fragile peace on the legendary killing fields of Kosovo Polje, there must be optimum co-operation between the international organisations concerned; the UN for the return of the refugees, the OSCE in terms of constructing democracy, and the EU for economic and social construction. If international co-ordination is lacking or falls short then the price paid for this will be institutional chaos. For its part, the EU would do well to guard against this critical danger . . . we are certainly in favour of being on good neighbourly terms. Indeed, that is in every sense our Christian duty.¹⁰³

In sum, Keohane’s “good neighborhood” characteristics stand at the forefront of the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999.¹⁰⁴ The struggle toward a unified Western identity, security infrastructure, and institutional resources propelled Kosovo above the rest in 1999, leading to a military intervention against Serbia to protect innocent civilians. First, the crisis needed to undergo

a transformation in perception so as to fall under Western norms of protection of innocents, but ultimately such a framework is only regional in application. The interaction is twofold: a favorable shift in conflict perceptions was required to access Western resources, but favorable perceptions may not have helped had Kosovo existed far outside the Western neighborhood and its pooled institutions and values-driven missions.

Conclusions

The interaction among states, elites, various organizations, and local actors on the ground created a favorable perception for the Kosovo Crisis. Western political elites already on the ground, with previous experiences in Bosnia, may have facilitated the narrative shift. Previous NATO-led operations in the region made it easier for Kosovo to move away from the typical civil war narration and receive international support as well. The perception shift was sudden, mainly because media and leadership interest in Kosovo was sudden as well, relying on the real-time witness reports of acute massacres to spark humanitarian and security interests. But once the massacres in Kosovo entered the Western consciousness, predominantly due to Ambassador Walker's witness testimony, it was not long before analogies to Bosnia, the Holocaust, and past Western mistakes became exigent, increasing the likelihood of third-party military intervention in Kosovo. But such a pattern was strengthened in its influence due to Kosovo's location within the "heart of Europe" and its role as a test of NATO's regional benefits. Had Kosovo been located outside the sphere of Western influence, without the institutional benefits provided by NATO, the EU, OSCE, and other regional actors, favorable conflict perceptions may not have altered the pathway of intervention. But then again, had the Kosovo Crisis remained within the narrative of a civil war, it may have taken the West many more years to intervene with military force, as in the case of Bosnia. Perhaps there would have been no intervention at all. Even within the Western neighborhood, an intervention against humanitarian abuses is not guaranteed, especially when past historical lessons cannot be applied to the narrative.

In Kosovo's case, however, the lessons to be learned were plentiful. Especially through the eyes of the European Union, the Kosovo Crisis signified a turning point—a watershed moment and breaking point—that hastened a common security and foreign policy. This lesson encouraged the EU into multiple shared missions in the future. As Joschka Fischer summarized by the end of the Kosovo Crisis:

[The EU] . . . turned the crisis to good account as an incentive to achieve further integration. The reason for this is that the war in Kosovo served to highlight again that the essence of European integration is to establish a lasting framework for peace on our continent. This insight resulted in an awareness of the degree to which the national interests of individual Member States are interconnected, and in a readiness throughout Europe to take a decisive step forward in the historic task of bringing European integration to fruition.¹⁰⁵

But the militarization of the neighborhood, in simple realist terms, was not the definitive goal here. It was truly about building upon and relying on the proper values-based institutions to preserve the Western ethos in the region. The expanded message was that it was a European obligation to integrate peripheral neighbors to preserve and expand its security, peace, and the liberal community for Europe as a whole, even if it meant using force. As Joschka Fischer explained:

This is not about militarisation of the European Union at all, but about developing it into an effective force for peace which has the ability to act, and which is able, as in Kosovo, to uphold the power of justice and the renunciation of violence, thus ensuring that war as a political instrument in Europe is forever a thing of the past. . . . This requires our determination to oppose those who seek to carry out nationalist policies through violence, murder, terror and expulsion, and when all other means fail, to resort to military means if necessary.¹⁰⁶

Thus, we can most closely place the Kosovo Crisis intervention on the second pathway to intervention, first introduced in chapter 1. Kosovo initially presented with humanitarian abuses but low traditional security interests to the great powers, a pathway that predicts low probabilities of third-party intervention. But in the background of Western involvement in the Balkans, alongside NATO's need to restore its security image, Kosovo assumed secondary interests for Western elites, such as solidifying a shared security protocol, reaffirming Western values, and spreading democracy as a mechanism for regional stability. Furthermore, the reframing of the Kosovo Crisis as systematic killing—no longer as ethnic war—mobilized Western resources toward intervention. The prospects of immense resource pooling would not have existed outside of the Western neighborhood. Ultimately, a change in conflict perceptions led to the values-based usage of regional insti-

tutions, according to both the statistical modeling and case study narrative. Such an interaction between perception and region appears to have driven the dramatic decision to militaristically intervene in Kosovo in 1999, preceded by years of international indifference to the same violence.

Some vital questions remain, however. For instance, in Kosovo's case, did conflict perceptions change due to deliberate, strategic actions by Western or local elites, or did they primarily respond to new events and media attention on the ground? Why do conflict perceptions change to favor intervention in certain regions of the world, such as Kosovo, and not others, such as Darfur? The case studies to follow will delve into some of these dimensions, but the key drivers of perception shifts across international crises remains a topic for future study.

6 • Intervention in Libya

National Interests and Regional Demands

What's important in Libya is, first of all, it has a good deal of oil. A lot of the country is unexplored; there may be a lot more. And it's very high-quality oil, so very valuable.¹

—Noam Chomsky, 2011

The Libya intervention in March 2011 marked the first instance since the Kosovo Crisis that the international community sanctioned military action against a sovereign state for humanitarian purposes, this time under UN Security Council Chapter VII. In other words, a group of states had legalized the international use of force to prevent human rights abuses by another state against its own citizens, without the target state's consent. This response adds Libya to the short list of "humanitarian military interventions" in the post-9/11 international sphere, signifying to some the triumph of humanitarian norms since the 1990s.² As the statistical analysis in chapter 3 would imply, the intervention in Libya was probable, given Libya's relative proximity to the Western neighborhood, rapid international perceptions of mass killings, and even strategic national interests in the region. In fact, UN Resolution 1973 on Libya authorized no-fly zones and also allowed military action to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas from Colonel Gadhafi's forces. This UN resolution gave NATO the legitimacy to defend cities and regions in Libya even if Gadhafi's armed forces there were not hurting civilians directly.³ Yet the mandate to protect civilians transformed into one of regime change in Libya, with great powers eager to further their own strategic interests. Beyond the fast military response, the international community refused to provide resources for postconflict security and rebuilding, thereby dramatically altering the conflict trajectory to decidedly unhumanitarian ends. Decades after the NATO intervention, Libya remains mired in violent civil

conflict and failing statehood, characterized by regional refugee crises, broad destabilization, and a power vacuum that permitted the growth and spread of terrorist actors and competing militia groups across the neighborhood.⁴ While NATO's intervention was not the sole or perhaps the main culprit in such a harmful, long-term trajectory, NATO and the international community's meager postconflict involvement failed to support the desperately needed rebuilding and institutionalization efforts within Libya, leaving the vulnerable country to fend for itself.⁵ As Dennis Ross, the special assistant to President Obama in 2011, said of the US's postintervention plan: Libya "was farmed out to the working level."⁶

Yet from a cursory glance, both the cases of Kosovo and Libya present with similar characteristics that increase the odds of the internalization of conflict and military intervention. Both crises were proximate to the Western neighborhood and elicited perceptions of systematic governmental violence. At first, Libya appears to be an extension and even intensification of the patterns that drove NATO to intervene in Kosovo militarily in 1999. As this chapter will make clear, however, these initial parallels will prove superficial: The Libya intervention and its civilian outcomes were born of a decidedly distinct military intervention pathway defined by the heightened influence of short-term, regional geopolitical interests achieved via Western institutions.

The example of Libya further presents a division between international and regional obligations. In UN Resolutions 1970 and 1973, Dunne and Gifkins find a disturbing lack of discussion about the international community's responsibility to defend civilian lives in Libya. Instead, the resolutions only invoke the R2P principle to specifically highlight "the responsibility of the Libyan authorities to protect the Libyan population,"⁷ locating the obligation to protect civilian populations with the sovereign state and away from global norms on collective intervention in times of crisis. Serving as the tip of the iceberg, these initial documents hint that while NATO did intervene in Libya during a humanitarian crisis, it invoked quite different justifying narratives from those introduced in Kosovo.

The campaign against the Libyan state began as an ad hoc "coalition of the willing" led by US Africa Command (AFRICOM). But when the United States proved hesitant to lead in the long run, British- and French-led campaigns arose as viable options.⁸ NATO ultimately chose to involve itself at this stage, gathering support from new NATO members, such as the Czech Republic and Romania, and relaxing regional opposition to the mission (e.g., France and Turkey).⁹ Such regionalization was a precondition to Libya intervention, as it was in Kosovo, only this time it occurred much earlier in the discussion and more explicitly.

Unlike with Kosovo, NATO demanded that legal protocol and regional institutions already be active in a target state prior to intervention, instead of crafting such coordination or mandates on its own. In Libya, NATO considered an intervention against Colonel Gadhafi's security forces only once regional support was guaranteed and paralleled UN mandates. Regionalization of the response also provided a strong foundation of legitimacy for third-party actors within Libya, especially given the swift mandate transformation to that of regime change.¹⁰ As NATO secretary general Anders Fogh Rasmussen confirmed, "We protected the people of Libya with political support from the region, and with operational support from many of our partners in the region."¹¹

This regionalization of intervention, born of NATO's intentional reliance on local partners, served to strengthen mission legitimacy, which in turn provided cover for the pursuit of geopolitical interests. After all, for international actors, Libya presented greater security interests than Kosovo. In fact, Rasmussen claimed that the Libya intervention occurred to protect civilians and preserve their right to freedom, but more so, it occurred "to prevent Libya from becoming a failed state" to the detriment of its neighbor.¹² Unlike in the case of Kosovo, NATO leaders did not attempt to label the Libya intervention a fully humanitarian endeavor (although they did refer to humanitarian intent). Instead, they were blunt in their discussion of strategic interests in Libya, which explains why Western actors ultimately decided to destroy the regime and the Libyan state, instead of just stopping the human rights abuses. Within days of the Libya intervention, NATO air forces had already begun targeting central elements of the regime.¹³ Soon enough, it became clear that the NATO intervention was supporting the rebels via ammunition, intelligence, and targeted air strikes, transforming a narrow protection mandate into an unlimited military mandate focused on toppling Gadhafi's rule. Eight months later, the regime had fallen, and Gadhafi lay slain at the hand of NATO-supported rebels.

Libya's unique pathway of intervention relies on the interaction between humanitarian conflict perceptions and the pursuit of geopolitical interests. Key Western actors held many security interests in Libya, related to oil resources, risks of terrorism, failed statehood, and the legacy of adversarial relations between Gadhafi's regime and the West. But they did not explicitly act upon these interests until a sudden, irrefutable humanitarian crisis in Libya activated the narrative of a benign, transatlantic intervention via favorable conflict perceptions, humanitarian intent, and the assurance of regional support and institutional legitimacy. Libya was near a Western neighborhood, and this regional dimension, coupled with perceptions of a violence

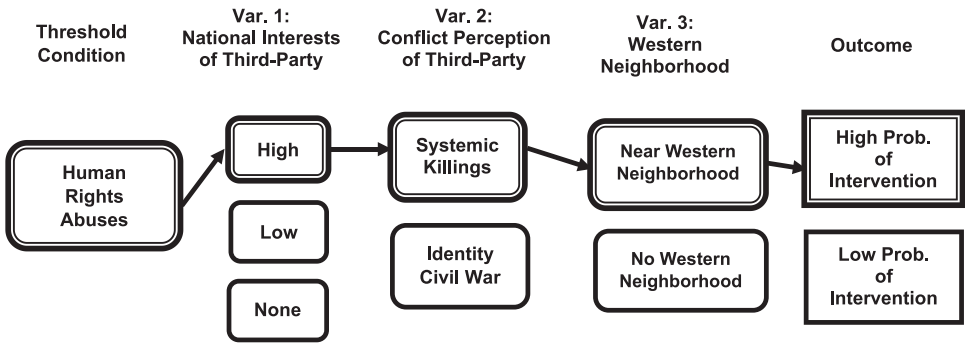


Fig. 6.1. The Libya Crisis Intervention Pathway

that breached liberal norms, led to the internationalization of the conflict. But since Western strategic interests were short-term in nature, so too was the Libya intervention, with minimal postconflict considerations.

Before embarking on the empirical analysis behind these claims, I first illustrate the pathway to Libya's intervention in figure 6.1, using the primary variables of the study. The existence of humanitarian abuses, understood as systematic governmental killings against a largely defenseless civilian target, can provide cover for third-party pursuits of geopolitical interests, while the pooled resources from international organizations can increase legitimacy and facilitate state goals. But since Libya is not within a Western neighborhood or directly bordering it, such an institutional mechanism required support outside of the Western sphere. In sum, the immediate conflict perception of Libya as a site of systematic killings prompted a favorable context for the pursuit of Western interests and a baseline enforcement of the R2P principle. The UN and NATO then served to increase Western legitimacy, security, and economic resource sharing.

In the following section, I introduce the historical background of the Libya Crisis before analyzing the standard explanations of intervention, including strategic national interests and humanitarian need in isolation. Most of the chapter then offers evidence for the proposed pathway of intervention within Libya. In such a pathway, conflict perceptions of Libya as an urgent example of systematic killings interacted with vital geopolitical interests to allow for a swift NATO-led military intervention that moved beyond the protection of civilians into regime change aspirations, with little post-conflict investment from Western actors.¹⁴

Background and Timeline on the Libya Crisis

By mid-January 2011, small, scattered protests began to emerge in Libya, partially prompted by the earlier civil uprisings in Tunisia and the beginnings of the “Arab Spring.” At this time, protesters demanded more freedom and less corruption from their current regime. But by February 2011, many civilian protesters sought the end of Col. Muammar Gadhafi’s forty-one-year authoritarian reign in Libya.¹⁵ These demonstrations began in the capital of Tripoli, but within weeks they had spread across the country. By late February, clashes between the government and protesters culminated in at least five hundred reported deaths, and by the end of month people had armed themselves against the government.¹⁶ Benghazi soon became the opposition’s stronghold and endured the most brutal attacks by Gadhafi’s national army.

Early on, Libya’s leader promised the people of Benghazi that his forces would show no mercy to any rebels.¹⁷ In other words, Gadhafi announced his intentions to commit mass human rights violations within domestic borders. In his speech on February 22, 2011, Gadhafi encouraged his followers to attack opposition “cockroaches,” “rats,” and “mercenaries.” The Libyan leader then urged his loyal citizens to “cleanse Libya house by house” until protesting “traitors” surrendered.¹⁸ Gadhafi’s public broadcasting of his ruthless, brutal methods made it easy for the international community to assume Libya’s intentions to perpetrate systematic killing of civilians, despite a previous history that showcased Gadhafi’s policy preferences for quashing domestic rebellions through execution at the leadership level, not via the persistent, systematic murder of his citizens.¹⁹

As soon as the Libyan government began its crackdown on protesters, civil society groups from different corners of the world pressured international bodies to uphold the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) clause. They first demanded that the Libyan government stop the violence against civilians, but as it became clear that Gadhafi would not relent, they demanded action from regional bodies, states, and the UN. The narrative of abuse in Libya escalated quickly with each passing day. By February 20, 2011, over the course of four days, Human Rights Watch confirmed that the civilian death toll stood at over 233. “A potential human rights catastrophe is unfolding in Libya as protesters brave live gunfire and death for a third day running,” said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch, which confirmed the massacre of unarmed civilians in Libya despite a government-imposed information blackout.²⁰

Reacting quickly to the domestic conflict, the Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect issued a press release two days later. They urged the Libyan government to immediately cease the violence against its own civilian population.²¹ Three days later, the Human Rights Council (HRC) adopted Resolution S-15/2, which had three parts: (1) that the Libyan government end all violations against human rights, (2) that an international commission of inquiry be established, and (3) that Libya be suspended from the General Assembly Council.²² By early March, the General Assembly had unanimously voted to suspend Libya's Council membership.²³

Individual state actors from the West to the East were also quick to condemn Colonel Gadhafi's bloody crackdowns. From February 23 to 25, French president Nicolas Sarkozy called for EU sanctions against Libya, including freezing the Gadhafi family assets, while the United States closed its embassy in Tripoli and imposed economic sanctions on Libya. At the same time, Canada began Operation MOBILE, in which it sent armed forces to facilitate the evacuation of foreign nationals from Libya.²⁴

As evidenced, the Libya Crisis was almost unanimously publicized as an act of systematic killing by governmental forces. Unlike the Kosovo Crisis, the violence in Libya did not have to undergo a favorable conflict transformation to gain Western attention. It was immediately portrayed by regional organizations, UN channels, national leaders, and civilian NGOs as a government massacre.

Within a week of the attacks, on February 26, 2011, broader concerns from the African Union (AU), Human Rights Council, Arab League (AL), and Organization of the Islamic Conference prompted the Security Council (2011) to unanimously adopt Resolution 1970. The passage of Resolution 1970 marked the first time since a 2006 resolution on Darfur that the council had officially referred to the R2P principle. The resolution imposed an arms embargo on the territory as well as a travel ban on the Gadhafi family and main government officials. Furthermore, it referred the Libyan regime to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate the evidence on crimes against humanity.²⁵ Following this international consensus, Italy, Libya's former colonist, ended its friendship treaty with Libya, also voiding their nonaggression clause. In early March, US president Barack Obama issued his first public warning against Gadhafi, urging the Libyan leader to step down or face military sanctions. By March 10, the EU had also imposed an arms embargo, sanctions, and a travel ban on Gadhafi and his family, at the same time freezing Libya's sovereign wealth fund and central bank assets.²⁶

While Western actors applied strong pressure against Gadhafi's regime,

including options of third-party intervention and regime change, regional actors such as the African Union (AU) consistently sought a peaceful solution and political compromise. In fact, the AU explicitly rejected proposals calling for third-party military responses. Instead of military retaliation, the AU adopted a Roadmap for Peace by the end of March, demanding a ceasefire and the enactment of political reforms. This regional body was one of the few international actors to persistently push such a political solution, despite greater powers inching their way toward military airstrikes.²⁷

Western powers argued that the peaceful measures of Resolution 1970 failed to stop Gadhafi's reign of terror against his own citizens, and on March 17, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1973, sanctioning a no-fly zone to protect civilians.²⁸ It also allowed member states to take "all necessary measures . . . to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat."²⁹ While the resolution passed with strong support, key member states, including China, Russia, India, Brazil, and Germany, abstained from the vote, believing that diplomatic routes had not been exhausted in such a short time, echoing the war as a "last resort" principle within Just War tenets. Yet even initial strong UNSC support began to erode once it became clear that the intervention had explicit regime change goals, not merely acute humanitarian ones. Regional actors such as the Arab League and the African Union were supportive early on but quickly turned to criticize the intervention once political compromise was off the table.³⁰

Several days after the resolution passed, Colonel Gadhafi issued an official condemnation of UNSC efforts, while Libyan government troops fired artillery and mortars into Benghazi. Following Resolution 1973, the Libyan government also announced a ceasefire, but this was rejected by the newly established National Transitional Council (NTC) because "attacks on the opposition-held territory continued."³¹ Although Resolution 1973 prioritized the need for an "immediate ceasefire" alongside the no-fly zone, the intervention did not enforce the acceptance or implementation of a ceasefire at any point during the conflict. But Gadhafi's and the NTC's responses prompted the enforcement of the UN no-fly zone on March 19, with the UK, United States, France, and Canada launching operations against government forces in Tripoli, Misrata, and Benghazi. In quick succession, Operation Unified Protector, now under NATO leadership, included fifteen NATO members as well as Sweden, Jordan, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.³² This coalition provided support to the Libyan rebels in their fight against Gadhafi and his loyalist strongholds.

The Libya operation had both air and naval components, with Qatar only aiding the aerial component and all other members contributing to both

naval and air support. During the operation, the United States flew the largest number of sorties, followed by the UK and France, and then Italy and Canada. France had the largest percentage of strikes under NATO.³³ Qatar's combat deployment, however, was of great regional significance as it was the first by an Arab or Muslim-majority country. Qatar was also the only country to commit ground troops to the mission, sending hundreds of Special Forces to fight alongside the Libyan opposition.³⁴

The Libyan conflict remained internationalized via the eight-month enforcement of the no-fly zone. It came to an end with the gruesome death of Gadhafi and his son Mutassim in late October 2011, when rebel forces captured Libya's leader hiding in a drainage pipe and then proceeded to sodomize him with a blade before executing him.³⁵ Unfortunately, the NATO mission in Libya, which demolished the Libyan state as a whole, only fueled future civil wars, as seen by the renewal and persistence of internal violence, terrorism, and millions of displaced refugees years after the intervention.

Unlike the progression of the Kosovo Crisis, the Libya military intervention occurred swiftly and unanimously via the UNSC, moving from policy discussion to airstrikes over the course of weeks, not years. Although the Libya mission was UN-sanctioned, unlike its Kosovo counterpart, it did not include a robust postconflict component. As soon as the military offensive ended—with the overthrow of Colonel Gadhafi—international actors quickly dispersed without clear plans for postconflict rebuilding, institutionalization, or robust observation. Thus, while both Kosovo and Libya technically experienced humanitarian military interventions during periods of intrastate conflict, they ultimately underwent drastically different types of conflict internationalization.

To be sure, the swiftness with which the Libya intervention occurred, with little time devoted to diplomatic measures or nonmilitary routes, increases suspicions about the interests of intervening coalitions. This skepticism is more pronounced when considering how rarely such international actors had applied the R2P principle in unison in the past, such as in Darfur earlier. Were Libya's past humanitarian atrocities so unique as to warrant such a rapid third-party military response, and why did the original goal of civilian protection evolve into that of complete regime change and decimation of the Libyan state?

The primacy of humanitarian intent diminishes when recalling the range of potential national interests in Libya. For instance, Italy, Libya's former colonizer, had grave economic concern about the breakdown of the Libyan state, as it received over a quarter of its oil and 10 percent of its natural gas from Libya.³⁶ Consequently, the two countries were highly interdependent,

and Italy had core interests in preserving its access to natural resources within a now unstable Libya. France, also influenced by Libyan oil supply, intervened in Libya against the backdrop of a series of failed pro-regime stances in several other Arab Spring uprisings, such as in Egypt and Tunisia. Hence it may have reacted differently in Libya so as to maintain its political influence, access to natural resources, or even to repair its regional reputation. Many European states worried heavily about the influx of refugees from nearby Libya, while non-European actors, such as Qatar, saw Libya as an opportunity to expand regional influence. The most potent critique against the humanitarian dimensions of the Libya intervention, however, centers on NATO's key goal of regime change and its dismissal of the UN resolution's goal of a swift and enforceable ceasefire. NATO not only attempted to protect civilians in Libya; it went out of its way to aid rebels and effect regime change even in early stages of the intervention, muting "mission creep" justifications.

Below I introduce the standard debate on the Libya intervention, between the primacy of humanitarian intent and the reign of national interests across third-party intervenors. I analyze the strengths and limitations of these perspectives through archival dialogues before moving to analysis of regional dynamics, including the role of the Western neighborhood, conflict perceptions, and institutional links. I conclude that perceptions of Libya as a case of systematic killings, coupled with readily available regional resources and multilateral mandates, made the pursuit of strategic geopolitical interests more favorable for third-party actors. Therefore, the Libya intervention signifies the dominance of interests over humanitarian intent, although both dimensions were evident during the crisis. Such a hierarchy of variables also reveals itself in the lack of postconflict rebuilding within Libya. Lastly, I offer a preliminary comparison between the Kosovo Crisis of 1999 and the Libya intervention of 2011.

Standard Explanations of NATO Intervention: Human Rights versus Interests

It only took the UN Security Council one week to respond to the violent suppression of civil protests within Libya. On February 15, 2011, the UNSC issued a public statement urging the Libyan government to fulfill its obligation to protect its citizens. Although the subsequent intervention in Libya was controversial, the expectation that the international community needed to play its part in protecting Libyan citizens against their still func-

tioning domestic government seemed undisputed by February 2011.³⁷ Soon after, the HRC recommended Libya's suspension from the General Assembly Council, which was unanimously enforced by early March.³⁸ Such rapid reactions reveal that in the weeks before the military intervention, the international community—consisting of Western states, most Arab League members, the African Union, and a significant number of Latin American and Asian countries—was unified behind some degree of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle in Libya. While such levels of unification on conflict perception and immediate international moral reactions were absent during the Kosovo Crisis, they were strong in the context of Libya.

Responsibility to Protect in Action?

A humanitarian argument for the Libya intervention relies on this unified, rapid international outrage, coupled with evidence of human rights abuses on the ground. After all, by March 19, as the NATO operations began, the death toll in Libya had spiked to more than one thousand.³⁹ These empirical reports from the ground further supported the narratives of Colonel Gadhafi as a ruthless killer of his people, bent on his own political survival at any human cost. In turn, national leaders repeatedly expressed their concerns about the threat to life within Libya, without any lingering doubts about which side was to blame. French president Sarkozy was clear in delineating aggressor and victim in his call of action: "In Libya, the civilian population, which is demanding nothing more than the right to choose their own destiny, is in mortal danger . . . it is our duty to respond to their anguished appeal."⁴⁰ US president Obama issued a similarly structured call: "We cannot stand idly when a tyrant tells his people there will be no mercy."⁴¹ Thus, many within the international community felt a sense of moral duty regarding Gadhafi's unchecked aggression against civilian protesters.

The following UN resolutions on Libya used the same language of humanitarian intention, clearly delineating victim from perpetrator in the domestic crisis. These documents even immediately labeled Gadhafi's violent crackdowns as crimes against humanity.

Deploing the gross and systematic violation of human rights, including the repression of peaceful demonstrators, expressing deep concern at the deaths of civilians, and rejecting unequivocally the incitement to hostility and violence against the civilian population made from

the highest level of the Libyan Government. . . . *Considering* that the widespread and systematic attacks currently taking place in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya against the civilian population may amount to crimes against humanity.⁴²

In Resolution 1973, these “crimes against humanity” become more explicit and detailed. They include the “arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture and summary executions.”⁴³ But the document focuses on the “responsibility of the Libyan authorities to protect the population,” a stark contrast to the otherwise cosmopolitan narrative.

