“Assessing Outcomes: Conflict Management and the Durability of Peace”

*Sage Handbook on Conflict Resolution*

Sage Press

Scott Sigmund Gartner  
The University of California, Davis

Molly M. Melin  
The University of California, Davis
Conflict management is as old as conflict itself. Yet, for years, scientific studies of conflict management lagged behind other areas of study in the field of international relations, such as conflict initiation, remaining mostly antidotal. The conflict resolution process was shrouded in mystique since most actions were conducted behind closed doors and were highly confidential (Young 1967). Scholars were skeptical about the possibility for creating generalizations about conflict management and its outcomes (Meyer 1960; Simkin 1971). As a result, the activities involved in managing conflict and the outcomes of these efforts have only recently become a focus of systematic scholarship (Young 1967; Bercovitch and Gartner 2006a). As the scientific study of conflict resolution gained acceptance, scholars began to collect information about the occurrence of management and its characteristics. Driven by an increase in the availability of management information and data, along with an increase in the practice of third party conflict resolution efforts, especially mediation, have increasingly become a focus of systematic analysis (see Bercovitch and Gartner 2006a; Beardsley et al. 2006; Greig 2005; Regan and Stam 2000; Bercovitch 1997). These recent studies have dramatically improved our understanding of the management process and its impact on conflict resolution.

Conflict management typically results in one of two outcomes: an agreement or continued fighting. This essay focuses on the management efforts that result in an agreement and examines the nature and duration of these settlements. We: 1) describe the conflict management process generally; 2) examine the theoretical approaches used to analyze conflict resolution and settlement duration, 3) compare descriptive statistics on agreement type and duration using a variety of different datasets and examine why they
differ, 4) present brief vignettes of conflict management that highlight the issues and patterns presented, 5) address future research by discussing the importance of understanding two crucial theoretical factors, selection and substitutability, which both currently limit our ability to move this promising research forward.

The Conflict Management Process

By conflict management we mean any steps taken to help resolve peacefully a conflict, from bilateral negotiation to third party mediation. Third party managers include a variety of different types, including nation-states, state coalitions, regional or international organizations, and individuals (Dixon 1996). Conflict management efforts involve the interaction of various decisions by disputants and possibly intermediaries. These potential interactions are depicted in Figure 1.

***INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE***

As the schematic of the conflict management process in Figure 1 shows, a third party can offer to help or be invited to manage the conflict at any point in a conflict. If no third party is involved, then the disputants may fight or negotiate themselves. When a third party does become involved as a conflict manager, its action may or many not lead to a settlement. Should no settlement be reached, the third party may either offer further management or discontinue involvement all together. Following the establishment of a settlement, the agreement may or may not be upheld. Although this chapter focuses on the final phase of the management process, dispute settlements are related to the behavior and results of earlier phases in the conflict management process.

Assessing Conflict Resolution Conflict Management Outcomes
Much of the existing scholarship defines successful conflict management as the establishment of an agreement. Similarly, it is common to assume the goal of a management effort is to resolve the conflict by making it “too costly for combatants to continue fighting” (Regan 1996, 341). However, concluding that a conflict management effort is successful necessitates having knowledge of the goal of the effort, which is especially problematic when third parties are involved. Territorial acquisition, regional stability, protection of intervener’s diplomatic, economic, or military interests, ideology or the upholding of human rights are all possible goals of management activities (Pearson 1974). States frequently pursue more than one goal with their foreign policies (Morgan and Palmer 2000; Palmer and Morgan 2006). It is therefore necessary to disaggregate further the outcomes of conflict management to examine them critically.

Scholars have examined the type of agreement established as a way of further disaggregating conflict management outcomes. For example, achieving a ceasefire, however temporary and ill designed, may represent a successful and effective management effort (Bercovitch and Gartner 2006b). One can think of the numerous temporary ceasefires in the former Yugoslavia, each of which gave the parties the opportunity to feed the hungry and care for the wounded before fighting resumed. Achieving a limited agreement in a previously intractable conflict may be no less significant than the achievement of a full settlement in a more tractable dispute. Arguing that mediation is unsuccessful where it does not produce a full settlement thus represents a failure to appreciate the full complexity of conflict, the different outcomes that may bring a conflict to an end, and the decision processes underlying the entry or exit of a mediator.
Although a short ceasefire may represent relative progress, a truly effective management effort must allow peace to consolidate so that a political settlement takes root (Kissinger 1996). Many management efforts result in ceasefires that last only a few hours and do not enable true resolution. In the recent Yugoslavian case, there were ninety-one mediated settlements, almost half of which lasted one week or less (Gartner and Bercovitch 2006). Disputants may sign agreements without the intention of upholding them. Agreements such as ceasefires may actually be strategic – providing one side with an opportunity to improve its military position and fight longer. These realities suggest that effective conflict resolution involves “removing the causes as well as the manifestations of a conflict between parties and eliminating the sources of incompatibility in their position” which, represents “a long term proposition” (Zartman 1997, 11). Examining how long peace agreements last after they are agreed upon rather than focusing solely on whether an agreement was reached provides a clearer understanding of the conflict management process and can help generate more effective prescriptions for resolving international disputes.

