

NEGOTIATING IN PEACE

EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF CEASEFIRES DURING
NEGOTIATIONS ON REACHING A PEACE ACCORD



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Abstract

Do ceasefires during peace negotiations facilitate reaching a peace agreement in internal armed conflicts? Existing case studies offer diverging arguments and mixed empirical evidence for whether ceasefires should precede or come after the more political settlements. In this regard, I argue that ceasefires facilitate that the combatant parties will reach a political deal by increasing mutual trust, alleviating the impact of two critical uncertainties in the negotiation stage: the uncertainty on whether the other party is willing to reach a negotiated settlement, and the uncertainty on whether the other party has the capacity to control their respective armed forces. Using new data on negotiation processes in internal armed conflicts in Africa, between 1989 and 2013, I examine the effect of having a ceasefire during negotiations on the probability of reaching a negotiated accord, while controlling for the levels of violence during the talks as a crucial conditioning factor, as well as for the presence of peacekeepers, and the intervention of a mediator. The results show that early ceasefires have a significant effect on the conclusion of political agreements at the talks, and that this effect is stronger when the talks are surrounded by decreased or null levels of violence.

Key words: Ceasefires, Peace Agreements, Negotiations, Africa, Internal Conflicts.

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List of abbreviations

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
ETA	Euskadi Ta Askatasuna
IRA	Irish Republican Army
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MLC	Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo
RCD	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie
Renamo	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana
SLM/A	Sudan Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola

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1. Introduction

The post-Cold War period has been characterized mostly by intrastate or civil wars which do not often end in a decisive military victory but where, instead, the warring actors will pursue peace at the negotiating table (Sisk 2009). In particular, in civil wars, compared to interstate conflicts, Fortna has underscored the need for comprehensive or political settlements. As she puts it, “*it is difficult for countries torn by civil war to go about their business with issues of secession or who will run the country still up in the air*” (Fortna 2004, 215, italics added). However, reaching a political settlement has proven to be an elusive task. In this sense, Walter (2002, 77) found that close to two-thirds of all negotiations in civil wars broke down into resumed fighting.

In this context, peace scholars have dedicated a considerable amount of attention to understand why some negotiations conclude with peace agreements while others do not. In this sense, the previous literature has identified many different factors that facilitate the conclusion of peace deals. These include the participation a mediator (Bercovitch and Gartner 2009, Svensson 2007, Mitchell 2008), the deployment of a peacekeeping operation (Walter 2002, Fortna 2008), and the participation of women during the peace process (Paffenholz et al. 2016), among others.

However, among the different explanations for the success of peace talks, the influence of ceasefires and the dynamics of violence during this phase of the peace process have been insufficiently examined. Thus, the research question of the present thesis is *do ceasefires during negotiations influence the likelihood of reaching a peace agreement in internal armed conflicts?*

Although policymakers seem to have a strong expectation that ceasefires have an influence on the civilians’ well-being and the resolution of armed conflicts, existing case studies offer diverging arguments and mixed empirical evidence for whether ceasefires should precede or come after the more political settlements. On one hand, the proponents of the first approach have argued that early ceasefires can decrease the combatants’ incentives to engage in violence (Sisk 2009, 193), reduce tension, and

signal good will (Chounet-Cambas 2011); thus, facilitating the conclusion of a peace accord. On the other hand, in support of the second approach, recent case studies have emphasized that ceasefires can have detrimental effects on the conflict dynamics, for instance by fueling other types of violence such as inter-rebel disputes (Johnson 2017) or by creating divisions within the rebel groups (Ellis 1999, Kolås 2011); thus deteriorating the likelihood of reaching a peace deal.

Although this literature has contributed with important insights, there is a lack of comparative research on the value of ceasefires for reaching peace accords. In addition, there is a lack of studies that look at the interaction between ceasefires and other factors that can influence the chances of reaching a peace deal. In sum, as Wallensteen puts it, there are few empirical studies into the “*merits of ceasefires for conflict resolution*” (Wallensteen 2007, 43, italics added).

This thesis starts filling this gap by differentiating, both theoretically and empirically, between negotiation processes that occur under a ceasefire agreement and those that occur in its absence. In this regard, I examine the relationship between ceasefires and peace accords, drawing on a relatively large number of cases and controlling for the influence of key factors such as the dynamics of violence, the presence of a mediator, and the deployment of a peacekeeping operation during the talks.

Building upon previous research which advocates for early ceasefires, I argue that ceasefires make it more likely that the combatant parties reach a political deal. The proposed causal story is that ceasefires can increase mutual trust, alleviating the impact of two critical uncertainties in the negotiation stage, the uncertainty on whether the other party is willing to reach a negotiated settlement, and the uncertainty on whether the other party has the capacity to control their respective armed forces. However, for this to work, ceasefires would have to be generally respected.

To test the hypothesized relation between ceasefires and peace accords, the methodology employed is a logistic regression. Using new data for negotiation processes in internal armed conflicts in Africa, between 1989 and 2013, I examine the effect of having a ceasefire during negotiations on the probability of reaching a negotiated accord, while controlling for the levels of violence during the talks as a

crucial conditioning factor, as well as for the presence of peacekeepers and the intervention of a mediator, among others.

The overall results show that early ceasefires have a significant effect on the conclusion of political agreements at the talks, and that this effect is stronger when the talks are surrounded by decreased or null levels of violence. These findings have relevant policy implications for mediators and other practitioners, calling for increased efforts to facilitate the conclusion of ceasefires and a reduction in violence before the combatants initiate negotiations over the more political issues.

This thesis proceeds as follows: after this introduction, the next section reviews the previous research in relation to the conclusion of peace agreements. Next, the main theoretical argument and the hypotheses derived from it are presented. I then outline the research design and operationalize the key concepts. This is followed by sections where the main results are presented and analyzed. After this, I reflect on alternative explanations, limitations and potential avenues for future research. Finally, the main conclusions are discussed.

2. Previous research

Overview of the previous research on the successful conclusion of peace deals

During the last two decades, a growing amount of literature has examined the factors that make peace negotiations lead to negotiated settlements being signed (e.g. Svensson 2007, Paffenholz et al. 2016). In particular, third-party security guarantees and the intervention of a mediator have been identified as relevant factors that increase, overall, the probability of reaching peace agreements at the negotiating table (Walter 2002, Bercovitch and Gartner 2009). However, a fewer number of studies has looked at the influence of ceasefires during peace talks and the levels of violence during this phase of the conflict. In addition, there is particularly a lack of statistical analyses and of studies that look at the interaction between all these different factors. Given the humanitarian implications associated with reaching peace agreements, this reality is surprising. Thus, there is a need for comparative, more generalizable research in the understanding of why some negotiations conclude with peace agreements while others do not.

In order to provide a broad picture of the previous research, this section outlines the following explanations for the successful conclusion of negotiations: having a ceasefire during the negotiations, the dynamics of violence during the talks, the intervention of a mediator, and the deployment of a peacekeeping operation. However, it is acknowledged that these factors do not operate in isolation, but are closely interconnected.

The next section will present the state of the literature in regards to ceasefires and the conclusion of peace accords.

2.1. Ceasefires

Overview of the previous research on ceasefires

Ceasefire accords have not captured much scholarly attention so far (Wallensteen 2007, 43, Åkebo 2013), and in most cases ceasefires were only studied as a dependent variable, that is, as the final result of a certain process. In line with the approach of the present study, this section summarizes the main insights that look at ceasefires as the independent variable (IV) leading to the conclusion of peace agreements. In this sense, the debate around the appropriate timing of ceasefires is outlined.

In this regard, previous research has followed two main approaches: “security first, settlement will follow” and “settlement first, security will follow” (Sisk 2009). That is, while some authors advocated for reaching ceasefires before there is consensus on a political deal, others have spoken in favor of signing a peace agreement first, and only then agree on a ceasefire.

Early ceasefires: “Security first, settlement will follow”

As a proponent of the first approach, the international community usually exerts pressure on reaching a ceasefire at early stages of the process for humanitarian reasons and for the de-escalation of the conflict (Lane 2016, Touval 1995). These arguments find empirical support in different cases. For example, Åkebo found that all three ceasefire accords in Aceh (Indonesia) were followed by an immediate decrease in the levels of violence, an increased atmosphere of optimism, and a greater sense of security in the area (Åkebo 2013, 153). Similarly, the two ceasefires she examined in Sri Lanka also resulted in decreased levels of violence and improvements in the humanitarian situation (Åkebo 2013, 203). A reduction of violence following the ceasefires can also be observed for the case of Philippines (1993-2017), both for the Communist Party of the Philippines and the Mindanao conflicts (Ryland et al. 2018). On the other hand, some cases where ceasefires preceded deteriorating conflict scenarios will be discussed later in this section.

In addition, there are other reasons why ceasefires can be valuable at early stages of the negotiation process. For instance, Sisk (2009, 193) argued that when the combatants enter negotiations with a ceasefire, their *motivation* to engage in violence is expected to be lower. In this sense, in the absence of a ceasefire, these actors could see violence as a means to influence the agenda, direction, and potential outcomes of the talks.

Further, ceasefires can facilitate the identification of potential spoilers, and allow to test the intent of the warring sides (Clark 1995, 61, Sisk 2009, 199). In brief, Chounet-Cambas (2011, 19) concluded that having a ceasefire from the beginning of the negotiating process might reduce tension and signal good will between the warring parties.

As an illustration of the “security first, settlement will follow” approach, the negotiations in Northern Ireland are a helpful example. The timing of a ceasefire and the decommissioning of arms was an issue that initially prevented the British/Protestant parties and the IRA/Sinn Fein from seating at the negotiating table in 1995 (Darby 2001, 22). However, in 1997 the IRA declared a ceasefire, Sinn Fein entered the peace talks, and the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998 (Darby 2001, 22).

Adding more nuances to this line of discussion, authors such as Mahieu (2007) or Sisk (2009) argued that the successful sequencing of a ceasefire would require not only an agreement on a truce before a political accord is signed, but also an agreement on a “*formula for settlement* that defines the strategic idea of peace” (Sisk 2009, 193, italics added). In this sense, Darby (2001, 117) observed that ceasefires at the early stages of negotiations are more likely to disrupt the negotiations, compared to when the talks already evolved, while Doyle and Sambanis (2000) argued that until the main political issues are addressed, hostilities will keep on reoccurring.

The next sub-section will present the arguments defending that an agreement on the political issues should come first, and only then a ceasefire should be reached.

The risks of ceasefires: “Settlement first, security will follow”

Some authors have argued that in protracted violent conflicts, the signs associated with observing a truce may not be accepted as a conciliatory measure due to high levels of mutual distrust (Åkebo 2013, 59). Indeed, Fortna (2004, 13) noted that the warring actors can decide to observe a ceasefire as a strategy to resume the battle better prepared. In this sense, the context of a ceasefire can facilitate the recruiting, rearming, and movement of troops by the armed factions to prepare for new offensives (Luttwak 2004, 267, Crocker 2004, 158, Åkebo 2013, 59). This was the case, for example, in Bosnia (Luttwak 2004, 267, Mahieu 2007, 12). In addition, case studies have shown that ceasefire agreements can fuel other types of violence, for instance increasing inter-rebel hostilities such as in the case of Colombia (Johnson 2017).

As an illustration of these concerns, the case study by Kolås (2011, 2) in Northeast India is of relevance. In this context, ceasefires accompanied by poor monitoring and a reduced threat of prosecution enabled rebel groups to operate more easily, resulting in higher figures of civilian casualties despite a decrease in the state-based violence. In another example, Clapham (1998, 205) argued that the 1992-1993 truce in Rwanda while the Arusha negotiations were taking place allowed the extremist factions to organize the genocides they would later implement.

Further, authors such as Ellis (1999, 101) and Kolås (2011, 3) argued that ceasefires can also increase the fractionalization of rebel groups. However, the latter primarily looked at cases where ceasefires preceded political negotiations, and where the divisions within rebel groups were between ‘pro-talks’ and ‘anti-talks’ factions (Kolås 2011, 5-6). Thus, a limitation of this conclusion was pointing out ceasefires as causing fractionalization, while it seemed plausible that the reason behind these internal divisions was *initiating peace talks*.

In a different line of argumentation, it has also been proposed that reaching ceasefires before the more political agreements may simply freeze the conflict (Wallenstein 2012, Clapham 1998), as exemplified in the case of Cyprus (Mahieu 2007, 217). In these cases, it is argued, a ceasefire brings about a stable status quo that diminishes the actors’ incentives to negotiate a peace agreement (Mahieu 2007, 217).

In sum, acknowledging the above concerns, some scholars defended that a ceasefire should not come before a political agreement, but coinciding with it. In particular, some authors argued that an agreement on substantive issues might be a *necessary* precondition for reaching a ceasefire (Ramsbotham et al. 2011, 184, Crocker 2004, 151).