In short succession, these humanitarian narratives began to adopt more nuanced policy agendas, especially once NATO took full control of the mission. At the London conference on Libya, participants not only agreed to send “a clear message to Qadhafi that he cannot attack civilians with impunity” but also concurred on regime change, albeit one centered on the demands of the Libyan people, one without Gadhafi at the helm. According to Foreign Secretary William Hague, “We agreed that it is not for any of the participants here today to choose the government of Libya: only the Libyan people can do that. Participants agreed that Qadhafi and his regime have completely lost legitimacy and will be held accountable for their actions. The Libyan people must be free to determine their own future.”⁴⁴ The theme of regime change repeated itself during the Libya Contact Group meeting in Doha. Hague, the chairman, summarized that all players “were united in believing that Qadhafi’s continued presence would threaten any resolution of the crisis.” Thus, “they called on all Libyans who wanted to see a process of political transition to urge Qadhafi to step down.” Hague reasserted, “Gadhafi must leave power.”⁴⁵

In a joint statement, the leaders of the United States, the UK, and France framed this political aspect of the intervention in terms of humanitarian need and international law. “The people of Libya are suffering terrible horrors at Gadhafi’s hands. . . . His rockets and his shells rained down on defenceless civilians in Ajdabiya. The city of Misrata is enduring a medieval siege as Gadhafi tried to strangle its population into submission. The evidence of disappearances and abuses grows daily,” wrote Obama, Cameron, and Sarkozy in the *New York Times*.⁴⁶ Effectively, these leaders justified aiding rebel factions in Libya with the language of humanitarian intent, steering clear of outright regime change rhetoric. They did highlight, however, that “so long as Qaddafi is in power, NATO must maintain its operations so that civilians remain protected and the pressure on the regime builds.”⁴⁷

As NATO extended its mandate within Libya, it also went out of its way

to justify the goal of regime change as a humanitarian necessity. NATO authorities appeared to defend their mission extension via an “us versus them” narrative of culpability. While still in the realm of humanitarian intent, these justifications occur in the backdrop of a political reality of regime change. In a press conference, NATO spokesperson Oana Lungescu begins this trend: “I think what is clear is that what started the international community in its efforts to support the people of Libya were the systematic attacks by Colonel Gadhafi on his own people. The fact that you’ve seen the shelling of city centres with heavy artillery, the outrageous violence that we’ve seen from the authorities against unarmed protesters, that is how this all started, and we have to remember that.”⁴⁸ Col. Roland Lavoie, the military spokesperson for Operation Unified Protector, adds a secondary component to these humanitarian justifications: that of a solid UN mandate. He states, “As long as there are attacks, threats of attacks and incitement of violence against civilians NATO will act to protect them. This is not a matter of religion, ethnicity or culture, but a commitment derived from a United Nations Security Council Resolution in order to protect innocent victims.”⁴⁹

Thus, the humanitarian narrative was set as follows: (1) Gadhafi was fully to blame for the situation in Libya; (2) Gadhafi’s attacks against civilians activated the R2P principle, now enforced by NATO; and (3) Due to Gadhafi’s horrifying humanitarian abuses, the only way to fully enforce the R2P principle and the UN mandate was via continued military attack aimed at regime change. In this case, NATO portrayed itself as a humanitarian vessel steered toward more political goals by factors outside of its control. NATO spokesperson Lungescu encouraged this pattern in response to a critiquing question on NATO’s continued mandate and obvious regime change goals:

Let’s not lose sight of the fact that it is the Qadhafi regime which started this crisis. Not NATO, not the international community. It is the Qadhafi regime who’s deliberately and indiscriminately attacking civilians. It is the Qadhafi regime who has been deliberately and indiscriminately using tanks, guns and artillery against cities, like Misrata and Zintan. It is the Qadhafi regime that has been deliberately and indiscriminately firing rockets from mosques and citing [*sic*] bunkers next to children’s playgrounds.⁵⁰

Libya: Security before Saving Lives

These trends of regime change alongside humanitarian rhetoric, however, diminish the strength of a purely humanitarian cause for the swift Libya

intervention. In fact, several alternate accounts dictate that the Libya intervention did little to ameliorate the humanitarian circumstances of civilians; instead, it sacrificed their well-being for political gains. On April 14, Alan Kuperman questioned whether President Obama had used humanitarian rhetoric as a false pretense for intervention in Libya. Calculation of lives saved versus lives lost did not favor humanitarian intent. For example, after two months of fighting in Misrata, a city inhabited by 400,000 people, the death toll numbered about 257 people, combatants included. Of the 949 people who had been wounded in the city, less than 3 percent were women. According to Kuperman's interpretation, such statistics and death rates did not support the widespread global accusations that Gadhafi's forces were indiscriminately and deliberately attacking cities and civilian targets. Moreover, compared to the humanitarian crises in Rwanda, Darfur, Congo, and Bosnia, Libya's targeting of rebel positions (before the no-fly zone) appeared relatively minor in systematic harm.⁵¹

Beyond the threshold of humanitarian harm, Jeff Bachman argues that had NATO truly sought humanitarian relief above interests-based opportunities, it would have focused on the creation of humanitarian corridors and ceasefires, allowing civilians a chance to flee and seek further aid.⁵² But instead, NATO repeatedly rejected viable ceasefires, proposed by both the Libyan regime itself as well as regional organizations such as the AU. China was one of the most vocal critics of such NATO policymaking, calling the organization both hypocritical in its international standards and antithetical to humanitarian protection for Libyan civilians. An editorial in the *Global Times*, a nationalist tabloid in China, read, "Although Libya had announced a ceasefire and was willing to talk to the opposition forces, western countries still carried on the air raids, after making the UN pass their smartly designed no-fly zone resolution. . . . Although it is under the name of 'protecting human rights and civilians,' it is for their own economic and political interest."⁵³ *The People's Daily*, the official Communist Party newspaper, provided another critical commentary: "The air raids clearly go against the original goal of protecting civilians in Libya. There has been a long history of western countries having double standards."⁵⁴

While little systematic data existed on state-level public opinion toward the Libya intervention before and immediately during intervention, the preliminary trends show large differences between Western and non-Western audiences. First, as figure 6.2 shows, the intervention in Libya was less than popular, even in the eyes of Western audiences (with Russia included in Western group in the interest of visual simplification). Over 50 percent of individuals polled in Italy opposed the intervention, while levels of support remained below 50 percent for the majority of Western audiences, with

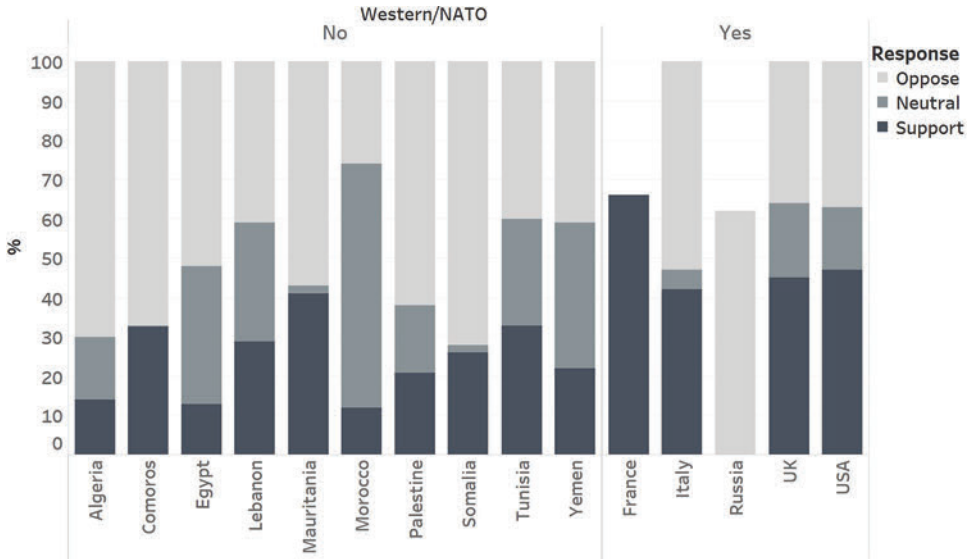


Fig. 6.2. Public Opinion on the NATO Libya Intervention

Source: "Libya Conflict: Reactions around the World," *The Guardian*, March 30, 2011.

France presenting as a large outlier. Even with such low polling numbers in the West, the discrepancy between these audiences and non-Western audiences is clear. Middle Eastern and African states presented with much lower levels of support for the Libya intervention. But ultimately, these public opinion numbers did not impact the decision making of international elites, as state governments dove into the Libya intervention before they knew what regional audiences preferred or expected. In other words, the third-party military intervention within Libya was not brought about by sustained domestic pressure to enforce the R2P norm, but by a swiftly formed elite consensus across national borders and within international institutions. The question then remains: Did the humanitarian context in Libya truly propel such a fast consensus on international policymaking, or were other considerations at the forefront of the international agenda?

Consequently, geopolitical national interests can easily compete with the humanitarian narrative of the Libya intervention. In this subsection, I summarize the interests-based argument and then proceed to showcase its strengths relative to the humanitarian argument. Nevertheless, the national interest argument requires greater nuance, which may be gained by reassessing the role of regional ties, institutions, and perceptions within the selectivity of intervention.

When asked about Turkey's stance on the Libya Crisis and pending military intervention, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan did not stick to the typical NATO script, showcased above. "I wish they would look at Libya with a conscientious eye instead of an eye for oil," he said.⁵⁵ Libya's abundant natural resources are a well-known international fact. It is, therefore, not surprising that the standard argument of geopolitical national interests dominates the debate on the Libya intervention. NATO members had strong geopolitical interests in the region, especially the need to access vital natural resources during the civil unrest.⁵⁶ First, European states were quite reliant on Libya's oil reserves, with Libya exporting about 85 percent of its oil to Italy, France, the UK, and others. More specifically, Italy consumed about 28 percent of Libya's oil, with France and the UK following next, at 17 and 8 percent, respectively.⁵⁷ The domestic crisis of 2011 diminished oil production to less than 20 percent of Libya's national needs.⁵⁸ Such a dramatic decline threatened the security and economic prosperity of key Western states. Notably, these same actors were the most willing to involve themselves early in the crisis and took the reins of leadership in the Libya intervention that followed.

NATO did not hide its concern over Libya's reduced oil production either. Contact Group meetings devoted significant amounts of time to discussions on recovering Libya's oil production and re-establishing international distribution, even while the civilian crisis in Libya raged on. International pledges of funding were abundant, all with the aim of supporting Libya's war-torn hydrocarbons infrastructures and industry, now handed over to a new, untested rebel regime. According to NATO, "participants stressed the importance of international support to help the NTC to resume the production and export of crude oil. The Contact Group also welcomed the fulfillment of pledges of 200 million USD from Turkey, 100 million USD from Qatar, 5 million USD from Bahrain, and Italy's contribution of 250 million Euros in cash and 100 million Euros in refined oil products, and they looked forward to disbursement of remaining pledges by France and Kuwait. The group urged others to follow a similar path in support of the Libyan people."⁵⁹

Oil and economic risks were not the only drivers of national interests in Libya. For Western partners, a Gadhafi-led Libya was always labeled as a terrorism-sponsoring state, and this perception only solidified in 2011.⁶⁰ In the early 1970s, Colonel Gadhafi had been accused of establishing terrorist training camps in Libya and providing weapons, funds, and safe havens to an array of regional terrorist groups. In fact, it was not until 2006, when Gadhafi had cut off most of these ties, that the United States removed Libya from the list of terrorism-sponsoring states.⁶¹

Over the past decades, Colonel Gadhafi's regime had hindered the power aspirations of other NATO members as well. For example, Gadhafi's meddling in the domestic affairs of Chad threatened France's sphere of influence. France supported Chad militarily in its direct exchange against Libyan forces in the 1980s, leading to heavy losses for the French.⁶² Gadhafi's provision of guns and explosives to the IRA also made the UK a victim of Libya's past actions, especially in the bombing of the Grand Hotel in Brighton in 1984.⁶³ Such historical examples of Libya's antagonism toward Western states' agendas further elucidate the geopolitical motivations of Western regime change.

But such motivations are not limited to past actions and behavior. A contemporary failed Libyan state, close to a Western neighborhood, could exponentially increase terrorism in the region. Therefore, Western states had strong interests in regime change in Libya, hoping to temper domestic instability while crafting a more favorable regional dynamic for the future. Indeed, NATO spokesperson Oana Lungescu did not hesitate to discuss these security threats during her public press briefings: "Obviously a failed state in Libya would be the worst-case scenario. Nobody wants a failed state in Libya or breeding ground for extremism, which is why we think it's so important that the whole international community has heard the call from the UN to help stop the violence and to protect the civilians in Libya."⁶⁴ NATO secretary general Rasmussen was even blunter about the motivating security interests driving the Libya intervention.⁶⁵ In the following excerpt, the secretary general goes out of his way to dismiss Libya as a case of humanitarian intervention and instead places it squarely within the camp of "strategic interest for NATO territory." He continues:

Let me stress that NATO's core function remains the territorial defense of our populations and our territories. That's the core function of NATO and it will remain so. . . . However, we have to realize that in today's world the defense of our borders very often starts beyond our borders. That's the reason why we decided to take on the responsibility for the Libya operation, because we consider this of strategic interest for NATO territory. Instability in North Africa could also have negative repercussions for NATO Allies. . . . *You can call it humanitarian interventions, but I wouldn't explain it that way. It is about territorial defense, it's about defense of the interests of our countries and our populations.*⁶⁶

Given such rhetoric, the Libya intervention had undisputable interests-based origins. But how do we reconcile such a clear interests-based argument with

the significant humanitarian elements discussed in previous sections? Faster than ever before, the international community banded together against a state's systematic abuse of civilians, not significantly doubting this interpretation of events. It took the solidification of such a humanitarian context to prompt a third-party military intervention in Libya. In other words, despite decades-long strong national interests within Libya, the international community did not proceed with unified, aggressive foreign policy until the occurrence of a humanitarian crisis. The next section explains this interaction between humanitarian context and the Western pursuit of interests in Libya via military intervention.

Favorable Conflict Perceptions as Promoters of Western Regional Interests

Western actors have long held security and economic interests in Libya and the surrounding region, as elites explicitly admit in the above remarks. But these same actors have rarely considered third-party military interventions as optimal strategies for pursuing these interests. It was not until the Libyan government lost all legitimacy in the eyes of the liberal international order that military intervention became a viable strategy, because the humanitarian context may decrease the risks associated with military interventions, especially through pooled regional resources and the lowered probability of retaliation by the other international actors. Consequently, as I address in this section, what prompted the military intervention in 2011 were perceptions of the Libyan government as a systematic killer; belief in the presence of an innocent, moderate opposition group ready to govern; and the existence of willing regional actors. National interests in Libya were surely a driving factor, but they required a specific humanitarian context in which to activate. Even then, Libya's distance from a Western neighborhood limited its pathway to postconflict rebuilding.

This pathway of intervention reveals itself directly through NATO's swiftly transformed and consolidated rhetoric on Libya. As news of the Libyan government's crackdown on civilian protesters spread globally, NATO initially vehemently denied any vital interests in Libya and denied plans of intervention. The organization merely hinted at several negative regional consequences. On February 24, the secretary general gave the following assessment: "We do not consider the situation in Libya a direct threat to NATO or NATO Allies, but, of course, there may be negative repercussions. Such upheavals may have a negative impact on migration, refugees, etc., and

that also goes for neighbouring countries. But I would like to stress that NATO as such has no plans to intervene. We have not received any request in that regard and any actions should be based on a UN mandate.”⁶⁷ At this stage, NATO was waiting for an international legal mandate to act. Indeed, before the UN approved an international intervention in Libya, Rasmussen claimed that the situation in Libya had no bearing on NATO. He emphasized that NATO would only involve itself if clear need and legal conditions were evident. Instead, Rasmussen called for “firm regional support” and a strict UN mandate before NATO would consider acting within Libya.⁶⁸

This legitimacy would facilitate a multilateral military intervention within Libya, driven by both member interests as well as by humanitarian demand. NATO leadership was also assessing the degree of regional involvement and resource pooling available for such an intervention. In fact, the very next day, as violent images of Libya flooded the media and international community, NATO activated its rhetoric on “neighborhoods” and the protection of innocent civilians. During an emergency meeting of the Atlantic Council, Rasmussen led with a strong regional argument this time: “It’s a crisis in our immediate neighborhood. It affects the lives and safety of Libyan civilians and those of thousands of citizens from NATO member states.”⁶⁹ Western perceptions of the rebel group also mattered here. When Secretary of State Hillary Clinton flew to Paris to meet with the rebels’ leadership council, she was convinced by Mahmoud Jibril, an American-educated head of the council and eventual prime minister-equivalent of Libya’s interim government, that the opposition was “coherent, secular-minded, and capable of governing,” and thus could lower the potential risks of regime change intervention.⁷⁰ In this case, Western actors and NATO did not simply alter their policies or motivations on Libya within a day; they simply used the amplified, undeniable humanitarian need to craft the best narrative and timing of intervention with which to lower their risks.

Germany’s stance presents a counterfactual interpretation to the conflict perceptions pathway. Although in the minority, Germany vehemently opposed military intervention within Libya, partially due to its pacifist national identity but also because it perceived the conflict in Libya as a civil war, with little national interest for Germany. Guido Westerwelle, the German foreign minister, repeatedly stated, “We don’t want to get involved in a civil war in north Africa.”⁷¹ Had the perception of a standard African civil war pervaded most of the international community, a military intervention would have been beyond the realm of policy possibilities in Libya. But most Western actors held tight to a narrative of systematic killing from the first glimpse of protests within Libya.

Figure 6.3 shows the number of articles and documents from January to

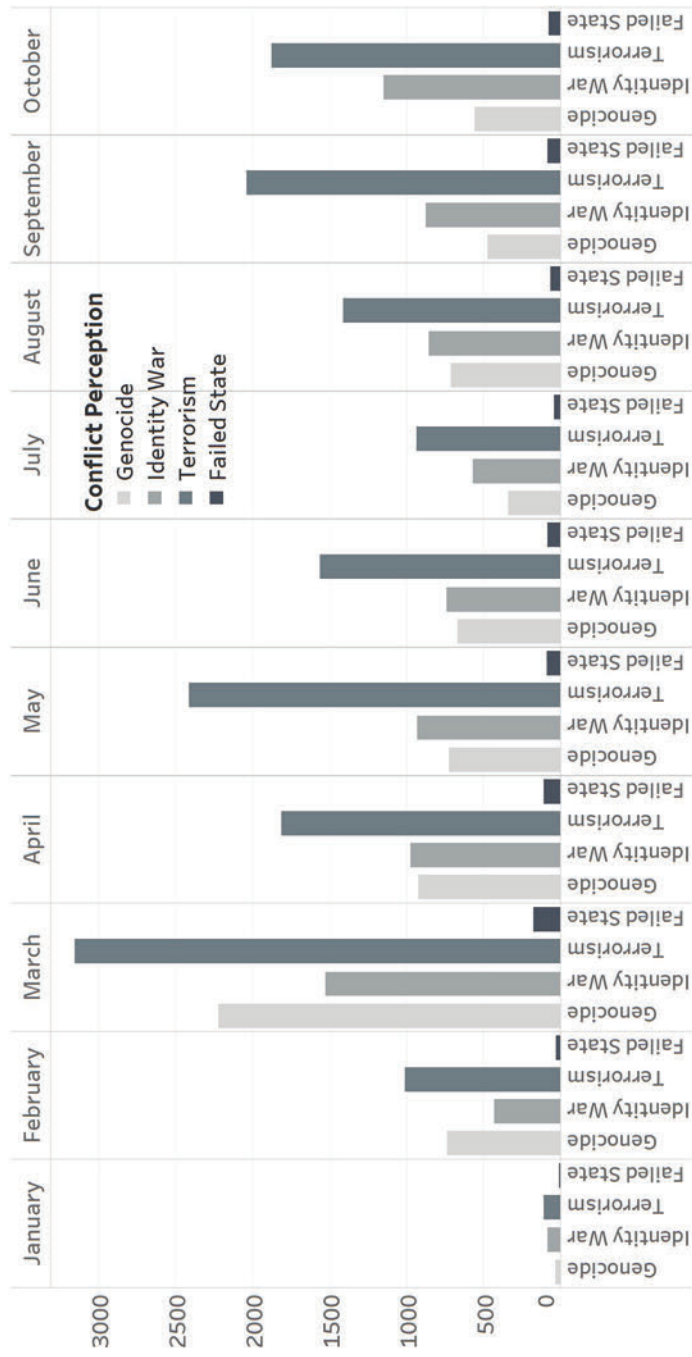


Fig. 6.3. Public Perceptions of the Libya Crisis via Article Count
Source: Original content analysis of narratives leading up to and during the 2011 Libya intervention using the FACTIVA database. See table A6.1 in appendix B for details on the specific search terms applied within Factiva.

October 2011 that portrayed Libya as either a genocide, mass killings, identity civil war, or other measures related to international security, coded using Factiva (see appendix for details on the coding of these narratives).⁷² As protests overtook Libya in January, all the narratives related to the acute crisis were beginning to arise. But by February, these narratives grew exponentially, and the genocide and mass killings perceptions began to outpace the ones of civil war in media coverage and elite discussions. By the beginning of the intervention in March, this narrative fully dominated the one of civil war and failed statehood, although it never outmatched the overarching narrative of Libya as a case of dangerous terrorism. Interestingly, once the military intervention was underway, the narratives of potential genocide and systematic killings slowly yielded to the more complicated civil war perception. These changes may have been influenced by the mission complexities that marred progress on the ground in Libya. Moreover, this secondary civil war narrative helped mute any international responsibility for postconflict rebuilding in Libya.

Due to the initially favorable conflict perceptions, by March NATO received the legal mandate and regional support it needed to intervene in Libya. With the passing of UN Resolution 1973, NATO was guaranteed a degree of legitimacy for its military mission as well as direct pledges of support from both member states and various regional organizations. In fact, according to several sources, the promise of regional support was what really won NATO over. The initial declaration of the Arab League in favor of the no-fly zone was the most influential news in the decision making of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Due to such an impact upon elites, Alex Belamy called this regional addition a “diplomatic game-changer.”⁷³

By this point, Rasmussen eagerly promoted a NATO-led, democratizing intervention within Libya, under the assumption of strong regional support.⁷⁴ “There is an urgent need, firm support from the region and a clear UN mandate for necessary international action. Allies stand behind the legitimate aspirations of the Libyan people for freedom, democracy, and human rights,” he said. Such rhetoric signaled that the Libya intervention was now beyond just protecting citizens from physical harm; it had transformed into a battle over liberal values, democratization, and regime change.

In early March, the EU explicitly supported regime change as a means of bringing Libya under its influence. In a common communiqué, the EU wrote that “Colonel Kadhafi must relinquish power immediately,” emphasizing that the “regime has lost all legitimacy and *is no longer an interlocutor for the EU*.”⁷⁵ Of course, Western leaders were careful to intertwine their regime

change rhetoric with the language of protection of innocents, lest national interests pushed their way to the forefront of the narrative.

Less than a month into the intervention, the key leaders of the Western neighborhood, US president Barack Obama, French president Nicolas Sarkozy, and UK prime minister David Cameron, reminded the world about the intertwined nature of regime change. They also recalled their hard-earned mandate for this military mission. "Our duty and our mandate under UN Security Council Resolution 1973 is to protect civilians, and we are doing that. It is not to remove Qaddafi by force. But it is impossible to imagine a future for Libya with Qaddafi in power."⁷⁶ In this way, the strategic goals of regime overthrow melded into a fully legitimized humanitarian mission in Libya.

According to this regional narrative of humanitarian intervention, regime change and direct humanitarian assistance vied for dominance. While France and the United States ardently warned of "another Srebrenica" or "another Rwanda" within Libya, regional actors worried about the prospects of regime change.⁷⁷ They suspected NATO's seemingly excessive and immediate use of force to protect civilians, shunning what they saw as "the abuse of the humanitarian argument of protecting civilians for the political goal of regime change."⁷⁸

Making matters worse, NATO dismissed several efforts by the AU to negotiate a ceasefire between the regime and the rebels, never once pressuring the National Transitional Council to negotiate with the Gadhafi regime.⁷⁹ While this pattern may serve to diminish humanitarian accounts, it also arises due to the ineffectiveness of non-Western regional institutions. According to Apuuli Kasaija, the Libya intervention simply revealed how dysfunctional the AU was in comparison to NATO.⁸⁰ The AU was fragmented in its demands, as members disagreed on how to resolve the crisis. Gadhafi even ignored the AU's calls to end the crisis peacefully. Thus regional institutions became muted by more effective Western partners and their UN legal mandates.

Apuuli Kasaija claims that more than anything, the Libya Crisis confirmed that the AU did not have the ability or resources to handle regional crises on its own.⁸¹ At the most fundamental level, the Libya Crisis shattered the notion of "African solutions to African problems." Perhaps this is why journalist David Rieff lamented that in Libya, "R2P was NATO-ized."⁸² "As a result, everywhere outside Western Europe and North America, R2P is losing what little ethical credibility it ever commanded," he continued.⁸³ With such a perspective, Rieff is directly critiquing the regional dimensions of humanitarian interventions, claiming that, once enforced, any universal norm of humanitarianism becomes highly regionalized,⁸⁴ because the norm, including the R2P principle, is most likely to be enforced within certain

regions of the world. Western actors, encouraged by their pooled resources, institutions, and liberal mandates against systematic violence, are often able to enforce humanitarian norms within their spheres of influence/interest. But this trend harms the future of genuine norms enforcement in other parts of the world.

Military Intervention Only

Not only did this “NATO-ized” response to humanitarian crisis spell disaster for non-Western victims of abuse, but it also meant less postconflict support for Libya. While NATO intervened to enforce the no-fly zone over Libya, it shied away from a role in postconflict rebuilding, security, and regime transition. Unlike in the case of Kosovo, NATO and its Western partners went out their way to reject a seat at the table of postconflict Libya. They left this task up to regional organizations and UN institutions, now citing those same legal mandates and their limitations as justification. “We will continue to coordinate with other key organisations, including the United Nations, the European Union, the League of Arab States and the African Union, and to consult with others such as the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, and we encourage these organisations’ efforts in the immediate and longer term post-conflict period.”⁸⁵ Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard, commander of the military operation Unified Protector, added the following: “Throughout we stayed focused on the mandate, to protect the population, to ensure a No-Fly Zone and to conduct the embargo. . . . We did not get involved in anything beyond what was our legal mandate and we remain well within the mandate assigned to us by the North Atlantic Council.”⁸⁶

NATO spokesperson Oana Lungescu best summarized this legalistic, human-rights-laden argument on NATO’s lack of involvement. She led with a vivid, emotional portrayal of Libya’s humanitarian plight, bordering on implications of genocide and paving the ground for NATO’s initial justification for military intervention. But this humanitarian rhetoric did not apply to postconflict discussions. Instead, it was replaced by legalistic language on mandates and rule of law.

The mission will continue in full compliance with the United Nations mandate for as long as it’s needed, but not a day longer. . . . In the last week we’ve seen vivid reminders of where the threats are coming from. We’ve seen the grim pictures from Tripoli and the allegations of mass graves, executed prisoners and a hospital full of dead patients. We’ve

seen more reports of how the regime has been using mosques, schools and market places as shields for its weapons. We must make sure that these threats are gone and that they're gone for good. Until civilians and cities in Libya are safe. So that the Libyan people can build a new future based on democracy, reconciliation and the rule of law. Once NATO's job is done it's for others to take over the lead in supporting Libya. We expect the United Nations to take the leading role and we've already seen that it is doing so. NATO could support upon request.⁸⁷

Enforcing this lack of additional investment in Libya, NATO and other international actors never once considered ground troops or further intensification of the mission, regardless of outcomes. As Adm. Giampaolo di Paola affirmed for NATO, "the answer is not. Is no. The Alliance, the Council and for this matter not even the Military Committee discuss of any hint of the fact or ground forces, because the Alliance has been clear, so far the Resolution is clear, the Alliance has been clear so far."⁸⁸ While the Kosovo Crisis needed to be won at all costs (including a reoccurring option of "boots on the ground"), not even a "hint" of ground troops was allowed in Libya because the Libya intervention was meant as a simple military mission. This trend fits well with national interests-driven narratives of intervention as interacting with favorable humanitarian conflict perceptions.