An agreement can provide a brief time period that allows for political changes to occur that lead to a permanent peace, or it can fail to address sufficiently the issues underlying the dispute and conflict can break out again. Change can only occur if there is a period of peace following an agreement. Agreements that last only a brief time fail to provide sufficient opportunity for effective political change since they fail to provide the political space necessary for new institutions and policies to gain traction and lead to lasting peace (Gartner and Bercovitch and 2006). Thus, a critical aspect of the peace process is to “make it over the hump” and allow dispute settlements to take effect and
alter the underlying political situation fueling the dispute. As the period immediately
after a settlement is implemented poses a high risk of the return to conflict, Rothchild
calls this period the “treacherous transition period” (2002, 3).

Almost half of all agreements fail to last two months (Gartner and Bercovitch and
2006). These short-lived agreements failed to provide the “space” necessary for an
agreement to shift political conditions (Rothchild 2002). While short-lived agreements
clearly represent a failure of the agreement, they capture a different type of failure than if
the terms of the settlement are implemented and conflict breaks out again. Both types of
failure are important (Bercovitch and Gartner 2006b). Yet most studies ignore the
problem of short-lived agreements, instead defining outcomes such that reemerging
conflicts area new disputes.

Recent Developments

In refining our approach to analyzing conflict management outcomes, some
scholars focus less on the determinants of successful management and more on the
durability of management outcomes. Only long lasting agreements can truly allow for
conflict resolution. Authors have begun to converge on two determinants of why
agreements hold or fail (Bercovitch and Garton 2006b; Fortna 2003b, 2004b; Gerner and
Schrodt 2001). The first, what Fortna terms the baseline prospects for peace (called
selection effects by Gartner and Bercovitch 2006; and contextual effects by Gerner and
Schrodt 2001), are characteristics of the situation over which actors in the present have
little control, such as the issue in dispute and history of the conflict. The second involves
actors’ deliberate attempts to enhance the durability of peace.

Baseline Prospects for Conflict Resolution
Contextual variables distinguish *ex ante* the cases that are hard to terminate and likely to have a fragile settlement from those that are more amenable to settlement and likely to remain peaceful (Bercovitch and Gartner 2006b; Gerner and Schrodt 2001). These consist of situational or structural factors that exist at the time of an agreement. Examples include the outcome of the conflict, the number of disputants and their relationship, and the cost of the dispute. These variables capture the underlying factors that characterize a conflict and its attendant agreements; they do not represent a variable easily changed through conflict management.

The nature of the dispute, the issue involved, the dispute’s intensity and violence, and the nature of the disputants affect the likelihood of a settlement having a short duration. Evidence suggests that agreements reached in conflicts over certain issues (e.g. territorial) are less likely to hold (Hensel 1994; Huth and Allee 2002). We must therefore consider the sources of the conflict carefully (see Vasquez and Valeriano in this volume; Gopin in this volume; Kinsella in this volume). Other studies have linked outcome durability to power capabilities (Quinn et al. 2006; Dixon and Senese 2002; Werner 1998, 1999). Belligerents and third party managers have little control over these contextual factors. At most, they can only make an effort to account for them and limit any negative effects they may have on the life of the agreement.

**Proactive Measures for Conflict Resolution**

The second type of factors that determine the durability of a peace agreements are direct attempts to form a strong and lasting agreement (or process effects). Variables that directly influence the likelihood of a settlement also alter the latent mechanism that affects the duration of a settlement. These steps account for the problem that led to
conflict and try to create a long-lasting settlement. Such measures include creating
demilitarized zones to separate troops, monitoring by international observers, and third
party guarantees. Thus, the nature of the settlement and its resulting changes influence
the likelihood of a settlement being short-lived. We break process effects into two parts:
the method used to manage the conflict and the provisions within the agreement.