Summary

The previous literature on the value of ceasefires for facilitating political deals has been divided by a controversial debate. While some authors highlighted the virtues of ceasefires for de-escalating the conflicts and showing righteous intentions, different scholars raised concerns on the potential utility of ceasefire agreements for returning to the battlefield better prepared, or on their potential to freeze the conflicts without a political solution being reached. As a consequence, this division of arguments is also reflected in the policy recommendations deriving from each approach: while some advocated for the agreement on a ceasefire before reaching consensus on a political accord, others defended that a political deal should come in the first place.

In the following section, I will present the main insights from the existing research on the dynamics of violence during the negotiations. The importance for the present study is that the violence coinciding with peace talks can influence the direction of the negotiations, as well as constitute a breach on a ceasefire when there is one.

2.2 Violence during negotiations

Overview of the previous research on the violence dynamics

The study of the dynamics of violence during the peace talks shares many features with the state of the literature on ceasefires. In this sense, different case studies have contributed to a debate as to whether violence constitutes an obstacle for successfully concluding peace settlements or not.

A regrettable reality is that peace talks often take place under the shadow of political violence and its threat. Moreover, Sisk (2009, 3, 68) observed that political violence often increases following the initiation of peace talks because the warring parties seek to improve their bargaining position, prevent being sidelined, or sabotage the negotiations altogether.

However, a key aspect for understanding the effects of violence on the likelihood that the combatants will sign a peace deal is the focus on the *interpretation* of the violent events by the warring parties, and not the objective intensity of these incidents. As an illustration of this, in South Africa, while the Biopatong massacre in 1992 was seen as a reason to suspend the talks by the lead negotiators, the assassination of the South African Communist leader Chris Hani in 1993 increased the resolve of the negotiating parties to continue the talks (Darby and Mac Ginty 2000, 234, Höglund 2004, 137). In the face of the latter event, Nelson Mandela issued a key speech highlighting the urgency to stop the aggressions, calling for a response to the recent attacks with “*dignity and in a disciplined fashion*” (Sisk 2009, 94, italics added).

While these basic considerations enjoy consensus within the previous research, this body of literature can be broadly divided into arguments that consider violence as an impediment for reaching peace agreements and, on the other hand, reasonings for violence as an inducement for the success at the negotiating table.

The next sub-section will outline the arguments that consider violence as an impediment for reaching peace deals.

Violence as an obstacle for peace agreements

Speaking in broad terms, Touval (1995) concluded that violence while talks are ongoing has a negative impact on the chances of having successful negotiations. In this sense, the emotions associated with the continuation of war would make it difficult for the warring sides to accept the concerns of their opponent as valid (Touval 1995, 335).

In the same line, Sisk (2009) argued that this untimely violence usually undermines trust and impedes the willingness to continue further negotiations. In other words, the violence coinciding with peace talks would negatively affect the mutual trust between combatants, thus hindering the prospects for a negotiated settlement.

Adding more nuances to these approaches, Höglund (2004) concluded that violence can produce a crisis in the negotiation process when three factors are present simultaneously: (1) there is little trust between the parties, (2) there is much opposition within the parties to continue the negotiations, and (3) there is little certainty of where the peace talks are heading. When the three variables are present, she argues, violence is thus interpreted as a confirmation that the opposing side cannot be trusted.

In essence, Höglund acknowledged that a violent event will be interpreted differently depending on two key uncertainties: the uncertainty over the direction of the talks, and over the internal cohesion of the groups.

However, a different set of arguments has been proposed regarding the role of violence during the negotiations. The next sub-section presents those arguments that consider violence as promoting that a political agreement will be reached.

Violence facilitating peace agreements

Some authors have suggested a potential facilitating role of violence for the conclusion of political deals. From a rationalist perspective, it has been argued that groups often turn to violence because they expect it to result in a critical concession from an opponent (Sederberg 1995). However, it should be noted that the escalation of violence is not always a consequence of a rational decision-making process (Pruitt and Kim 2004).

In line with this approach, Höglund (2004) recognized a potential effect of violence *facilitating* a negotiated settlement. In particular, she argued that peace negotiations are moved forward by the parties' fear of continued violence, a fear that could be increased by the constant presence of violence. Further, she acknowledged that the changes in the balance of power created by violence can speed up the negotiations.

Finally, Zartman (2008, 22) argued that conflict parties experiencing pain and loss become ready for compromise. Although this argument was the basis for the explanation of why combatants *initiate* negotiations, the rationale behind it could also be employed to justify why political agreements are signed. In this sense, it has been argued that the violence coinciding with peace talks puts pressure on the combatants to make concessions at the table (Msabaha 1995, Mahieu 2007), thus facilitating that they will sign a peace accord.

Summary

In short, how a violent event is interpreted by the combatants has implications for the direction of the peace talks. On one hand, this violence can undermine the mutual trust between the conflict parties, particularly when there are important uncertainties around the negotiating process. On the other hand, continuing violence can put pressure on the parties for the conclusion of a peace accord. However, more comparative research is needed to better ascertain the relative importance of these different views.

The next two sections will briefly outline the state of the literature connecting mediation and peacekeeping with the conclusion of peace accords. These factors are of relevance given that mediation can contribute to reaching both ceasefires and peace deals, while peacekeeping is often deployed where there is already a ceasefire, and it can also facilitate the successful conclusion of peace talks.

2.3. Mediation

Overview of the previous research on mediation

Existing studies found that mediation facilitates the signing of a peace deal, in both qualitative and quantitative studies (Bercovitch and Gartner 2009, Fortna 2004, 188, Sisk 2009, 187). In particular, a statistical study by Walter showed that, overall, having a mediator significantly increased the chances of signing an agreement in civil wars by 39%, when holding constant other independent variables such as third-party security guarantees, the duration of war, the overall violence, and the territorial goals (Walter 2002, 79).

From mediation to peace accords

The explanations proposed for this positive effect have primarily relied on the roles that mediators usually carry out. These actors can deliver incentives and sanctions; provide useful information on data, ideas and options for adaptation; and control some aspects of the meetings such as the structure of the agenda (Mitchell 2008, 121, Sisk 2009, 187, Walter 2002, 14). All of the above would contribute to improving the communication between the warring sides, and to making a negotiated settlement a more preferable outcome.

In addition to these roles, warring parties with high levels of mutual mistrust can put their trust in this external actor instead of on their opponent (King 1997). In turn, the parties would be more likely to sign a peace accord where there exists a mediation effort, even when the levels of mutual trust between combatants can be far from ideal.

Summary

In sum, there seems to be a wide consensus around the finding that negotiations that take place under the presence of at least one mediator are more likely to succeed. In addition, the reason for this relationship appears to rely on the roles of the mediators for facilitating inter-party communication, and on their ability to alleviate issues related with mistrust.

2.4. Peacekeeping operations

Overview of the previous research on peacekeeping

The presence of a peacekeeping force has been underscored by different studies as facilitating a negotiated outcome (Walter 2002, 72, Fortna 2008). In a quantitative study for civil wars, Walter found that third-party security guarantees were one of the main explanatory factors for obtaining a signed accord (Walter 2002, 72). In this sense, warring actors were 50% more likely to sign a peace agreement if a third party offered to verify or enforce its terms and then effectively did so, when holding constant other independent variables, such as mediation and the duration of war (Walter 2002, 78).

From peacekeeping to peace accords

The reason behind this finding, she argued, is that the warring actors are more likely to sign an accord if they *believe* that there will be security guarantees during its implementation (Walter 2002, 72). In particular, peacekeepers can actively coerce for compliance and/or expose cheating in relation to the peace accord, thus increasing the cost associated with breaking the agreement (Walter 2002, 39).

On the other hand, it should be noted that while peacekeepers can count and report ceasefire breaches with the aim of deterrence, in the context of heavy violations this evidence can also be used by critics who oppose the agreement (Åkebo 2013, 207).

Summary

In sum, peacekeeping seems to increase the chances that a peace settlement will be signed by the combatants. The underlying reason for this observation appears to be the ability of peacekeepers to alleviate the uncertainty over the security of the combatants, providing an external guarantee and increasing the costs associated with violence.

Because the different factors presented are not assumed to operate in isolation, the following section will discuss the interplay between the above four factors for the successful conclusion of peace accords.

2.5. Interaction between the factors leading to peace agreements

Overview of the previous research on the interaction between the factors

While previous research has explored the effects of different factors for reaching a peace settlement, most studies have done so without considering the interplay between these elements. However, given that these factors often coincide and can influence each other, the contributions regarding this interaction are reviewed in this section.

As an example of these relations, peacekeeping and mediation often coincide (Clayton and Dorussen 2018), peacekeeping tends to be deployed where there is already a ceasefire, and a ceasefire is expected to be followed by decreased levels of violence.

Most importantly, both a peacekeeping operation and a mediator can shape the combatants' *perception* of a violent event when this occurs, for instance, by assigning responsibility for illicit uses of force (Beardsley et al. 2018, 5).

From interaction effects to peace accords: a gap

The question of what condition or combination of conditions actually facilitate reaching a peace accord remains to be addressed in the previous literature. As an illustration of this puzzle, the negotiations in Mozambique between Renamo and the government took place in 1993 while a ceasefire was in place, and these were concluded when the two parties reached a peace agreement in November of the same year. However, in these negotiations there was also mediation, a peacekeeping force present in the country, and the talks went by in a context of nonexistent deadly violence.

Was the early ceasefire the reason why a peace accord was reached? Was this due to the presence of mediation, peacekeeping or an absence in violence? Or was this maybe because of a combination of the other factors?

In order to address these queries, I formulate the question: *do ceasefires during negotiations influence the likelihood of reaching a peace agreement in internal conflicts?* I will attempt to answer this interrogation while controlling for the dynamics of violence as a crucial conditioning factor, as well as for the presence of peacekeepers and the intervention of a mediator.

3. Theory

Introductory notes

This section develops the main theoretical argument connecting ceasefires with the successful conclusion of peace accords. I will start by defining the key concepts in this thesis, to then present the proposed causal mechanism and the hypotheses derived from it.

3.1. Definitions

Internal armed conflicts

In this thesis, an internal armed conflict is defined as a “*contested incompatibility between the government and an opposition party, that concerns government and/or territory, where the use of armed force results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year*” (UCDP 2019, italics added).

Negotiations

Because the unit of analysis of this thesis are dyad-negotiation processes, it is relevant to clarify what is understood by negotiations. Given that the dependent variable of present study is the signing of *political* accords, the definition of negotiations by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) is restricted to only those connected to the incompatibility. Thus, negotiations are seen in this thesis as *talks that are held between at least two of the warring parties in a state-based conflict, and are connected to one or more issues related to the incompatibility.*

Ceasefires

The definition of what constitutes a ceasefire differs significantly in the previous research. In line with Åkebo (2013, 39), this thesis conceptualizes ceasefires in a broad sense, including both accords that merely address the cessation of violence as well as settlements that *also* address political issues. In line with this conceptualization, Fortna

defined ceasefires as “*an end to or break in the fighting, whether or not it represents the final end of the war*” (Fortna 2004, 45, italics added). Because this definition does not sufficiently specify that ceasefires involve a mutual agreement between two or more parties, in the present thesis ceasefires are defined as *a commitment by two or more parties for an end or break in the fighting, whether or not it represents the final end of the conflict*.

It should be noted that unilaterally declared ceasefires are not considered as ceasefires since the former do not involve a mutual agreement between the parties.

Peace agreements

Finally, the definition of peace agreements/comprehensive settlements used by UCDP was taken for the present work. These are conceptualized as “*a formal agreement between warring parties, which addresses the disputed incompatibility, either by settling all or part of it, or by clearly outlining a process for how the warring parties plan to regulate the incompatibility*” (UCDP 2019, italics added).

In the following section I will discuss the scope of the present study. That is, I will present the basic framework in which the study is situated.

3.2. Scope of the analysis

Unit of analysis

Regarding the unit of analysis, the present study focuses on negotiations where the incompatibility is discussed, since addressing the political dimensions of a conflict is seen as necessary for achieving not only an absence of violence, but what is understood as positive peace¹ (Höglund and Kovacs 2010, Shields 2017). In addition, as Mac

¹ Positive peace is defined not only by the absence of violence, but also by the presence of features such as social justice and the respect of human rights (Höglund and Kovacs 2010: 370, Shields 2017).

Ginty (2008) noted, without progress towards a political agreement, a fragile situation of *no war, no peace* can result from negotiations. More critically, ceasefires without a political settlement are especially prone to conflict breakdown and recurrence (Sisk 2009, 28).

Assumptions

In line with previous research (e.g. Walter 2009, Fearon 1995), I look at the warring actors as being primarily strategic in their interactions with their opponent, both at the negotiation table and at the battlefield. In other words, the assumption of rationality of the warring sides is made, in concordance with game theoretical models.

In the next section, I will proceed to discuss the proposed link between having a ceasefire during the talks and the successful conclusion of these, with the signing of a peace accord.