Conclusions

Ultimately, the Libya case presents a much shorter, less complicated pathway of military intervention. After all, Libya's humanitarian suffering at the hands of the Gadhafi regime made international headlines right away, and within the week an array of international actors was calling for the enforcement of the R2P principle. Conflict perceptions were already favorable for Libya's humanitarian plight. Western governments did not label antigovernment rebels as terrorists in Libya as they readily did during the Kosovo conflict. But it still took NATO some time to take the reins of the mission. As the normative consensus around Libya was building, NATO awaited the activation of regional support and legitimacy. Once this support was guaranteed, especially through several UN mandates, NATO key members committed themselves to a military intervention in Libya. Although the humanitarian context prompted this intervention, NATO was not shy about its pursuit of geopolitical interests in Libya either, with NATO elites

often calling Libya a strategic intervention, which also explains the lack of postconflict mission planning.

Thus, the military intervention in Libya presents with a high level of geopolitical national interests made easier to obtain alongside a humanitarian mission. The humanitarian components of this mission, however, were often criticized by both state actors and academics alike. In fact, the lack of systemic polling evidence on sentiments toward the Libya Crisis strengthens such criticism. There was little time to assess public opinion as international actors quickly used humanitarian conflict perceptions to initiate strategic military plans, without allowing time for diplomatic routes or nonmilitary options in Libya.

In the aftermath of this intervention, Libya was left on its own to fight the wave of anarchy. The weak, Western-backed government in Tripoli that took over after Gadhafi's demise could not fully disarm many of the militias that had fought during the conflict, which prompted renewed warfare among the domestic armed factions as well as nearby countries. With limited international involvement following the acute regime change, the country swiftly descended down the dangerous path to failed statehood, from which it has yet to escape.⁸⁹

It is a challenge to quantify the total number of people killed in Libya since the uprising began in 2011, but a recent estimate stands at no less than twenty-five thousand.⁹⁰ Beyond this excruciating loss of life and stability, the Libya intervention left a legacy of fractured will and grave skepticism when it came to the protection of civilians across the world. The repercussions of Libya would come to haunt the international community during the Syrian conflict. As Sergey Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, explained, the West's perceived deception during the Libya Crisis further strengthened Russia's resolve to veto the many UN resolutions on the Syrian civil war and ultimately used the Libya intervention to justify Russia's devastating war of aggression against Ukraine.⁹¹

In the next case study, the interaction between strategic interests and humanitarian intent is much easier to untangle. The Darfur Crisis, tragically, did not prompt a robust third-party military intervention even though it produced more humanitarian suffering (in strict quantifiable terms) than both the Kosovo and Libya Crises combined. The following chapter explains this nonintervention via the same key variables of conflict perception and regional variation.

7 • Hollow Intervention in Darfur

Civil Wars in Bad Neighborhoods

The news media's silence, particularly television news, is reprehensible. If we knew as much about Darfur as we do about Michael Jackson, we might be able to stop these things from continuing.¹

—Nicholas Kristof, 2005

The UN has described the violent intrastate conflict raging within Darfur as “the world’s worst humanitarian crisis,” while the US government was one of the first to call it a “genocide.” Within broad international circles, such levels of human suffering and destruction are often compared to the 1994 Rwandan genocide, but with a much longer duration.² Darfur, a fragmented region within western Sudan, has experienced grave and persistent armed conflict since 2003, although no robust military intervention over the past decades has materialized to end the violent emergency. Over these years, the fighting between the government of Sudan (GoS) (allied with the Arab-based Janjaweed militia) and the Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel groups has killed more than three hundred thousand people and displaced at least 2.7 million.³ The violence resurged in 2023, leading to even more deaths and displacements. Although the murder of civilians and the systematic rape of women and girls in Darfur quickly became international news, this intrastate violence has garnered minimal sustained third-party military response.

Despite the powerful rhetoric and condemnation of the violence, the international community has purposefully abstained from committing an effective intervening force not beholden to the GoS in Darfur. Twenty years since its onset, the humanitarian crisis in Darfur rages on. In 2023, following worsening waves of violence, Darfur academics called for urgent humanitar-

ian intervention and support, particularly an international response to the plight of Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad and a rescue of trapped non-Arab populations in El Geneina, the Darfuri city sieged and devastated by Janjaweed militias called the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).⁴ As civilians in Darfur and Sudan as a whole suffer from the recent resurgence in systematic killings, mass internal displacement, rampant starvation, and lack of basic health care and services, Western actors, including the United States, have mainly evacuated their own citizens from the region, despite having the leverage and capacity to extend ceasefires and protect local civilians beyond these brief evacuation intervals. Unfortunately, evidence from previous chapters presents the international community's lackluster reaction to Darfur's humanitarian crisis as driven by Darfur's location, biased regional institutions, and divided, unclear conflict perceptions.

UNAMID, the joint mission between the African Union (AU) and UN responsible for peacekeeping in Darfur was too little too late. It deployed four years following the violent emergency, worked only under the consent of the GoS, and was decimated by lack of interstate coordination, a dearth of resources, and a mandate that failed to protect civilians. Lacking a full enforcement mandate, UNAMID could not disarm militias and rebels, enforce a no-fly zone, or effectively create safe zones for civilians. As the UN secretary-general declared in May 2008, UNAMID was "not a peacekeeping force designed to deploy or function in a war zone."⁵

UNAMID terminated its mission in 2020, although the humanitarian emergency in Darfur intensified in 2019 with the overthrow of al-Bashir and then again in 2023. With the closure of UNAMID, the GoS revoked any responsibility to protect and defend civilians attacked by militia groups, while other states remain on the sidelines. As recently as July 2023, the US Department of State made its noninterventionist stance clear for Darfur, despite new humanitarian atrocities committed by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the Janjaweed's successor, including mass graves that are being investigated as crimes against humanity and genocide at the ICC.⁶ "The United States strongly objects to any form of external interference and military support for the belligerent parties, which will only intensify and prolong the conflict and contribute to regional instability. There is no military solution to this conflict."⁷ Decades later, Darfur remains a tragic yet intentional case of practical nonintervention, despite a wide international consensus on persistent human rights abuses on the ground. Why has the international community chosen to step back in response to the Darfur humanitarian crisis spanning across decades? As this chapter will reveal, the inaction is not due to a lack of information on the nature and scale of the atrocities on the

ground; but due to an explicit unwillingness of powerful actors and institutions to invest resources and activate the narrative of genocide within a non-Western neighborhood without direct geopolitical payoffs.

In this last empirical chapter, I introduce the Darfur Crisis as an instance of relative nonintervention, as a case of UN consent-based peacekeeping that occurred four years after undeniable, ongoing humanitarian abuses against civilians. Despite documented crimes against humanity and many proclamations of genocide, Darfur has not been a target of a robust intervention that could prevent further violence, let alone an enforcement-based humanitarian military intervention. As figure 7.1 illustrates, the same factors that intersected and drove the Kosovo and the Libya interventions were largely absent from the Darfur Crisis. First, Darfur's narrative of violence wavered between that of an intractable, multi-actor civil war to that of an irrefutable genocide, leading to unclear and unfavorable conflict perceptions of intervention. Making matters worse, Darfur was a long way from a "good neighborhood" or Western institutional resources. While Western actors individually called upon the UN to act in Darfur, they never attempted to craft policy outside of UN platforms. Moreover, regional, non-Western institutions such as the African Union (AU) and Arab League (AL) often ignored the government-affiliated atrocities within Darfur in favor of short-run national interests, instead of acting with any semblance of shared values. Such organizations even staunchly opposed outside intervention and refuted the label of genocide as related to Darfur. Unlike the case of Libya, Darfur also lacked strong geopolitical interests for many regional and international powers.

In the case of Darfur, the regional component may also heavily implicate the role of race and racism within the international system, especially given that the international community has consistently framed the violence in Darfur as another complicated, multisided civil war, predominantly one between perceived Arab and African ethnic groups.⁸ Similar to the nonresponse against the Rwandan genocide a decade prior, Western actors refused to involve themselves and risk their resources in another African civil war in Darfur. Instead, they pushed for regional African involvement to stem the prolonged humanitarian crisis, prompting a delayed, underfunded, and underserving hybrid UN mission, beholden to the GoS. The chapter that follows will primarily explore the regional and perceptions-based dimensions to the Darfur conflict and timeline of international responses; however, future studies may extend such a regional framework to incorporate the pervasive racial, ethnic, and/or religious hierarchies that could underpin the regionality of international norms and interests.

The chapter begins with an overview of the progression of the Darfur

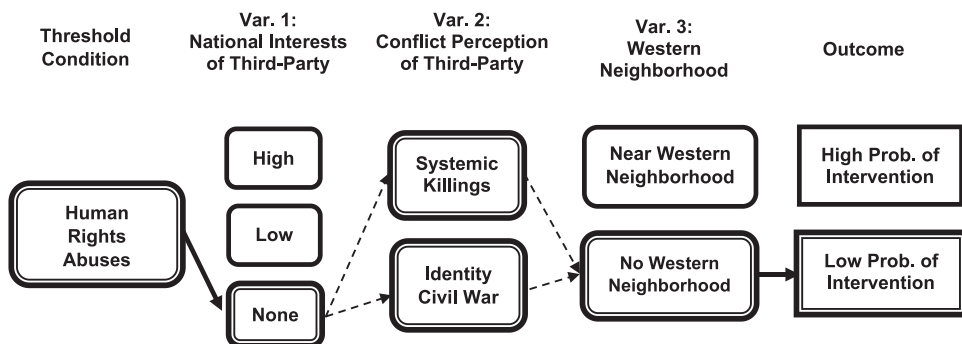


Fig. 7.1. The Darfur Crisis Nonintervention Pathway

(Note: The dashed lines represent the choice of variables along the pathway, while the bolded sections represent the most relevant variables for the intervention pathway.)

Crisis, including a timeline of international responses, resolutions, and missions. Next I use limited archival data to trace how conflict perceptions, regional institutions, and lack of geopolitical interests ensured a weak international response to the worst humanitarian crisis of the twenty-first century. The Darfur Crisis reveals how damaging even a fragmented perception of civil war becomes for humanitarian action, especially in the context of a bad neighborhood, with little institutional support.

Background and Timeline on the Darfur Crisis

While the origins of the conflict in Darfur span decades of state-sponsored economic and political marginalization of non-Arab groups, the spark that ignited the contemporary violent crisis occurred in 2003.⁹ As the Second Sudanese Civil War culminated in a peace process in 2002–2005, the people of Darfur were largely marginalized and displaced from the peace talks, which ultimately invigorated their fight against an oppressive government. Around this time, members of the marginalized Fur and Zaghawa tribes organized themselves into armed rebel groups, leading to the creation of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) in 2001.¹⁰ These groups took up arms against the government with aspirations to build a united, democratic Sudan and to push for a new federalist system with equal distribution of natural resources. While the Khartoum government had been aware of these rebel movements since at least 2002, it had typically underestimated their influence. Despite former Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir threatening to “unleash” the army, the gov-

ernment had minimal capacity to respond at the time, making any losses against the rebel groups even more humiliating and dangerous.¹¹

By April 2003, a joint SLA and JEM force attacked several government installations, including a key airport, and decimated Sudanese military equipment and personnel.¹² This level of damage by rebel movements was unprecedented in the country and thus served as a turning point for governmental retaliation. As the rebel movements grew more powerful, they became greater threats to the government in Khartoum. Every rebel victory revealed further weakened state power and threatened the survival of the regime in the long run. The Khartoum government, however, could not devote enough resources to mount an effective counteroffensive, as they were overextended in other domestic conflicts in the south. Instead, the national government commenced aerial bombardments and waged a proxy war against the rebels in Darfur.¹³ To structure their proxy war, the government had to manipulate ethnic resentments in the region, arming hostile groups and turning them against the unfavorable rebel groups. The best example of this proxy war tactic was the creation of the Janjaweed, a government-allied paramilitary group, mainly composed of Arabic-speaking individuals.¹⁴ With the financial and technological aid of the Sudanese army, the Janjaweed committed mass violence against non-Arab communities across Darfur.¹⁵

Though Chad brokered a ceasefire between the government and rebel groups in September 2003, this agreement fell apart by December 2003. Consequently, by 2004, the government's renewed counterinsurgency campaign intensified, now systematically targeting ethnic groups, which experienced horrific massacres, the burning of villages, violent displacements, and systematic rapes of women and girls as tactics of war.¹⁶ Human Rights Watch reported at least fourteen instances of mass murder in Dar Masalit from September 2003 and February 2004, which culminated in 770 deaths. The government-support militias attacked hundreds of villages, with reports of rape and sexual assault arising in over half of the displaced villages. By the spring of 2004, an estimated thirty thousand people had been murdered, 1.4 million others had become internally displaced, and one hundred thousand had escaped into Chad.¹⁷ This high level of systematic mass violence plagued Darfur for two decades, with cycles of relative calm following periods of acute horror.

International Responses

Amnesty International was one of the first to bring international attention to the Darfur Crisis, in July 2003, followed closely by incoming informa-

tion from the International Crisis Group in December 2003.¹⁸ Soon, Human Rights Watch reported that government-affiliated militias were engaging in an ethnically targeted campaign of mass killings, displacements, sexual violence, and destruction of property.¹⁹ Extensive media attention, however, did not materialize until the outgoing United Nations resident and humanitarian coordinator for Sudan, Mukesh Kapila, said to the *BBC* that Darfur was the “world’s greatest humanitarian crisis” in March 2004.²⁰ Kapila further warned of the eerie similarities between Darfur’s campaign of violence and that of Rwanda. He was shocked at the international community’s inaction, emphasizing that in the case of Darfur, “it is more than just a conflict. It is an organised attempt to do away with a group of people.”²¹

On this same day, Tom Eric Vraalsen, the secretary-general’s special envoy for humanitarian affairs in Sudan, declared the crisis as “one of the worst in the world.”²² Similarly, by early April, UN undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs Jan Egeland declared that the scorched-earth tactics of the Sudanese government and rebel groups have triggered “one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises.” Most importantly, he highlighted, “I consider this to be ethnic cleansing.”²³ By May, Egeland had once again told the UN Security Council that Darfur threatened to become “the biggest humanitarian drama of our time.”²⁴

In the following month, the United States reported to the UN Commission on Human Rights that mass humanitarian atrocities, such as systematic sexual abuse and ethnic cleansing, were unfolding in Darfur, while humanitarian aid was being blocked from reaching non-Arab groups within the region.²⁵ Soon after, Human Rights Watch released a detailed report that stated, “there can be no doubt about the Sudanese government’s culpability in crimes against humanity in Darfur” and demanded that the international community enforce its responsibility to protect civilians within Sudan, noting that the domestic government had revoked this guarantee.²⁶

Although civil society groups were quick to describe and condemn the human rights situation in Darfur, they could not get the UN’s full attention. The UN was distracted by another regional conflict. As the violence in Darfur escalated in early 2003 until mid-2004, the UN Security Council was focused on negotiations in Naivasha, Kenya, to end the Sudanese civil war. Although the massacres in Darfur grew harder to ignore, the Security Council still attempted to demote the crisis on its policy agendas, worried that a policy reorientation toward Darfur would prompt Khartoum to walk out of the Naivasha talks. Even when the Security Council passed Resolution 1547 by June 2004, establishing a UN mission in Sudan to supervise and enforce

the final agreement on the Sudanese civil war, Darfur was barely mentioned in the writing and following discussions.²⁷

Unfortunately, by the time international attention had turned to Darfur, instead of the many other regional conflicts, the violence in the region had claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.²⁸ By 2022, the conflict in Sudan had internally displaced 3.7 million others and coerced eight hundred thousand citizens to escape across the borders.²⁹ The worsening numbers over the years were available to all relevant international organizations and state actors, and yet there was no perceived urgency to act. Conflict perceptions were partially responsible for such silence and international policy paralysis.

Genocide or Civil War? Regional Variations in Perceptions

Despite such massive, recognized loss of innocent lives, the international community did not readily apply the label of genocide to the violence ravaging Darfur. While Western counterparts were quick to narrate the Darfur Crisis as a case of genocide (albeit with little policy change), regional actors were strongly opposed. This response is especially conspicuous given that regional actors had self-proclaimed a heavier burden in stabilizing the country, while Western institutions generally opted for UN mandates or the need for African responses. As the timeline of events reveals below, the international actors that had no direct responsibility to act in Darfur eagerly applied the genocide narrative, while actors that would have been required to intervene in the crisis refuted this narrative in favor of a civil war analogy.

The US Congress discussed the situation in Darfur as genocide by May 2004.³⁰ Before the US administration publicly declared its position on Darfur, the EU had wavered on how to describe the violence decimating the villages of Darfur. Surprisingly, the EU made a statement in response to the US Congress's genocide resolution, arguing that Darfur did not fit the legal prerequisites of genocide.³¹ Claims of genocide resurfaced in September in a report by the US State Department and the US secretary of defense.³² Within the month, the European Parliament had flipped and joined this narrative, labeling the violence by the government of Sudan as "tantamount to genocide."³³ At the time of these genocide proclamations, the United States and the EU had minimal direct ties to political action in Darfur and no binding mechanisms to follow. Despite their passionate condemnation of an ongoing genocide, these actors would ultimately refuse to protect the victims.

In dramatic contrast to such actors' proclamations, in January 2005 the UN International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur argued against deploying the genocide narrative.³⁴ They claimed that while "no genocidal policy

has been pursued and implemented in Darfur by the Government authorities, directly or through the militias under their control,” they emphasized that the crimes against humanity that had been committed may be as serious and horrific as that of genocide.³⁵ Promoting the genocide narrative in Darfur would have obliged the UN to bolster its mission within the region, but such a political consensus was lacking at the time, especially in the case of Russia’s and China’s veto within the Security Council and worries over spoiling negotiations of the North-South Sudan peace.

By June 2005, US president George W. Bush had broken from UN rhetoric to echo former secretary of state Colin L. Powell, who referred to the crisis in Darfur as explicit genocide.³⁶ This rhetoric, however, did not lead to any dramatic policy changes for the suffering citizens of Darfur. In the years to follow, the EU continued to condemn the atrocities unfolding within Darfur, but it, too, never took any action beyond pushing for a limited UN mandate. For instance, by April 2006 the European Parliament pressured the UN to “act on its responsibility to protect civilians,” and in September, the Parliament claimed that Sudan “has failed in its ‘responsibility to protect’ its own people” and requested that the government of Sudan allow a UN mission under Resolution 1706.³⁷ In the following year, Parliament intensified its rhetoric, demanding that the UN “act in line with its Responsibility to Protect doctrine . . . *even in the absence of consent or agreement from the Sudanese Government.*” In other words, the EU was promoting a UN non-consent-based humanitarian military intervention, an intervention with teeth to enforce a permanent peace. Following this demand, by July 2007, the EU Parliament insisted on an international UN response, “basing its action on the failure of the Government of Sudan (GoS) to protect its population in Darfur from war crimes and crimes against humanity.”³⁸

While leaders of powerful Western states used the narrative of genocide to describe the violence within Darfur, international and regional organizations were hostile to the rhetoric. By 2004, the AU still refused to use the language of genocide, instead claiming that “there is mass suffering, but it is not genocide.”³⁹ The AU withheld this narrative, as “the Government of Sudan [facilitating] assistance (through such channels as the granting of visas and in some cases protection) to various members of civil society organization . . . hardly reflects the actions of a country practising genocide.”⁴⁰ In a similar trend, the League of Arab States declared that it could not find “any proof of allegations that ethnic cleansing or the eradication of communities had been perpetrated.”⁴¹

By 2008, the ICC’s chief prosecutor made a controversial move and charged Sudanese president al-Bashir with planning and perpetuating geno-

cide in Darfur, accusing him of murdering over thirty-five thousand people with his policies. More specifically, prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo said that 2.5 million people had endured the horrors of “rape, hunger and fear” within the refugee camps.⁴² Yet even by 2010, after judges at the International Criminal Court (ICC) had issued a second arrest warrant for al-Bashir on three counts of genocide committed against civilians in Darfur (representing the first time the ICC had issued a warrant for the crime of genocide), the Arab League and the African Union dismissed the narrative of genocide and opposed the warrant.⁴³ In fact, the AU Assembly demanded that the UN Security Council defer criminal proceedings against then president al-Bashir. While the UN Security Council did not falter to this pressure, it repeatedly failed to enforce the warrant when former president al-Bashir was allowed entry across a wide range of national borders, including in Chad, Egypt, Kenya, and nonsignatory states such as China and Saudi Arabia.⁴⁴

It bears repeating that the organizations and states most opposed to the narrative of genocide within Darfur are the same actors that claim the largest responsibility for maintaining peace and influence within Africa and the Middle East. The AU, for instance, has staunchly opposed Western aid and general international intervention as it relates to Darfur, under the premise of promoting “African responsibility.”⁴⁵ Thus it appears that these organizations distanced themselves from the narrative of genocide to evade their claimed regional responsibilities. These connections merit further scrutiny and will be expanded upon in the following sections.

Timeline of Inaction

Even a strong narrative of genocide on the part of Western states did not propel action within Darfur, partially because regional and international institutions were unwilling to utter the word that would legally require a robust mandate. The scale of the violence in Darfur was impossible to ignore, yet Western governments, including those of the United States and the EU, were unwilling to intervene. They were also unable to craft a unified, long-term policy toward the government of Sudan. At the international level, the UN proclaimed a series of threats and passed several resolutions, but without the compliance of the Sudanese government, these mechanisms were hollow and ineffective.

In particular, the Security Council attempted to influence the course of the conflict by imposing an arms embargo (via Resolution 1556) on all non-governmental entities and people, including the Janjaweed, within Darfur in

July 2004.⁴⁶ In other words, the resolution only targeted the rebels and the Janjaweed militias, but exempted the government that organized, financed, and supplied the Janjaweed. By September 2004, after nearly two more months of deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Darfur, the Security Council passed Resolution 1564, in which they declared their “grave concern” that the government of Sudan had abandoned its duty to protect its citizens. Thus the Security Council called for Sudanese leadership “to end the climate of impunity in Darfur” by prosecuting those responsible for the systematic humanitarian atrocities.⁴⁷ Furthermore, it called for a more robust AU monitoring mission in Darfur and launched a commission of inquiry to investigate violations of international law and to decide whether acts of genocide had occurred there. Finally, the Security Council threatened additional measures, including actions that would hinder Sudan’s petroleum industry or specific government members.⁴⁸ In summary, five months after receiving irrefutable evidence of government-sponsored mass violence against civilians in Darfur, the Security Council still primarily relied on investigations, mild threats, and the promotion of an AU observing force as a policy against genocide.

By 2005, the passage of Resolution 1590 authorized a mission (UNMIS) to support the peace agreement that ended the Second Sudanese Civil War.⁴⁹ Resolution 1591 more specifically targeted the Darfur conflict by strengthening sanctions and issuing a travel ban and an asset freeze on two rebel leaders: a previous Sudanese air force chief and a progovernment militia leader.⁵⁰ By 2006, the Security Council’s Resolution 1706 sought to expand the UNMIS mandate, but it faced intense opposition from the GoS.⁵¹ Nowhere in these resolutions, however, were direct governmental bodies or actors targeted for sanctions.

After persistent pressure from the UN, the AU, and regional actors, the Sudanese government and rebel groups attended peace talks in Nigeria, leading to the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement of 2006.⁵² This deal created a power-sharing, wealth-sharing mandate alongside mechanisms of compensation for victims. Unfortunately, this agreement was rejected by several rebel groups and failed in the long run.⁵³

Even the deployment of a narrow consensual peacekeeping mission in Darfur was met with contention. The Sudanese government would not allow any European soldiers within its borders, but it would allow the stationing of AU peacekeepers, and the international community eagerly complied. Until 2007, only a seven-thousand-strong AU peacekeeping force was active in Darfur, and, given its overextension as well as its subordination to the GoS, it was unable to prevent violence or protect civilians.⁵⁴ Noting such chal-

lenges, in July 2007, four years after the start of the violent emergency, the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1769, which offered a compromise: the creation of a “hybrid force” consisting of eighteen thousand UN and AU troops. This resolution authorized the establishment of UNAMID under Chapter VII, a consent-based mission focused on monitoring the implementation of agreements, the protection of civilians and humanitarian assistance, and the promotion of rule of law.⁵⁵ These peacekeepers, however, struggled with governmental restrictions on their movement too and limited access to camps for displaced communities. Moreover, the mission mandate did not allow for the enforcement of agreements or any nonconsensual operations against those committing crimes against civilians. The mission also gravely underfunded the troops, who lacked basic equipment, including helicopters and weaponry.⁵⁶

While levels of violence in the region fell after 2005, they spiked again by 2013.⁵⁷ Such changing trends led to the extension of UNAMID’s mandate in 2010 and once again in 2013 and 2017, but the mission’s strength remained set at 26,167 personnel by UN Resolution 2063 in 2012.⁵⁸ Although the Sudanese government had *technically* agreed to these mandates, foot dragging and lack of international funds consistently hindered the mission’s ability to protect civilians in a meaningful way.⁵⁹

Alongside a sequence of failed peace agreements and proposed power-sharing mechanisms, recent years have seen increased fragmentation within rebel groups. Since 2010, government-backed paramilitaries began to showcase greater autonomy in their actions, most likely as a product of dwindling financial support from GoS as well as faltering oil revenues due to internal strikes. Consequently, rebel forces began fighting among themselves over commercial interests, including the gold mines in North Darfur. Most distinct in this new phase of violence were attacks also occurring within Arab communities, contravening earlier narratives of an Arab versus non-Arab conflict. The UN reported the displacement of 400,000 people in 2013, ending an era marked by the returning home of 100,000 people from refugee camps.⁶⁰ In March 2014, renewed intrastate violence displaced another 20,000 people.⁶¹ Around the same time, US ambassador Samantha Power reported to the international community that since the beginning of 2014, at least 120,000 people were displaced throughout Darfur.⁶²

By 2017, the downsizing of UNAMID troop and police numbers became part of the renewal mandate taking place over the next two years.⁶³ The removal of longtime authoritarian ruler al-Bashir in 2019 initially sparked a wave of optimism for a return to civilian rule and stability in Sudan and Darfur. But two years later, a military coup dissolved the civilian government and

reignited the decades-long conflict. Yet by the end of 2020, UNAMID had terminated its mission in Darfur while the humanitarian crisis raged on.