Conflict Management Method

The nature of the conflict management process affects the durability of
agreements. There are many methods used to manage conflict (Bercovitch and Regan
1999). The different methods of managing a conflict may work together, as more than
one method is often used in the same conflict. The choice of strategies is dynamic and
dependent upon the reaction of the disputants (Maoz and Terris 2006). Negotiation
involves direct conflict management among the disputants without third parties
assistance, whereby two parties seek a mutually acceptable agreement through
compromise (see Zartman, in this volume). Vocalization involves public third party
appeals or demands for the disputants to negotiate, agree to a ceasefire, or withdraw
troops and are common initial reactions of the international community to a dispute.
Economic sanctions formalize intermediary demands by limiting financial interaction
with the disputants. Mediation involves third party assistance in finding a mutually
acceptable agreement (see Bercovitch, in this volume). Positive inducements include
economic and military aid, support in international organizations, and assistance with
civil administration. These are the carrots of conflict management. Adjudication and
arbitration use the international legal system to manage the conflict by generating a
binding decision to which the disputants must adhere (Cede, in this volume).
Noncombatant troops act as peacekeepers, humanitarian protectors, military observers, or help to clear minefields. Direct military intervention includes the use of troops across borders with the intent to stop an ongoing conflict (Holzgrefe and Keohane 2003). The method of management a third party employs has substantive implications for the outcome of the management effort and the durability of any settlement achieved (Regan 1996).

Third parties become involved in the disputes that are amongst the most difficult to resolve. These disputes are thus more likely to result in short-lived outcomes. However, this is because third parties get the tough cases, and not because third parties have a negative effect on agreements (Gartner and Bercovitch 2006). Rather, the presence of a third party as a guarantor actually increases the likelihood an agreement, more than would otherwise be the case for these challenging, hard to resolve conflicts (Fortna 2004b). To understand fully the effects of third party actions therefore requires we control for the baseline prospects for peace and examine the entire management process (Bercovitch and Gartner 2006b; Melin et al. 2006).

Which third party actions are the most effective in resolving conflicts? Only a few studies that compare third party actions exist; Regan analyzes the success of third party diplomatic, economic, and military efforts (Regan 1996). He finds that a mixed strategy is best for determining intervention success rather than focus on just economic sanctions or military force. Frazier and Dixon examine the efficacy of different third party actors and conflict management techniques (2006). They find that international governmental organizations (IGOs) are the most effective in reaching a negotiated
settlement. They also conclude that mediation is an effective technique to produce settlements but that military actions, such as peacekeeping, are more successful.

Agreement Provisions

Mechanisms within the agreement can also promote peace by altering the incentive structures of the disputants to raise the cost of attack, reducing uncertainty about actions and intentions, and preventing accidents that could lead to war. Provisions made within agreements matter and can lessen the risk of further war. Precautions included in agreements, such as demilitarized zones, dispute resolution commissions, peacekeeping, and external guarantees, can establish a durable peace (Fortna 2004b; Greig and Diehl 2005). Note there is an under-appreciated negative effect: sometimes the factors that increase the likelihood of the disputing parties agreeing to a settlement, such as power sharing, can decrease the likely duration of that same agreement (Rothchild 2002).

The importance of third party guarantors is a consistent theme in studies of peace durability. Hartzell, Hoddie, and Rothchild examine the stability of civil war settlements (2001). They control for situational characteristics, such as international system structure, nature of the previous regime, conflict duration, conflict issue, and conflict intensity. They find territorial autonomy and third party guarantors are important keys to establishing stability. This study was replicated by Pearson, Lounsbery, Walker, and Mann with a broader definition of conflict (2006). The results differ in that territorial autonomy is not as important, but third party guarantors are still central for a durable peace.
The importance of third party involvement and assurance is also a focus of Walter (2002), who argues that combatants must design credible guarantees on the terms of agreement for peace to take hold, which necessitates outside assistance. She confirms the critical nature of third party security guarantees and the importance of effective power-sharing pacts, and finds that adversaries do, in fact, consider such factors in deciding whether to negotiate or fight (2002). Peacekeeping efforts have also been shown to have important effects on the duration of peace in both interstate wars (Fortna 2003a; Smith and Stam III 2003) and in intrastate wars (Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Hartzell et al. 2001). Scholars consistently find that while the involvement of third parties as conflict managers signals the difficulty of establishing a lasting peace due to the baseline characteristics of the conflict and disputants, the presence of third parties make it more likely that these agreements last than if no third party were present in the same case.