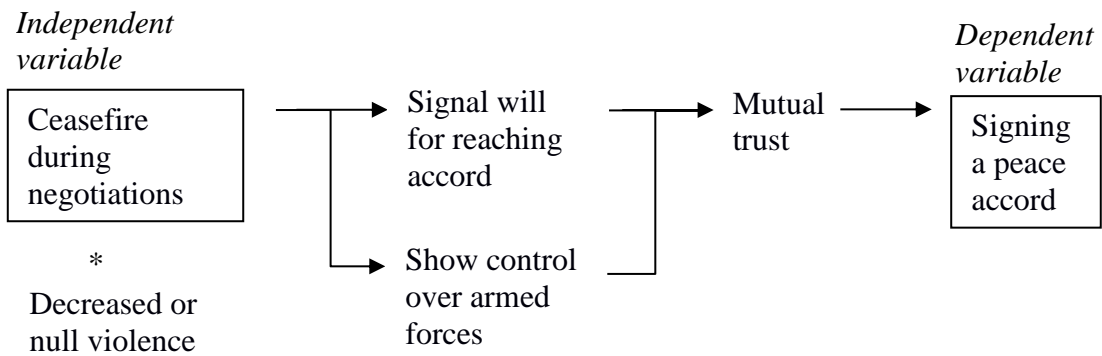
3.3. Causal story

Trust as a step between ceasefires and peace accords

The effect of ceasefires on the likelihood of reaching peace agreements is expected to be mediated by the interparty trust, which has already been identified as a relevant element for understanding the outcome of peace talks (Höglund 2004, 33, Sisk 2009, 189, 199). Trust can be broadly defined as “*an attitude involving a willingness to place the fate of one’s interests under control of others*” (Hoffman 2002, 376, italics added).

More specifically, I argue that ceasefires can contribute to increasing mutual trust by addressing two of its main components: diminishing the uncertainty over the willingness to negotiate a peaceful solution, and alleviating the uncertainty on whether the other party has the capacity to control their respective armed forces. In short, ceasefires would signal will and capacity, from one side to the other, in commitment to peace.

Figure 1. Causal mechanism.



* represents a conditional relationship

Showing willingness to sign a political accord

A central uncertainty faced by the representatives at the negotiating table concerns the question of whether the opposing side is interested in signing a peace deal or not. Just as some ceasefires are reached with the ulterior motive for one side to return to war (Fortna 2004), some political negotiations can occur for the strategic perception of legitimacy. In this regard, as already pointed out by Sisk (2009), ceasefires allow a potential opportunity for the intent of the warring sides to be tested.

In particular, agreeing on a ceasefire is not only a symbolic measure, but it has implications for the internal cohesion of a group and for the costs associated with the violence taking place under the ceasefire period. I argue that these associated risks are actually what make ceasefires a credible sign about the intent to reach a political deal.

First, the leaders of the respective warring groups can potentially face internal opposition after a ceasefire is signed, due to the existence of potential hard-liner factions opposed to a truce. In line with Darby's (2001) study, we should consider the warring sides as internally heterogeneous. Therefore, a leader of a group who agrees

on a ceasefire with their opponents can be exposed to increased criticism by the more hard-liner members within his/her group.

Second, I argue that ceasefires will increase the costs associated with the violence perpetrated during this period. In this regard, the violence inflicted by a warring organization under a ceasefire accord would be perceived as more illegitimate by the public opinion and by the opposing side, indicating that the commitments made by the parties are not credible.

In sum, the costs associated with signing a ceasefire will show the other side their commitment to reaching a peace accord. Thus, a ceasefire will increase the mutual trust between the combatants at the table.

Showing control over the armed forces

On the other hand, ceasefires will inform the opposing sides on whether the leaders of their respective groups have effective control over their armed branch (Åkebo 2013, 65). In other words, a ceasefire provides relevant information on each actor's *capacity* to effectively control their armed forces. This explanation speaks to Smith's (1995) argument that parties may discard the option of a ceasefire because of their inability to control their armed forces. Hence, by proving control over one's armed forces, I argue that ceasefires would also reduce commitment problems and thus increase mutual trust among the warring sides.

From mutual trust to peace agreements

Finally, drawing on Höglund's (2004) research, it is expected that warring sides that have higher levels of mutual trust are more likely to make concessions and/or find mutually beneficial outcomes. As a result, the likelihood of reaching a comprehensive agreement will be greater when parties present increased levels of mutual trust.

Conditioning effect of violence

For this causal mechanism to hold, however, ceasefires are assumed to be generally respected. If the actors perceive that the ceasefire during the peace talks was widely violated, it could have an even more detrimental effect on the talks compared to not having a ceasefire at all, as noted by Höglund (2004).

In particular, and in line with the presented causal mechanism, ceasefire *breaches* could potentially undermine the combatants' mutual trust by showing that the parties do not wish to comply by their agreements or that they lack the capacity to effectively control their respective armed forces.

Therefore, the relation between having a ceasefire during negotiations and the likelihood of reaching a peace agreement is expected to be conditioned by the dynamics of violence during the negotiations, seeing the latter as an indicator of whether the ceasefire was respected or not. More specifically, for the presented causal mechanism to receive empirical support, having a ceasefire during negotiations is expected to coincide with a *decrease* in the levels of violence from before to during the negotiations, or to coincide with a complete absence of violence during the talks.

Summary

Put together, the proposed causal mechanism is as follows: Having a ceasefire during negotiations, on the condition of having decreased or null levels of violence during this period, is perceived by the combatants as a confidence building measure, signaling both the willingness to reach a negotiated settlement and the capacity to control their respective armed forces, therefore increasing mutual trust. This trust will contribute to the actors being more likely to make concessions and/or find mutually beneficial outcomes. Consequently, the warring sides will be more likely to reach a peace agreement.

Based on this mechanism, I proceed to describe in the next section the hypotheses that will be tested in this study.

3.4. Hypotheses

Drawing on the above-presented mechanism, the main interest of the present study is the interaction between ceasefires during negotiations and the patterns of violence on the likelihood of reaching a peace accord.

However, two more parsimonious hypotheses are formulated to assess the *independent* effect of ceasefires and the dynamics of violence on the probability of concluding peace deals, because this is not sufficiently studied in previous research with a comparative approach. Thus, the hypotheses 1 and 2 are formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Negotiations in internal conflicts that occur in the context of a ceasefire are more likely to conclude with a peace agreement.

Hypothesis 2: Negotiations in internal conflicts that occur in the context of decreased or null levels of violence are more likely to conclude with a peace agreement.

Drawing on the causal mechanism of the present study, ceasefires *alone* are not expected to facilitate the conclusion of peace deals, because I do not expect ceasefires to have such an impact when they are broadly disrespected. Consequently, the Hypothesis 1 is not expected to receive empirical support.

On the other hand, and in line with the conclusions reached by Touval (1995), decreased levels of violence *alone* are expected to raise the likelihood of reaching a negotiated accord by increasing mutual trust. In this sense, the Hypothesis 2 is expected to obtain empirical backing.

Finally, I predict a relationship between having a ceasefire during the talks and reaching a peace deal, but only on the *condition* of decreased or null levels of violence, as expressed in Hypothesis 3. Thus, the third hypothesis is formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 3: Negotiations in internal conflicts that occur in the context of a ceasefire are more likely to conclude with a peace agreement when there are also decreased or null levels of violence, but not otherwise.

4. Research design

Introductory notes

In the next section I will discuss the criteria for selecting the cases under study and the operationalization of the variables. The methodological choices and procedure will also be discussed.

4.1. Data and Time Period

Scope of the study

The scope of the data in this study are internal armed conflicts in Africa, from 1989 to 2013. The unit of analysis is dyad-negotiation process. For each case within the scope of the analysis, I have coded the presence or absence of a ceasefire during the talks. Therefore, the data employed is completely novel and has never been used before.

To identify those negotiations where political issues are discussed, I draw on a forthcoming dataset by Nilsson (Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala) which includes data on negotiations processes within the above time-frame. These are, for instance, negotiations where elections or power-sharing measures are discussed, but not those which merely focus on the release of prisoners, the conflict behavior, or amnesties. It should be noted that Nilsson's dataset includes data on calendar years in which the conflict dyads are engaged in armed conflict, and two additional calendar years since the conflict dyad becomes inactive.

Consequently, focusing on negotiation processes in Africa, and from 1989 to 2013, is partly driven by the availability of data from Nilsson's dataset. However, selecting this region and time-frame has also some advantages. Limiting the conflicts under study to Africa, in the post-Cold War period makes the cases more comparable, while allowing for analyzing a sufficiently large amount of cases. A further discussion on some commonalities of the cases under study will be presented in the Empirics section.

Unit of analysis

Given that the unit of analysis of the present thesis are dyad-negotiation *processes*, I first limited Nilsson's dataset to only those dyad-months with negotiations over the incompatibility, and then grouped these together when they belonged to the same negotiation process. The criterion for this grouping was: if negotiations are only discontinued by one month between them, or if subsequent rounds of talks are scheduled to take place (even with more than one month in between them) without significant changes between them; then these negotiations are considered as part of the same negotiation process.

In addition, negotiations lasting for less than a week were excluded because these were not seen as comparable to the more common negotiation processes lasting for several weeks or months. In other words, talks lasting for less than a week fall outside the frame of comparison seen as appropriate for the present study.

As an illustration of this criteria, the peace talks in Burundi in July 1998 and October of the same year are considered as part of the same negotiation process, because the latter are seen as the second round of talks by the warring parties and were scheduled already in July. On the other hand, the negotiations in Burundi ending in September 1999 and those that take place in December 1999 are considered as separate, since there is a significant change in the lead mediator and there are two months between them without negotiations over the incompatibility.

Although I believe that these criteria adequately capture what the combatants and the international community consider as being part of the same negotiation process, I am aware that peace talks lasting for only few weeks may not be fairly compared to those lasting for several months or even a year. However, I reached this compromise in order to capture more events and, thus, expand the generalizability of the results.

Summary

In sum, the universe of cases in this study are negotiation processes lasting for at least one week, corresponding to intrastate conflict dyads in Africa, and from 1989 to 2013. In this sense, I only look at internal conflicts, excluding interstate and communal disputes. In addition, it should be noted that I analyze both cases which had a ceasefire during the talks and those that did not. Thus, by studying a reasonably broad number of dyad-negotiation processes from different armed conflicts in Africa, I considerably control for a potential selection bias.

The next sub-section will describe how the main variables under this study are operationalized, and the limitations associated with this measurement.

4.2. Operationalization

Measuring variables related to the conclusion of peace accords

In Table 1, the variables studied in this thesis are presented. It should be noted that ceasefires are the IV in Hypothesis 1, the violence dynamics are the IV in Hypothesis 2, and both variables are the IVs in Hypothesis 3, which looks at their interactive effect.

Table 1. Variables employed in the study.

Role in this study	Variable	Type of variable
IV (in H1 and H3)	Ceasefire	Binary
IV (in H2 and H3)	Violence dynamics	Ordinal
Control	Mediation	Binary
Control	Peacekeeping	Binary
Control	Duration	Continuous
Control	Previous talks	Continuous
DV	Peace accord	Binary

Measuring the main independent variable: Ceasefires

In the present thesis, ceasefires are defined as a commitment by two or more parties for an end or break in the fighting, whether or not it represents the final end of the conflict.

Based on this definition, I coded the presence or absence of a ceasefire for each dyad-negotiation process under study. The aim was to identify at what time in the peace process were the ceasefires agreed upon, and at what time were they terminated. Simply put, I coded whether ceasefires were reached *before* or *during* the negotiations, if at all. To code this variable, I relied primarily on news articles taken from Factiva, a tool that provides news items from a wide variety of news agencies. These include sources such as BBC Monitoring or Agence France Presse, but also local news media such as Africa Research Bulletin.

In addition to these secondary sources, primary sources such as ceasefire agreements or peace accords were also considered. When possible, I made each coding decision based on different sources, in an approach known as triangulation, thus allowing for more accurate and convincing findings (Yin 2009, 116).

Limitations in the measure of ceasefires

A limitation of using English-language and translated news sources is that the data employed in this thesis is dependent on the media coverage of the events of interest for the present study. In this sense, an agreement on a ceasefire by the combatants or its termination would not be identified in the present study unless these events were captured by the media. Keeping this limitation in mind, it should also be acknowledged that the events related to ceasefires and peace talks generally attract a wide degree of media attention, so that this limitation is not expected to significantly skew the results.

In addition, a problem with the collection of data for this study was determining when were the ceasefire accords *finalized*. To address this difficulty, two different indicators were considered and coded separately. On one hand, I looked at whether a ceasefire was *officially* in place. That is, I considered a ceasefire as being *officially* terminated

if a deadline made explicit in the terms of the agreement passed. On the other hand, I assessed whether a ceasefire was *informally* perceived as being in place. For this purpose, I considered a ceasefire as being *informally* terminated if the warring sides declared the need to agree on a truce to facilitate negotiations. In both cases, I also considered a ceasefire as being finalized if the signatory actors publicly declared it to be over.