By spring of 2023, the humanitarian crisis worsened once again due to a power struggle between previously allied parties, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) commander Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo in Khartoum. The warring parties had previously joined forces in 2019 to overthrow the al-Bashir government and subsequent civilian governments, but a push to integrate the RSF into the national army triggered an RSF revolt, unleashing violence across Sudan and western Darfur. Between April and June 2023, the violence had killed at least 3,000 people and displaced more than three million people within Sudan and in neighboring countries, particularly devastating women and children.⁶⁴ This latest round of fighting occurred when Sudan was already experiencing its highest levels of humanitarian need in a decade.

Although the United States and Saudi Arabia negotiated a seventy-two-hour truce at the beginning of this violence, it did not last. Multiple agreed-upon ceasefires and promises to allow for humanitarian corridors were also violated by warring factions.⁶⁵ The US- and Saudi-led initiatives to hold talks between the army and RSF in Jeddah proved futile as well. Months after the start of this humanitarian crisis, the United States imposed sanctions on both army and RSF assets, followed a month later by the UK. But that did nothing to slow down the violence, with western Darfur governor Khamis Abakar kidnapped and killed for accusing the RSF of committing genocide against the Masalit people in Darfur.⁶⁶ As of July 2023, the army rejected a proposed regional summit led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to deploy peacekeeping forces for the protection of civilians.

The renewed conflict has already decimated Sudan's infrastructure, and the risk of growing disease epidemics is high. In 2023, two decades after the start of the humanitarian emergency, people in Sudan and especially in Darfur remain in desperate need of clean water, food, and urgent humanitarian aid across the country. As more and more people from Darfur, mostly from the Masalit community, flee the renewed violence, neighboring countries such as Chad and the Central African Republic struggle to handle the influx of refugees on top of their own dilemmas, prompting concerns of wider regional instability. In 2023, the alarm bells of "another genocide in Darfur" were ringing, with non-Arab Masalit people in Darfur targeted by the RSF for systematic killings and their bodies thrown into mass graves.⁶⁷ A surviving woman from Misterei in West Darfur, a city that was attacked, pillaged, and set ablaze by Arab militias, said that the militias were systematically seeking out the men and boys, asking: "Where are the men? Where are the boys?"

We want all of them! We want to kill them! Why didn't you just flee and leave the country? Why are you still here?"⁶⁸ Jean-Baptiste Gallopin, senior crisis and conflict researcher at Human Rights Watch added, "the accounts of those who survived recent attacks in West Darfur echo the horror, devastation, and despair of Darfur 20 years ago."⁶⁹ Yet from 2003 until 2023, the international community has not invested nearly enough resources and political will to end the humanitarian emergency for good.

Since the beginnings of the Darfur Crisis, the international community has done the bare minimum or less to curb the internal violence that has been taking the lives of innocent civilians for twenty consecutive years. Despite staggering numbers and narratives of horrifying violence over the decades, the international community has silenced calls for robust intervention and aid in Darfur. Too often, this silence has been strategic: to ensure that the fragile negotiations on the other conflicts raging within Sudan continued, to support the US's "War on Terror," and to allow for a peaceful secession of South Sudan in 2011.⁷⁰ In the following sections, I briefly delve into some of these interest-based causes of international inaction before exploring the effects of regional variation and conflict perceptions as applied to nonintervention in Darfur.

Standard Explanations of Nonintervention: Interest in the Status Quo

As in the previous cases of military intervention, one of the strongest standard explanations of nonintervention in Darfur is that of geopolitical interest. For Darfur, the argument is that international inaction (instead of timely and robust military intervention) promoted the national interests of powerful states and institutions, including most Western actors and regional organizations as well as China. As Gerard Prunier has also discussed, the most powerful countries in the world, when faced with the worst humanitarian atrocities in a region where they could project military power with minimal pushback, limited themselves to rhetorical platitudes for Darfur's plight while demanding vague UN responses.⁷¹ Meanwhile, without the support of the powerful states, the UN lacked the necessary funding, military capacity, and logistical support to take the reins on its own, so it relied heavily on the AU to deploy a token force that lacked a full and effective mandate to protect civilians against the scale of the violence in the region. This regional token force, however, placated much of the backlash against Western inaction in the name of anti-imperialism.

Prunier was not the only one to notice the international community's willful passivity toward mass civilian killings and impending genocide.⁷² After all, none of these international players could hide behind justifications of ignorance, as knowledge of the mass atrocities in Darfur had become commonplace. By October 2004, the UN secretary-general established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate whether violent actors had committed acts of genocide in Darfur. Although the commission's report ruled against the label of genocide, it still strongly asserted that GoS forces and allied militia had "conducted indiscriminate attacks, including killing of civilians, torture, enforced disappearances, destruction of villages, rape and other forms of sexual violence, pillaging and forced displacement." The panel concluded that "international offences such as the crimes against humanity and war crimes that have been committed in Darfur may be no less serious and heinous than genocide." It pleaded with the Security Council to "act not only against the perpetrators but also on behalf of the victim."⁷³ But this humanitarian urgency and consensus did not produce any substantial policy initiatives regarding Darfur.

By October 2006, a report by the Minority Rights Group (MRG) detailed how easily the UN and other state powers could have stopped the Darfur Crisis. The report also lambasted these actors for learning so little from their mistakes during the Rwandan genocide. MRG's executive director, Mark Lattimer, went on to say that "this level of crisis, the killings, rape and displacement could have been foreseen and avoided. . . . Darfur would just not be in this situation had the UN systems got its act together after Rwanda: their action was too little too late."⁷⁴

In the context of this brazen lack of prevention of mass atrocities, geopolitical national interests surface as key motivators of international inactivity. The United States, for instance, had its sights set on other policy battles within Africa, such as ending the Sudanese civil war. As briefly discussed above, when the "civil war" started in Darfur, the Bush administration was unwilling to criticize Khartoum, fearing that it would destroy the North-South peace initiative that the administration had prioritized since 2001. By April 2004, however, a bipartisan group of members of Congress had called for sanctions, pressuring President Bush to finally condemn the "atrocities" in Darfur.⁷⁵ By the summer, Secretary of State Colin Powell visited Darfur, and in the next months, he told Congress that the Sudanese government and the Janjaweed had committed genocide (as per State Department conclusions). Despite this official stance, US policy toward Darfur was characterized by tragic inconsistency, as seen in the administration's reversion in November 2004 to using carrots to incentivize the GoS to sign the Naivasha

accords. This inconsistency in US foreign policy was also largely to blame for the Security Council's refusal to even discuss more robust human rights interventions within Darfur.⁷⁶

Instead of contributing to a solution, the United States and its Western allies encouraged "African solutions to African problems," while criticizing regional efforts in Darfur. It was seemingly in the US national interest to take a normative stance on the violence in Darfur but offload actual responsibilities to others. On the one hand, the US government preferred that others manage the Darfur crisis; but on the other hand, it faced strident demands by activists and Congress to "do more."⁷⁷ This policy ambivalence explains why the United States was quick to call Darfur "genocide" but at the same time ruled out any prospect of a NATO or UN enforcement mission that would not be beholden to the GoS. Making matters worse, the United States kept urging the AU to lead in Darfur while attacking the quality of African initiatives.⁷⁸ In this way, the United States could maintain some semblance of its normative image with regard to the protection of innocents without contributing to a mission that appeared both difficult and unsupported by other Western institutions. At the same time, the United States could maintain the status quo in Africa, which was more conducive to its international outcomes, especially regarding the war on terror, the Sudanese civil war, and its dealings with China and Russia.

Western actors were not the only ones complicit in such interest-driven, passive policymaking. The African Union (AU), too, has been accused of ulterior motives in its Darfur mission trajectories. Beyond its well-known deficits in mission funding, organization, and resources, the AU is blamed for failing to step aside and allow others to help resolve Darfur's violence. The AU's presence in Darfur, no matter how minimal or flawed, made it difficult for non-African states and institutions to debate the merits of more extensive humanitarian intervention. As Black and Williams reaffirm, "the AU presence became, in effect, a stumbling block to more robust external interventions—a fact that the GoS used adroitly."⁷⁹ The AU's blockage of an external military intervention may have been intentional, not solely a consequence of organizational dysfunctions. After all, as the AU itself admitted, "Countries within the North African Region such as Egypt and Libya have a direct interest in developments in the Sudan. These collective interests are expanded upon within the forum that the African Union provides."⁸⁰ Such interests may explain why AU members refused to confront the GoS on its campaigns of mass violence, making sure to dismiss any discussions of genocide. Instead, the AU focused on "compliance with multilateral objectives" and justified its narrow mandates by reminding the international community

of Sudan's record of accepting and inviting international organizations during the time of crisis. "The fact that Sudan has recently approached the African Union to send additional Peacekeepers to Darfur reflects the credibility and objectivity of the institution as well as the trust African countries have in their own institutions," AU representatives would often declare.⁸¹

This legacy of regional hesitation followed the hybrid UNAMID mission as well, to the detriment of Darfur's civilians. "It is fair to say that UNAMID peacekeepers largely failed to protect Darfur civilians, and their presence didn't deter either the government or the rebels from attacking the civilians," Aicha Elbasri, the mission's former spokeswoman, wrote in 2013 after resigning in protest. "They sometimes helplessly witnessed the attacks and harassment of civilians, some of which took place near UNAMID team sites."⁸² These UNAMID peacekeepers endured bullying by governmental security forces while fully aware of the West's critical indifference. Lacking the necessary weapons, numbers, and mandate to properly fight against either government or rebel forces, UNAMID peacekeepers have been killed in greater numbers than in any others in UN mission history.⁸³ Some of this failure to protect civilians (and peacekeepers themselves) was due to resource deficiencies. As Colum Lynch reported, internal UNAMID documents reveal that troop-contributing countries sent their soldiers in with broken vehicles and low-quality weapons. Meanwhile, powerful Western states rejected several UN appeals to provide the peacekeepers with attack helicopters, which would have reinforced and protected the predominantly AU infantry battalions. Moreover, UN headquarters repeatedly rejected UNAMID commanders' requests to replace underperforming or misbehaving peacekeeping troops.⁸⁴

While there is a consensus on how a scarcity of resources hindered UNAMID goals, some factions perceive the UNAMID as being voluntarily hesitant in Sudan. For instance, from the very beginning, UNAMID was reluctant to denounce the Sudanese government without firsthand proof collected by its own personnel, even though the GoS was the only actor in Darfur with airpower. Consequently, UNAMID public reporting withheld strong circumstantial evidence of Sudanese violations in communications with the Security Council.⁸⁵ Although Elbasri first discussed UNAMID's bureaucratic and funds-based dilemmas, she did not shy away from these heavier accusations. While working for UNAMID, she raised concerns about the mission's refusal to acknowledge the atrocities committed by the GoS. One of the peacekeepers' local commanders, Maj. Gen. Wynjones Matthew Kisamba, even told Elbasri that UNAMID forces had to sometimes reframe the truth. "You know, sometimes we have to behave like diplomats," he told her. "We can't say all what we see in Darfur."⁸⁶

But the UNAMID did witness crimes against humanity committed by GoS forces and their rebel allies; they simply hid the evidence to placate an already hostile government whose permission they needed to act. Throughout the conflict in Darfur, Lynch reported that UNAMID gathered large stacks of documents connecting Sudanese authorities to grave human rights violations, particularly in using airpower and Arab proxies to attack prorebel communities.⁸⁷ Yet as will be expanded upon in the following section, much of that evidence never made it to public records and was rarely amplified in the international community. The UNAMID's failure to verify the links between civilian attacks and the Sudanese government remained a source of tension for US policymakers, even by the end of the Obama administration. In their attempt to mollify the Sudanese government and ensure their own regional interests and overall stability, AU country members shut their eyes to the genocide unfolding in their own neighborhood.

China followed a similar strategy in Darfur, allowing some degree of human suffering in exchange for relative stability in a region of interest. In such a case, the preservation of Sudan's sovereignty suited both China and the AU more so than the prospects of third-party military involvement, particularly Western humanitarian intervention. After all, the main impediment to stronger UN mandates in Darfur was always the Chinese Security Council veto. China also held a 40 percent share of Sudan's primary oil-producing field. To secure these resources, it joined with Russia (the main arms supplier to the GoS) to pressure other Security Council members to downgrade Resolution 1574 at the special November 2004 session in Nairobi.⁸⁸ But it was China that ultimately convinced Sudan to concede to the hybrid UNAMID peacekeepers later on. As a top buyer of Sudan's oil and supplier of weapons, China held potent tools with which to sway the Sudanese government, and so it endured a substantial degree of international pressure "to do more" to prevent the violence in Darfur.⁸⁹ In response, China still managed to safeguard its geopolitical interests by promoting UNAMID as the solution to the violence, muting more robust alternatives that would not have deferred to the GoS.

With such a trail of evidence, the national interest argument quickly wins over the humanitarian intent. Seemingly, neither the United States, EU, AU, nor China stood to benefit from robust intervention in Darfur despite undeniable mass atrocities occurring there over many long years. Because of this, the UN was also frozen by its members' interests in a Sudanese status quo. But as convincing as the status quo arguments are, this analysis still has its gaps: We must still contend with the fact that none of these states stood to lose extensively from a third-party military intervention in Darfur. In

Kosovo, we saw that despite low national interests, Western institutions and actors overrode the UN mandate and intervened anyway. In other words, humanitarian context mattered for foreign policymaking in Kosovo. Why wasn't it half as influential in Darfur, where civilian suffering continued for decades? As I will argue in the following section, the narrative of conflict perceptions also strongly favored nonintervention in Darfur, and in the context of a bad neighborhood with little institutional success or value-laden mandates, these perceptions became fatal to any Western-led or robust humanitarian initiative.

Ambiguous Conflict Perceptions in "Bad Neighborhoods"

Early in the trajectory of the Darfur Crisis, Western actors were quick to label the mass violence as genocide, albeit with few policy consequences. But as the crisis worsened without an end in sight, these same actors opted to cooperate with the GoS, thereby granting it status as a legitimate state actor. Meanwhile, regional actors and powerful non-Western states buttressed a narrative of Darfur as an ethnic/religious civil war with equally culpable sides and an intractable nature. As discussed below, this wide rift in crisis perceptions greatly diminished the odds of military intervention in the Darfur Crisis, especially given the distance from the Western neighborhood and its institutional benefits.

Early Warnings of Genocide

As the first waves of mass violence decimated Darfur, the international community reacted with a figurative shrug. It was yet another African civil conflict, after all. While diplomats worried about the Darfur Crisis derailing peace negotiations to end the Sudanese civil war, few of them rang the alarm on human rights abuses right away. Indeed, Darfur remained on the back burner as a typical African civil war until several political elites reframed commemorations of the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide as a call to action on Darfur. In March 2004, Mukesh Kapila, UN resident and humanitarian coordinator in Sudan, compared the GoS counterinsurgency to the scorched-earth policies during the 1994 Rwandan genocide.⁹⁰ Kapila was one of the first to directly condemn the silence of the Security Council. He used a lessons-learned narrative to shame and threaten international actors into action: "I was present in Rwanda at the time of the genocide, and I've seen many other situations around the world and I am totally shocked at

what is going on in Darfur. . . . This is ethnic cleansing, this is the world's greatest humanitarian crisis, and I don't know why the world isn't doing more about it."⁹¹ Consequently, within UN circles, Darfur as a case of systematic ethnic cleansing began to replace the passivity that defined the narrative of another African civil war. Samantha Power's 2004 op-ed "Remember Rwanda, But Take Action in Sudan" provided the same framing for elites in Washington.⁹² Like the Kosovo Crisis, analogies to historical genocides and international shame over historical inactivity altered conflict perceptions in Darfur. Such a transformation, of course, relied heavily on circulating images of slaughtered unarmed civilians.⁹³

The lessons of Rwanda also haunted UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, who had led the peacekeeping mission at the time of the 1994 genocide and was blamed for the UN's grave failure to act. On the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, Annan brought the suffering of Darfur before the UN Human Rights Commission, endorsing a broader policy of civilian protection and possible interventionist measures against genocide.⁹⁴

Whatever terms it uses to describe the situation, the international community cannot stand idle. At the invitation of the Sudanese Government, I propose to send a high-level team to Darfur to gain a fuller understanding of the extent and nature of this crisis, and to seek improved access to those in need of assistance and protection. . . . If that is denied, the international community must be prepared to take swift and appropriate action. By "action" in such situations I mean a continuum of steps, which may include military action. . . . But let us not wait until the worst has happened, or is already happening. . . . Let us not wait until the only alternatives to military action are futile hand-wringing or callous indifference.⁹⁵

Although Annan stopped short of labeling Darfur ethnic cleansing or genocide, he did detach it from the narrative of the typical African civil war, as key Western actors had previously perceived it. The parallels to Rwanda convinced even India, otherwise critical of Western meddling into matters of state sovereignty, to demand international action on behalf of Darfur's civilians. The *Economic Times* editorial team wrote that "Darfur is another Rwanda in the making. And not just in terms of the human atrocities but the apathetic reaction of the international community."⁹⁶

Thus, by appealing to analogies of former genocides and historical lessons, Darfur left the realm of "another African conflict" and entered the favorable narratives of "ethnic cleansing" and a type of violence that merited interna-

tional reaction. But this favorable conflict perception did not guarantee international intervention, and, indeed, it did not last long. At one end of the spectrum, the actors who were quick to condemn Darfur as genocide were the same ones who shied away from any commitment to act. At the other end, various states actively fought against the genocide narrative in favor of a complex civil war narrative so as to quell demands for military intervention. This ensuing confusion over the nature of the conflict doomed Darfur to a path of nonintervention, even before regional bias could have a say.

Genocide, But No Protection Needed

The United States, for instance, used the genocide label to mitigate domestic protests over the violence in Darfur, but its rhetoric did not come close to matching its foreign policy, whether debated or actualized. The Bush administration did not believe that identifying Darfur as “genocide” also demanded a US commitment to stopping the genocide. A US-led intervention to protect civilians in Darfur was out of the question, regardless of conflict perceptions.⁹⁷ In the backdrop of worsening conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, US leadership settled for a policy with the “rhetoric of genocide . . . as a substitute for more forceful action.”⁹⁸ In other words, instead of interpreting the violation of the 1948 Genocide Convention by the GoS as an obligation to intervene militaristically itself, the United States interpreted it as a responsibility to support regional intervention, as part of the theme of “African solutions to African problems,” with a few sanctions thrown in.⁹⁹

This policy choice was an easy one to make for most Western actors, given the strong normative support of regional actors. In this way, the United States and the EU did not have to forsake their values of human rights, democracy, and the prevention of genocide outright. In fact, after the tainted US legacy of “humanitarian intervention” in Iraq, many argued that Western actors were finally listening to the democratic demands of African leaders, citizens, and governments in the case of nonintervention in Darfur. Since the war in Iraq significantly undermined the credibility of US-led humanitarian military interventions and general foreign policy in the region, the choice of nonintervention in Darfur may have led to greater moral credibility for the United States,¹⁰⁰ especially as Sudanese leadership had effectively stoked suspicions that the United States would only involve itself in Darfur for oil resources, not humanitarian aid.¹⁰¹ Given such an international context, Western actors transferred the responsibility for Darfur’s safety onto regional organizations, instead of their own organizations or states, to maintain their normative images and their interest in the status quo.

Regional actors in particular were pleased by this Western restraint. South African president Thabo Mbeki asserted that it was their preference: "It's critically important that the African continent should deal with these conflict situations on the continent. And that includes Darfur . . . indeed, you will notice that we have not asked for anybody outside of the African continent to deploy troops in Darfur. It's an African responsibility, and we can do it."¹⁰² But although the West stepped aside while the AU led efforts toward a military solution, Western elites continued to critique AU measures as too weak to prevent the killing of innocent civilians. The Western counter-response invoked the promise of NATO organizational advice and organizational logistics, but never direct military support. President Bush, for instance, would casually mention NATO to deflect critiques of US inaction in Darfur. "We are working with NATO to make sure that we are able to help the AU put combat troops there," Bush said. "And, as a part of that, I believe a transport plane of ours, for example, will be a part of this mission."¹⁰³ Bush was willing to offer Darfur a NATO transport plane, but little else. In fact, Bush—who was one of the first to call Darfur a genocide—even opposed UK prime minister Tony Blair's plans to convince the wealthiest states to double their monetary aid to Africa, simply saying that "it doesn't fit our budgetary process."¹⁰⁴ In sum, Western actors remained on the right side of the narrative debate, but practically irrelevant in Darfur on the ground.

Another Civil War

Meanwhile, non-Western actors were busy reinforcing their own narrative of the conflict. In particular, China, the Arab League (AL), and Russia seriously contested the nature of the Darfur Crisis. They had no sympathies for the "simple" genocide narrative. Instead, they insisted that the dynamics on the ground in Darfur were more complicated than the dichotomous narrative of the Sudanese regime as perpetrators of massacres and non-Arab rebel groups as innocent victims. They preferred the characterization of "civil war," blurring the distinctions between perpetrator and victim and equalizing culpabilities.¹⁰⁵ This Darfur civil war then, naturally, required a peace process or even the provision of developmental aid involving the Sudanese government, not a humanitarian military intervention. In a view largely shared by Brazilian and Indian state actors, the best way to protect civilians in Darfur was through a peace settlement between the GoS and the rebel groups. It was thought that a peace settlement would eventually lead to increased security, thus ending the killings in the long run.¹⁰⁶

Even those who perceived the state as the main culprit of the Darfur vio-

lence were not ready to use the term genocide, as many did not regard humanitarian intervention or coercion of the GoS as effective solutions. To these parties, the GoS was a flawed, albeit legitimate and necessary, international actor. Consequently, non-Western countries like China and Arab states sought peace deals with the moderates within the al-Bashir regime in Sudan, hoping that this peace would prove beneficial to AU diplomatic and peacekeeping efforts.¹⁰⁷ From Beijing's perspective in particular, the Sudanese government should neither be ignored as an illegitimate actor nor pressured as the only or main culpable party. Instead, the Sudanese government merely required help by international actors to assert control over its own population once more. The loss of sovereignty and government capacity were the key threats to human rights in such a context. Only by protecting and reasserting its sovereignty would the GoS be able to fulfill its obligation to protect its citizens.¹⁰⁸

Leading Western academic Alex de Waal also promoted such a narrative on Darfur, prompting extremely different policy options from the narrative of genocide. "Darfur is a war—a horrible war, but first and foremost, it is a war," he said. He then reminded his audience how the conflict had transformed in the past five years: "Ninety per cent of the deaths occurred four to five years ago and the government and its militia proxies were the main culprits. . . . Today many fewer are being killed and it is hard to make a moral distinction between the sides." With this admitted ambiguity in culpability, de Waal presented one of the most standard effects of the "civil war" conflict perception: dramatically decreased odds of humanitarian military intervention. After all, the option of third-party intervention barely exists with such perceptions. As de Waal added, "In big and complicated wars—like Darfur—successful armed intervention is so unlikely that it is foolish even to make the threat. . . . What Darfur needs is old-fashioned peace and peacekeeping and state-of-the-art humanitarian technology. RIP R2P."¹⁰⁹

Related to the framings of the previous literature on conflict perceptions, many global actors understood Darfur as the inevitable result of ancient and intractable ethnic hatreds between Black Africans and Arabs. Not only does such a narrative limit policy responses, but it also simplifies politics to be compatible with stereotypes about Africa. But as Campbell was quick to capture in the case of Bosnia, these narratives neglect elite manipulation in Darfur and more structural, economic causes of conflict, never mind ignoring Sudan's complicity in arming the Janjaweed throughout the counterinsurgency campaign.¹¹⁰

Despite the flaws in such "ancient hatreds" narratives, the civil war perceptions of Darfur produced an interactive feedback effect.¹¹¹ It encouraged the

reporting of violence in Darfur as a neutral exercise, devoid of assigning culpabilities, especially to governmental actors. The longer the crisis remained in the realm of domestic politics, the more the civil war narrative took a toll on information gathering, information sharing, and the odds of greater investigation or interventions in Darfur. The most egregious example of such a trend is within the UN itself. In 2009, UN human rights agencies simply stopped posting public reports on the abuses occurring in Darfur, according to human rights advocates and a leaked UN report.¹¹² As Lynch argues, this report confirmed the propensity of the UN and AU to magnify the successes and mute the failures of the peace process that they pushed in lieu of robust intervention. Making matters worse, the GoS never stopped intimidating UN officials and aid workers into silence on government atrocities, threatening to expel these actors or directly harassing them on the ground. These trends intensified by March 2009, when the Sudanese government expelled thirteen relief organizations, increasing fears that publicly critiquing the regime could trigger restrictions on UN agencies as well.¹¹³ Consequently, from January 2009 until 2012, Lynch concluded that the UN high commissioner for human rights did not issue a single report on human rights violations in Darfur.¹¹⁴

By 2012, a group of three former UN experts confirmed that this silence was intentional and systemic; the UNAMID mission had actively minimized reporting on governmental abuses in Darfur, including incidents of ethnic cleansing against the Zaghawa tribe.¹¹⁵ Jehanne Henry, the Darfur researcher for Human Rights Watch, confirmed these leaked reports: “Still we do receive reports from sources inside Darfur indicating the war architecture and tools of repression are very much intact,” she said. She added that the Sudanese government had “effectively muzzled the AU/UN mission into silence. . . . Humanitarian aid agencies, traditionally a reliable source of informally reporting on rights abuses, also do not speak out [for] fear of being kicked out of Darfur altogether.”¹¹⁶

Even Susan Rice, then US ambassador to the UN, was worried about this lack of reporting and raised grave concerns in a private meeting with Ibrahim Gambari, UNAMID’s representative in 2012. In the following months, in a closed-door Security Council meeting, the United States and EU powers demanded that the UN chief peacekeeper increase the coverage of governmental abuses in Darfur. Ultimately, an expert panel of former UN officials convened to address this discrepancy, arguing that UNAMID’s sparse reporting on Darfur was evidence of its bias: that regional actors muted evidence of governmental abuses while magnifying the violence committed by the rebels.¹¹⁷ According to these panel members, the institutional bias “risks exacerbating existing perceptions of UNAMID as insufficiently neutral: per-

ceptions which may pose a threat both to UNAMID's own security and to the eastern Darfur area's peace and security."¹¹⁸

But this neutrality in reporting merely echoed the neutrality of the Darfur conflict narrative, as perceived by regional actors on the ground. As long as Darfur remained a civil war, with equally culpable violent parties, its abuses would be reported along the same lines. Thus, the original ambiguity in perceptions affected information sharing on Darfur, which further enhanced the civil war narrative. This feedback mechanism not only extinguished any prospects of robust intervention in Darfur, but it also demoted Darfur from the long list of global crises altogether, since a standard African civil war could not effectively compete for the world's resources.

Bad Neighborhoods and the Limitations of Geography

Making matters worse, Darfur's location within a "bad neighborhood" meant that it did not benefit from the resources and values-based will of robust multilateral organizations. In this bad neighborhood, any transformative missions or attempts at democratization were already dismissed as futile policy options by powerful Western players. The assumption was that any humanitarian military interventions in Darfur would be tainted by the legacy of long-run instability and even failed statehood. Even if Western actors were to intervene to stop the genocide in Darfur, they wouldn't remain in the region long enough to guarantee a better outcome relative to the current status quo. Therefore, to avoid such messy involvement, the West allowed regional actors to maintain dominance in Darfur, to define its atrocities as an African problem or an issue of imperfect sovereignty, not a global horror. Such a narrative ensured the delegation of moral responsibility beyond the state, while at the same time implying that geography should alter whose responsibility it is to protect civilians from systematic violence and government massacres.