Agreement Duration

While few have studied agreement duration, the recent development of conflict management data provides a preliminary picture of the nature of settlement durability and allows us to establish an understanding of the factors that lead to lasting peace. We provide, for the first time, an overview of the four most important datasets on conflict resolution and their associated summary statistics in Table 1: Third Party Interventions and Militarized Interstate Disputes, International Crisis Behavior, Cease-fires, and International Conflict Management. These datasets flow from very different conflict management research agendas and thus have fundamentally different approaches. The major differences between these datasets include: the actors considered as conflict managers, the actions identified as conflict management, and the measures of success.
This variation clearly has implications for the results that will come from analysis on each of these datasets. A description of each dataset and summary statistics for important agreement duration and outcome type measures are discussed below.

An agreement is only a “final” agreement *ex post*. *Ex ante*, an agreement’s duration and permanence are unknown; seemingly weak treaties can be enduring, while settlements anticipated to be conclusive may fail almost immediately. It is critical to use datasets that include both brief agreements that fizzle and long lasting agreements in order to develop an understanding of how conflict resolution efforts work. As a result, we do not include common conflict datasets like the Correlates of War and Militarized Interstate Dispute data, since they only identify so called “final agreements” that are coded as such *ex post* once an agreement lasts long enough for renewed fighting to be considered a new dispute. This lack of inclusiveness is not a comment on these datasets’ quality as conflict data, but addresses their utility as conflict management data sources.

***TABLE 1 HERE***

*The International Conflict Management* (ICM) dataset was compiled with a focus on international conflict management mechanisms, with the conflict management effort being the unit of analysis (Bercovitch 2000). The data define international conflict as an “organised and continuous militarized conflict, or a demonstration of intention to use military force involving at least one state” (Bercovitch 1998, 6). This definition yields 333 disputes from the 1945-2000 post World War II period. Conflict management includes negotiation, mediation, arbitration, referral to international institutions, and multilateral conferences. Management represents the actions of individuals, states, and international and regional organizations, taken to resolve an international conflict. The
data, described in Table 2, offer two methods for measuring conflict management outcomes. The first variable is a categorical measure of any agreement, which includes outcomes of unsuccessful, ceasefire, partial agreement, or full settlement (see Bercovitch and Gartner 2006b). The second is the length of time the agreement lasts, ranging from under a week to over eight weeks (Gartner and Bercovitch and 2006).

One sees that the distribution of the duration of outcomes shown in Table 2 is U-shaped. The most common outcome is those that last eight weeks or more, with 1042 observations in this category. The second most common category is those that end quickly, with 242 agreements lasting less than one week. Those agreements in the middle number from 7 observations (those agreements lasting 5 weeks) to 109 observations (those lasting 4 weeks). The range in this variation is at least partially due to the measurement of agreement durability being censored at 8 weeks or more. However, the distribution also reveals the importance of considering variation in the life of an agreement, as many fail to last even a week.

There is also variation in the types of agreements established. Although most (2543 observations) management efforts are unsuccessful and do not lead to an agreement of any type, there is more variation than a dichotomous measure of successful or unsuccessful captures. Of those cases for which an agreement is established, many (1502 observations) are only partial agreements and very few (323 observations) result in full settlements.

***INSERT TABLE 2 HERE***

Third Party Interventions and Militarized Interstate Disputes (TPI) data address intermediary involvements in conflicts in 1,178 interventions in MIDs from 1946 to 2000.
(Frazier and Dixon 2005). It categorizes third party intermediary actions into five categories: verbal expression, diplomatic approaches, judicial processes, administrative, and military. In addition to containing information on the methods of management, the dataset includes information on the short term and long term outcomes of the management effort. It also identifies the third parties, which include states, coalitions of states, international governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations. The data are described in Table 3. Many (117) of the agreements that were successful in the short term were not successful in the long term.

***INSERT TABLE 3 HERE***

*International Crises Behavior* (ICB) contain information on 334 international crises, 32 protracted conflicts, and 975 crisis actors from the end of World War I through 2002 identified by the International Crisis Behavior data project (Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1998). ICB data includes information on regional and global organizations and major powers that intervene, along with information on the dispute and the conflict. The ICB Data Viewer is an updated interactive version of the data and summaries originally published as part of *A Study of Crisis* by Michael Brecher and Jonathan Wilkenfeld (1998). The ICB data include management actions by superpowers, great powers, regional, global, and security organizations. Actions include discussion without resolution, fact-finding, good offices, condemnation, call for action, mediation, arbitration, adjudication, sanctions, observer group, and emergency military forces. Outcomes from these efforts include: 1) whether the activity delayed the termination, 1) had no effect on the termination, 2) was an important contributor to the termination, or 4) was the most important contributor to termination of the conflict. The data are described
in Table 4. Superpower involvement is the most likely factor to escalate a crisis (in 48 of
the observations). Mediators, on the other hand, are frequently the most important
contributors to resolving the crises.