Because the proposed causal mechanism is based on the *perception* of a ceasefire by the warring actors, the *informal* measure will be employed for the main analyses, while the *official* measurement of ceasefires is left for conducting robustness checks.

As a clarification, I did not consider a ceasefire as being present during a negotiation process if the former was terminated while the talks were ongoing, since the interest relies on the cases which had a ceasefire when the talks came to an end.

Separating the variables of ceasefires and violence dynamics

It should be noted that I did not use the levels of violence as an indicator for the termination of ceasefires since I want to study these two variables *separately*. By keeping the measures for ceasefires and violence dynamics independent from each other, I can better assess for the isolated effect of each variable on the likelihood of reaching a peace accord, and for the nature of the interaction between the ceasefires and the patterns of violence.

Measuring ceasefires: summary

In sum, I have coded the presence or absence of a ceasefire for each dyad-negotiation process based primarily on news articles from Factiva. I distinguish if the ceasefires are already agreed by the time the talks begin, or if they are agreed at some point during the negotiations. For doing this, I consider a ceasefire as being terminated based on two different criteria: an official and an informal one.

Measuring a critical control variable: Violence dynamics

In this thesis, the dynamics of violence are seen as an indicator of whether a ceasefire was respected or not. While this concept could refer to different types of aggressions, I operationalize this variable by looking at the *battle deaths* associated with each conflict dyad.

The data on the number of battle deaths is obtained from the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset Global, version 18.1 (Sundberg and Melander 2013, Croicu and Sundberg 2017). This database is used because it includes disaggregated information on the casualties in combat, separated for each conflict dyad, and with information on the specific date in which the killings occurred.

For each conflict dyad, I aggregate the counts of battle deaths to the month in which these take place, including fatalities between the rebel group and the government, and also killings of civilians by these combatants. As a clarification, I include one-sided violence in this measure because it is most often considered as a violation of a ceasefire, if there is one, and it can influence the direction of the talks.

I measure the dynamics of violence by looking at two different indicators. Namely, the *percentage increase* in battle deaths from before to during the talks, and the *absolute* lack of battle deaths during the talks. This is because the combatants are assumed to interpret a ceasefire as being respected both if there is an important de-escalation of violence, as well as if there is no violence at all.

First, I measure the *percentage increase* in battle deaths comparing the periods before and during negotiations. For each dyad-negotiation process, I calculate the mean value of battle deaths during the *four* months preceding the negotiations², and the mean value

² Four months preceding the talks were considered given that the mean duration of the dyad-negotiation processes studied in this work was 4.24 months. Therefore, this duration seemed as appropriate for the comparison of violence levels before the talks with those during this period.

during the negotiations. After this, I obtain the percentage increase in battle deaths by comparing the mean values of conflict fatalities *before* and *during* the talks. In sum, the percentage increase in the levels of violence is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Percentage increase} = 100 * \frac{b - a}{a}$$

where “*a*” is the mean value of the battle deaths in the four months preceding negotiations, and “*b*” is the mean value of the battle deaths during the talks.

Secondly, I measure the *absolute* absence of violence by identifying those cases that have a monthly mean value of battle deaths *below* 10 during the negotiations.

As a result of these two measurements, the variable *violence dynamics* can adopt three different values: 1 for *de-escalation*, 2 for *continuity*, and 3 for *increase*. A 1 is assigned to those cases where the percentage increase in violence is -50% or below, and to those cases with an *absolute absence* of violence as previously described. A 2 is assigned to the cases with a percentage increase between -49% and 49% and, finally, a 3 is assigned to the cases with a percentage increase in violence of 50% or above.

In essence, this measurement distinguishes between cases with no violence during negotiations or where this was reduced by at least a half, from those cases where violence increased by at least a half, and from those cases falling in between.

An advantage of primarily looking at the patterns of violence in relative, as opposed to absolute terms, is that by doing this I can control for the overall severity of the different armed conflicts.

Illustrating the value of looking at violence in relative terms

To exemplify the value of looking at the dynamics of violence in relative terms, two negotiation processes between the government of Sudan and the rebel group SPLM/A are briefly presented. First, in April of 1993, peace talks began between the two parties right after they renewed their commitment to observe a ceasefire (Reuters, 1993 April). Importantly, while the average monthly violence *during* the talks was of 86 killings, this figure represented a *decrease* compared to the months preceding the talks, in which 186 people were being killed, on average, each month. However, the talks ended a month later over disagreements on the application of Islamic Sharia Law (Reuters, 1993 May).

Seven years later, in 2000, after having agreed on a referendum of self-determination for the South of Sudan, both groups met again just after declaring to observe unilateral ceasefires, respectively (Associated Press Newswires, January 2000; Agence France Presse, January 2000). In this case, while the average monthly violence during the talks was of 46 killings, this represented an *increase* in the intensity of the conflict. The average violence preceding the talks was of 15 battle deaths per month. Once again, the talks came to an end in April without substantial progress being made (Xinhua News Agency, April 2000).

These examples illustrate how the absolute figures of violence during the negotiations were probably interpreted very differently. In the first case, these figures constituted a de-escalation in violence whereas, in the second, this violence was probably seen in a more negative way by the combatants, since it represented an increase in the intensity of the conflict. Therefore, I argue that assessing the dynamics of violence in relative terms captures more accurately the perception of violence by the conflict parties.

Measuring other control variables

Although the main variables of interest are the presence of a ceasefire during negotiations and the patterns of violence during that same period, the previous literature has showed that other factors can also affect the probability of reaching peace accords and possibly interact with each other in various ways.

In this sense, I control for four additional factors; namely, the presence of a peacekeeping operation during the negotiations, the intervention of a mediator, the duration of the talks, and the number of previous dyad-negotiation processes.

Control variable: Mediation

To control for the presence of a *mediator* at the talks, I rely on the UCDP Managing Intrastate Conflict (MIC) dataset (Croicu et al. 2013). In this sense, I first limited the MIC dataset to those events coded as “direct talks,” which indicate the presence of a third party at the peace negotiations at a specific date. Secondly, I compared the limited MIC dataset with the one constructed for this thesis, and I simply coded the presence of a mediator when an event from the former dataset takes place within the months of a dyad-negotiation process in my study. Thus, the presence of mediation is coded as a binary variable in the present work.

Because the MIC dataset only covers the period from 1993 to 2007 and the time-frame of the present study is from 1989 to 2013, I completed the measurement of mediation for the cases under study that fell outside that time-frame, relying on news articles from Factiva.

Thus, while I employed the same definition of a third party as MIC, it is acknowledged that there can be a bias in this added data, as it is possible that I do not use exactly the same criteria for considering the presence of a mediator.

For clarification, MIC defines a third party as a “party that is involved in either helping the warring parties to regulate the incompatibility, the conflict behavior or to regulate other conflict issues and work as an intermediary between the two” (Croicu et al. 2013, 3, italics added).

Control variable: Peacekeeping

The deployment of a peacekeeping operation is measured as a binary variable, showing if there are outside, neutral military personnel in the country during the dyad-negotiation process. This variable is obtained drawing on a dataset provided by Corinne Bara (Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala), based on data collected by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). This data contains information on peacekeeping at the monthly level and covers the period from 1993 to 2016, including both UN and non-UN peacekeeping. For the negotiation processes under study falling between 1989 and 1992, I assess whether there is peacekeeping or not based on news articles from Factiva, with a similar associated limitation as the one discussed for expanding the MIC dataset.

Control variables: Duration of the talks and Previous negotiations

I measure the duration of each negotiation process as the number of months that this lasts for. In addition, for each case in this study, I have simply counted the number of previous negotiation processes concerning the same conflict dyad. This is to take into consideration that the previous history of failed/successful negotiations may influence the chances of reaching a peace deal at the new negotiation processes. As an illustration of this potential influence, Bercovitch and Gartner (2009, 24) found that the previous history of failures had a very detrimental effect in mediation.

Measuring the dependent variable: Peace agreements

The DV, signing a peace settlement, is measured as a binary variable by looking at two different types of sources: the news articles from Factiva, and the peace agreements included in the PA-X database (PA-X 2017) and UN Peacemaker database (UN Peacemaker).

Peace agreements are seen as “*a formal agreement between warring parties, which addresses the disputed incompatibility, either by settling all or part of it, or by clearly outlining a process for how the warring parties plan to regulate the incompatibility*” (UCDP 2019, italics added).

In this sense, I consider a peace agreement as being reached by a dyad-negotiation process if the combatants sign an accord which addresses at least some aspect about the perceived incompatibility, as a result of a negotiation process. For instance, a peace agreement can address the organization of elections or some kind of power sharing. However, agreements that only regulate the conflict behavior, amnesties or the release of prisoners, to name a few, are not considered as peace agreements.

For example, the first negotiations between the Angolan government and the UNITA rebels, in 1989, resulted in a ceasefire being signed in June (Gbadolite Declaration 1989). As indicated in the ceasefire document, the parties accepted a ceasefire and the wish to proclaim National Reconciliation (Gbadolite Declaration 1989), but no specific measures were included in this document that regulated the dispute over the government. Two months later, the talks came to an end with a call by UNITA for the resumption of war, allegedly responding to violations of a ceasefire by the government (Reuters, 1989 August). In this case, I did not consider a peace agreement as being reached because the measures included in the ceasefire did not explicitly address the incompatibility and the talks ended with a resumption of hostilities.

In the next sub-section, I will present the rationale for the method selected in this study, as well as how it will be employed to test the formulated hypotheses.

4.3. Methodology

Logistic regression analysis

To test the proposed hypotheses, and given that the DV is binary, a logistic regression analysis is employed. In particular, because Hypothesis 3 formulates a conditional relationship, the models to test this hypothesis include multiplicative interaction terms. In this sense, Brambor et al. argue that *“the intuition behind conditional hypotheses is captured quite well by multiplicative interaction models”* (Brambor et al. 2006, 64, italics added). The hypotheses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1	Negotiations in internal conflicts that occur in the context of a ceasefire are more likely to conclude with a peace agreement.
Hypothesis 2	Negotiations in internal conflicts that occur in the context of decreased or null levels of violence are more likely to conclude with a peace agreement.
Hypothesis 3	Negotiations in internal conflicts that occur in the context of a ceasefire are more likely to conclude with a peace agreement when there are also decreased or null levels of violence, but not otherwise.

A logistic regression analysis is well-suited to account for two key criteria when assessing the causal effect; namely, *covariation* and *isolation*. Addressing these criteria is of particular relevance considering that the existing literature on the relationship between ceasefires, violence and peace accords has almost exclusively relied on case studies. In this sense, case studies are generally not so appropriate for accounting for these criteria.

A specific strength of employing a logistic regression in the present study is that the *temporal order* is also controlled for. Given that peace agreements *always* come after negotiations, the direction of the causal relation can be interpreted as being in line with the formulated hypotheses. In other words, a positive correlation between having a ceasefire and concluding a peace accord, while controlling for other factors, will always indicate that the presence of a ceasefire facilitated reaching the peace deal, and not the opposite way.

However, a limitation of the methodology employed is that this design is not well-suited to account for the *causal mechanism*. Thus, even if ceasefires are found to have an effect on the conclusion of peace accords, this could occur for a different reason than the one I theorize.

In short, because previous research exploring the relationships between ceasefires, violence, and peace agreements relied almost exclusively on case studies, the present design has the potential to complement the existing insights with more generalizable, comparative evidence. In this sense, the effect of having a ceasefire during negotiations on the likelihood of reaching a peace accord is tested considering a wider range of cases, while controlling for other key factors and for the direction of the hypothesized relationship.

In addition, compared to a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), employing logistic regression allows to include *continuous* variables, as well as more *control* variables. Further, the measures of uncertainty for logistic regression are more standardized than in QCA, so that the specific knowledge and judgements by the researcher play a smaller role in making the results both robust and plausible (Schneider and Wagemann 2012, 31).

Procedure to test the hypotheses

The hypotheses are presented in Table 2. It should be noted that the IV in Hypothesis 1 is the presence of a ceasefire, while the IV in Hypothesis 2 are the violence dynamics. In both cases, the DV is signing a peace accord.

To test the hypotheses 1 and 2, I will start by running a bivariate regression including the corresponding IV, together with the DV, in order to assess if the hypotheses receive or not preliminary empirical support. Secondly, I will proceed to run a multiple regression model, including all the other five control variables, as to examine if the pattern from the first model remains the same or changes.

Next, I will create additional models for robustness tests, where I will use an *alternative* measurement of the IV or a *subset* of the data.