Thus, in Darfur, the Western community championed safeguarding state sovereignty over the protection of human rights, precisely because of the characteristics found within a "bad neighborhood."¹¹⁹ In a bad neighborhood, sharing or diminishing sovereignty for the sake of the neighborhood is unheard of. Instead, sovereignty remains the only way to preserve order within the dynamics of interstate animosity, few shared resources, and weak interstate institutions. Without the possibility of bundling sovereignty or activating shared institutions, the West could not pursue any long-term goals in Darfur: no hopes of democratization, no rhetoric on economic development, and zero transformative goals. Instead, the West spoke only of return-

ing refugees to their homes and relative stabilization in Darfur. Days after the signing of the Darfur peace agreement, US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice spoke of such smaller milestones, always delegating their enforcement to the UN:

Most importantly, the agreement sets out a path that can return the people of Darfur to their homes. . . . It is now more important than ever to have a strong United Nations effort to ensure that the agreement's detailed timelines are monitored and enforced. The accord clearly states that neutral peacekeepers have an essential role to play in this process. . . . Just as UN peacekeepers play a central role in helping to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between North and South, we now need a UN peacekeeping force to help implement the Darfur peace agreement.¹²⁰

It is a rare moment, indeed, whenever US leadership demands "a strong United Nations."

In the case of Kosovo, the West went out of its way to dismiss UN mandates and pursue separate missions in a region of humanitarian crisis. In Libya, the West used the UN's normative credibility to activate the NATO mission for regime change and potential democratization. Yet when it came to protecting human rights in Darfur, the West insisted on staying out, offering a UN framing as the solution of choice. The Western community, including the United States and EU actors, scrapped the idea of intervention in Darfur with the alternative of propping the only stable government actor in the crisis, the government of Sudan, and leaving the rest to UN structures. As Susan Rice summarized, "In effect what we've done . . .—we, the international community—is to allow the perpetrators of genocide, the government of Sudan, to dictate the terms of the international community's response to that genocide."¹²¹ As absurd as this may sound in terms of humanitarian effect, this variation in policy response parallels variations in region and institutional resources, which alter the costs associated with revocations of Sudan's sovereignty.

The West supported the GoS's sovereignty due to the risks arising from a bad neighborhood, which is also why powerful states implicitly made the UN the sole institution with a mandate to act. Without strategic interests or transformative liberal missions at stake in Darfur, the West could not use up its own resources and credibility within a region that it saw as an endless quagmire of violence. In other words, the R2P principle no longer applied to Darfur because a humanitarian intervention in the crisis would not lead to

an outcome conducive to Western liberal goals. Even at the height of the humanitarian suffering in July 2004, US Defense Department officials admitted that they had no plans to deploy US forces to Darfur, not even to aid in the delivery of humanitarian relief.¹²² After all, as Senators Brownback and Corzine publicly asserted, the purpose of a US resolution was not meant to compel the United States to intervene in Darfur but to “add moral weight to efforts to pass a United Nations resolution.”¹²³

This choice was made much easier by the fact that regional players did not want any Western support or aid. To repeat South African president Mbeki, “You will notice that we have not asked for anybody outside of the African continent to deploy troops in Darfur. *It’s an African responsibility, and we can do it.*”¹²⁴ But as discussed above, without any semblance of Western support, the regional organizations of the AU and Arab League lacked the resources and the political will to stage a strong intervention on behalf of civilians in Darfur. The West, however, did not care that nothing was being done; they only cared about the image of responsibility, coupled with credibility.

Unlike in the case of Kosovo, where the choice of nonintervention would have weakened Western institutions and values, nonintervention in Darfur aided Western credibility and normative images. It allowed the West to thwart accusations of colonial exploitation and imperialist wars, especially in the aftermath of US interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. These accusations only grew louder once the UN Commission of Inquiry released its report on Darfur, refusing to label the violence as genocide.¹²⁵ The isolated US declaration of genocide was thus perceived as another Western ploy to imperialize Africa and the Global South. Media outlets even accused the United States of “hyping” genocide in Darfur.¹²⁶ In a similar vein, former assistant secretary-general of the UN, Ramesh Thakur, attacked Western “humanitarians clamoring for another war,” adding that “Western intervention in Darfur would be exploited as yet another assault on Arabs and Muslims.”¹²⁷ This, of course, evolved from the “humanitarian” origins of the war in Iraq, in that “most actors in international and world society believed that humanitarian justifications were used to mask the exercise of hegemonic power.”¹²⁸ Thakur continued on this imperialist critique against Western involvement in Darfur:

A Western intervention, far from offering a solution, may add to the problems. Especially after Iraq, we have to work through regional governments and the United Nations. There seems little interest in contemplating the possibility that developing countries might have some justice on their side in resisting assaults on sovereignty. The most

important clue to understanding their concerns is the history of Europe's encounter with Arabs, Africans and Asians. . . . But given the history of past interventions by Westerners, the wiser course is for the African Union or the UN—which has been trying for over a year to alert everyone to the urgency and gravity of the Darfur crisis—to accept the lead responsibility. If London and Washington lead the charge to eliminate the veto power in the Security Council, then—but only then—can they claim legitimacy for military intervention outside the UN framework if UN authorisation is vetoed.¹²⁹

Thus the sovereignty argument against intervention in Darfur is heavily entangled with a regional perspective of both norms and interests. It invokes the limitations of Western values and institutions. The “normative foundations” of these institutions become moot once outside of the Western neighborhood, both in terms of regional functionalities and public expectations and international demands. In fact, in the case of Darfur, nonintervention offered the West more moral high ground and credibility than the alternative would have. The alternative of Western intervention in Darfur would have reeked of colonial pasts and imperialist patronizing, so the West eagerly blurred its unwillingness to intervene within legalistic rhetoric tied to UN mandates. In this way, the West was happy with nonintervention, but so were regional and UN actors. As Thakur questioned, “Do developing countries not have the right to use force to put down armed challenge to their authority? Who decides the answers to these questions other than regional countries and the UN?”¹³⁰ In other words, by not challenging Sudan's sovereignty, Western actors were upholding their moral credibility in the international community and evading risky, nontransformative missions in bad neighborhoods. It was now only up to the UN to do something about Darfur.

But after the US attempt to justify intervention in Iraq on humanitarian grounds, the UN principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) suffered a credibility blow as well. Some developing countries compared the R2P to a “Trojan horse” for the machinations of realpolitik among Western actors, while smaller countries were terrified of becoming future targets for intervention.¹³¹ Thankfully for Western actors, this skepticism of intervention let them off the hook in Darfur, a region of low geopolitical interest. In fact, many US and EU officials were relieved when the UN Commission announced that there was not enough evidence to prove that genocide was unfolding in Darfur.¹³² The West was able to use its lack of humanitarian credibility abroad to provide normative cover for nonintervention in a self-declared genocide in Darfur.¹³³ In this way, the West could talk a big humani-

tarian game, but contribute little to the prevention of human suffering, something it could not so easily have accomplished in Kosovo or other crises near Western neighborhoods.

In this normative backdrop, NATO was not inclined to use force to halt massive human rights atrocities in Darfur either. In Kosovo, NATO was willing to rebuke the UN and several powerful state actors to intervene. Yet five years later, NATO stood firm in requiring a UN mandate before it could legitimately act as a UN proxy against acts of ethnic cleansing or genocide. NATO demanded expansive UN authorization to even consider this option in Darfur.

Many of NATO secretary general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer's speeches touched upon this NATO reluctance to resort to force in Darfur without a clear UN mandate. On top of this, Scheffer distanced NATO even further by exclusively promoting the regionalization of international responsibility via the AU and the principle of "African ownership." An excerpt from a speech delivered in October of 2008, at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Ghana, openly explains NATO's lack of enthusiasm for involvement in Darfur. Indeed, Scheffer presents a virtually opposite view from the one NATO took on Kosovo in 1999. The speech begins with a glimpse at the past, mentioning Bosnia as a case of necessary NATO intervention with a UN mandate.¹³⁴ "In Bosnia, however, the UN blue-helmets found themselves in the middle of an ongoing war. The result was a series of humiliations for UN forces . . . we needed more than a classic UN peacekeeping force. We needed a military alliance. Provided with a mandate by the UN, it was NATO that took on the challenge."¹³⁵ At this point, the only conflict dimensions differentiating Darfur from Bosnia are region and the lack of a UN mandate for NATO action.

But then Scheffer invokes Kosovo as an instance of necessary NATO military action without a UN mandate: "Kosovo was on the brink of a humanitarian disaster. This time, Russia and China made it clear that they would not provide a UN mandate for an intervention by NATO. . . . NATO Allies decided to act without that direct UN mandate."¹³⁶ Scheffer justified this breach of UN law by recalling Kofi Annan's normative appeals at the time: "The UN Charter, he said in April 1999, 'should never [be] the source of comfort or justification' for 'those guilty of gross and shocking violations of human rights.'"¹³⁷ The overarching argument was that no national government could misuse sovereignty for the purposes of committing human rights abuses against their own civilians.

So what distinguished the Kosovo Crisis from the Darfur Crisis? In both cases, human rights abuses by government actors were rampant. The UN had

normatively condemned both crises and called the international community to action. Lastly, the UN had withheld a formal mandate for NATO in both Kosovo and Darfur, albeit more forcefully in the case of Kosovo. Thus, if we are to compare Scheffer's rhetoric on NATO's Kosovo intervention to NATO's Darfur nonintervention, we are left with region as the only varying explanatory force. In Kosovo, the Western neighborhood could not tolerate ethnic cleansing and was pushed into action, but in Darfur, the Western neighborhood gained credibility and avoided labels of imperialism by not intervening. The following longer excerpt from the speech implicitly admits this regional variation as a source of policy divergence:

In 1999 . . . the NATO Allies decided to act without that direct U.N. mandate. It was a controversial decision . . . in the summer of 2005, when I received calls from the Presidency of the African Union and from U.N. officials. Their question was straightforward: Would NATO support the African Union in its attempt to resolve the crisis in Darfur? As you all know, the answer of NATO's 26 member countries was "yes" . . . Could NATO do even more? Should it do more? This is a question that is first of all for the African Union to answer. Our approach is clear: we respond to requests put forward by the African Union. We do not see ourselves as a global policeman. . . . We are not seeking to impose ourselves, nor do we pretend that we have the answers to all of Africa's security problems. This is why we strongly support the principle of African ownership. And why we will always coordinate closely with other international organisations—especially the United Nations. We need African solutions for African problems.¹³⁸

In less diplomatic wording, NATO intervened in Kosovo without a UN mandate because it serviced Western neighborhoods, not outside realms of violence. Non-Western regions should then rely on their own regional institutional and resources for the preservation of human rights. After all, NATO was not going to impose itself as a global policeman on Africa's many civil wars and standard "security problems." It saw these problems as Africa's business, not the global business of genocide prevention. Along this line of expectations, NATO's role in Darfur was self-limited to the provision of logistical advice, training, and sometimes airlift support to AMIS troops in Sudan.

But NATO had warned the world of its regional selectivity before, back in 1999, after the end of the Kosovo mission. NATO elites made it clear that unless a region was amenable to Western transformation or democratization goals, it would not be a target of NATO rescue. As Javier Solana said back in

1999, “Let me say first of all that NATO is not a global organisation. When you say whatever it is, it is too broad a concept, but in the region of our responsibilities I think that what has happened in the last months is more important than whatever I could say now. Look at the facts and that is the behaviour of an Alliance of democratic countries that is able to act in a coherent manner to stop something that never could have happened, or should have happened, in Europe.”¹³⁹ With NATO decidedly on the sidelines, the UN dealing in rhetoric it could not enforce, and regional organizations interested in a civil war narrative, Darfur did not stand a chance. Even in 2023, as the humanitarian emergency in Darfur echoed the terrors of genocide once again, the troika of Norway, the UK, and the United States continue to utter “both sides” condemnations in an effort to avoid responsibility to act: “We call on all parties to the conflict to enable humanitarian access in Darfur and throughout the country. . . . The SAF and the RSF must silence their guns and find a negotiated exit from the conflict they started.”¹⁴⁰

Over the decades of violence in Darfur, Western condemnations of genocide were not enough to override the ambiguity of conflict perceptions, the years of reporting bias, or the many regional deficits. These interactions muted a robust international response in favor of diplomacy and mild peace-keeping in Darfur.

Conclusions

It is unsurprising, then, that Darfur stands with Rwanda as a tragic yet preventable case of state-sponsored genocide. In the literature of historical humanitarian military intervention, this was surely the opposite of a “lessons learned” trajectory. Moreover, the Darfur crisis has raged on for two decades, while the international community placated the R2P principle with a flawed regional mission and moral outrage.

Not even high levels of public support across international actors were enough to save Darfur. According to two public opinion surveys in several African countries and within the United States, a majority of people supported a UN military intervention in Darfur (see fig. 7.2).¹⁴¹ Sixty-five percent of Africans interviewed (a majority in seven countries and a plurality in one) said the UN “should have the right to authorize the use of military force to prevent severe human rights violations such as genocide.” Among these countries, Ghana and Kenya stood as the strongest supporters of intervention, at 80 and 75 percent, respectively. In contrast, South Africa offered the least support, at 47 percent. For supportive respondents, the UN was the

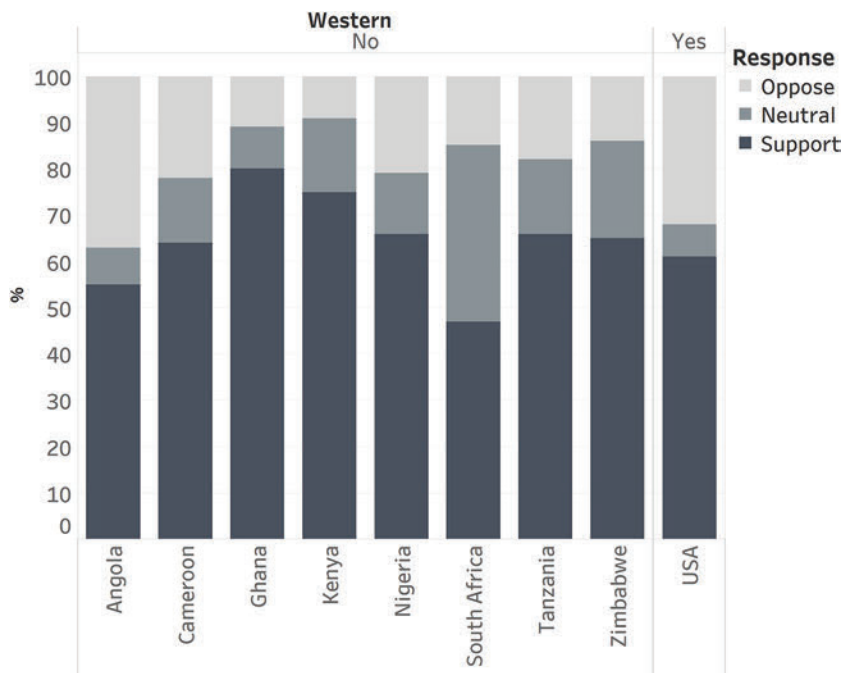


Fig. 7.2. Public Opinion on UN Military Intervention in Darfur

Source: Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), 2004–2005.

most preferred and well-trusted of all third-party mediators in Darfur, with the AU falling in second place. But even so, over half of the African respondents believed that countries should be able to intervene against human rights violations without explicit UN approval.¹⁴²

The survey of US citizens revealed similar, bipartisan patterns, with 61 percent of Americans agreeing that the best solution for the crisis was that the UN “step in with military force to stop the violence in Darfur.” While favoring a multilateral UN operation, a smaller majority of the Americans also supported the deployment of US and NATO forces in Darfur.¹⁴³ Support was even higher for providing equipment and logistical aid for the AU peacekeeping force, with 71 percent of US respondents saying that NATO should provide help and only 21 percent saying that it should not.

But conflict perceptions still mattered deeply here. In a 2004 study by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, respondents were asked if they would prefer sending US troops in Darfur “to stop a government from committing genocide.” Seventy-five percent of respondents agreed with such a policy. But once “genocide” was removed in reference to the mass violence,

support for sending US troops decreased by six points and public support for a general UN intervention dropped by thirteen points.¹⁴⁴ Ultimately, the Darfur crisis received little of this proclaimed support, as elite policymaking did not match public sentiments, largely due to ambiguous conflict perceptions, interests in maintaining the status quo, and regional dynamics that echoed the biased narrative of “another African civil war.”

Some, however, have a more optimistic take on the Darfur nonintervention. In their interviews with regional elites, Verhoeven et al. found cause for optimism as related to the expansion of humanitarian interventions, albeit under a different name.¹⁴⁵ For instance, El-Ghassim Wane, the director of the AU’s Peace and Security Department, did not view Darfur as an example of the failure of African states to multilaterally intervene in their neighbors’ domestic crises. In Darfur, he saw an opportunity for African states to learn optimal resource pooling and specializations for future crisis management.

As Verhoeven et al. noted, since the Darfur Crisis, the AU has wielded force in the Central African Republic, Burundi, and Somalia.¹⁴⁶ It has also imposed sanctions to manage unconstitutional power takeovers in Comoros, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Togo, and Madagascar. Verhoeven et al. add that while “the AU may not use verbatim R2P language because of its connotations with Western imperialism,” especially after the western Libya intervention in 2011, “the practice of intervention as a legitimate instrument in Africa’s international relations to arrest bloody conflicts or prevent violence from escalating further is here to stay.”¹⁴⁷ Therefore, Darfur may serve as an example of how non-Western actors can begin to institutionalize their neighborhoods for more effective, collective humanitarian outcomes; that is, if we can somehow sideline the decades-long atrocities continuing to occur in Darfur.

While some scholars interpret Darfur as a catalyst to further institutionalize AU principles of humanitarian intervention,¹⁴⁸ in this study Darfur more readily represents persistent nonintervention in a region still experiencing systematic humanitarian abuses; and now even the UN peacekeepers have abandoned the region. The main distinguishers of this policy outcome from the interventions in Kosovo and Libya are unfavorable conflict perceptions (freighted by the dynamics of national interest) and regional variations in institutional mandates and resources.

In the last chapter of this journey, I synthesize such pathways of intervention and nonintervention as portrayed via the Kosovo, Libya, and Darfur case studies. I return to the interacting variables of conflict perception, regional variation, and geopolitical interests to explain patterns of selectivity in humanitarian military interventions. I consolidate these findings within a

four-by-four typology of intervention, followed by a short section on contributions and implications for international security policy and ethics in international relations. Last, I suggest several steps for future research into a phenomenon that has the potential to save millions, but instead often inflicts damage upon human rights, operates with veiled interests, and perpetuates regional bias about the worth of human life.

8 • Conclusions and the Future of Humanitarian Interventions

Because you can't intervene everywhere, you don't conclude you can't intervene anywhere.

—Zbigniew Brzezinski¹

The phenomenon of humanitarian military intervention reached its apex in the 1990s, yet as Darfur's persistent and urgent calls for international support remind us, global demands for humanitarian intervention will not tone down in the next decades, and neither will the stark inconsistencies in intervention selectivity. Closer to the Western neighborhood, in 2022, Haiti's de facto prime minister Ariel Henry also called for foreign intervention to help Haiti's police force contain widespread gang violence, prevent a complete state failure, and restore security to their citizens.² With the support of the United States, the UN Security Council considered yet another proposal for a multinational force, even though Haiti's past experiences of external intervention have echoed dynamics of Western imperialism and have not provided a permanent solution to the cycles of instability. Yet again, the international community finds itself in the quandary of either ignoring the horrific humanitarian crisis or dispatching a flawed response laden in dynamics of domination.³

Beyond the uncertain humanitarian outcomes of future interventions, the question remains: Why are some pleas for humanitarian intervention heeded quickly while others remain muted or discounted for decades? Is it the degree of humanitarian emergency in the target state, the level of national interest across potential intervenors, the push to uphold humanitarian norms, the economic connections between actors, or something that cuts across these categories?

Equipped with our statistical trends and three detailed cases of intrastate crisis, we can now pose the question that underpins the trajectory of this

study: Does the prevention of human suffering or the pursuit of strategic interests primarily activate these military interventions? In other words, are humanitarian military interventions *really* humanitarian? The answer to such a question is a hesitant yes. Yes, humanitarian military interventions certainly require a threshold of human suffering to become probable global policymaking. But this human rights dimension is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the activation of such missions. Given our model findings on the minimal impact of both traditional state interests and norms of human rights on the selectivity gap of humanitarian military interventions, the nature of the question changes. We must instead ask: Under what conditions does human suffering prompt third-party responses, including humanitarian military intervention? Using both aggregated modeling and case study analysis, this book has shown that the probability of humanitarian intervention depends on how powerful international actors perceive the violence within the conflict: whether as another civil war or as systematic killings. Yet even if the conflict receives favorable perceptions as something beyond a civil war, it must still be near a good neighborhood, synonymous with the Western sphere and institutions, to receive third-party resources and perhaps a military rescue.

What do these patterns say about the current state of international norms regarding the protection of innocents? Given the regional biases that underlie the selectivity of humanitarian military intervention, can we speak of a normative consensus on human rights across borders? In this last chapter, beyond summaries of empirical arguments, I discuss the ethical implications behind the regional biases that pervade international humanitarian expectations, exploring ways to diminish the selectivity gap that has characterized many findings in this study. I conclude with ways in which this book can speak to future debates on humanitarian intervention or nonintervention when confronting the worst of human suffering beyond our own borders.

Key Drivers of Intervention

Understanding the dynamics behind contemporary military interventions within internal conflicts is not only an exercise in isolating important theoretical variables but an endeavor that may alter international behavior toward future calls for humanitarian interventions. If the propelling force of intervention is humanitarian need, including perceptions of grave human rights abuses, then the international community should not discourage these defensible endeavors, but instead should focus on improving resources,

consistency in standards, and humanitarian outcomes. Most importantly, such a finding would warrant, to some degree, the conferral of the label “humanitarian military intervention” upon these missions. Alternatively, if the reasons behind the interventions are predominantly tied to national interests or harmful biases, the international community must consider stricter barriers so as to limit the abuse of the R2P norm for self-interested or paternalistic purposes and the co-opting of humanitarian international law as a whole. If the answer resides along the middle of this spectrum—such as involving interactions between political identities, interests, and norms across different spheres of the world—the academic community must work harder to define relationships so as to determine the efficacy, possible biases, and ultimate role of these missions across categories. The primary catalysts of these interventions can influence the outcome for the people on the ground, either placing humanitarian goals before or after national interests, and may perpetuate often unspoken biases within international politics.

So what stand as the primary drivers of humanitarian military interventions in this study? The good news is that national interests do not dominate this answer, but the bad news is that neither do human rights considerations and universal norms. Instead, the effects of both interests and human rights norms depend upon variations in conflict perceptions and regional institutionalization. The theoretical framework of good versus bad neighborhoods begins to explain the regional variation in intervention outcomes, while the role of conflict perceptions may explain the conditions under which regional resources become activated.⁴ For instance, in the Kosovo Crisis, it took years for NATO to consider the suffering of ethnic Albanians as worthy of elite attention, let alone military intervention. But as soon as the perception of the Kosovo Crisis shifted from ethnic/religious civil war and into the realm of systematic killing, the Western neighborhood activated its values-based institutions and resources. This transformation in conflict perceptions occurred swiftly after US ambassador William Walker personally witnessed the civilian massacres in 1999, against the backdrop of years of third-party inactivity toward Kosovo. For Kosovo, this change in conflict perceptions was a mandatory condition for Western actors to consider intervention; once it was fulfilled, Western institutions created secondary interests based on their own functionalities and values-based alliance. The Kosovo intervention became a test of NATO’s regional values, credibility, and effectiveness as well as the West’s enforcement of its own normative image.

In Libya, conflict perceptions were immediately favorable to Western attention because of existing geopolitical interests in regime change. As soon as Gadhafi began his offensive against protesters, the Western media, along-

side elites, immediately reported the crisis as a case of systematic violence, with the Libyan government as the fully culpable actor and the protesters as the outmatched, innocent victims. But because Libya was not within a Western neighborhood, NATO required strong proof that both the UN and regional institutions such as the African Union (AU) and Arab League (AL) would contribute to the mission, so as to prop mission legitimacy and support NATO's Western values. Ultimately, the West was only interested in regime change in Libya, which was easier to pursue amid favorable conflict perceptions. NATO did not care to invest in postconflict rebuilding in the region in the same way they did in Kosovo. As the previously eager Western partners lost interest following Gadhafi's overthrow, postintervention Libya descended into failing statehood and civil violence, making it a prime hub for regional terrorist actors like ISIS, even more than a decade later.

In comparing the two missions, we see that NATO took longer to intervene in response to the human suffering in Kosovo but was ready to put boots on the ground once the mission was underway. In the long run, it also invested more in Kosovo's future stability and institution building. In contrast, NATO intervened swiftly through aerial strikes to stop human suffering in Libya, but as soon as the Gadhafi regime fell, NATO and Western partners abandoned Libya to its failing state conditions, as regime change was the main and final objective. In both cases, conflict perceptions and regional institutions were important factors of intervention, albeit within a dramatically different timeline. Once the suffering in Kosovo earned the right to be called "ethnic cleansing" or "potential genocide," Western elites were ready to expand the good neighborhood parameters to incorporate Kosovo into the European identity, hence investing heavily in its future. As the narratives show, transatlantic actors were sure of the Balkans' path of democratization and assimilation into "civilized" Europe.⁵ But this expansion of the neighborhood was not an option in Libya. The 2011 intervention in Libya never had transformative goals beyond a quick regime overthrow. In fact, Western leaders rarely uttered words of democratic solidarity for Libya. They simply could not envision Libya within the good Western neighborhood. Favorable conflict perceptions may have propelled a military intervention in Libya, but they were not enough to mobilize the resources of the good neighborhood toward long-term transformations.

Key Drivers of Nonintervention

Perceptions and regional variations are a double-edged sword. The forces that drove the Kosovo and Libya interventions are the same ones that ham-

per international responses to the decades-long atrocities within Darfur. Far from the borders of a good neighborhood, Darfur holds minimal national interest for powerful states and institutions, beyond the interest of maintaining a terrifying status quo. Making matters worse, fragmented perceptions of the violence on the ground enable passive reactions, while the racial biases embedded within the international system perpetuate a simplistic “another African civil war” narrative regarding the systematic, decades-long human rights crisis in Darfur. In an attempt to limit further Western influence in the continent and maintain a status quo favorable to them, even regional actors such as the AU and AL have gone out of their way to dismiss narratives of genocide or systematic killings in Darfur, preferring to discuss the government of Sudan (GoS) as an equally culpable actor wrangling a complicated identity civil war. They also monopolized the third-party mission in Darfur until its termination, which proved to be one of the most ineffective missions in the history of peacekeeping.