***INSERT TABLE 4 HERE***

The Ceasefires (CF) data contains information of 48 ceasefires in international
wars from 1946 to 1998, each represents a dyadic ceasefire between principal belligerents
in a Correlates of War interstate war (Fortna 2004b). Each case has multiple
observations over time, running from the cease-fire or the end of the previous time
period, until the end of the calendar year, a substantial change in agreement terms, or
another war between the same belligerents, whichever comes first. These data include
information on the ceasefires and how long they lasted, the situations between the
belligerents at the time of the ceasefire, and changes over time, along with detailed
information on the content of agreements. If the period does not end with a new COW
war for the dyad, the agreement is considered successful. Third party activities included
in the data are mediation (third party involvement as mediator of the cease-fire,
exercising restraint, acting as patron for one side) and third party guarantees (third party
provides explicit or well-understood guarantee of peace). The data are described in Table
5. The majority of the observations do not include third party involvement, and these
bilateral cases are the most likely to return to conflict. No observations that included
third party guarantees returned to war.

***INSERT TABLE 5 HERE***

Variation on a Theme
The variations in each dataset have substantial implications for assessing conflict management outcomes. Figure 2 graphs the percent of successful management efforts by dataset, using the strictest definition of success included in each dataset, and employing a definition of conflict management that includes any type of third party actions. We use percentages of successful management efforts to compare the data since each dataset has different units of analysis.

***INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE***

The International Conflict Management dataset (ICM) has by far the lowest percentage of successful management efforts (6.45% of observations are successful), where success is defined as establishing a full settlement. The International Crisis Behavior data (ICB) has the next strictest definition of successful management, where mediation is the most important factor in the timing of settlement duration (which is the case for 11% of the observations). The Third Party Interventions and Militarized Interstate Disputes data (TPI) find 26.74% of the management efforts included are successful in the long term. Finally, the Ceasefires data (CF) has the most liberal definition of success, with 97% of the agreements examined never failing.

This enormous variation in management outcome is a product of how the datasets define success, conflict, and management, along with the varied units of analyses and different time periods examined. Note that we are not arguing that one dataset, or even that one approach or unit of analysis is the “correct” one. Each of these research agendas, with their theories and data, provide a different and valuable perspective on the conflict management process. We are suggesting, however, that these data require scholars: 1) recognize that no dataset is the final word and keep in mind their varied approaches; 2)
employ multiple datasets when possible; and 3) realize that these resources contribute to, and are the result of, a dramatic increase in the scientific study of dispute resolution (Bercovitch and Gartner 2006a).

**Variations in Durability: The Breakup of Yugoslavia and the Egypt/ Israeli Conflict**

The necessity of considering the longevity of an agreement in assessing the effectiveness of third party management and understanding when a conflict is resolved is well-illustrated by the cases of the break-up of Yugoslavia and the conflict between Israel and Egypt. The war in the Balkans is one of the most common disputes found in the *International Conflict Management* dataset, with ninety-one mediated settlements (Bercovitch and Gartner 2006b). In the Yugoslavian Civil War, over 35% of the settlements lasted less than one week and 14% lasted just one week. Many settlements were broken within 24 hours of coming to an agreement. 35% of the settlements lasted eight weeks or more. With almost half of all settlements lasting one week or less, this case illustrates the importance of analyzing the likelihood of a settlement being short-lived. Simply classifying any management effort that resulted in some sort of an agreement as “successful” would grossly misrepresent the effect that various conflict management efforts had on settling the dispute by lumping all of these agreements together – no matter how short-lived (for an analysis of the duration of Yugoslavian Civil War agreement duration, see Gartner and Bercovitch 2006).

The Yugoslavian conflict was mediated by United Nations, the European Union, and the United States. Most of the settlement attempts before 1995 now appear largely ineffective. These agreements were followed by the more successful Dayton Peace Accords signed in December of 1995, which is seen by some as a suboptimal
compromise with a continued lack of resolution for many of the dispute’s issues (Cousens 2002). The outcome of the Dayton agreement was a separation of the conflict parties through the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Although this settlement halted the violence, it did not resolve the conflict, as is seen by the renewed conflict and subsequent intervention in Kosovo. Some claim that the accords were unsuccessful at creating a durable peace because they did not provide an institutional framework, as was accomplished by the settlements in other ethnically divided societies such as South Africa and Northern Ireland (Greenberg et al. 2000).