Because the Hypothesis 3 formulates a conditional relationship between ceasefires and the violence dynamics leading to a peace accord, a slightly different procedure will be followed. In this case, the IVs are the both presence of a ceasefire and the violence dynamics, while the DV is signing a peace agreement.

In turn, I will introduce a *multiplicative interaction* term in the models to test this last hypothesis. I will start by running a first model which includes the variables of ‘ceasefire,’ ‘violence dynamics,’ and ‘peace accord,’ with an interaction term between the two first variables. Next, I will include the control variables of ‘mediation’ and ‘peacekeeping’ in a second model. It should be noted that not all the control variables would be added in the second model, since interaction models are by design more sensitive to multicollinearity issues (Brambor et al. 2006, 8).

I acknowledge that in the cases where a ceasefire is agreed *during* the talks, the *changes in violence* after the ceasefire are not captured well by the design of this study. Thus, I exclude these cases to test Hypothesis 3, resulting in 70 cases, because the focus here is on the interaction between ceasefires and the dynamics of violence.

It should be noted that I will not control for the potential effect of influential cases, because the variables under study cannot adopt more than three different values. Thus, there cannot be cases with extreme values on these variables that skew the results.

The following section will proceed to describe the most relevant features of the data that will later be used to test the hypotheses. In particular, I will start by briefly contextualizing the conflicts in Africa, to better frame the results of this study.

5. Empirics

5.1. Historical context of African internal conflicts

The present study is limited to internal armed conflicts in Africa in the post-Cold War period. Acknowledging that the different cases under study are not homogeneous and have specific singularities, there are also some common features among them. For instance, one reality these countries share is the arbitrary design of their borders by the colonial powers, mostly in the late 1880s, disregarding the local circumstances and cultures (Herbst 1989).

In addition, there are further historical similitudes. Under colonial rule, the economies of most African countries became primarily reliant on the production of raw materials for exportations (Fontana 2011). In the early 1980s, the global rise of energy prices led to a fall in the prices of African exports, resulting in a marked economic recession and increased indebtedment of these countries (Bates 2008, 99). As a result of their indebtedment, most of these countries demanded the assistance of the International Monetary Fund, whose support came together with a call for structural adjustment programs (Fontana 2011). However, these programs had questionable effects on the economy of these populations, with particularly detrimental consequences in places such as Somalia (read Fontana 2011). Further, with the end of the Cold War, the type of foreign economic aid intended to garner allies was drastically reduced (Bates 2008, 98, Fontana 2011).

As a consequence, there were increased internal demands for political change. These took place in a context defined by limited democratic institutions (Bates 2008, 137) and by widespread corruption, often associated with illicit exports of natural resources with the complicity of European and North American banks and corporations (Global Witness 2018, Fontana 2011).

A salient feature of the cases under study is that the vast majority of actors at the negotiations are male, in line with a global trend in diplomacy being a male-dominated environment (Aggestam and Towns 2019, Ellerby 2013) where only 9% of negotiators at official peace talks have been women (Page et al. 2009). However, as historian Sylvia Serbin notes, the women in pre-colonial Africa had a known, respected, and influential role in their societies before the arrival of external religious and cultural influences (Serbin 2018). Therefore, the male monopoly observed in the formal political sphere for the cases under study appears to be a feature of colonial and post-colonial Africa, but not a distinctive historical trait of this continent until that period.

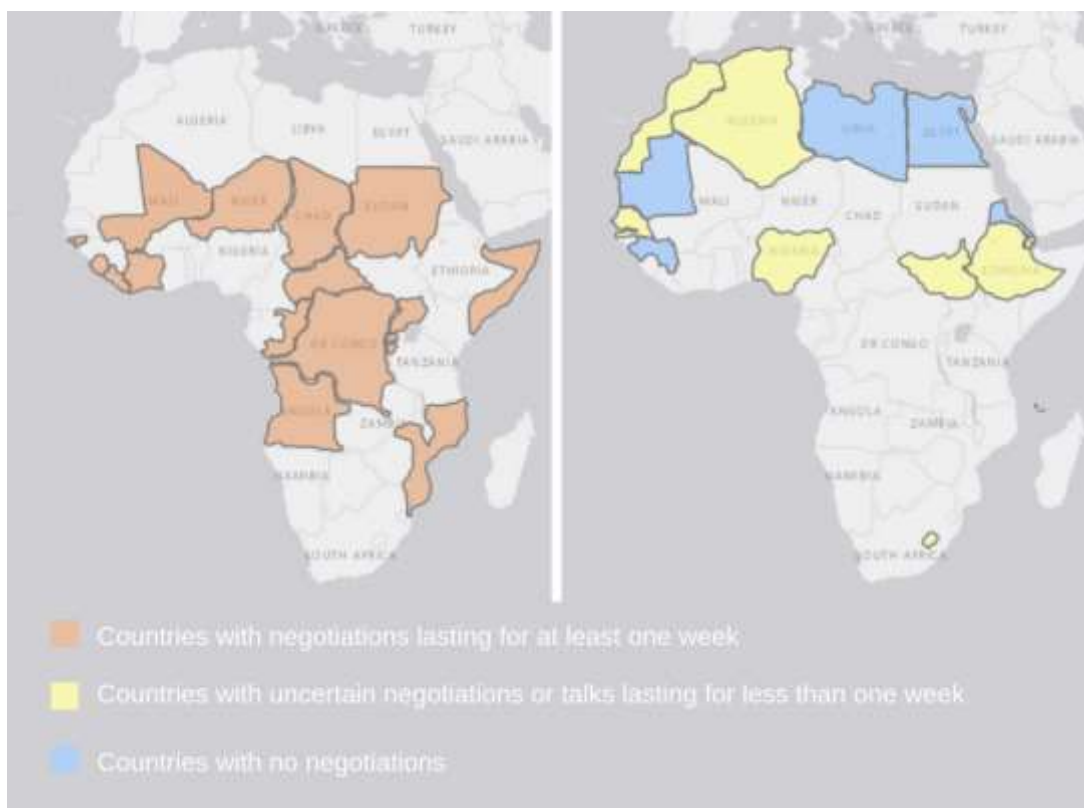
In the next sub-section, I will shortly present the cases studied in this thesis.

5.2. Cases under study

In this work, the scope of the data are internal armed conflicts in Africa, from 1989 to 2013. The data has been collected using the following definition of negotiations: *Negotiations are talks that are held between at least two of the warring parties in a state-based conflict, and are connected to one or more issues related to the incompatibility.*

Based on this definition, and excluding talks lasting for less than one week, a total of 85 dyad-negotiation processes from 17 different countries are studied. An illustration of those countries included and excluded in this thesis is presented in Figure 2. Interestingly, all the countries included in the study belong to sub-Saharan Africa, despite the prevalence of internal armed conflicts in the northern areas of the continent as well.

Figure 2. Countries in Africa that experienced internal armed conflicts during the period 1989-2013.



Note: Map created by the author of this study, using the program ArcGIS.

5.3. Distribution of the cases

Table 3 shows the distribution of the cases under study according to the four *categorical* variables considered in this work. This table includes the main IV, which is ceasefires; and the DV, which is peace accords. As it can be seen in Table 3, the cases studied show a reasonable degree of variation in regards to the variables of interest, with the exception of mediation. It is clear from Table 3 that most of the negotiation processes under study take place with the participation of a mediator. In addition, the fact that 59% of the negotiations reached a peace agreement is congruent with Walter's (2002, 6) observation that 62% of the negotiations in civil wars between 1940 and 1992 concluded with a peace deal.

Table 3. Distribution of the cases according to the four categorical variables.

	Peace accord	Ceasefire	Mediation	Peacekeeping
Present	50	50	72	46
Absent	35	35	13	39
Total	85	85	85	85

The variable of violence dynamics is *ordinal*, and can adopt three different values. Table 4 shows the distribution of the cases based on the dynamics of violence that characterize them. This table shows that in 52 out of the 85 negotiations under study, there was a de-escalation in violence. Interestingly, this evidence diverges from Sisk's (2009, 3) claim that political violence often increases following the initiation of peace talks. It should be clarified, however, that this figure does not answer the *reason* behind this common trend of de-escalation. Thus, it is possible that many conflicts de-escalated not because of the start of peace talks, but due to a ceasefire being signed or the deployment of peacekeeping, among other explanations.

Table 4. Distribution of the cases according to the violence dynamics.

Violence dynamics	Cases
De-escalation	52
Continuity	13
Increase	20
Total	85

In Table 5, the state of the two *continuous* variables in this study is summarized: the duration of the talks and the history of previous negotiations. As follows from Table 5, while the mean duration of the talks is 4.24 months, there seems to be a wide variation between the cases, given that the standard deviation is 4.16 months. In addition, most of the negotiations are preceded by few or nonexistent previous attempts, given that the mean of this variable is only of 1.11 previous talks.

Table 5. Overview of the continuous variables in the dataset.

	Duration of the talks (in months)	Number of previous negotiation processes
Mean	4.24	1.11
SD	4.16	1.73
Min.	1	0
Max.	24	8

5.4. Correlation between the variables

Because previous research (e.g. Beardsley et al. 2018, 3) already found that some of the variables considered in this study often coincide and can influence one another, the correlation between five of the key variables in this study is examined by conducting a χ^2 test and a *Spearman's Rank Correlation*.

Table 6 summarizes the *statistical significance* of the correlation between the four categorical variables, after conducting a χ^2 test for each pair of factors. Surprisingly, the only variable that shows a significant correlation with the conclusion of a peace accord is the presence of a ceasefire during the negotiations.

Table 6. Correlation significance between the four categorical variables. The p values for each correlation are presented as a result of a χ^2 test.

	P. accord	Ceasefire	Mediation	Peacekeeping
Peace accord	-	0.02**	0.92	0.13
Ceasefire	0.02**	-	0.19	0.13
Mediation	0.92	0.19	-	0.35
Peacekeeping	0.13	0.13	0.35	-

Note: ** significant at 5%

The previous literature found a significant relationship between mediation, peacekeeping and the signing of peace agreements (e.g. Clayton and Dorussen 2018, Bercovitch and Gartner 2009, Walter 2002, 72). However, as shown in Table 6, none of these correlations is found to be statistically significant.

However, I acknowledge that the relatively reduced number of cases included in this study, and the discrepancy with the time-frame employed in Walter’s (2002) study, or instance, could potentially account for some of these differences.

To assess the correlations between the *violence dynamics* and the four main categorical variables, a *Spearman’s Rank Correlation* is conducted for each pair of variables, as illustrated in Table 7. We can see in this table that only mediation presents a statistically significant association with the dynamics of violence, and in an unexpected direction. The intervention of a mediator is correlated with an increase in violence during the talks. Therefore, the results presented in Table 7 are not in line with previous research suggesting an association between mediation and peacekeeping with decreased levels of violence (Beardsley et al. 2018, 3).

However, because mediation is present in 72 out of the 85 cases, it is possible that there is a selection effect in the data. In this sense, mediators may tend to go to the most complicated conflicts, because they are most needed there. In any case, future studies could examine more closely the pattern found in the present work.

Table 7. Correlations between the patterns of violence and the four categorical variables. The results were obtained by conducting a Spearman’s Rank Correlation.

	Peace accord	Ceasefire	Mediation	Peacekeeping
Violence dynamics	<i>rho:</i> -0.14	<i>rho:</i> -0.10	<i>rho:</i> 0.25**	<i>rho:</i> 0.06

Note: ** significant at 5%

On a different note, evidence from case studies (Ryland et al. 2018, Åkebo 2013, 203) raised the expectation that ceasefires would coincide with decreased levels of violence. However, while the sign of the correlation between ceasefires and the dynamics of violence is in line with those expectations, the correlation is not statistically significant, as follows from Table 7. Therefore, it seems that reaching a ceasefire is not an infallible method for bringing about a reduction in violence. Indeed, Forster (2018) pointed out that ceasefire agreements have a high rate of failure.

Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that a *Spearman's Rank Correlation* only captures linear relationships. It is plausible that significant, non-linear relationships exist between the violence dynamics and the other categorical variables, but are not captured by this test.

5.5. Summary

In sum, a first overview of the data employed in this study shows that there is an appropriate degree of *variation* in regards to the main IVs and DV, and that the IVs are not significantly *correlated* to each other.

These results are convenient for conducting a logistic regression analysis. In this sense, a certain variance is *always* needed in order to find a pattern of association between the IV and the DV. In addition, the absence of covariation between the IVs suggests that there will not be important multicollinearity issues in the models including these variables together.

The next three sections will show the main findings corresponding to the three proposed hypotheses, and these results will be analyzed in the light of the previous literature. In particular, the following section will discuss Hypothesis 1, examining the relationship between having a ceasefire during the talks and the conclusion of a political deal.

6. From ceasefires to peace accords?

6.1. Introduction

This section aims to examine the effect of having a ceasefire during negotiations on the probability of reaching a peace agreement, as opposed to being at the table without having agreed on a halt of hostilities. The findings support the argument that there is indeed such an effect, in the sense that having a ceasefire during the negotiations is positively associated with reaching a peace accord, even when controlling for the influence of other factors.