Western actors have sometimes protested against the civil war narrative by proclaiming the violence in Darfur as ongoing genocide; but without the activation of their regional institutions, Western accusations of genocide in Darfur enter the void of UN stalemates. Against a backdrop of accusations of imperialism, the West was able to gain credibility and normative power via nonintervention in Darfur, instead allowing regional institutions to take the reins. It was also able to sidestep a mission within a noninstitutionalized bad neighborhood, choosing to preserve a deadly sovereign rule over the risks of more disorder in Sudan and surrounding states overwhelmed by refugee flows and their own internal problems.

Indeed, almost twenty years later, the people of Darfur continue to suffer from government-sponsored violence partially because effective institutions are too far away from their homes. NATO refuses to use its resources beyond its own neighborhood, especially when there are no interests to pursue. It refuses to act for humanitarian objectives in regions that do not serve as arenas for the pursuit of its transatlantic values and Western collective security. In other words, NATO and other Western actors have effectively regionalized their responsibility to protect doctrine and any human rights norms that follow. As figure 8.1 shows, all crises bordering the Western neighborhood had much higher rates of intervention than the crises outside this neighborhood, regardless of national interests involved.

This regionalization of humanitarian responsibility also denotes a specific institutionalization of humanitarian intervention. For instance, the Kosovo and Libya interventions overcame the UN Security Council’s opposition or restrictions by pivoting to a NATO mandate. Yet in the likely sce-

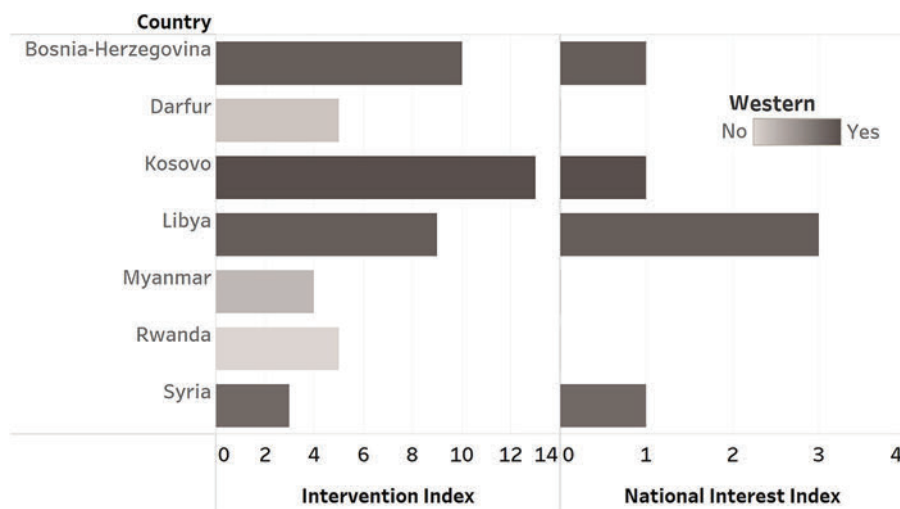


Fig. 8.1. Crisis Intervention by Region and Interests, 1989–2014

Source: This graphic applies an expanded set of cases from the aggregated dataset introduced in chapter 3.

nario where the UN remains paralyzed and ineffective due to the P5 veto power, non-Western neighborhoods do not have the similar choice to activate regional mission mandates. Thus if we extrapolate past patterns to the future of humanitarian interventionism, we can expect that in the West, the regionalization of responsibility may generally prompt NATO interventions into humanitarian crises, while beyond the West, military intervention into intrastate crises must occur as either unilateral interventions, which have grown unpopular in the post–Cold War era, or as rare, often lukewarm UN interventions, which must overcome the Security Council’s potent vetoes to become reality. In some instances, a “coalition of the willing” might spearhead more interests-driven interventions to bolster the humanitarian legitimacy of a mission, such as in the case of Iraq in 2003. In the case of Darfur, for instance, with the UN hybrid mission limited in its mandate, funding, and timeline by Security Council members, the future humanitarian response would demand a coalition of states to act outside of formal institutional mechanisms, which is difficult to achieve without the resource pooling and political will of a regional values-based alliance. In other words, even a coalition of the willing intervention would depend on existing levels of institutionalization within a region, further evincing the regionalization of humanitarian norms and mechanisms into the future.

The effects of this regionalization of responsibility extend beyond Darfur.

All violent conflicts outside of the Western neighborhood suffer from fragmentations in conflict perception and muted international reactions. For instance, the atrocities committed by the Myanmar military against the Rohingya minority population remain at the periphery of Western institutions and elite attention. While the UN has condemned the violence as ethnic cleansing, it has been unable to rally support for third-party intervention. As the violence rages on, the international community limits itself to reading periodic updates from NGOs and UN agencies on the worsening of the Myanmar crisis. As long as Bangladesh takes on the refugee spillover and the Myanmar government denies the existence of mass graves, the international community will dismiss the degree of undeniable human terror so as not to activate any legal mandates to respond.

The typology of intervention below (fig. 8.2), based on aggregated data and case study narratives, confirms such tragic consequences. If a violent internal crisis is outside of the Western neighborhood and within the realm of a civil war narrative, the probability of rescue is in the negatives, even if national interests are moderate across third-party actors. If the internal crisis happens near a Western neighborhood and also accrues perceptions of systematic killings, then intervention is increasingly probable and more rigorous. As the figure reveals, there are degrees of intervention within the Western realm as well. While Bosnia and Kosovo had limited initial interests at play, these crises received more intense interventions than did Libya, as they were within the Western neighborhood, not simply proximate to it. The intervention in Libya, on the other hand, was primarily driven by great power interests and favorable conflict perceptions.

Simply put, current norms and expectations for the protection of innocents vary by region of the world. Scholars, policymakers, and institutions such as the UN may wax poetic about the importance of human rights across the globe, but in times of crisis, the human rights of specific populations and regions of the world become deserving of protection, while the rights and safety of others barely elicit any responsibility to care, let alone act, unless the powerful can benefit from their suffering. This regional discrimination, unfortunately, may arise from the coveted, shared values of Western institutions, not simply from the expected, cold indifference of geopolitics. These benign origins are what make the selectivity gap so much harder to address, as it comes with benefits for some of us, but it leaves many of us to fend for ourselves or to be exploited during the worst of times. In the Western neighborhood, institutions like NATO and the EU can rescue civilians and reestablish stability in moments of crisis, and most audiences support the liberal values that underpin the activated institutions. So how can we preserve the

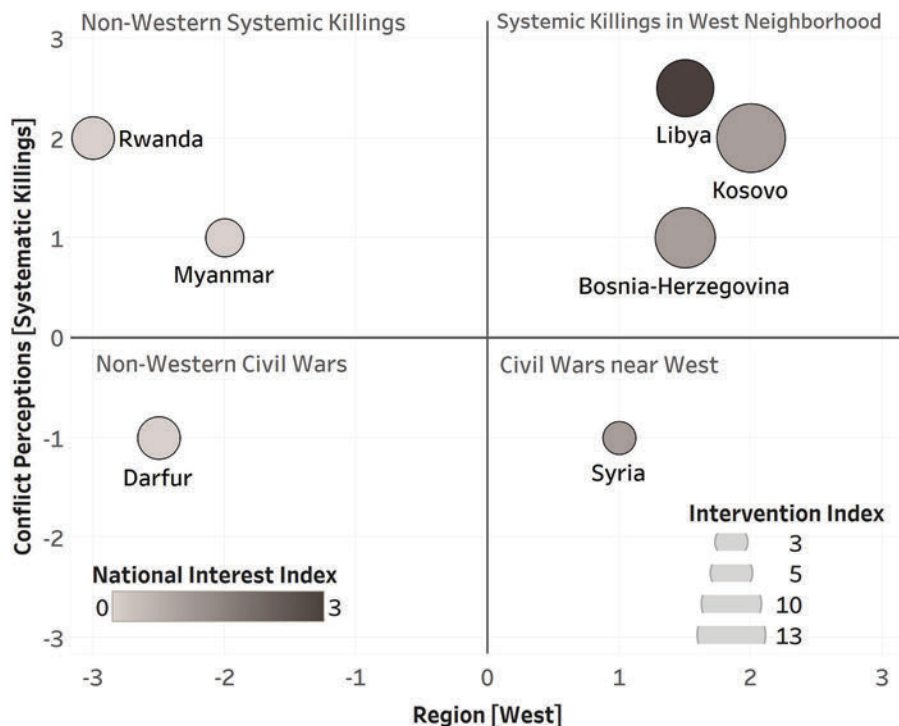


Fig. 8.2. Typology of Humanitarian Military Intervention

Source: Reproduced from Sidita Kushi, "Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises," *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022), 239 (fig. 8), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

benefits of such regional norms and institutions while chiseling away at the clear and abundant inequalities and grave exploitations that they may perpetuate within our international community? The first step may lie in supporting and emboldening regional institutions outside of the Western sphere.

Policy-making Related to Regional Selectivity

Because Western institutions such as NATO drive military interventions during times of neighborhood crises, then perhaps strengthening regional institutions throughout other neighborhoods could narrow the selectivity gap. Keohane briefly references this in his discussion of good versus bad neighborhoods as well. He suggests that "special efforts should be made to

reinforce democratic institutions in relatively large countries that could serve as the basis for the emergence of good neighborhoods where they do not currently exist.”⁶ He highlights two potent regional actors in Africa: “nothing could be more important for southern and western Africa than to ensure that South Africa and Nigeria both strengthen their domestic authority structures and remain, or become, democratic.”⁷

Beyond the potential of single state actors, the AU and AL serve as strong examples of existing institutions outside of the West that are able to expand their mandates and shared resources. But the member states within these institutions are often adamant about protecting their own sovereignty and therefore contribute minimal resources to institutional growth and shared missions.⁸ There is valid reason for the member states’ tight hold onto their external sovereignty. After all, most states in non-Western neighborhoods suffered from long legacies of imposed external rule and colonialism. Third-party calls to loosen state sovereignty in favor of shared values and joint missions echo past dynamics of Western imperialism. As Keohane admits, the push for “good neighborhoods” beyond the West may mimic “a quasi-imperial situation in which outsiders rule by virtue of force, legitimated by their supposed good intentions and the pronouncements of international organizations.” The practicality of transforming neighborhoods is rife with similar dilemmas, with any external intervention perpetuating indefinite periods of foreign supervision and domination.

Even if the international dynamics could be resolved, as it stands, both the AU and AL suffer from internal dysfunctions brought about by self-interested national agendas, lack of funding, and a lack of explicit shared values.⁹ But outside support could alter these trends in the long run. If transatlantic Western actors were to open up explicit political space and bolster investments in training and resources for non-Western regional organizations, then they could one day divest themselves of the blurry, merely symbolic responsibility of global human rights protection without risking normative images and accusations of hypocrisy and indifference. With Western institutions formally denoting their domain of geographic responsibility while empowering other regional actors with greater resources and political willpower to be accountable for human rights crises responses, the selectivity gap would slowly narrow, albeit imperfectly so.

Yet despite some functionalist improvements, such a proposed solution would further solidify the regionalization of human rights norms in the near future, and in many ways excuse the Western biases within a large realm of the international community. A more rapid solution would relate to shaming well-funded, functioning Western institutions into responding to global calls

for aid when the UN is unable or unwilling to do so, and this would first require an explicit and deep reckoning with the global racial, ethnic, and Eurocentric hierarchies and biases that have brought us to this modern-day status quo of humanitarian selectivity. State constituents, INGOs, and transnational advocacy networks (TANS) could mobilize such a call to action that emphasizes human rights crisis responses and obligations beyond the Western neighborhood. In other words, civil society actors and transnational advocacy networks could direct greater effort into shaming regional institutions instead of focusing mainly on pressuring the UN into paying attention to instances of global suffering. Equalizing media reporting on distant crises, better-informed citizenry, and recalibrated expectations for human rights beyond UN mandates would be key to such an informational and symbolic campaign. In such a scenario, robust institutions would be able to stem the violence within a crisis before it required a full-blown military intervention. In fact, the UN could be encouraged to reconsider the nature of its partnerships with regional institutions as well to create more regular channels of resource sharing with NATO, the EU, the AU, and AL that don't require the unanimous consent of the Security Council. While these alternatives are possibilities in the distant future, for the time being it is important to become aware of the regional bias that pervades our "universal" notions of human rights.

The findings on the impact of conflict perceptions on intervention trajectories evince several policy implications as well. First, they show that policy elites and even general publics can alter state and institutional responses to a distant crisis by uniting behind a specific conflict perception, which prompts concerns over the manipulation of conflict narratives toward political goals.

For instance, if elites or policymakers across the globe seek to undertake a humanitarian military mission within an internal conflict, they could intentionally frame a crisis away from narratives of identity civil war and toward the favorable narrative of systematic killings. Leaders, NGOs, or citizens suffering within the internal conflicts, who may seek international intervention on their group's behalf, could also frame the violence as systematic killings, removing any tinge of civil war dynamics in their reporting. The alternative to such a mechanism is that a consolidated narrative of identity-based civil war can mute international reactions to intrastate violence. Therefore, domestic and international leaders wary of interventionist efforts may strategically bolster such civil war narratives to stem international responses to humanitarian atrocities, promote the status quo, or support a specific faction in the conflict over another.

Last, given the dramatic regional pattern of selectivity activated by changing conflict perceptions, the international community—including security

scholars, national leaders, and international organizations—must recognize the Western bias in humanitarian interventions and further explore why it arises. Is this Western bias more cultural or interests-based, or does it come about due to institutional mechanisms otherwise missing in the non-Western sphere? In the latter case, international scholars and leaders should craft more robust structures of cooperation across regions; but in the former, these scholars and leaders should be cautious of the biased and often nonhumanitarian causes of “humanitarian” military interventions.

The Ethics and Future of Humanitarian Military Intervention

This research confirms the regionalized selectivity gap of humanitarian intervention, driven by variations in institutional resources, which may activate due to favorable conflict perceptions. Along this empirical journey, we must also speak to the larger themes of ethics and morality and how they interact, if at all, within the realm of international relations. Does contemporary international relations even allow for moral considerations? If so, are current patterns of humanitarian military intervention ethical?

It is my hope that future research will delve deeper into the patterns of humanitarian military interventions, and with every new empirical finding offer new insight into the mutual imbrication of power, ethics, and norms. The current humanitarian crises, including in Syria, Libya, Palestine, Yemen, Myanmar, and Darfur, require much more of our attention as scholars and policymakers, as international security is more than counterterrorism, the management of failed states, or the control of interstate hostilities. The way we respond to these armed crises, ranging from levels of media attention to degrees of Western and global policymaking in response to the violence, will shape the nature of the international relations discipline and our political realities across borders.

Although this book assesses the gravely underexplored patterns of regionality and perceptions in international interventions, it does not explicitly and fully explore the racial, ethnic, or religious biases that may form the foundations of some of this regionality. It is imperative that future research expand upon the regionality of interventions by directly tracing the construction of racial categories within and across borders and the impact that such racial divisions have on international human rights promotion, interventions, and institutional mandates and enforcement. The historical silence regarding the exploitive characteristics of the international system, defined by legacies of racism, imperialism, and Eurocentrism, remains one of the biggest challenges

and most harmful path dependencies of international relations as a field. It is my hope that the new regional framework introduced in the book may open new pathways for how to situate, understand, and ultimately measure and trace the role of race via theory and empirical analysis into the future.

Beyond this, expanded research on other cases of internal violence is necessary to untangle the relationships among perceptions, interests, and norms. More in-depth examinations are needed to understand, for example, why Russia invested so much time and resources into their normative justifications for the Crimean and Ukrainian interventions, even though traditional realist interests and revisionist power aspirations appear dominant in their calculations for invasion.¹⁰ Are the normative justifications only frail mirrors for realist pursuits, or do they serve a more significant purpose in today's international arena? Are there differences in how Western versus non-Western actors use or abuse humanitarian norms and values? A more multi-dimensional theoretical perspective is required to explain Russia's diverse arsenal of interventionist tools, including normative appeals to identity and anti-imperialism, economic incentives, indirect coercion, and, of course, pure militaristic strategies and territorial invasion.¹¹ Russia has justified its military invasions of Ukraine in 2014 and in 2022 through the co-opting of international institutional mandates, humanitarian norms of protecting civilians, and outright denial when using military force.¹² In contemporary politics, a state's reliance on military might to achieve their goals is perhaps more restricted than past eras of international politics. Thus normative context may play a much larger role in allowing for less risky interventions far beyond the realm of humanitarianism.¹³ Indeed, in the Crimea intervention, Russian national officials outright rejected the wording of "military intervention."¹⁴ In contrast, during the bipolar Cold War international context, the Soviet Union never attempted to legitimize its military interventions through humanitarian norms. But today, Russia's strategic use of norms (shallow humanitarian justifications for intervention; responsibility to protect rhetoric; the co-opting of anti-imperialist language; and calls to protect co-ethnic groups across borders) may allow it to pursue regional power and irredentist agendas without as much costly international interference.

Western responses to the Syrian conflict also require additional exploration. Since 2011, the violence in Syria has unleashed the world's largest refugee crisis, with about fourteen million Syrians leaving their homes, almost seven million internally displaced, and more than four million refugees displaced internationally.¹⁵ By February 2013, over seventy thousand Syrians had already been murdered. By the end of 2019, the Assad regime had used chemical weapons 266 times since the UN demanded that they be removed.¹⁶

Indeed, the Assad regime has predominantly targeted the country's majority Sunni population, and thus the regime's violence may fit within definitions of systematic killings.¹⁷ But this narrative did not solidify across Western communities, as more geostrategic matters of counterterrorism and regime change aspirations have taken precedence over the ethical debates. Former US president Barack Obama was quoted in 2013 as saying, "We can't even identify the groups on the ground that we might support," in response to a potential humanitarian intervention in the Syrian civil war.¹⁸ In other words, Western elites, beyond all other considerations, view the prospects of successful, transformative policies in the Syrian "civil war" as bleak. In 2017 and 2018, in response to more chemical attacks, US president Donald Trump ordered missile strikes in Syria, yet for the most part the main Western objective in Syria has been to stem terrorism, counter Russian and Iranian involvement, pursue pro-rebel geopolitical objectives, and limit the spillover effects, not to promote a better humanitarian outcome. There is reason to suspect that conflict perceptions and regional bias are driving the international trajectory of the Syrian conflict as well. The evolving, highly politicized violence engulfing Syria may require a regional lens of analysis, especially as new information about what is happening on the ground and within high-level policy circles becomes more readily available.

While this book has analyzed all recorded instances of internal armed conflicts and ensuing humanitarian interventions until 2014, the book's sample universe is dominated by Western actors as key third-party intervenors. Future research should also consider splitting up the sample of crises between Western and non-Western intervenors and perhaps, more specifically, among Russian, Arab, or Chinese third-party intervenors. Refining sample characteristics could provide more nuanced insight into the selectivity gap in intervention across different geopolitical spheres of influence and begin to examine non-Western institutional effects too.

Last, future studies should extend measurements of conflict perceptions beyond dichotomous generalizations and individual case studies via a systematic analysis of language used across media, elites, and the general public during specific crises.¹⁹ If we succeed in better understanding the power of conflict perceptions during a crisis, we can learn to use information campaigns, media accounts, and word choices to equalize the distribution of human rights protection across the world or at the very least minimize the co-opting of humanitarian context for geopolitical military interventions, which can make an internal crisis worse for all. We must also prevent the manipulation of these perception narratives: the abuse of information and language toward dismissing human suffering, perceiving a subset of our

global community as undeserving of human rights protection, or co-opting of favorable narratives to enable power-hungry interventions under the guise of morality.

Implicitly underlying this study are questions of responsibility to the distant other. Yet the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle becomes a mere international platitude, the justification of the status quo of regionalized indifference. It already assumes a duty on behalf of international actors to protect innocent civilians from massacres when the sovereign state refuses to do so. But despite the universal consensus that “something must be done,” our international security policies consistently showcase a highly biased enforcement of the R2P norm. In most parts of our world, states and elites continue to commit mass atrocities or genocide against their own citizens, while the rest of us stand by as sympathetic, knowledgeable, but paralyzed actors. By revealing the extreme variations in such international responses, including new fundamental causes, we can begin to earnestly discuss and decide upon the nature of our political expectations, ethical standards, and trade-offs between sovereignty and suffering.

Appendix A

Chapter 3 Appendix

The following tables and figures provide supporting information for the assertions made in chapter 3.

Table A3.1. Case Universe of Humanitarian Military Interventions during Year of Intrastate Conflict, 1989–2014

Country	Year	Intervenor(s)	Start (yyymmdd)	End (yyymmdd)
Sri Lanka	1987	India	19870730	19900320
South Africa, Namibia	1989	UN (UNTAG)	19890216	19900321
Cambodia	1990	UN (UNAMIC)	19911001	19920331
Liberia	1990	West African Peacekeeping: UN; United States of America	19900823	19961228
Cambodia	1991	UN (UNTAC)	19920201	19930930
El Salvador	1991	UN (ONUSAL)	19910701	19950430
Iran	1991	Germany relief for Iraqi refugees	19910424	Unknown
Iraq	1991	United States of America, France, UK, Turkey	19910222	19910228
Kuwait	1991	UN (UNIKOM)	19910403	20030930
Rwanda	1991	OAU	19910329	19931005
Sierra Leone	1991	Nigeria, Guinea	19910412	19970531
Uganda	1991	OAU peacekeeping on border with Rwanda	19910710	19931101
Bosnia- Herzegovina	1992	UN (UNPROFOR)	19920112	19950331
Djibouti	1992	France	19920225	19921127
Georgia	1992	Russia peacekeeping	19920721	19931201
Iraq	1992	US-led, Operation Southern Watch	19920827	20030319
Macedonia	1992	UN (UNPROFOR)	19920112	19950331
Moldova	1992	Russia	19920622	19920730
Mozambique	1992	UN (ONUMOZ)	19921206	19941215
Serbia	1992	UN (UNPROFOR)	19920112	19950331
Somalia	1992	UN (UNOSOM I), US, Italian, Canadian, and French troops	19920424	19930309
Azerbaijan	1993	Iran	19930903	19931025
Bosnia- Herzegovina	1993	United States of America, France, Germany	19930228	19960109
Bosnia- Herzegovina	1993	NATO (Operation Deny Flight)	19930412	19951220
Haiti	1993	UN (UNMIH)	19930901	19960603
Liberia	1993	UN (UNOMIL)	19930922	19970930
Rwanda	1993	France, UN (UNOMUR) (UNAMIR)	19930209	19930318
Somalia	1993	UN (UNOSOM II)	19930331	19950331
Tajikistan	1993	CIS Collective Peacekeeping Forces	19931001	19961223
Congo	1994	France and US	19940624	19940821
Georgia	1994	Russia peacekeeping in Abkhazia	19940623	Unclear
Haiti	1994	United States of America	19940919	19950331
Papua New Guinea	1994	South Pacific Peacekeeping	19941008	19941019

Table A3.1—*Continued*

Country	Year	Intervenor(s)	Start (yyyymmdd)	End (yyyymmdd)
Rwanda	1994	French Operation Turquoise; US; Canada	19940624	19940821
Tajikistan	1994	UN (UNMOT)	19941204	20000515
Uganda	1994	UN (UNOMUR)	19930622	19940921
Angola	1995	UN (UNAVEM III) and British peacekeeping	19950201	19970630
Bosnia- Herzegovina	1995	UN (UNMIBH)	19951220	20021231
Bosnia- Herzegovina	1995	NATO (IFOR) Operation Joint Endeavor	19951220	19961220
Croatia	1995	UN (UNCRO)	19950331	19960115
Macedonia	1995	UN (UNPREDEP)	19950331	19990228
Somalia	1995	Operation United Shield, United States of America	19950208	19950303
Bosnia- Herzegovina	1996	SFOR Stabilisation Force	19961220	20051202
Central African Republic	1996	France	19960519	19970105
Haiti	1996	UN (UNSMIH)	19960701	19970731
Iraq	1996	US-led Operation North Watch	19970101	20030501
Papua New Guinea	1996	Truce Monitoring Group (New Zealand)	19971117	19980430
Albania	1997	Italy, France, Greece	19970411	19970811
Angola	1997	UN (MONUA)	19970630	19990226
Central African Republic	1997	MISAB	19970208	19980415
Congo	1997	France and US (Pelican Operation)	19970609	19970617
Guatemala	1997	UN (MINUGUA)	19970101	19970531
Haiti	1997	UN (UNTMIH) transition mission	19970801	19971130
Sierra Leone	1997	Nigeria, ECOMOG	19970529	20000404
Guinea-Bissau	1998	ECOMOG, Senegal, Guinea, Portugal, France	19980609	19990316
Papua New Guinea	1998	Australia	19980430	20030630
Sierra Leone	1998	UN (UNOMSIL)	19980713	19991022
Albania	1999	NATO Operation Allied Harbor	19990411	19990901
DR Congo (Zaire)	1999	UN (MONUSCO)	19990831	20130328
Haiti	1999	UN (MIPONUH)	19991217	20000315
Indonesia/East Timor	1999	Australia, UN (UNTAET)	19990920	20000228
Sierra Leone	1999	UN (UNAMSIL)	19991022	20051231

Table A3.1—*Continued*

Country	Year	Intervenor(s)	Start (yyyymmdd)	End (yyyymmdd)
Yugoslavia (Kosovo)	1999	NATO Operation Allied Force, Russia, KFOR	19990324	19990610
Ethiopia	2000	UN (UNMEE)	20000731	20080730
Sierra Leone	2000	United Kingdom operation separate from UN	20000508	20020728
Afghanistan	2001	US-led coalition, ISAF, NATO	20011007	20141231
Burundi	2001	South Africa	20011028	2008124
Macedonia	2001	NATO	20010817	20030331
Indonesia/East Timor	2002	UN (UNMISSET)	20020520	20050520
Ivory Coast	2002	France, US, ECOMOG	20020922	20050406
Burundi	2003	African Union	20030427	20040601
Chad	2003	France	20040731	Unclear
DR Congo (Zaire)	2003	EU (Operation Artemis)	20030606	20030901
Liberia	2003	ECOWAS, US, UN (UNMIL)	20030804	20031001
Macedonia	2003	EU	20030331	20031215
Solomon Islands	2003	Australian-led	20030724	20030813
Sudan	2003	France	20030731	Unclear
Burundi	2004	UN (ONUB)	20040601	20061231
Haiti	2004	United States of America, France, Chile, Canada (MIF), UN (MINUSTAH)	20040229	20051231
Iraq	2004	US-led Multinational Force in Iraq (MNF—Iraq) / Operation Iraqi Freedom	20040119	20111215
Ivory Coast	2004	UN (UNOCI)	20040405	20170630
Sudan	2004	AU, Germany logistics	20040508	Unclear
Sudan	2005	UN (UNMIS); European Union Support to AMIS	20050427	20110709
Lebanon	2006	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and North Israel	20060811	20060823
Central African Republic	2007	United Nations Mission (MINURCAT—Central African Republic)	20070925	20101231
Somalia	2007	African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM); transition to African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) in 2022	20070301	Ongoing
Sudan	2007	African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation (UNAMID—Sudan/Darfur)	20071231	20201231