The case of Yugoslavia, with multiple short-lived peace agreements, contrasts with the conflict settlement process involving Israel and Egypt. The treaty between Israel and Egypt was signed on March 26, 1979, following the 1978 Camp David Accords. The main features of the treaty were the mutual recognition of each country by the other, the cessation of the state of war that had existed since the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, and the withdrawal by Israel of its armed forces and civilians from the Sinai Peninsula which Israel had captured during the 1967 Six-Day War. The agreement notably made Egypt the first Arab country to recognize officially Israel (Jordan would follow suit in 1994). The peace treaty was signed after Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's landmark visit to Israel in 1978. Even after the Camp David agreements, a treaty was not certain since Egypt was under intense pressure from Arab countries not to sign a separate settlement.

A separate Israel-US Memorandum of Agreement, concluded on the same day as the Camp David agreement between Israel and Egypt, lays out the US commitment to Israel in case the treaty is violated, the role of the UN and the future supply of military and economic aid to Israel. The United States also helped organize a peacekeeping
mission along the Egyptian-Israeli border, which still maintains a rotating infantry task force. The treaty also created a Multi-National Force and Observers funded by Egypt, Israel, the United States, Germany, Japan, and Switzerland. The presence of third party guarantors is an important determinant in the agreement’s longevity. The groundbreaking peace paved the way for subsequent Israeli negotiations and treaties with Jordan and the Palestinians. Although relations between Cairo and Jerusalem have not been warm, they share what is considered a “cold peace” and the treaty between Israel and Egypt has lasted almost 20 years. All agree a cold peace is better than a hot war.

**Future Research**

Despite both the recent theoretical and empirical improvement in our understanding of the factors that influence military dispute settlements and the dramatic increase in the employment of conflict management techniques, the conflict management literature still has considerable room for improvement. We focus on two directions for advancing our understanding of settlement durability: considering more effectively the roles of selection and substitutability in conflict management outcomes and in particular, agreement duration.

**Selection Effects**

Conflict management behavior is not random, but rather is the result of actors making strategic decisions based on their anticipation of the consequences resulting from those decisions. This strategic process affects why some conflicts are mediated in the first place (and some are not) and the outcomes of particular management activities and therefore must be taken into consideration in any study of conflict management.

“Outcomes ranging from the foreign policy of individual states to international phenomena such as war or cooperation cannot be understood apart from the
strategic choices actors make and the interaction of those choices” (Lake and Powell 1999, 3).

Accepting that international outcomes result from the interaction of actors’ purposeful choices requires that we acknowledge this process creates selection effects (Reed 2002; Fearon 2002). Failing to study the expectations of decision makers introduces selection bias and can lead to incorrect inferences.

Selection effects mean that the population from which a dispute is drawn provides information about the likely outcome of that dispute and its attendant agreements. We identify three types of selection effects related to conflict management: entry effects, management method effects, and dispute effects.

**Entry Effects.** The first selection effect is a product of an actor’s involvement as a manager. Third parties make strategic calculations about whether or not to become involved in a dispute, and belligerents make strategic decisions about whether or not a conflict manager is acceptable. We observe only those situations where conflict managers thought their actions were likely to have a desired outcome, resulting in a selection effect. Research must therefore consider not only the outcomes of conflict management effort but also the reasons conflicts are managed by an outside party and those that are not managed.

**Management Method Effects:** The second selection effect is a consequence of actors’ strategic choice of conflict management method. Actors have expectations about which methods of management will be the most effective. Intermediaries strategically choose their approach to managing a conflict according to how difficult they anticipate resolution will be while minimizing their costs and efforts. Since cases that merit more expensive methods of management are the most difficult to resolve, conflicts receiving
such measures are less likely to reach a lasting resolution. Thus, because mediation is generally more costly than most other third party resolution efforts, we can expect that the conflicts that merit mediation are, *ex ante*, comparatively more difficult to resolve.

*Dispute Effects:* The third selection effect results from the characteristics of the disputes that require outside assistance for resolution. Since the cases requiring outside involvement are the ones the disputants are unable to resolve themselves, managers are most likely to become involved in the conflicts that are difficult to resolve (Bercovitch and Gartner 2006b; Greig 2005). This is critical if the conditions that involved third parties in the first place also influence the effectiveness of the effort. That a third party becomes involved at all signals the likely effects of the effort, as third parties are less likely to generate a lasting resolution compared to cases in which the disputants resolve the conflict themselves (Regan 2002).