6.2. Findings

Statistical significance

Six different models are presented in Table 8. Out of these, models 1 and 2 correspond with Hypothesis 1. Model 1 is a bivariate logistic regression which only includes the IV and the DV. In Model 2, the control variables are added. The criterion for statistical significance employed is a *p*-value of 0.05.

Model 1 in Table 8 describes the effect of having a ceasefire during the talks on the likelihood that the parties will reach a peace deal. In line with the theoretical expectations, having a ceasefire during negotiations seems to have a positive effect on the likelihood of reaching peace accords, since the coefficient for ceasefires is positive and statistically significant.

In Model 2, the control variables are included. As it can be seen in this model, the effect of ceasefires during the talks on the likelihood of reaching a peace deal endures when controlling for the influence of these control variables, providing additional empirical support to Hypothesis 1. In this sense, the coefficient for ceasefires in Model 2 is positive and statistically significant. Importantly, the results remain robust even when controlling for the effect of *mediation* and *peacekeeping*, which previous research found to be closely associated with the conclusion of peace accords.

As follows from Model 2, apart from having a ceasefire, no other variable is statistically significant. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the sign of peacekeeping, but not the sign of the coefficient for mediation, is in line with the findings in previous research (Walter 2002), which observed a facilitating effect of both these variables on the conclusion of peace agreements.

Substantial effect

In terms of the *substantial* effect of ceasefires for predicting a peace deal being signed, the first two models in Table 8 offer similar results. In Model 1, the effect of ceasefires on reaching peace accords is considerably strong: having a ceasefire during negotiations increases the predicted probability of signing a peace deal by 27.2%.

When including the control variables, as in Model 2, this predicted effect is only slightly reduced. In this second model, having a ceasefire during negotiations increases the predicted probability of reaching a peace settlement by 26.1%, given that the control variables are held at their means³. This suggests that the observed effect of ceasefires during negotiations on the conclusion of peace accords does not seem to be mediated by the control variables under study. Instead, the findings suggest that the effect of ceasefires during the talks for the conclusion of peace deals is independent from the control variables, further supporting the claim made in Hypothesis 1.

³ Similar results are obtained when holding the control variables at their medians.

Table 8. Logit estimates on the likelihood of reaching a peace accord. The results are based on negotiations in internal armed conflicts in Africa, from 1989 to 2013.

	Peace Agreement					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Ceasefire	1.135** (0.460)	1.091** (0.480)				
Ceasefire Start					1.840** (0.777)	1.689** (0.797)
Violence Dynamics2			-1.106* (0.640)	-1.235* (0.687)	-0.811 (0.955)	-0.915 (1.011)
Violence Dynamics3			-0.435 (0.536)	-0.633 (0.614)	-0.118 (0.813)	-0.310 (0.874)
Ceasefire Start* Violence Dynamics2					-0.924 (1.404)	-0.954 (1.426)
Ceasefire Start* Violence Dynamics3					-1.394 (1.226)	-1.200 (1.254)
Mediation		-0.041 (0.658)		0.452 (0.662)		0.349 (0.747)
Peacekeeping		0.599 (0.472)		0.793* (0.469)		0.399 (0.554)
Duration		-0.0002 (0.056)		0.016 (0.060)		
Previous Talks		-0.121 (0.135)		-0.045 (0.138)		
Constant	-0.288 (0.342)	-0.402 (0.645)	0.636** (0.291)	-0.110 (0.619)	-0.105 (0.459)	-0.452 (0.658)
Observations	85	85	85	85	70	70

Note: Robust standard errors in parenthesis; * significant at 10%, ** significant at 5%, *** significant at 1%.

Robustness checks

Four additional models were run to better test Hypothesis 1, using different measurements of the IV. These models can be found in Annex I. In models 7 and 8, those cases where a ceasefire is agreed *during* the talks are excluded, resulting in 70 cases. In other words, the only ceasefires being studied are those present from the start of the talks. Compared to models 1 and 2, the coefficient for *ceasefires from the start* in these models is still positive and statistically significant, and it is slightly larger as well. In a similar way, this coefficient does not present important changes when adding the control variables into the model.

These results are in line with the theoretical expectations. In this sense, given that having a ceasefire during the talks is expected to facilitate that the combatants will sign a peace deal, it follows from logic that negotiations which had a ceasefire *from the start* of the talks would be expected to facilitate the conclusion of a peace accord to a larger extent. Thus, we would expect that the coefficients corresponding to only having a ceasefire from the start would be larger than those for ceasefires overall, as it is the case when comparing models 1 and 2 with models 7 and 8. Therefore, the results presented in models 7 and 8 provide additional support to Hypothesis 1.

Finally, in models 9 and 10 in Annex I, the measurement of ceasefires is the *official* presence of a ceasefire, as described in the Research Design section. That is, instead of looking at the perceptions by the combatants on whether a ceasefire is in place or not, this measurement captures the prevalence of a ceasefire according to the signed ceasefire document.

The corresponding coefficient for *official* ceasefires is neither statistically significant nor strong, as follows from models 9 and 10. Thus, it seems clear that the *official* presence of a ceasefire is not an appropriate predictor for the success at the negotiating table. This evidence highlights the need for considering the warring parties' *interpretations* of ceasefires, instead of just looking at the signed documents, which is both the easiest and the most common practice in previous studies.

Summary

In sum, while Hypothesis 1 receives extensive support from different models, this claim does not seem to hold when only considering the official presence of a ceasefire. Instead, the *perceptions* of ceasefires by the combatants seem to be relevant for explaining the probabilities of success at the talks.

6.3. Discussion

The timing of ceasefires: before or after peace accords?

Previous research on the value of ceasefires for reaching political accords has followed two main approaches: “security first, settlement will follow” and “settlement first, security will follow.” While some of the proponents of the first approach may have advocated for early agreements on a truce for humanitarian reasons (Lane 2016, Touval 1995), peace scholars have also suggested specific mechanisms by which ceasefires can facilitate the conclusion of a peace settlement. Chounet-Cambas (2011, 19), for instance, summarized these when concluding that having a ceasefire from the beginning of the process might reduce tension and signal good will between the combatant sides.

The results presented in the models 1 and 2 in Table 8 provide empirical support to this line of argumentation, backing the “security first, settlement will follow” approach as opposed to the “settlement first, security will follow.” In other words, the findings that follow from models 1 and 2 are in line with the proponents of early ceasefires.

Association between ceasefires and violence

Despite these results, there are also reasons to be cautious about the direction of the talks once a ceasefire is reached by the combatants. In this sense, different authors (Fortna 2004, 13, Luttwak 2004, 267, Crocker 2004, 158) argued that the warring parties can decide to observe a ceasefire as a strategy to resume the battle better prepared. In line with these concerns, I did not find a statistically significant correlation between ceasefires and the dynamics of violence, as shown in Table 7. Therefore, this

suggests that at least some negotiations experienced a de-escalation in violence without a ceasefire, and at least some took place under continuing violence despite having agreed on a ceasefire.

Summary

In sum, negotiations taking place while a ceasefire has already been agreed are significantly more likely to conclude with a peace accord, and this effect remains even when accounting for the influence of factors such as mediation and peacekeeping. This result, however, only seems to apply to the combatants' *perception* of a ceasefire, and not to the official presence of it.

The implications of this findings are that the official presence of a ceasefire is not enough to facilitate the success at the table, but the parties must perceive a ceasefire as being valid. Thus, if a ceasefire is in place *in paper* but the conflict parties do not perceive it as being meaningful, increased efforts should be made to either renew the commitment by the combatants to the ceasefire, or to sign a new truce. The predicted consequence of these actions would be an increase in the chances that the parties will sign a political accord.

The next section will discuss Hypothesis 2, examining the relationship between the dynamics of violence and the conclusion of political deals.

7. From decreased or null violence to peace accords?

7.1. Introduction

I argue, as proposed in Hypothesis 2, that negotiations taking place under reduced or null levels of violence make it more likely, on average, that the combatants will sign a peace deal, compared to those cases with continuing or increasing levels of violence. The results do not support this claim. In this regard, the coefficient of the violence dynamics is not statistically significant in any of the models that test this hypothesis.

7.2. Findings

Statistical significance

In Table 8, models 3 and 4 correspond with Hypothesis 2. Model 3 is a bivariate logistic regression which only includes the IV and the DV. In Model 4, the control variables are added. The criterion for statistical significance employed is a p -value of 0.05.

Model 3 examines the effect of the violence dynamics on the likelihood that the parties will reach a peace deal. Because the variable of violence dynamics is ordinal, this variable was transformed into two factors for the logistic regression analysis, so that the factors represent the predicted effect of the change from *de-escalation* to *continuity*, and from *de-escalation* to *increase*, respectively.

In line with the theoretical expectations, the sign of the relationship for the coefficients corresponding to violence dynamics is negative, suggesting that an increase in violence is associated with lower probabilities of successfully concluding a peace accord at the table. However, as follows from Model 3, the change from *de-escalation* to *continuity* is only statistically significant at a 90% level of confidence, and the change from *de-escalation* to *increase* is not even statistically significant at that level.

Because this statistical significance is below the criterion used, and keeping in mind that Hypothesis 2 would predict a larger effect for the cases with an *increase* in violence, we can conclude that the findings do not support Hypothesis 2. In other words, the results in Model 3 do not suggest that the changes in violence can accurately predict the likelihood that a peace accord will be signed at the table.

When adding the control variables, similar results are obtained. As we can observe in Model 4, the coefficients corresponding to the violence dynamics have a negative sign, in line with the theoretical expectations, but are not statistically significant at a 95% level of confidence. Thus, the findings in Model 4 do not support Hypothesis 2.

In a complementary note, none of the control variables in Model 4 are statistically significant at a 95% level of confidence, but the signs of peacekeeping and mediation are in line with the findings from previous research (Walter 2002), which suggested a facilitating effect of these variables for reaching peace accords.

Robustness checks

In annex II, four additional models are presented. Models 11 and 12 represent the effect of the violence dynamics on the probabilities of reaching a peace deal at the table, but excluding the cases with null levels of violence both before and during the talks. Model 12 also includes the control variables.

This distinction is made because these cases could be seen as theoretically different from the cases with at least some figures of deadly violence before the talks. However, in line with the findings in this section, the coefficients for violence dynamics are not statistically significant at a 95% level of confidence in any of the two models.

In models 13 and 14, the effect of the *absolute* levels of violence at the talks on the likelihood that the combatants will sign a peace deal is examined. Model 14 controls for potentially confounding variables. Again, the coefficients are not statistically significant in any of the models, suggesting that the overall intensity of violence does not seem to have an independent effect on the likelihood of successfully concluding peace talks.

Summary

Taking all the above into account, the claim that having decreased or null levels of violence during the negotiations will have a significant effect on the probability that the combatant parties will sign a peace settlement does not receive empirical backing. Differing with this claim, the findings suggest that the violence dynamics do not seem to have an independent effect on the conclusion of peace agreements.

7.3. Discussion

Violence: obstacle or inducement for peace accords?

Previous research has acknowledged that it is not the *objective* degree of violence but the *interpretation* of this behavior what can constitute a crisis in negotiations. In this context, some authors (e.g. Höglund 2004, Darby 2001) added nuances on the conditions that make violence more prone to crises at the talks. However, the existing literature is broadly divided into those that underscore the deteriorating effects of violence for the trust between the parties (e.g. Touval 1995, Sisk 2009), and those who argue that violence can put pressure on the parties to compromise (e.g. Mahieu 2007, Zartman 2008).

By looking at the independent effect of the violence dynamics on the likelihood of reaching peace accords in models 3 and 4 in Table 8, we do not find a strong support for any of those approaches, although the sign of the relationship is in line with the proponents of violence as an obstacle for peace accords. However, because these coefficients are not statistically significant at a 95% level of confidence, it is plausible that in some cases the continuation of violence has indeed pressured the negotiating parties to sign a deal. Thus, a more in-depth examination of these particular cases is needed to complement the general trends that follow from models 3 and 4.

In addition, the *objective* levels of violence do not seem to have an effect either, as shown in models 13 and 14, in annex II.

It should be noted, as Ragin (2010, 17) argues, that there can be strong relations between two variables despite presenting relatively modest correlations. In the present case, this could be due to the fact that the violence dynamics *per se* are not a reliable predictor for the conclusion of peace deals, but that they may have a strong effect in interaction with other factors, as speculated in Hypothesis 3.

Summary

In sum, while the findings in models 3 and 4 do not show support for the claim that there is an isolated effect of the violence dynamics for the conclusion of peace agreements, the sign of this relationship seems to be, on average, in line with the proponents of violence as a *deteriorating* factor for the chances of success at the talks.

The next section will discuss the effects of ceasefires, in interaction with the violence dynamics, on the likelihood of success at the negotiating table.