Table A3.1—*Continued*

Country	Year	Intervenor(s)	Start (yyyymmdd)	End (yyyymmdd)
Central African Republic	2008	European Union Military Operation (EUFOR I—Central African Republic); Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Mission for the Consolidation of Peace	20080201	20090315
Chad	2008	European Union Military Operation in Chad (EUFOR—Chad)	20080128	20100418
Ivory Coast	2011	UN (UNOCI) and French Opération Licorne	20110401	20110711
Libya	2011	NATO, Jordan, Qatar	20110319	20111023
South Sudan	2011	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)	20110909	Ongoing
Syria	2012	United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS)	20120421	20120819
Central African Republic	2013	African Union (AU) African-led International Support Mission (AFISM-CAR) and French mission; United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA); European Union Force	20130111	Ongoing
DR Congo (Zaire)	2013	UN (MONUSCO), EU	20130328	Ongoing
Mali	2013	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA); AU mission; French mission	20130111	Ongoing
Iraq	2014	US, Combined Joint Task Force; Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF–OIR)	20140808	Ongoing

Source: Reprinted from Sidita Kushi, "Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises," *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022), 246–49 (table A1), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

Table A3.2. Descriptive Statistics by Region, 1989–2014

Variables	Non-West					West				
	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Battle Deaths	889	1,334	3,640	25	53,948	57	863.2	1,574	27	7,365
Intervention Index	917	0.709	2.538	0	18	66	1.727	3.312	0	13
Identity War	695	0.847	0.360	0	1	58	0.948	0.223	0	1
Affinity Score P5	795	0.812	0.159	0.375	1	56	0.651	0.219	0.470	1
Oil Rents of GDP	775	5.992	12.50	0	67.33	54	0.199	0.455	0	2.227
GDP Growth	843	3.753	8.577	−64.05	57.82	50	6.027	14.31	−29.10	88.96
FDI Inflows	780	2.329	7.181	−82.89	89.48	47	2.327	2.327	0.213	12.05
GDP per capita	774	1,418	1,793	73.83	21,425	54	14,750	9,156	523.0	33,635
Mineral Rents	793	0.946	3.363	0	43.73	54	0.0488	0.133	0	0.603
Natural Resource Rent	734	13.94	14.95	0.073	80.75	52	0.662	1.156	0.00193	7.013
Trade Flows	797	53.78	33.09	0.021	199.7	54	71.91	16.05	35.51	107.7
Exports	797	24.06	17.11	0.006	98.76	54	29.70	8.054	9.746	54.35
Fuel Exports	548	20.20	31.08	0	99.79	50	2.580	3.663	0.0240	17.72
Oil Exporter	913	0.193	0.395	0	1	66	0	0	0	0
Polity2	893	1.331	5.936	−9	10	63	5.841	5.586	−7	10
Durability Index	915	17.43	19.93	0	105	66	34.44	33.12	0	118
CINC	683	0.014	0.023	1.27e-05	0.124	58	0.005	0.007	0.000	0.0264
Source	717	251.2	648.1	0	6,601	60	270.8	515.3	0	1,768
IDP	710	580.0	903.3	0	6,000	59	348.4	479.6	0	1,300
Host	717	177.7	365.5	0	3,677	59	50.94	124.1	0	621
IGO Rate	619	33.24	10.44	0.567	51.61	54	28.79	12.21	7.372	60.68
Av. IGO Member	619	0.543	0.167	0.001	0.822	54	0.475	0.208	0.128	1.030
Physical Integrity Index	775	1.658	1.603	0	8	53	3.547	1.957	0	8
National Interest Index	917	1.517	0.827	0	3	66	0.227	0.602	0	2
Intervention	917	0.087	0.282	0	1	66	0.242	0.432	0	1

Source: Sidita Kushi, "Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises," *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022): 216–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047178221104344>

Table A3.3. Descriptive Statistics by Intervention and Nonintervention Subsample, 1989–2014

Variables	Nonintervention					Intervention				
	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Battle Deaths	868	1,221	3,430	25	53,948	78	2,248	4,616	25	30,848
Intervention Index	887	0.014	0.403	0	12	96	7.833	3,606	2	18
Identity War	674	0.883	0.322	0	1	79	0.620	0.488	0	1
Affinity Score P5	772	0.795	0.170	0.375	1	79	0.865	0.134	0.467	1
Oil Rents of GDP	748	5.437	11.70	0	67.33	81	7.251	15.87	0	67.33
GDP Growth	816	4.489	6.638	-46.08	57.82	77	-2.57	20.78	-64.05	88.96
FDI Inflows	756	2.177	5.989	-82.89	83.43	71	3.949	13.70	-33.43	89.48
GDP per Capita	753	2,386	4,513	73.83	33,635	75	1,296	2,610	96.30	21,425
Mineral Rents	764	0.856	3.240	0	43.73	83	1.191	3.458	0	18.55
Natural Resource Rent	718	12.46	14.07	0.002	79.56	68	19.34	20.33	0.063	80.75
Trade Flows	772	53.82	32.13	0.0210	199.7	79	65.71	35.06	0.027	166.9
Exports	772	24.08	16.45	0.006	98.76	79	27.67	19.12	0.010	81.52
Fuel Exports	567	18.40	29.83	0	99.79	31	24.82	35.76	1e-05	96.45
Oil Exporter	884	0.178	0.382	0	1	95	0.200	0.402	0	1
Polity2	866	1.809	6.094	-9	10	90	-0.11	4.902	-9	10
Durability Index	885	19.81	21.64	0	118	96	7.188	16.11	0	78
CINC	657	0.014	0.024	2.7e-05	0.124	84	0.002	0.003	1e-05	0.015
Source	691	242.3	643.0	0	6,601	86	336.5	598.8	0	4,500
IDP	683	543.7	829.2	0	6,000	86	708.9	1,207	0	6,000
Host	690	174.6	347.8	0	3,677	86	115.7	403.3	0	3,650
IGO Rate	594	33.68	10.58	1.701	60.68	79	26.91	9.311	0.567	46.50
Av. IGO Member	594	0.551	0.170	0.030	1.030	79	0.438	0.147	0.010	0.734
Physical Integrity	756	1.750	1.662	0	8	72	2.083	1.955	0	7
National Interest Index	887	1.485	0.878	0	3	96	0.927	0.669	0	3
Broad West	887	0.222	0.416	0	1	96	0.302	0.462	0	1
Narrow West	887	0.0564	0.231	0	1	96	0.167	0.375	0	1

Source: Silita Kushi, "Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises," *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022): 216–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

Table A3.4. Predicted Probability of Intervention by Conflict Type (non-imputed)

Variables	(1) Predicted prob. of Intervention
No Identity War	0.150*** (0.0374)
Identity War	0.0561*** (0.00905)
Observations	725

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; all predictors at their mean value.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table A3.5. Predicted Probability of Intervention by Region

Variables	(1) Predicted prob.
Non-West	0.0505*** (0.00859)
West	0.382** (0.167)
Observations	954

Note: Standard errors in parentheses; all predictors at their mean value.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

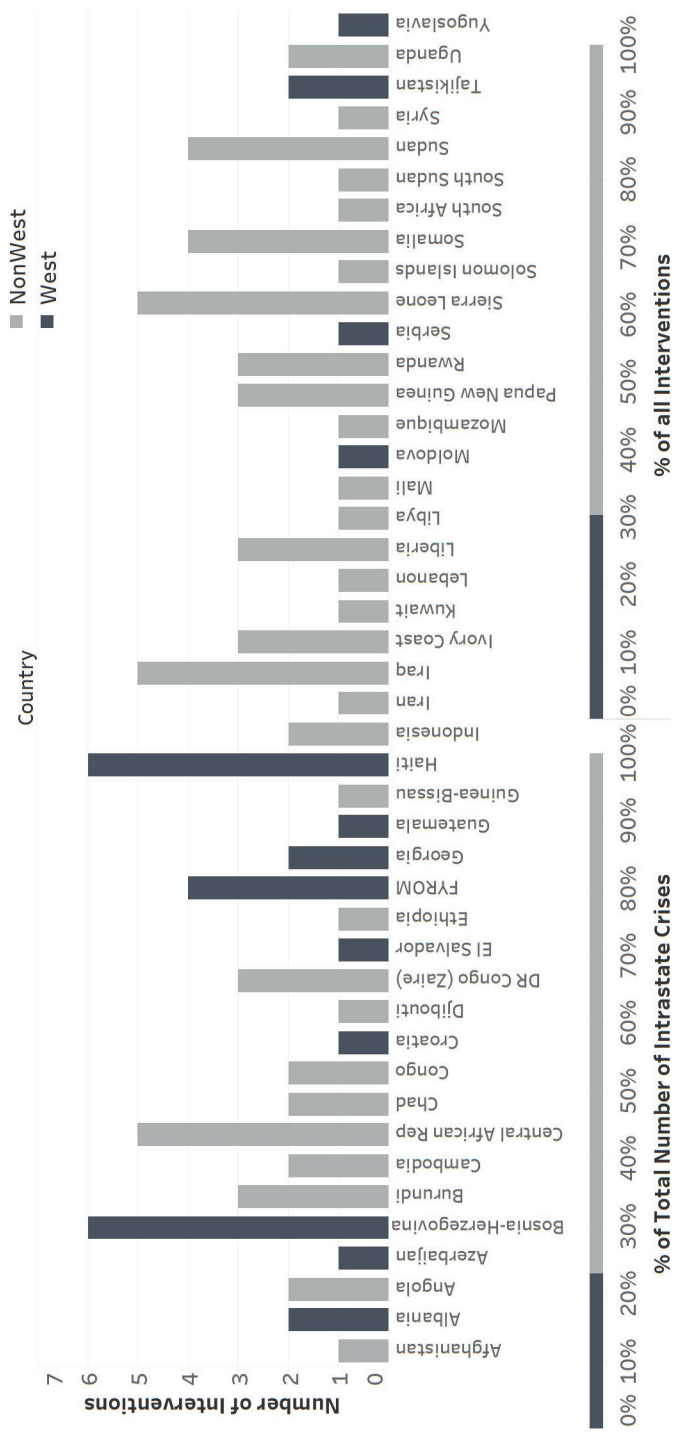


Fig. A3.1. Intervention Subsample by Region, 1989–2014 ($n = 96$)

Source: Reproduced from Sidra Kushi, "Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises," *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022): 254 (fig. A1), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

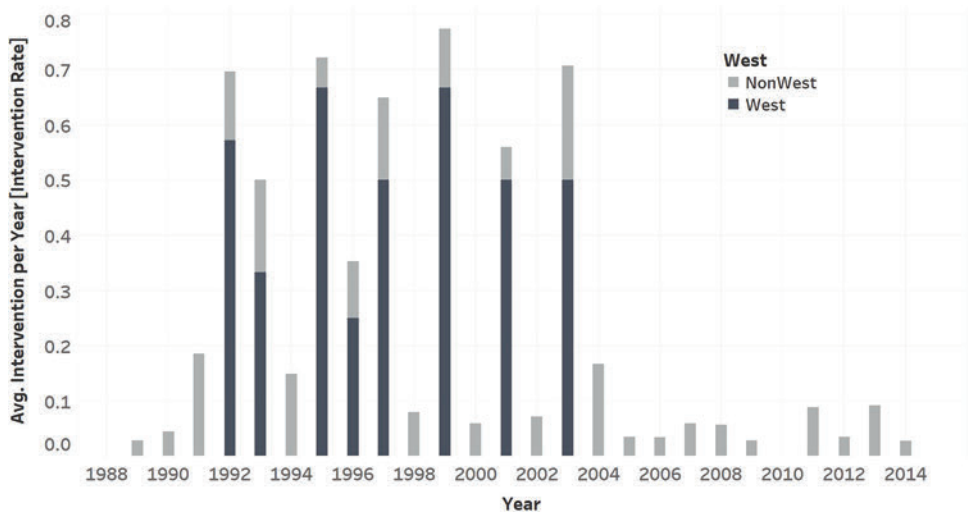


Fig. A3.2. Average Intervention per Year by Region, 1989–2014 (West narrow)
Source: Reproduced from Sidita Kushi, “Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises,” *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022): 255 (fig. A2), <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

Appendix B

Chapter 6 Appendix

This appendix provides details on the coding of narratives discussed about Libya in chapter 6.

Table A6.1. Factiva Conflict Perceptions Coding during the Libya Crisis

Narrative	Factiva Search Terms
Genocide/Mass Killings	Libya and (crisis or conflict or war or intervention) and (genocide or ethnic cleansing or massacres)
Identity War	Libya and (crisis or conflict or war or intervention) and (ethnic or religious or civil)
Terrorism	Libya and (crisis or conflict or war or intervention) and (terrorism or terrorist or terrorists)
Failed State	Libya and (crisis or conflict or war or intervention) and (failed state or failing state)

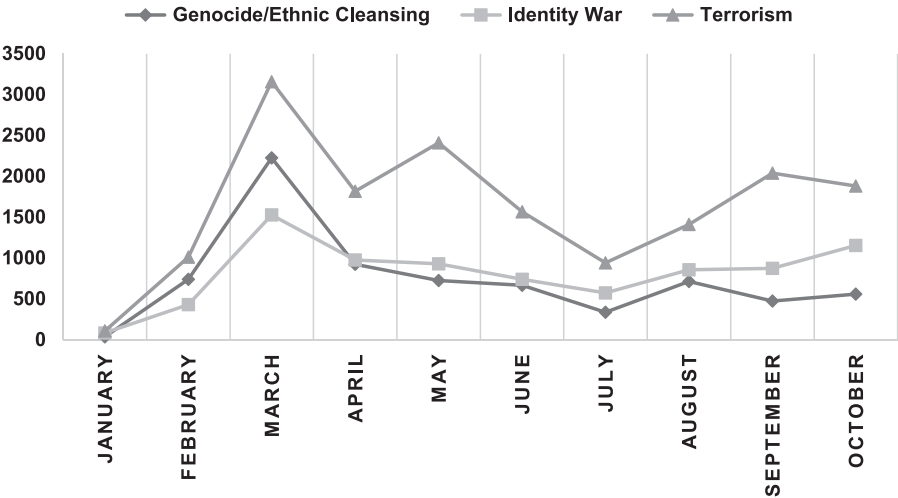


Fig. A6.1. Conflict Perceptions via Article Count during Libya Crisis
Source: Original content analysis of narratives leading up to and during the 2011 Libya intervention using the Factiva database. See table A6.1 in appendix B for details on the specific search terms applied within Factiva.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. Jean Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for the Ethics of Care* (London: Routledge, 1993), 59.
2. William Walker, Frontline interview, PBS, 2000, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/walker.html>
3. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Kosovo Verification Mission, "Special Report: Massacre of Civilians in Racak," January 17, 1999; Walker, Frontline interview, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/walker.html>
4. Walker, Frontline interview.
5. Walker, Frontline interview.
6. Walker, Frontline interview.
7. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Kosovo Verification Mission.
8. Walker, Frontline interview.
9. Walker, Frontline interview.
10. Walker, Frontline interview.
11. Nicholas Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
12. For a synthesis of greater implications of the NATO intervention in Kosovo, see Nicholas Wheeler, "Review Article: Humanitarian Intervention after Kosovo: Emergent Norm, Moral Duty or the Coming Anarchy?," *International Affairs* 77, no. 1 (2001): 113–28.
13. Barry Buzan, "The Timeless Wisdom of Realism," in *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, ed. Steve Smith, Ken Booth, and Marysia Zalewski (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 47–65; Jack Donnelly, "Realism," in *Theories of International Relations*, ed. Scott Burchill, Andrew Linklater, Richard Devetak, Jack Donnelly, Terry Nardin, Matthew Paterson, Christian Reus-Smit, and Jacqui True (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 35–56; Tim Dunne and Brian Schmidt, "Realism," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, ed. John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 84–99;

Thomas M. Franck and Nigel S. Rodley, "After Bangladesh: The Law of Humanitarian Intervention by Military Force," *American Journal of International Law* 67 (1973): 275–305.

14. Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997); Alynna J. Lyon and Chris J. Dolan, "American Humanitarian Intervention: Toward a Theory of Coevolution," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3, no. 1 (2007): 46–78, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2007.00041.x>

15. Nicholas Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*, 33–38, 105–8; Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*, 2003.

16. Laura Neack, "UN Peace-Keeping: In the Interest of Community or Self?" *Journal of Peace Research* 32, no. 2 (1995), 181–96, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343395032002005>

17. Roger D. Petersen, *Western Intervention in the Balkans: The Strategic Use of Emotion in Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 4.

18. For instance, Martha Finnemore argues that humanitarian military interventions have evolved since 1945 and are now founded upon multilateral, institutional regulations, instead of direct unilateral use of force. She claims that the legitimacy of force has declined over the decades due to emerging international norms. These norms have also expanded the range of human beings seen as worthy of international military protection. Martha Finnemore, "Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention," in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 153–85; Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*. See also Seung-Whan Choi, "What Determines US Humanitarian Intervention?" *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 30, no. 2 (2013): 121–39, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894212473916>; Andrea K. Talentino, *Military Intervention after the Cold War: The Evolution of Theory and Practice* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005); Nicholas Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Mark J. Mullenbach and Gerard P. Matthews, "Deciding to Intervene: An Analysis of International and Domestic Influences on United States Interventions in Intrastate Disputes," *International Interactions* 34, no. 1 (2008): 25–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050620701878835.2008>

19. Most of these perspectives originate from, but are not limited to, the realist school of international relations.

20. As will be detailed in later chapters, region in this context represents both geographical and ideational dimensions, with regional identities evolving and responding to events, elites, and crises.

21. The term "Western neighborhood" is inspired by Robert Keohane's distinctions between good versus bad neighborhoods, which will be detailed in later chapters. See Robert O. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention: Gradations in Sovereignty," in *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal and Political Dilemmas*, ed. J. L. Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

22. See Michael Gilligan and Steven J. Stedman, "Where Do the Peacekeepers Go?" *International Studies Review* 5, no. 4 (2003): 38; Richard Perkins and Eric Neumayer, "Extra-territorial Interventions in Conflict Spaces: Explaining the Geographies of Post-Cold War Peacekeeping," *Political Geography* 27, no. 8 (2008): 897.

23. Jeffrey Pickering and David F. Mitchell, “Empirical Knowledge on Foreign Military Intervention,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (2017), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.319>

24. This book primarily focuses on the Great Powers (P5) as they account for most trends in HMI. The Great Powers are synonymous with the P5, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council: the United States, the United Kingdom (UK), Russia, China, and France.

25. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*; Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*.

26. Taylor B. Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention: The Conditions for Success and Failure* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 20.

27. David Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

28. Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*.

29. John Mearsheimer quoted in Judith Miller, “Grand Strategy: Round and Round on US Interests; Kosovo Rekindles a Debate, Dormant for Nearly a Decade, of America’s Global Role,” *New York Times*, April 24, 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/24/arts/grand-strategy-round-round-us-interests-kosovo-rekindles-debate-dormant-for.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>; Michael Mandelbaum, “A Perfect Failure: NATO’s War Against Yugoslavia,” *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 5 (1999): 2–8; Charles Krauthammer, “The Clinton Doctrine,” *CNN*, March 29, 1999a, <http://edition.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/time/1999/03/29/doctrine.html>

30. Pickering and Mitchell, “Empirical Knowledge.”

31. Some examples of this vital scholarship include: Amitav Acharya, “Race and Racism in the Founding of the Modern World Order,” *International Affairs* 98, no. 1 (2022): 23–43, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiab198>; Alexander Anievas, Nivi Manchanda, and Robbie Shilliam, eds., *Race and Racism in International Relations: Confronting the Global Colour Line* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Alexander E. Davis, Vineet Thakur, and Peter Vale, *The Imperial Discipline: Race and the Founding of International Relations* (London: Pluto Press, 2020); Zoltán I. Búzás, “Racism and Antiracism in the Liberal International Order,” *International Organization* 75, no. 2 (2021): 440–63, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000521>; Errol A. Henderson, “Hidden in Plain Sight: Racism in International Relations Theory,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 26, no. 1 (2013): 71–92, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2012.710585>

32. See for instance, Kelebogile Zvobgo and Meredith Loken, “Why Race Matters in International Relations,” *Foreign Policy* (2020). <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/19/why-race-matters-international-relations-ir/>. For racialization in international security, see Richard W. Maass, “Racialization and International Security,” *International Security* 48, no. 2 (2023): 91–126. https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00470

33. For more examples of such racial biases in international law, institutions, and foreign policy formation, see Bianca Freeman, D. G. Kim, and David A. Lake, “Race in International Relations: Beyond the ‘Norm against Noticing,’” *Annual Review of Political Science* 25 (2022): 175–96. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051820-120746>

34. Maass, “Racialization and International Security.”

35. Andy Baker, “Race, Paternalism, and Foreign Aid: Evidence from US Public Opinion,” *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 1 (2015): 93–109; William Easterly, *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006). For a study that focuses on

shared religious identity, see Michael Grillo and Juris Pupcenoks, “Let’s Intervene! But Only if They’re Like Us,” *International Interactions* 43, no. 2 (2017): 349–74. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2016.1185420>

36. Robert Knox, “Civilizing Interventions? Race, War and International Law,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 26, no. 1 (2013): 111–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2012.762899>

37. Jonathan A. Chu and Carrie A. Lee, “Race, Religion, and American Support for Humanitarian Intervention,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2023): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027231214716>

38. Chu and Lee, “Race, Religion, and American Support,” 12.

39. William McNeill, “What We Mean by the West,” *Orbis* 41, no. 4 (1997): 513–14.

40. Turkey is a special case since it is a long-time member of NATO but does not consistently hold to the liberal, democratic values that other Western members espouse. Turkey is often seen as the bridge between East and West in geography, culture, and identity.

41. J. L. Holzgrefe, “The Humanitarian Intervention Debate,” in *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal and Political Dilemmas*, ed. J. L. Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 18; David J. Scheffer, “Towards a Modern Doctrine of Humanitarian Intervention,” *University of Toledo Law Review* 23 (1992): 266; Jack Donnelly, “Human Rights, Humanitarian Crisis, and Humanitarian Intervention,” *International Journal* 48, no. 4 (1993): 607–40, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25734034.610ff>

42. Holzgrefe, “The Humanitarian Intervention Debate,” 18; Ulrich Beyerlin, “Humanitarian Intervention,” in *Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, ed. Rudolph Bernhardt et al. (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1982), 213f.

43. Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*, 53; Donnelly, “Human Rights,” 612f.

44. Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*; Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*; Stanley Hoffmann, *Duties Beyond Borders: On the Limits and Possibilities of Ethical International Politics* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1981).

45. This brief review delves into the theoretical camps broadly, not into the distinctions between subcamps, such as neorealism, neoclassical realism, and so on. The important distinctions to make are those between theories of international relations that center the role of geopolitical interests versus norms, government types, or other considerations.

46. Edward H. Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1939); Hans J. Morganthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1948); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001).

47. Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1979).

48. Buzan, “Timeless Wisdom of Realism”; Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

49. Daniel Deudney and John Ikenberry, “The Nature and Sources of Liberal International Order,” *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 2 (1999): 187.

50. Sarah Kenyon Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries: Refugee Camps, Civil War, and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005); Amanda Murdie and David R. Davis, "Problematic Potential," *Human Rights Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (2010): 49–72, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hrq.0.0124>

51. Matthew W. Herbert, "Who Deserves Kosovo? An Argument from Social Contract Theory," *Southeast European Politics* 6, no. 1 (2005): 29–43.

52. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*; Sara Norrevik and Mehwish Sarwari, "If We Cooperate Together, We Intervene Together: Defense Cooperation Agreements and Support to Conflict Parties," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, OnlineFirst (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1177/07388942241247953>

53. Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391–425.

54. Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*.

55. Franck and Rodley, "After Bangladesh"; Neack, "UN Peace-Keeping"; Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, "The United Nations and Internal Conflict," in *International Dimensions of Internal Conflicts*, ed. Michael E. Brown (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 489–536; Jacob D. Kathman, "Civil War Diffusion and Regional Motivations for Interventions," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55, no. 6 (2011): 847–76, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0022002711408009>

56. Gilligan and Stedman, "Where Do the Peacekeepers Go?"; Lyon and Dolan, "American Humanitarian Intervention."

57. Choi, "What Determines US Humanitarian Intervention?"; Lyon and Dolan, "American Humanitarian Intervention"; Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*; Talen-tino, *Military Intervention after the Cold War*; Norrevik and Sarwari, "If We Cooperate Together, We Intervene Together."

58. Mullenbach and Matthews, "Deciding to Intervene"; Gilligan and Stedman "Where Do the Peacekeepers Go?"; Lyon and Dolan, "American Humanitarian Intervention."

59. Pickering and Mitchell, "Empirical Knowledge."

60. Gilligan and Stedman, "Where Do the Peacekeepers Go?"; 38; Pickering and Mitchell, "Empirical Knowledge"; Richard Perkins and Eric Neumayer, "Extra-territorial Interventions in Conflict Spaces: Explaining the Geographies of Post-Cold War Peace-keeping," *Political Geography* 27, no. 8 (2008): 897, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0962629808001182>

61. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention."

Chapter 2

1. I am grateful to Martin Fieseler for finding and translating the quote from German to English.

2. Nicholas Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

3. For an in-depth historical and legal analysis of the R2P norm, see Anne Orford, *International Authority and the Responsibility to Protect* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Alex J. Bellamy, *Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009).

4. Please note that some sections related to the theoretical framework within this chapter were originally published in a shorter format, alongside the empirical results within chapter 3, in Sidita Kushi, “Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises,” *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022): 216–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

5. Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); J. L. Holzgrefe, “The Humanitarian Intervention Debate,” in *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal and Political Dilemmas*, ed. J. L. Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15–52.

6. Michael M. Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 107.

7. Taylor B. Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention: The Conditions for Success and Failure* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

8. Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*, 6.

9. Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—or War* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

10. Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*, 20.

11. Terry Nardin, “The Moral Basis of Humanitarian Intervention,” *Ethics and International Affairs* 16, no. 2 (2002): 58; Alex J. Bellamy, “Ethics and Intervention: The ‘Humanitarian Exception’ and the Problem of Abuse in the Case of Iraq,” *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 2 (2004): 132.

12. Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*, 8.

13. Stephen D. Krasner, ed., *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*.

14. Martha Finnemore, “Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention,” in *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 153–85; Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*.

15. Charter of the United Nations, articles 2(4), 39, 42, and 51; Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*.

16. Charter of the United Nations, Article 1(3); United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, UN General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III), 10 Dec. 1948; and *The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, UN General Assembly, December 9, 1948; Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*.

17. Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*, 10.

18. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*; Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*, 10.

19. Anthony C. Arend and Robert J. Beck, *International Law and the Use of Force* (London: Routledge, 1993), 112–37.

20. Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*, 1.

21. Laura W. Reed and Carl Kaysen, eds. *Emerging Norms of Justified Intervention* (Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1993); Lori F. Damrosch, ed., *Enforcing Restraint: Collective Intervention in Internal Conflicts* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993), 1–7; Julie A. Mertus, “Legitimizing the Use of Force in Kosovo,” *Ethics and International Affairs* 15, no. 1 (2001): 33–50; Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*.