Despite the necessity of considering the entire strategic process, many studies of conflict management focus solely on the characteristics of successful involvement and most authors focus on a single method of management (Frei 1976; Kleiboer 1996). For example, there is much debate surrounding the effectiveness of economic sanctions (Li 1993; Hufbauer and Schott 1983; Martin 1993; Weiss 1999). Similar debates exist in the military intervention literature (Regan 1996) and the vast mediation literature (Mack and Snyder 1957; Bercovitch 1998; Kleiboer 1996; Pruitt 1981; Ott 1972; Regan 2000). It remains unclear which management efforts are the most effective and why.

Recent work has begun to incorporate the role of selection in the duration of peace agreements. New studies have begun to examine: 1) the role of selection effects in mediated conflicts (Bercovitch and Gartner 2006b), 2) which actors are likely to act as
mediators and which disputants accept third party offers to mediate (Schmidt 2004), and 3) the supply and demand of mediation (Crescenzi et al. 2005; Beardsley 2006). Future research should follow this progress and examine the variation in the identity and method of outside involvement across conflicts and the results of this variation on the effectiveness of third party management efforts.

**Substitutability**

The literatures on mediation, economic sanction, and military action have remained isolated from one another, despite the fact that they all address methods of dispute resolution. The complexities of foreign policy decision making require attention to issues of substitutability (Most and Starr 1984, 1989). Policymakers have a wide array of available options for approaching any range of policy issues, since any cause may have a number of effects and any effect can stem from several causes (Morgan and Palmer 2000). Different conflicts may lead to similar responses (as in mediation efforts by the US with Israel and Egypt in the 1970’s, by the Vatican in the Falkland conflict between Argentina and the UK in 1982, and by Congo with Burundi and Rwanda in 1966). In addition, there are multiple ways to respond to similar types of conflicts (as was the case of the UN observers sent in 1992 to Yugoslavia compared to the later NATO military intervention in Kosovo). Economic sanctions, diplomatic efforts, and military operations are substitutable foreign policy instruments potentially triggered in response to conflict.

Analysis of the complex decision process involved in choosing a response to conflict requires the inclusion of the various foreign policy instruments available to policymakers and is “essential” for the comparison of state policies (Palmer and Bhandari 2000, 6). Accounting for foreign policy substitutability captures some of the complexity
of international relations omitted in much of the existing research and reflects intuition of how policy is made (Morgan and Palmer 2000). Research that fails to address the issue of substitutability in foreign policy risks producing inaccurate results and unconvincing conclusions (see also Most and Starr 1989).

Focusing on only one [policy] would mean a failure to provide full coverage of the possible outcomes and lead to incomplete results that fail to cumulate (or even make sense when compared). The results would fail to capture the theory or model being tested (as only part was being tested). (Starr 2000, 129).

Management methods are rarely used in isolation, and yet they are treated as such in a majority of the existing literature. As a result, it remains unclear how methods of conflict management work together theoretically and in practice. If the outside party is truly interested in resolving the conflict, it will likely employ different tactics until the conflict is resolved. For example, the United States and European Union used economic sanctions, mediation, and eventually military intervention to help end the bloody conflict that arose during the breakup of Yugoslavia. Future research should build on the work of authors who systematically evaluate the relative effectiveness of third party conflict management techniques and recognize the existence of foreign policy substitutability in approaching conflict management (Dixon 1996; Regan 2000).

**Conclusion**

Signing a peace agreement does not mean that the conflict is resolved and there will be peace. The duration of peace agreements vary considerably, with some never taking hold and others lasting for centuries. Thus, the first order of business in examining conflict settlement duration is to recognize the variation in outcome duration. The second issue is to recognize that we can, and recently have begun to, study this variation in a systematic manner. Recent studies have developed an increasingly
sophisticated understanding of the factors that lead to conflict resolution. Third, it would be easy to look at the variation in findings on settlement durability and type, however, and disagree with our assessments of scientific progress. There is significant variation in studies’ conclusions about the factors that influence outcomes. It is critical to recognize, however, that much of the variation results from the employment of different datasets that have fundamentally different units of analyses, definitions of settlement, and analytical frameworks. Varied empirical measures help to make our collective research stronger, and it is not necessary to choose the “best” dataset. It is necessary, however, to recognize this variation and to understand how it is likely to influence research results.

Nevertheless, some of the variation in findings on settlement duration results from failure to appreciate the importance of both selection effects and policy substitutability. Future theories need to incorporate these processes directly.