8. From ceasefires and decreased or null violence to peace accords?

8.1. Introduction

The third hypothesis formulated in this study is as follows: Negotiations in internal conflicts that occur in the context of a ceasefire are more likely to conclude with a peace agreement when there are also decreased or null levels of violence, but not otherwise.

The results following from models 5 and 6, in Table 8, provide some degree of support to this claim, in the sense that there seems to be an interaction effect between the two main IVs. In this regard, while the presence of a ceasefire during the talks appears to have an independent effect on the DV, as observed when testing Hypothesis 1, this effect is stronger when ceasefires coincide with a *de-escalation* in violence or *null* levels of it.

8.2. Findings

Substantial effect

Models 5 and 6, in Table 8, correspond with Hypothesis 3. It should be noted that in the cases where a ceasefire is agreed *during* the talks, the changes in violence *after agreeing on the ceasefire* are not captured well by the design of the present study. Therefore, I exclude these cases in the models that test Hypothesis 3, because the focus is on the *interaction* between ceasefires and the dynamics of violence.

Briefly put, the IVs in both Model 5 and 6 are the presence of a ceasefire from the start of the talks, and the dynamics of violence, while the DV is reaching a peace agreement. In Model 5, the two IVs are included, together with an interaction term between them. Finally, in Model 6, the control variables are also included. The criterion for statistical significance employed is a *p*-value of 0.05.

Model 5 describes the effect of having a ceasefire during the talks, in interaction with the dynamics of violence, on the likelihood that the parties will reach a peace deal. A first look at the results shows that the sign of the coefficients for ceasefires and those for the violence dynamics are in line with their respective hypothesized relations to the DV. In this sense, cases where there is a ceasefire during the talks, and those defined by decreased or null levels of violence seem to be associated with higher probabilities that the combatants will successfully conclude a peace deal.

When assessing if there is an interaction between the two IVs, it should be noted that introducing a multiplicative interaction term in a logistic regression model will always increase multicollinearity (Brambor et al. 2006). Therefore, even if the coefficients of the interaction terms are not found to be statistically significant, such an interactive effect could still receive empirical support.

In this sense, I assess the interaction effect hypothesized in this study by looking at the *substantial* differences in predicted probabilities for the various combinations of the IVs. The results provide strong support for the expected interaction effect. First, having a ceasefire during the talks increases by 37.6% the predicted probability that the combatants will sign a peace accord, when holding the violence dynamics at *decreased or null levels of violence*. Second, having a ceasefire during the negotiations increases by 21.4% the predicted probabilities of reaching a peace deal, when holding the violence dynamics at *continuity*. Finally, having a ceasefire during the talks increases by only 11.1% the predicted probabilities of signing a political accord, when holding the violence dynamics at *increase*.

In sum, the marked differences observed in the predicted probabilities, depending on the values of the dynamics of violence, support the claim that the effect of ceasefires on the DV is critically influenced by the dynamics of violence during the talks. These findings provide some degree of support to Hypothesis 3. In the sense, there seems to be a strong interaction effect between having a ceasefire during the talks and the dynamics of violence, as expected by the main theoretical argument of this study.

However, contrary to the claim made in Hypothesis 3, the findings suggest that there seems to be a positive effect of ceasefires on the conclusion of peace deals *also* in the cases where the dynamics of violence are held constant at *continuity* and at *increase* in violence, and not only when these are held at *de-escalation*. Therefore, we can only conclude that the findings provide *some* degree of support to Hypothesis 3.

Including peacekeeping and mediation in the model

In Model 6, the control variables of *mediation* and *peacekeeping* are included. Both these variables have a positive coefficient, in line with the findings in previous research linking mediation and peacekeeping with increased probabilities of concluding a peace accord (e.g. Walter 2002). Comparing the remaining coefficients with those of Model 5, we do not appreciate any significant differences, and the signs of these coefficients are the same in both models.

In addition, when calculating the predicted probabilities of having the DV, we obtain similar results in models 5 and 6. Based on the latter, having a ceasefire increases the likelihood that the parties will sign a peace accord by 33.7%, 17.2% and 12.1%, respectively, when holding the dynamics of violence at *de-escalation*, *continuity*, and *increase*, and when holding the two control variables at their means.

As an illustration of these predictions in more detail, in Model 6, when setting the control variables to their means, a case defined by *decreased or null* levels of violence would have a predicted probability of succeeding of 51.5% if the parties negotiate in the absence of a ceasefire, but a predicted probability of signing a political deal of 85.2% if the parties already agreed on a ceasefire from the start of the talks.

In short, the findings that follow from Model 6 provide further support to the hypothesis that having a ceasefire during the talks, in interaction with decreased or null levels of violence, has a significant effect on the likelihood of concluding a peace agreement at the negotiating table. This interactive effect is easily seen by comparing the predicted probabilities derived from Model 6, and occurs even when controlling for the influence of mediation and peacekeeping.

However, in an analogy to the conclusions resulting from Model 5, this interactive effect falls short of the claim made in Hypothesis 3, in the sense that the results do not *only* suggest an effect of ceasefires on the DV in the condition of *decreased* or *null* levels of violence, but also in those cases with *continuity* and *increase*, although these are considerably weaker.

Summary

In sum, considering the findings resulting from models 5 and 6, we can conclude that Hypothesis 3 receives some degree of empirical support, and that there seems to be a relevant interaction effect between having a ceasefire during the talks and the dynamics of violence.

8.3. Discussion

Empirical support to the theoretical argument

The present thesis describes a causal mechanism by which having a ceasefire during negotiations increases the likelihood that the combatants will reach a peace deal. More specifically, having a ceasefire in place is expected to contribute to increasing mutual trust by alleviating two key uncertainties during the negotiations: the uncertainty on whether the other party is willing to reach a negotiated settlement, and the uncertainty on whether the other party has the capacity to control their respective armed forces. I argue that, by reaching an early ceasefire, the warring parties will signal to their counterpart their intention to conclude a political deal, as well as demonstrating effective control over their respective armed forces, who will either observe or disregard the call to halt hostilities. In addition, I expect that warring sides that have higher levels of mutual trust will be more likely to make concessions and/or find mutually beneficial outcomes. Finally, as a result, the likelihood of reaching a comprehensive agreement will be greater when the parties present increased levels of mutual trust.

For this causal story to work, however, the ceasefires have to be respected by the combatants. In this sense, the effect of ceasefires on the likelihood of reaching a peace accord is understood to be *conditional* on the dynamics of violence surrounding the negotiations, seeing these as an indicator of compliance with the truce. In other words, having agreed on a ceasefire is not expected to improve the prospects for signing a peace deal unless the warring sides comply with it.

The main hypothesis that is derived from the proposed mechanism is Hypothesis 3. As previously discussed, this hypothesis receives some degree of empirical support. In this sense, I find that the presence of a ceasefire during the talks has a stronger effect on the DV in the condition that there are also decreased or null levels of violence, as follows from models 5 and 6, in Table 8.

Discrepancies with the theoretical argument

However, a more unexpected finding is that ceasefires do seem to increase the probability of reaching a peace accord even when the negotiations occur under the shadow of continuing or increasing deadly violence, as follows from models 5 and 6. This observation stands in clear contrast with the argument made in the theory section, where I understood ceasefires as only facilitating the conclusion of peace deals under situations of decreased or null violence.

Based on the causal mechanism I propose, the fact that the combatants agree on a ceasefire is expected to augment the perceived costs associated with the violence perpetrated by their respective groups. As follows from the theorized relationship, one would expect that ceasefires coinciding with an escalation in violence would be perceived as a sign that either a party lacks control over their forces, or that they are not really willing to reach a compromise at the table. Nevertheless, the empirics showed that ceasefires had a predicted facilitating effect on the DV, even in those circumstances.

Missing the nuances of violence

To make sense of this puzzle, a closer look at how I measure the violence dynamics is taken. A limitation of my research design is that the measurement of the dynamics of violence only compares the levels of violence *before* and *during* the talks. My design, therefore, does not capture the variation in the intensity of the conflict *within* the period of negotiations. Consequently, if a ceasefire is only respected by the combatants in the last phase of the talks, the measure of the violence dynamics will not detect that as a decrease in violence, because it considers the period of talks as a whole.

As an illustration of this limitation, the negotiations between the LURD rebels and the Liberian government are a case in point. In June of 2003, both parties agreed on a ceasefire (Agence France Presse, June 2003), a week after the peace talks officially began. However, only a few days after the signing of the ceasefire, the rebels reported ceasefire violations (All Africa, June 2003), which were in turn followed by government complaints about a breach in the ceasefire (Reuters, June 2003).

Since the ceasefire agreement, an escalation in violence continued until July, a month in which heavy fighting was reported (Agence France Presse, July 2003; All Africa, July 2003), and in which more than 1000 people were killed. However, at the end of this month, the LURD rebels declared a unilateral ceasefire (Agence France Presse, July 2003) ahead of the deployment of a peacekeeping operation. Consequently, the figures of violence were sharply reduced to 29 casualties in August, and a peace deal was signed the 18 of August (Accra Agreement 2003).

Considering the talks in Liberia, it seems plausible that the decrease in violence during August facilitated the conclusion of a peace accord. Nevertheless, this de-escalation is not captured by the measure of the violence dynamics employed in this study, which is acknowledged as a limitation.

Summary

In sum, when excluding the cases in which ceasefires were agreed *during* the talks, given that these present problems regarding the interpretation of the violence dynamics, the findings strongly support the argument that the effect of ceasefires on the DV is largely dependent on the dynamics of violence that surround the table, in line with Hypothesis 3.

The three hypotheses and the empirical support received by them, based on the above findings are summarized in Table 9.

Table 9. Empirical support to the proposed hypotheses.

	Receives empirical support
Hypothesis 1: Negotiations in internal conflicts that occur in the context of a ceasefire are more likely to conclude with a peace agreement.	Yes
Hypothesis 2: Negotiations in internal conflicts that occur in the context of decreased or null levels of violence are more likely to conclude with a peace agreement.	No
Hypothesis 3: Negotiations in internal conflicts that occur in the context of a ceasefire are more likely to conclude with a peace agreement when there are also decreased or null levels of violence, but not otherwise.	Yes, to some extent

9. Limitations, alternative explanations and avenues for future research

9.1. Limitations

Overview of the limitations

Some of the results outlined in this thesis appear to be robust even when controlling for the influence of key factors such as mediation and peacekeeping, when employing different measurements of IVs, and when excluding cases that could be seen as out of the frame of comparison. However, there are also important limitations that should be acknowledged when drawing conclusions from the findings presented in this study.

Regarding additional valuable information

Overall, this study could benefit from additional and more detailed information for each dyad-negotiation process. For instance, the *intraparty dynamics* both within the government and the rebel groups are not sufficiently considered, despite the fact that these have been proven to be of relevance in key previous works (Höglund 2004, Darby 2001). As an example of this importance, Höglund found that high levels of internal opposition within the parties to continue the negotiations was a component that could make violence more likely to result in a crisis at the talks. In this sense, the design of the present study did not allow to identify intraparty divisions, including the identification of potential spoilers to the peace process. In other words, the groups were seen as internally homogeneous despite this is not often the case.

In a similar way, the present thesis does not account for the *interactions between the different rebel groups* active in the same context, which could also contribute to a better understanding of their decisions and the progress made at the negotiations, as remarked by Lederach (1997). For instance, one could assume that the agreements signed between the government and other rebel organizations, and the alliances made between rebel groups could shape their decisions to sign ceasefires and peace accords.

Another important limitation is that I did not account for the progress made in the political aspects during the talks. More importantly, the current design does not allow to detect those cases where the parties agreed of a *formula for settlement*, which has been identified as a key aspect for the success of ceasefires (Mahieu 2007, Sisk 2009).

Further, while the *participation of women* at the negotiations has been found to influence the chances that a peace agreement is signed (Paffenholz et al. 2016), and the participation of civil society actors could potentially have an influence in this outcome as well, I did not control for these factors in the present thesis. Neither did I control for the overall *duration of the conflicts*, which was found to have an effect on the likelihood of reaching peace agreements in the study by Svensson (2007), for instance.

In addition, it could be possible that ceasefires are interpreted differently by the warring actors depending on whether there is an even *balance of power* between them or if one side has the military upper hand (Walter 2002, 15). In line with the finding by Hultquist (2013) that combatants with an even balance of power are more likely to reach a peace deal, it could be plausible that ceasefires are interpreted as a conciliatory sign or as a strategy for war depending on their parity of power.

However, because for negotiations to start in the first place, there has to be a perception of a mutually hurting stalemate (Zartman 2008), I can assume that the cases studied in this thesis do not include conflict dyads where one side could easily defeat the other by military means. In fact, from the 85 negotiation processes under study, only the talks between the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the M23 rebel group end with a military victory. In this case, the talks are halted the 5th of November, 2013, with the government defeating the rebel group through the use of force.