22. Bianca Freeman, D. G. Kim, and David A. Lake, “Race in International Relations:

Beyond the 'Norm against Noticing,'" *Annual Review of Political Science* 25 (2022): 175–96. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051820-120746>; Robbie Shilliam, *Decolonizing Politics: An Introduction* (Medford, MA: Polity, 2021); Lucy Taylor, "Decolonizing International Relations: Perspectives from Latin America," *International Studies Review* 14, no. 3 (2012): 386–400, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2012.01125.x>

23. See for instance Taylor, "Decolonizing International Relations: Perspectives from Latin America."

24. Shilliam, *Decolonizing Politics*; Taylor, "Decolonizing International Relations: Perspectives from Latin America."

25. James Traub, "Never Again, No Longer?" *New York Times Magazine*, July 18, 2004, 17–18.

26. Human Rights Watch, "War in Iraq: Not a Humanitarian Intervention," *Human Rights Watch World Report, 2004: Human Rights and Armed Conflict*, 2004, 13–35.

27. Gerard Prunier, ed., *Darfur: A 21st Century Genocide* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*, 1. This is the first time that a state government has accused another of perpetuating contemporary genocide.

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30. Edward H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1939); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1948); Barry Buzan, "The Timeless Wisdom of Realism," in *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, ed. Steve Smith, Ken Booth, and Marysia Zalewski, 47–65 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001).

31. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*; Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*; Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*; Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, "Who's Keeping the Peace? Regionalization and Contemporary Operations," *International Security* 29, no. 4 (2005): 157–95, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4137500>

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34. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*, 30.

35. Alex Bellamy and Nicholas Wheeler, "Humanitarian Intervention in World Politics," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, ed. John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 510–25.

36. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, 111.

37. Christian Reus-Smit, "International Law." In *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, ed. John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 278–92.

38. Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1979).

39. Realist theories assume that states in the international system are sovereign, that "states are accorded a set of rights and assume a set of responsibilities, the most important of which is the mutual recognition of each other's autonomy and juridical equality." Daniel Deudney and John Ikenberry, "The Nature and Sources of Liberal International Order," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 2 (1999): 187.

40. Rasmus Tenbergen, "Bombs for Human Rights? Humanitarian Intervention in Kosovo," *Romanian Review of International Studies* 1, no. 1 (2001), 5, <http://www.rasmus-tenbergen.de/publikationen/Bombs%20for%20Human%20Rights.pdf>. Terry Nardin, "International Political Theory," in *Theories of International Relations*, ed. Scott Burdick, Andrew Linklater, Richard Devetak, Jack Donnelly, Terry Nardin, Matthew Paterson, Christian Reus-Smit, and Jacqui True (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 284–310.

41. Kathman, "Civil War Diffusion and Regional Motivations for Interventions."

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43. Buzan, "Timeless Wisdom of Realism"; Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

44. Deudney and Ikenberry, "Nature and Sources."

45. Keohane, *After Hegemony*.

46. Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997); Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

47. For a deeper dive into how Just War theory can inform debates on humanitarian military intervention, see David M. Mednicoff, "Humane Wars? International Law, Just War Theory and Contemporary Armed Humanitarian Intervention," *Law, Culture and the Humanities* 2, no. 3 (2006): 373–98, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1743872106069823>. See also Simon Chesterman, *Just War or Just Peace? Humanitarian Intervention and International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

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54. James Kurth, “Humanitarian Intervention After Iraq: Legal Ideals vs. Military Realities,” *Orbis* 50, no. 1 (2006): 87–101, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2005.10.007>; Andrea K. Talentino, *Military Intervention after the Cold War: The Evolution of Theory and Practice* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005); Carla Bagnoli, “Humanitarian Intervention as a Perfect Duty,” in *Humanitarian Intervention: NOMOS XLVII*, ed. Melissa Williams and Terry Nardin (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 117–48.

55. Talentino, *Military Intervention*.

56. Frederic S. Pearson and Jeffrey J. Pickering, “Military Intervention and Realpolitik,” in *Reconstructing Realpolitik*, ed. Frank W. Wayman and Paul F. Diehl (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 208; also cited and discussed in Seung-Whan Choi, “What Determines US Humanitarian Intervention?”

57. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace*; Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace*; James H. Lebovic, “Uniting for Peace? Democracies and United Nations Peace Operations after the Cold War,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 6 (2004): 910–36, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002704269357>

58. J. Owen, “How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace,” in *Debating the Democratic Peace*, ed. Michael E. Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 118.

59. Perkins and Neumayer, “Extra-territorial Interventions.”

60. Bellamy and Williams, “Who’s Keeping the Peace?” For an empirical assessment on the role of institutional cooperative alliances on military interventions in civil wars, see: Sara Norrevik and Mehwish Sarwari, “If We Cooperate Together, We Intervene Together: Defense Cooperation Agreements and Support to Conflict Parties,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, OnlineFirst (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1177/07388942241247953>

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62. International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), *The Responsibility to Protect*, 2001, <http://www.iciss.ca/report2-en.asp>, 13.

63. Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

64. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*.

65. Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*.

66. Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*.

67. Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*, 52–56.

68. Martha Finnemore, “Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention,” in

The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 153–85.

69. Bianca Freeman, D. G. Kim, and David A. Lake, “Race in International Relations: Beyond the ‘Norm against Noticing,’” *Annual Review of Political Science* 25 (2022): 175–96, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051820-120746>; Shilliam, *Decolonizing Politics*.

70. Wendt, *Social Theory*.

71. Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*.

72. Stephen D. Krasner, *Problematic Sovereignty: Contested Rules and Political Possibilities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Sonia Cardenas, “Norm Collision: Explaining the Effects of International Human Rights Pressure on State Behavior,” *International Studies Review* 6, no. 2 (2004): 220.

73. Martin Binder, “Humanitarian Crises and the International Politics of Selectivity,” *Human Rights Review* 10, no. 3 (2009): 327–48.

74. Binder, “Humanitarian Crises and the International Politics of Selectivity.”

75. Binder, “Humanitarian Crises and the International Politics of Selectivity,” 344–45.

76. Binder, “Humanitarian Crises and the International Politics of Selectivity,” 344–45.

77. Martin Binder, “Paths to Intervention: What Explains the Un’s Selective Response to Humanitarian Crises?,” *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 6 (2015): 712–26, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343315585847>. For a more in-depth look, including case studies on interventions and nonintervention during crises in Libya and Syria, see Martin Binder, *The United Nations and the Politics of Selective Humanitarian Intervention* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

78. Thomas M. Franck and Nigel S. Rodley, “After Bangladesh: The Law of Humanitarian Intervention by Military Force,” *American Journal of International Law* 67 (1973): 275–305; Neack, “UN Peace-Keeping”; Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, “The United Nations and Internal Conflict,” in *International Dimensions of Internal Conflicts*, ed. Michael E. Brown (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 489–536.

79. Franck and Rodley, “After Bangladesh,” 290.

80. Neack, “UN Peace-Keeping,” 181.

81. de Jonge Oudraat, “The United Nations and Internal Conflict,” 518.

82. Michael Gilligan and Steven J. Stedman, “Where Do the Peacekeepers Go?,” *International Studies Review* 5, no. 4 (2003): 37–54, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1079-1760.2003.00504005.x>; Alynna J. Lyon and Chris J. Dolan, “American Humanitarian Intervention: Toward a Theory of Coevolution,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3, no. 1 (2007): 46–78, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2007.00041.x>

83. Seung-Whan Choi, “What Determines US Humanitarian Intervention?,” Lyon and Dolan, “American Humanitarian Intervention”; Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*; Talentino, *Military Intervention*.

84. Lyon and Dolan, “American Humanitarian Intervention.”

85. Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James, “Why Does the US Intervene Abroad? Democracy, Human Rights Violations, and Terrorism,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60, no. 5 (2016): 899–926, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002714560350>. In a related study, Choi et al. rely on Department of State (DOS) human rights reporting to trace how human rights institutionalization drive many US military interventions. See Seung-

Whan Choi, Youngwan Kim, David Ebner, and Patrick James, “Human Rights Institutionalization and US Humanitarian Intervention,” *International Interactions* 46, no. 4 (2020): 606–35. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03050629.2020.1758694>

86. Seung-Whan Choi and Patrick James, “Are US Foreign Policy Tools Effective in Improving Human Rights Conditions?” *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 10, no. 3 (2017): 331–56, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pox010>

87. Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*.

88. Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*, 27.

89. Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention*, 26.

90. Gilligan and Stedman, “Where Do the Peacekeepers Go?”

91. Gilligan and Stedman, “Where Do the Peacekeepers Go?,” 47. Renee De Nevers finds a similar pattern in targets of intervention: Great powers most frequently target weak states for third-party military interventions, whereas they are less likely to target protected or defensible states for interventions that relate to “norm promotion.” More specifically, for protected states, the strength of their alliances influences whether a great power is likely to intervene with military force for norms promotion. Defensible states may sometimes discourage intervention if the cost of using force against them is high enough. But De Nevers also discovers another compelling, yet less potent, factor: international legitimacy as measured by the target state’s standing in international society. Insider states, recognized as full members of international society with complete sovereign status, are less likely than outsider states or those with contested status to be targets of military intervention. These dual findings hesitantly bolster realist assumptions that power considerations dominate state decisions in the international arena, while morals, directly tied to the institution of sovereignty, only matter when they don’t clash with power interests. See Renee De Nevers, “Imposing International Norms: Great Powers and Norm Enforcement,” *International Studies Review* 9, no. 1 (2007): 53–80.

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93. Mark J. Mullenbach and Gerard P. Matthews, “Deciding to Intervene: An Analysis of International and Domestic Influences on United States Interventions in Intrastate Disputes,” *International Interactions* 34, no. 1 (2008): 25–52, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050620701878835>

94. Mullenbach and Matthews, “Deciding to Intervene”; Gilligan and Stedman, “Where Do the Peacekeepers Go?”; Lyon and Dolan, “American Humanitarian Intervention”; Choi “What Determines US Humanitarian Intervention?”

95. Mullenbach and Matthews, “Deciding to Intervene”; Gilligan and Stedman “Where Do the Peacekeepers Go?”; Lyon and Dolan, “American Humanitarian Intervention.” More recent studies have begun to assess the regional and actor-based nuances of third-party interventions into civil wars, such as Michael G. Findley and Tze Kwang Teo, “Rethinking Third-Party Interventions into Civil Wars: An Actor-Centric Approach,” *Journal of Politics* 68, no. 4 (2006): 828–37, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00473.x>

96. Bellamy and Williams, “Who’s Keeping the Peace?”

97. Jeffrey Pickering and David F. Mitchell, “Empirical Knowledge on Foreign Military Intervention,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.319>

98. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention."
99. Keohane uses Krasner's typology of sovereignty ideal-types, defining traditional Westphalian sovereignty as "the exclusion of external authority structures from the decision-making processes of a state." Keohane makes sure to emphasize that each ideal-type of sovereignty should also be measured in degrees or gradations. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention," 285; Stephen D. Krasner, *Problematic Sovereignty: Contested Rules and Political Possibilities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).
100. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention," 277.
101. As Keohane further argues, alterations in classic sovereignty via foreign actors and institutions are imperative to pre- and postintervention considerations because even if military intervention temporarily succeeds in halting domestic atrocities, it must still contend against future problems. In ethnically divided regions, for example, traditional implementations of sovereignty after intrastate conflict may place a vengeful faction in power, which will seek to oppress opposing ethnic or religious groups. Even in the best-case scenario, immediate full sovereignty within the target state would lead to institutional and political divisions along ethnic, religious, or other highly politicized lines, opening the door to renewed domestic conflict. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention," 286–87.
102. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention," 298.
103. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention," 298.
104. Myron Weiner, "Bad Neighbors, Bad Neighborhoods: An Inquiry into the Causes of Refugee Flows," *International Security* 21 (1996): 5–42.
105. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention," 293.
106. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention," 293.
107. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention," 291.
108. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention," 278.
109. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention."
110. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention."
111. Keohane, "Political Authority after Intervention."
112. See McNeill for detailed historical analysis of "the West." William McNeill, "What We Mean by the West," *Orbis* 41, no. 4 (1997): 513–14.
113. David Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
114. Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, xi.
115. Timothy Garton Ash, "Bosnia in Our Future," *New York Review of Books*, December 21, 1995; Adam Clymer, "The Silent Opposition," *New York Times*, November 27, 1995; Francis Wheen, "Portillo's Balkan Blind Spot," *The Guardian*, May 28, 1997, 52–53.
116. Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, 52.
117. Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, 52.
118. Garton Ash, "Bosnia in Our Future"; Clymer, "Silent Opposition"; Wheen, "Portillo's Balkan Blind Spot"; Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, 52–53.
119. E.g., John Tagliabue, "Old Tribal Rivalries In Eastern Europe Pose Threat of Infection," *New York Times*, October 13, 1991; Craig R. Whitney, "Meddling in the Balkans: The Burden of Centuries," *New York Times*, April 11, 1993.
120. Paul Mojzes, *Yugoslavian Inferno* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 41–60.
121. Mojzes, *Yugoslavian Inferno*, 60; Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, 66.

122. Dražen Pehar, “On Some Disconcerting Aspects of American Foreign Policy towards Bosnia-Herzegovina,” *Institute for Social and Political Research*, 2014, <http://www.en.idpi.ba/on-some-disconcerting-aspects-of-american-foreign-policy-towards-bosnia-herzegovina/>

123. Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, chap. 4; Pehar, “On Some Disconcerting Aspects.”

124. Campbell, *National Deconstruction*, 124.

125. See here for the legal ruling of genocide regarding the crimes committed by Bosnian Serbs in Srebrenica: International Court of Justice (ICJ), “The Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro) [2007] Judgment, ICJ General List No. 91” (February 26, 2007): 108 § 297, <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/91/091-20070226-JUD-01-00-EN.pdf>

126. Stuart Kaufman, *Nationalist Passions* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

127. Campbell, *National Deconstruction*; Keohane, “Political Authority after Intervention.”

128. This is quoted in Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

Chapter 3

1. Robert Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate* (New York: Random House, 2013).

2. An older version of chapter 3 is published in Sidita Kushi, “Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises,” *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022): 216–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>. See this document for a supplemental appendix with a full list of concept operationalizations as related to this study. The analysis in this book chapter updates several key variables with recently available data, thus also filling in some of the missing or imputed data, and it includes a wider range of model specifications.

3. Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003).

4. For the conflict universe, see UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Data set. 2015. Uppsala University Department of Peace and Conflict Research. http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ucdp_prio_armed_conflict_dataset. For the intervention universe, see Emizet F. Kisangani and Jeffrey Pickering, “International Military Intervention, 1989–2005,” Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, Data Collection No 21282 (Ann Arbor, MI, 2008), <http://www.k-state.edu/polsci/intervention/index.html>; Frederic S. Pearson and Robert A. Baumann, “International Military Intervention, 1946–1988,” *Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research*, Data Collection No 6035 (Ann Arbor, MI, 1993). <http://www.k-state.edu/polsci/intervention.html>. I do not include interventions with Social Protective objectives, as coded in IMI, as automatic cases of HMI. Instead, I review the mission mandates for language on saving foreigners, humanitarian relief, or the prevention of human rights abuses and triangulate with other datasets, such as PRIF. Disaster relief, the saving of a country’s own citizens, and postconflict rebuilding missions are not included. Please see the supplemental documentation for more details.

5. Thomas Gromes and Matthias Dembinski, "Practices and Outcomes of Humanitarian Military Interventions. A New Data Set," *International Interactions* 45, no. 6 (2019): 1032–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2019.1638374>; PRIF, Humanitarian Military Interventions Dataset. <https://www.humanitarian-military-interventions.com>

6. Virginia P. Fortna, *Does Peacekeeping Work? Shaping Belligerents' Choices After Civil Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

7. J. L. Holzgrefe, "The Humanitarian Intervention Debate," in *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal and Political Dilemmas*, ed. J. L. Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 18; Gromes and Dembinski, "Practices and Outcomes of Humanitarian Military Interventions"; Matthias Dembinski, Thorsten Gromes, and Theresa Werner, "Humanitarian Military Interventions: Conceptual Controversies and Their Consequences for Comparative Research," *International Peacekeeping* 26, no. 5 (2019): 605–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2019.1659733>

8. Pearson and Baumann, "International Military Intervention, 1946–1988."

9. Pearson and Baumann, "International Military Intervention, 1946–1988."

10. Nils Petter Gleditsch, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg, and Håvard Strand, "Armed Conflict 1946–2001: A New Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 39, no. 5 (2002): 615–37; Uppsala Conflict Data Program. *UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia: Uppsala University*, 2014. www.ucdp.uu.se/database

Only two types of armed conflict are relevant: intrastate armed conflict and intrastate armed conflict with foreign involvement. Details on this operationalization can be found in table 3.1, and tests of robustness include the increasing of the battle-related deaths threshold across different samples and the inclusion of a conflict intensity measure.

11. See Holzgrefe, "The Humanitarian Intervention Debate"; Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*.

12. These criteria are very similar to the ones applied in key studies such as Matthias Dembinski, Thorsten Gromes, and Theresa Werner, "Humanitarian Military Interventions: Conceptual Controversies and Their Consequences for Comparative Research."

13. Holzgrefe, "The Humanitarian Intervention Debate," 18.

14. Nicholas Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

15. Taylor B. Seybolt, *Humanitarian Military Intervention: The Conditions for Success and Failure* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 20.

16. The operationalization of humanitarian intervention considers the occurrence and nonoccurrence of an intervention as well as the level of mission intensity, measured through IMI's categorical scales of troops numbers and troop incursion, as well as naval and air incursions. If an intervention is multilateral, the leading state within the coalition serves as the source of dyadic measurements, meaning that in most cases the independent variables discussed below will refer to the relationship between a target conflict and one or all of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany (P5+1), as these regional powers are the primary international intervenors. I combine these concept dimensions (IMI's scale on troop numbers, troop incursion levels, air incursion levels, and naval incursions) into one additive indicator of intervention intensity to reduce future problems with multicollinearity in the statistical analysis. I code post-2005 interventions using IMI standards by researching each post-2005 intervention individually

(there are only fourteen of them) and coding using the same categories of troop numbers, air, and naval incursions as IMI does. These newly coded variables are also checked against the Correlates of War (COW) Militarized Interstate Disputes (MID) dataset that contains variables of the level of hostility as well, albeit coded using a different protocol (Highest Military Action undertaken during the dispute). Moreover, the codings are checked with measures of troop numbers and air incursions in PRIF (Ground Numbers, Airforce, and No Fly Zones). These checks help confirm whether an intervention had no, low, medium, or high levels of troop involvement, air incursions, or naval incursions.

17. Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, "International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis," *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 4 (2000): 779–801. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2586208>; Fortna, *Does Peacekeeping Work*; Monty G. Marshall, Major Episodes of Political Violence (MEPV) and Conflict Regions, 1946–2018, Center for Systemic Peace, July 25, 2019, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>; codebook here: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/MEPVcodebook2018.pdf>

18. Doyle and Sambanis, "International Peacebuilding"; see also their "Data Set Notes" available at http://www.worldbank.org/research/conflict/papers/peacebuilding/datanotes_final.pdf

19. Nicholas Sambanis, "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes? A Theoretical and Empirical Inquiry (Part 1)," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 3 (2001): 261.

20. Doyle and Sambanis, "International Peacebuilding," 792.

21. Daniel C. Esty, Jack Goldstone, Ted Robert Gurr, Barbara Harff, Pamela T. Surko, Alan N. Unger, and Robert Chen, "The State Failure Project: Early Warning Research for US Foreign Policy Planning," In John L. Davies and Ted Robert Gurr, eds., *Preventive Measures: Building Risk Assessment and Crisis Early Warning Systems* (Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), quoted in Sambanis, "Do Ethnic and Nonethnic Civil Wars Have the Same Causes?," 262.

22. David Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

23. William McNeill, "What We Mean by the West," *Orbis* 41, no. 4 (1997): 513–14.

24. McNeill, "What We Mean by the West"

25. Rasmus Tenbergen, "Bombs for Human Rights? Humanitarian Intervention in Kosovo," *Romanian Review of International Studies* 1, no. 1 (2001), <http://www.rasmus-tenbergen.de/publikationen/Bombs%20for%20Human%20Rights.pdf>; Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*; Tim Dunne and Brian Schmidt, "Realism," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, ed. John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 84–99.

26. Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, "Who's Keeping the Peace? Regionalization and Contemporary Operations," *International Security* 29, no. 4 (2005): 157–195. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4137500>; Jacob D. Kathman, "Civil War Diffusion and Regional Motivations for Interventions," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55, no. 6 (2011): 847–76, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0022002711408009>; Michael Gilligan and Steven J. Stedman, "Where Do the Peacekeepers Go?" *International Studies Review* 5, no. 4 (2003): 37–54; Richard Perkins and Eric Neumayer, "Extra-territorial

Interventions in Conflict Spaces: Explaining the Geographies of Post-Cold War Peacekeeping,” *Political Geography* 27, no. 8 (2008): 895–914; Paul K. Huth, “Major Power Intervention in International Crises, 1918–1988,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 6 (1998): 744–70, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002798042006004>; Michael G. Findley and Josiah F. Marineau, “Lootable Resources and Third-Party Intervention into Civil Wars,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 32, no. 5 (2015): 465–86, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894214530828>

27. Adam Roberts, “Humanitarian War: Military Intervention and Human Rights,” *International Affairs* 69, no. 3 (1993): 429–49.

28. Roberts, “Humanitarian War: Military Intervention and Human Rights”; Barry Buzan, “The Timeless Wisdom of Realism,” in *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, ed. Steve Smith, Ken Booth, and Marysia Zalewski (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 47–65; Alex Bellamy and Nicholas Wheeler, “Humanitarian Intervention in World Politics,” in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, ed. John Baylis, Steve Smith, and Patricia Owens (New York: Oxford University Press), 510–25.

29. For a full and in-depth discussion of concept operationalization, from geopolitical interests to humanitarian need, please refer to the supplemental documentation included in Sidita Kushi, “Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises,” *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022): 216–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

30. See Sidita Kushi, “Selective Humanitarians: How Region and Conflict Perception Drive Military Interventions in Intrastate Crises,” *International Relations* 38, no. 2 (2022): 216–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178221104344>

31. The year 1987 marks the practical beginnings of the Soviet Union’s (USSR) policies of Perestroika, which denoted a general weakening of the ideological superpower rivalry between the United States and the USSR. For a symbolic and technical delineation of this transformation, see Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987).

32. These models include country-clustered robust standard errors to account for heteroskedasticity, autocorrelation, and multicollinearity. These specifications are also used in Doyle and Sambanis (2000, 2006) and Perkins and Neumayer (2008). Following this literature, several predictor variables are tested in lagged and unlagged formats, while other variables have been logged to better reflect a normal distribution. Doyle and Sambanis, “International Peacebuilding”; Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Perkins and Neumayer, “Extra-territorial Interventions in Conflict Spaces.”

33. The updated observations have prompted minor changes in the results, with the overarching findings related to the hypotheses remaining consistent. The imputed variables and corresponding models were tested against the non-imputed versions, showing similar findings and distributions.

34. David L. Cingranelli and David L. Richards, “The Cingranelli-Richards Human Rights Dataset Version 2008.03.12,” available at: <http://www.humanrightsdata.org>. The Physical Integrity Index is an additive index constructed from the Torture, Extrajudicial Killing, Political Imprisonment, and Disappearance indicators ranging from 0 (no government respect for rights) to 8 (full government respect).

35. Campbell, *National Deconstruction*.
36. Seung-Whan Choi, “What Determines US Humanitarian Intervention?,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 30, no. 2 (2013): 121–39, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0738894212473916>
37. These findings are based on the table 3.7 model of intervention occurrence.
38. Robert O. Keohane, “Political Authority after Intervention: Gradations in Sovereignty,” in *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal and Political Dilemmas*, edited by J. L. Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 275–98; Campbell, *National Deconstruction*.

Chapter 4

1. Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Picador, 2004), 71–72.
2. Aidan Hehir, *Humanitarian Intervention After Kosovo: Iraq, Darfur and the Record of Global Civil Society* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 47.
3. For more on the West’s projection of power and benevolence in Kosovo see, Aidan Hehir, “Introduction: Kosovo’s Symbolic Importance,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 13, no. 5 (2019): 539–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2019.1663986>
4. A section of this chapter 4 analysis is published in Sidita Kushi, “Just Another Civil War? The Influence of Conflict Perceptions on Western Conflict Management in Kosovo & Beyond,” *World Affairs* 186, no. 2 (2023): 284–322, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00438200231154296>. Please see this article for additional in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis of media reports on Kosovo.
5. See PRIF for the measurement of the violent emergency duration in Kosovo until intervention (13 months): <http://www.humanitarian-military-interventions.com/case/kosovo-1999/>
6. For more details on Putin’s application of the Kosovo precedent toward his wars of aggression, see Jade McGlynn, “Why Putin Keeps Talking About Kosovo,” *Foreign Policy*, March 3, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/03/putin-ukraine-russia-na-to-kosovo/>; Masha Gessen, “How the Kosovo Air War Foreshadowed the Crisis in Ukraine,” *The New Yorker*, February 15, 2022, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/how-the-kosovo-air-war-foreshadowed-the-crisis-in-ukraine>
7. I have selected NATO archives as the study’s primary evidence for three reasons. First, both preliminary discussions of a Kosovo intervention and intervention trajectories occurred within the context of the Western security alliance. While the UN remained inactive due to lack of member consensus (aside from a few weak, nonbinding resolutions), NATO member states initiated and completed the Kosovo military intervention, with both political and military orders coming from NATO and carefully driven by alliance consensus. Due to the vital role that NATO played in selecting, funding, coordinating, continuing, and finally halting the Kosovo military intervention in 1999, the study centers on NATO’s declassified archives, including daily press briefings by NATO spokesman Jamie Shea and guests (often including Gen. Wesley Clark and an array of world leaders), conferences, operational updates, speeches by several national leaders as well as NATO generals, conversations, maps, and recordings. These provide the most comprehensive set of documentations from which to gauge motives, causes, and shifts in

policy agenda. Second, NATO sources allow for the natural inclusion of different state actors, elites, and both global and national dynamics. They also provide a window into consensus formation between Western national actors. Alternatively, other sources of documentation would only reflect the dynamics of national elites in isolation and vary from country to country. These NATO sources additionally reflect and construct much of the media analysis on the subject, as NATO press releases and dialogues often correct, confirm, or generally discuss daily media reports on the Kosovo mission as they come to pass. Third, NATO archives on the Kosovo mission are now fully declassified. With proper permission, they are accessible via an online portal to the NATO multimedia e-library. See NATO Operation Allied Force, “NATO’s Role in Kosovo,” 1999, <http://www.nato.int/kosovo/all-frce.htm>; NATO Multimedia e-Library, “NATO’s Role in Kosovo,” 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts. See also Foreign Affairs Oral History (FAOH), Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (2011). <https://adst.org/Readers/Kosovo.pdf> (accessed October 4, 2022).

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Chapter 6

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Chapter 8

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