Every war ends, but not every peace lasts. Blainey argues that theories of war should be theories of peace (1988). We think that theories of peace should also be theories of war – that is, scholars examining peace agreements and conflict resolution need to consider their fragility and durability and the factors that contribute to the resumption of conflict. This recognition will help to develop both a better theoretical understanding of the conflict resolution process and better conflict management practices.
Figure 1: The Interaction of Third Party and Disputant Choices

Conflict

- 3rd Party Management
  - Settle
    - Fight
  - Fight
    - Upheld
    - 3rd Party Management
- No 3rd Party Management
  - Negotiate
  - Fight
    - Upheld
    - Settle
    - Fight
Table 1: Summary of Conflict Management Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Definition of Success</th>
<th>Definition of Management</th>
<th>Definition of Conflict Manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Third Party Interventions &amp; Militarized Interstate Disputes</td>
<td>Short Term Outcome: Successful, Unsuccessful</td>
<td>Verbal, Diplomatic, Judicial, Administrative, Military</td>
<td>State, Coalition of States, IGO, NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Long Term Outcome: Successful, Unsuccessful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Crisis Behavior</td>
<td>Impact on Crises Abatement: Delayed, No Effect, Marginal Effect, Important Effect, Most Important Effect</td>
<td>Discussion, Fact-finding, Good offices, Condemnation, Call for action, Mediation, Arbitration, Adjudication, Sanctions, Observer group, Military Force</td>
<td>Superpower, Regional or Security Organization, Global Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cease-fires</td>
<td>No New COW War for the Dyad</td>
<td>Mediation, Guarantee</td>
<td>Sovereign States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Conflict Management</td>
<td>Durability of Outcome: Less than 1 week, 1 week, 2 weeks, 3 weeks, 4 weeks, 5 weeks, 6 weeks, 7 weeks, 8 weeks +</td>
<td>Negotiation, Mediation, Arbitration, Referral to International Institution, Multilateral Conference</td>
<td>Individual, State, IGO, Regional Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management Outcome: Unsuccessful, Ceasefire, Partial Agreement, Full Settlement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Summary Statistics for *International Conflict Management* Outcome Variables

**Durability of Intervention Outcome**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 week</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>15.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 weeks</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>6.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 weeks</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 weeks</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 weeks or more</td>
<td>1042</td>
<td>65.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1599</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Intervention Outcome**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offered only</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>4.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>2543</td>
<td>50.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceasefire</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>7.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Agreement</td>
<td>1502</td>
<td>30.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Settlement</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>6.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>5004</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 This includes totals from all actions defined by the ICM dataset as management: negotiation, mediation, arbitration, referral to international institutions, and multilateral conferences.
Table 3: Summary Statistics for
Third Party Interventions and Militarized Interstate Disputes
Outcome Variables²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>41.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>49.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>789</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>26.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconclusive</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>6.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsuccessful</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>59.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>7.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>789</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² This includes all actions the TPI dataset defines as management: Verbal expression, diplomatic approaches, judicial processes, administrative, and military.
Table 4: Summary Statistics for
*International Crisis Behavior*
Outcome Variables\(^3\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No GP activity</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GP delayed termination</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GP had no effect</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GP more rapid termination</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>47.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong> (^4)</td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Superpower Involvement Effect on Timing of Crisis Abatement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No SP activity</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>51.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP escalated crisis</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP had no effect</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>26.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP more rapid termination</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>13.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>441</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Global Organization Involvement Effect on Timing of Crisis Abatement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No GO activity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GO escalated crisis</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>48.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GO had no effect</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GO more rapid termination</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>34.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>14.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>441</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Regional Organization Involvement Effect on Timing of Crisis Abatement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No RO activity</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>23.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO escalated crisis</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>38.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO had no effect</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO more rapid termination</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>24.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>12.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>441</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mediator Involvement Effect on Timing of Crisis Abatement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Med activity</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>69.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Med had no effect</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Med Escalated Crisis</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Med more rapid termination</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>22.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>441</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\(^3\) This includes all actions the ICB dataset defines as management: Negotiation, mediation, arbitration, referral to international institutions, and multilateral conferences.

\(^4\) The raw total for great power involvement is different from the raw totals for other methods of involvement since this includes only cases before 1939.
Table 5: Summary Statistics for the *Cease-Fires*
Outcome Variables\(^5\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No Failure</th>
<th>Failure</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Third Party</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediation</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guarantee</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>855</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>876</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^5\) This includes all actions the Ceasefires dataset defines as management: mediation (involvement as mediator of the cease-fire, exercising restraint, acting as patron for one side) and guarantee (provides guarantee of peace).
Figure 2: Overview of Successful Management Efforts by Dataset
References