In line with the previous consideration, it is also acknowledged that actors can perceive events of violence against *high-profile actors*, such as politicians or leaders involved in the negotiations, as being particularly sensitive. This would be the case for the assassination of the politician Miguel Ángel Blanco by the rebel group ETA in Spain, 1997, which resulted in mass protests condemning this event (El País 2017), as well as the above-mentioned killing of Chris Hani in South Africa, 1993, for instance. Because

I operationalize the violence dynamics by looking at the monthly sum in battle deaths, I do not account for the impact of high-profile killings.

Finally, the number and *detail of the provisions* included in the ceasefires could also influence the observed results. In her study of interstate conflicts, Fortna (2004) found that the content of the ceasefire agreement was relevant for explaining the continued absence of violence. In this sense, she looked at the provisions for raising the costs of violence, reducing uncertainty and preventing accidents. She concluded that ceasefire agreements that included more, and more detailed such provisions were more successful in bringing a continued absence of violence. This result was also found in the study by Werner and Yuen (2005).

On the other hand, while all the above aspects are theoretically sound, I could not find appropriate data that would allow me to include reliable information about these factors in the statistical models employed. In addition, the collection of this additional data through an in-depth examination of the 85 cases was seen as out of the reach of this study, due to time constraints.

It should be noted that ignoring some of these nuances was done with the aim of exploring a wider number of cases and thus improving the external validity or generalizability of the patterns found in this study, addressing the main gap identified in the previous literature.

Regarding the assumptions made

On a different note, another limitation of this study is that it assumed that the combatant sides have enough *agency* at the talks to decide if they want to sign a peace agreement or not, and behave consequently. However, I am aware that decisions made by external forces can critically influence whether the combatant parties reach a ceasefire or a peace accord. For instance, the literature on power mediation suggests that these outside actors can move the combatants into signing agreements that are not perceived as acceptable by both sides (Favretto 2009).

As an illustration of this external influence at the talks, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1999 is a helpful example. In this year, while the MLC and RCD rebel groups fighting the government received strong support from countries such as Rwanda and Uganda, the government was backed mostly by Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia (UCDP 2019). Interestingly, the peace talks involved not only representatives from the DRC government and the rebel groups, but also from the other countries involved in the conflict. In particular, the peace agreement signed at the talks was first agreed by the participant states, only to be signed the following month by the rebels (Lusaka Agreement). This case shows how the decisions at the table by external countries supporting the rebels can sometimes be more decisive than the choices by the rebels themselves.

Thus, while I did control for the intervention of a mediator at the talks, I did not distinguish between the types of mediation, or to what degree were the conflicts internationalized, in which case outside actors can be expected to play a larger role in the direction of the negotiations.

The following sub-section will problematize the interpretation of the results of this study by discussing alternative explanations.

9.2. Alternative explanations

A potential spurious relationship

The above limitations would challenge the results obtained in the statistical models. However, even if these results are seen as valid, a different interpretation of its meaning could be made.

In this sense, it could be possible that ceasefires only reflect the presence of another factor that has indeed an influence on the success of negotiations. That is, it could be that the relationship between ceasefires and the outcomes of the talks is spurious. In particular, as opposed to the direction theorized in the causal story, it could be that parties that already present high levels of *mutual trust* are also those able to reach a ceasefire in the first place, so that ceasefires would only be a result of this condition.

Nevertheless, there are two main reasons to believe this is not the case for the negotiations under study. First, considering violence as undermining mutual trust (Sisk 2009), it should be noted that ceasefires were often agreed in the context of *intense combat* between the warring sides. As an example of this, a ceasefire was agreed in Sierra Leone between the government and the AFRC in May of 1999, at a time characterized by heavy fighting both between the warring sides and against civilians. Similarly, the truce reached between UNITA and the Angolan government at the end of 1993 was preceded by monthly figures of casualties over 100 people being killed.

Adding to this argumentation, Fortna (2004) already pointed out that it is in the most severe cases where ceasefires are most needed and where those accords with the strongest provisions are more frequently put in place. Thus, the idea that ceasefires are reached in the easiest cases, where parties already have improved levels of mutual trust, would not be supported by these observations.

Secondly, by looking at the stated arguments provided by the combatant sides regarding ceasefires, it seems reasonable to interpret that having a ceasefire is seen as a *confidence building* measure, and not just as a side result of having high pre-existing levels of mutual trust. As an illustration of this, in Sudan, the SLM/A rebel leader stated the following in 2002:

“How can we hold negotiations if our people are daily subjected to a barrage of fire for several hours and if they are annihilated en masse and exposed to ethnic cleansing and all sorts of atrocities? We agreed to a cease-fire in order to end tension and pave the way for political talks, but regrettably this did not happen.” (BBC Monitoring Middle East, 2002 May, italics added)

Importantly, this statement suggests that the existing violence was indeed seen as an impediment for the initiation of talks. Thus, the agreement on a ceasefire was probably not the result of pre-existing good relations between the rebels and the government but, instead, it was perceived as a confidence building measure on its own.

In another example, right after the first ceasefire was signed between the Ugandan government and the LRA, in 2006, the leader of the LRA team at the negotiations stated that the ceasefire agreement would provide a conducive atmosphere of mutual trust, allowing progress at the peace talks (Agence France Presse, August 2006). Once again, the ceasefire was perceived as a measure capable of improving mutual trust, and does not appear to simply result from pre-existing good relations between the combatants.

Summary

In sum, based on the empirical evidence presented in this sub-section, it seems reasonable to believe that having a ceasefire during the negotiations, in interaction with the dynamics of violence, has an effect on the chances of success at the negotiating table. In this sense, this effect does not seem to merely reflect high pre-existing levels of mutual trust between the combatants.

The next sub-section will discuss some of the directions that future research can take, based on the design and findings of the present thesis.

9.3. Avenues for future research

Introductory notes

This study concludes that early ceasefires have a significant effect on the chances that the parties at the table will sign a peace accord, and that this effect is critically influenced by the dynamics of violence. Based on these findings and keeping in mind some of the challenges discussed above, there are different ways in which future research could complement this work.

Exploring the durability of peace

Importantly, it should be noted that in the present study the dependent variable is limited to reaching a peace agreement. However, the end objective of negotiations is leading to *durable* peace, which does not always follow from signing a peace accord. However, the durability of peace is not considered as a DV in the present study, aware

that the factors that can predict the success at the negotiating table are not the same as those that can explain the durability of peace.

For instance, the post-agreement levels of violence (Schnabel and Born 2011, 18) and the *sequencing* in the implementation of these political agreements (Joshi et al. 2017, 1) were found to influence the success at the implementation phase.

Thus, I avoid attempting to explain the durability of peace by only looking at the conditions related to the period of negotiations, because this is seen as a particularly limited approach.

In addition, the study of the durability of peace would benefit from a more holistic approach, by looking beyond the absence of battle deaths as an indicator of violence. In this sense, many reports have emphasized the horrors of conflict-related sexual violence (e.g. Rehn and Sirleaf 2002), despite its prevalence may have been overestimated in previous narratives (Human Security Report 2012). Assessing this and other types of violence within the study of the durability of peace would expand the implications of this line of research for the security of civilians. In particular, it should be noted that the rates of rape, murder and robbery increased after some peace agreements were signed, such as in the case of South Africa (du Toit 2000, 34). Further, other features of positive peace could also be taken into consideration, broadening the understanding of peace as an absence of violence (Höglund and Kovacs 2010, Shields 2017).

In this sense, future research could explore the determinants of durable peace by integrating the insights from the factors leading to peace accords with those related to the post-agreement environment, and studying violence beyond battle deaths, as well as other features of what is known as positive peace.

Broadening the universe of cases

Another direction that future research could take is expanding the scope of this thesis to include cases from other continents than Africa, examining interstate and communal conflicts, and broadening the time-frame to include more recent cases as well. While

the findings presented in this thesis are expected to be relevant, to a certain degree, for internal armed conflicts beyond Africa, I acknowledge that there are important differences with interstate and communal conflicts, so that the findings could differ significantly in those cases. In particular, in civil wars, the conflict takes place between two or more asymmetrical parties, in which one, the government, claims *de jure* monopoly over the use of force (Ari 2018, Zartman 1995), as opposed to the cases in communal and interstate disputes.

However, on the topic of ceasefires, Fortna (2004, 216) concluded that, while there are important differences between internal and interstate conflicts, the general strategies of changing incentives and reducing uncertainty are likely to apply in both types of conflicts.

Adding more nuances to the cases

In concordance with some of the limitations discussed, the models testing the proposed relationship could include additional factors. In particular, forthcoming studies could examine the intraparty and inter-rebel dynamics, the agreement on a formula for settlement, and the participation of women and that of civil society actors at the talks. In addition, these works could also examine the balance of power between the combatants, the salience of the violence being perpetrated, the duration of the conflicts, the detail of the provisions made in the agreements and the level of international involvement in the process.

In this regard, additional insights on the interplay between these factors and the effects of ceasefires have the potential to result in more context-sensitive policy recommendations.

Looking at more complex interactions

Finally, keeping in mind that the main IVs in the present study, together with mediation and peacekeeping, are assumed to be closely interrelated, an alternative line of research could be to look more closely at these complex patterns. In particular, employing a QCA has the advantage of being able to detect *necessary* and *sufficient* factors or

combinations of factors leading to the DV (Ragin 2010). Thus, a study employing a QCA methodology could complement the findings from this thesis by providing additional nuances on the interplay between some of the relevant variables leading to the conclusion of political agreements.

Summary

Overall, the present study can be complemented in many different ways. An interesting path for future studies is to analyze the durability of peace beyond signing a peace accord. In addition, the findings from the present study would benefit from complementary studies looking at more complex interactions between the factors, for instance employing QCA, as well as broadening the generalizability of the results by looking at cases in regions other than Africa.

Finally, the next section will present the main conclusions of this thesis.

10. Conclusions

To recall, the purpose of this thesis was to understand the effect of ceasefires during negotiations on the conclusion of peace agreements. Regarding the existing debate in the literature over the right timing of ceasefires in internal conflicts, this thesis contributes to that discussion by providing evidence from a comparative study. For the first time, the relationship between ceasefires during negotiations and the conclusion of peace accords was tested in a large-N study, observing negotiation processes in Africa from 1989 to 2013.

The results provide support for the advocates of early ceasefires, in the sense that ceasefires facilitate, on average, that the combatants will sign a political deal. In addition, the results show that this predicted effect is sensitive to the dynamics of violence at the talks. Thus, for cases with decreased or null violence, a ceasefire increases by a third the predicted likelihood that the parties will succeed at the negotiating table, when holding the rest constant.

This thesis has the merit of integrating the research on conflict resolution and that on conflict studies, by looking into the many relationships between the dynamics of violence and the signed agreements. In addition, it contributes with methodological tools such as the operationalization of violence in relative terms, as well as the distinction between the official and the interpreted presence of a ceasefire.

In all, this study has relevant implications for practitioners and policymakers, calling for increased efforts to reach ceasefires before the more political agreements, and to ensure that these are respected. However, future research can add more nuances to these conclusions and connect these results with the durability of peace, which is the end goal of peace talks.

Annexes

Annex I

Table 10. Logit estimates on the likelihood of reaching a peace accord, employing alternative measures of ceasefires.

	Peace Agreement			
	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Ceasefire Start	1.204** (0.507)	1.238** (0.540)		
Ceasefire Official			0.349 (0.507)	0.146 (0.549)
Mediation		0.087 (0.674)		0.143 (0.634)
Peacekeeping		0.299 (0.534)		0.715 (0.466)
Duration		-0.016 (0.061)		0.003 (0.057)
Previous Talks		-0.164 (0.148)		-0.097 (0.132)
Constant	-0.288 (0.342)	-0.271 (0.655)	0.095 (0.437)	-0.154 (0.665)
Observations	70	70	85	85

Note: Robust standard errors in parenthesis; * significant at 10%, ** significant at 5%, *** significant at 1%.

Annex II

Table 11. Logit estimates on the likelihood of reaching a peace accord, employing an alternative measure of violence dynamics and sub setting the data.

	Peace Agreement			
	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Violence Dynamics2	-0.950 (0.670)	-0.941 (0.725)		
Violence Dynamics3	-0.279 (0.571)	-0.395 (0.655)		
Absolute Violence			-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Mediation		0.005 (0.817)		0.207 (0.639)
Peacekeeping		1.010* (0.532)		0.733 (0.456)
Duration		0.025 (0.066)		0.005 (0.055)
Previous Talks		-0.061 (0.144)		-0.090 (0.132)
Constant	0.480 (0.353)	-0.092 (0.726)	0.416* (0.237)	-0.068 (0.613)
Observations	67	67	85	85

Note: Robust standard errors in parenthesis; * significant at 10%, ** significant at 5%, *** significant at 1%.

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