UN Peacekeeping Operations and One-sided Government Violence: Protection Through Partnership?

Pepermans, Ruben

UN Peacekeeping Operations and One-sided Government Violence: Protection Through Partnership?

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Ruben Pepermans
s3256758
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Abbreviations

AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EUTM-RCA	European Union Training Mission in the Central African Republic
GNI	Gross National Income
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
MICOPAX	Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in Central African Republic
MINURCAT	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MISCA	African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SLA/AW	Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNOMIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UPDF	Uganda People's Defense Forces

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1 Introduction

In January 2016, almost nine years after UNAMID (African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur) was first deployed, the Sudanese government launched a large-scale military campaign in the Jebel Marra area in Darfur to gain control over positions held by the SLA/AW (Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid) and put an end to the rebellion (Amnesty International, 2016). Soon afterwards, testimonies of survivors started to come out, illustrating the horror of a particularly violent episode of the Darfur conflict.

One of these survivors was Kubrah, a young woman in her twenties who testified about an attack on Baringo, a group of three small villages in which her husband and one of her sons were shot and killed by government forces as they fled. Kubrah stated that:

> *"When the attackers arrived, my husband and I ran with our kids…. We were together and then [my son] fell behind… My husband turned back to get him. And then we saw that [the child] was already shot and bleeding. He went to pick up the boy and [my husband] was also shot [and killed] … It was outside the village…. They killed a lot of people. They saw where people were running and just started shooting… We couldn't even go back to bury the bodies." (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 35).*

Sadly, this was not an isolated incident and after the violence had died down, survivors and local human rights monitors identified 367 civilians, including 95 children, who were killed by government forces (Amnesty International, 2016).

The Jebel Marra campaign was not the only violent episode of the Darfur conflict and many more civilians became victims of one-sided government violence (one-sided violence hereinafter). One-sided violence is defined by the UCDP (Uppsala Conflict Data Program) as: "The deliberate use of armed force by the government of a state or by a formally organised group against civilians which results in at least 25 deaths in a year" (Uppsala University, n.d.). This thesis adopts this definition and utilises the data from UCDP to assess the level of one-sided violence. According to UCDP (Uppsala Conflict Data Programme), 1478 civilians were deliberately killed by government forces while UNAMID was deployed in the country (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, n.d.). Similarly, in South Sudan, 1902 civilians were killed by one-sided violence between the start of UNMISS (United Nations Mission in South Sudan) and the end of 2020 (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, n.d.).

Hence, governments seem to be able to deliberately target civilians when they are faced with strong rebellions despite the presence of UN peacekeepers. This is surprising since contemporary peacekeeping operations supposedly raise the military costs (Fortna; 2008; Fjelde et al., 2019), political costs (Fjelde et al., 2019), provide incentives for keeping the peace for the involved actors (Fortna, 2008), reduce uncertainty for the involved actors (Fortna, 2008) and can shape behaviour through the power of persuasion, inducement and coercion (Howard, 2019).

Fjelde et al. (2019) have explained this finding by highlighting the agency of host-state governments. According to the authors, host-states hold leverage over UN peacekeeping operations because the deployment of these missions requires host-state consent. Therefore, host governments can steer peacekeepers away from areas where they want to commit violence and hinder peacekeepers from carrying out their duties by restricting access. Duursma (2021) has compared this resistance against peacekeeping operations with 'pinioning', the procedure that prevents a bird from flying.

However, not every recent UN peacekeeping operation has encountered this host-state resistance and high levels of one-sided violence. For instance, in the CAR (Central African Republic), only 19 civilians were killed in one-sided violence since the start of MINUSCA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic) and the end of 2020 (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, n.d.). Likewise, the Malian government has largely refrained from targeting civilians in their counter-insurgency campaign while MINUSMA (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali) has been present.

Thus, it seems that some governments still resort to one-sided violence when fighting counter-insurgency campaigns while others refrain from targeting civilians amidst the presence of peacekeepers. This thesis will address this variation and asks the following question: *Why are some peacekeeping operations more effective in protecting civilians from one-sided government violence than others?*

To answer this question, three plausible explanations are proposed: *Aid Dependency, Third-party Enforcement Mission and UN – Host Government Relationship.* These explanations are evaluated via a within- and between-case analysis. The results suggest that the variation in one-sided violence can best be explained by looking at the relationship between the UN and the host governments.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Peacekeeping, Power and One-sided Violence

UN peacekeeping operations are missions that "help countries torn by conflict create conditions for lasting peace" (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.b). These operations consist of military, police and civilian personnel and are established by the UNSC (United Nations Security Council) which sets out the peacekeeping operation's mandate and size. Peacekeeping operations are guided by three core principles: Consent of the parties, Impartiality and Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.c) These 'principles of peacekeeping' are what distinguishes UN peacekeeping from other forms of peacekeeping or military intervention (Howard, 2019). Nonetheless, UN peacekeeping operations have changed considerably over time, always reflecting the Zeitgeist and global power configurations from that period (Andersen, 2018).

Originally, peacekeeping operations consisted of lightly armed military units that monitored cease-fire agreements. In the 1980s, more tasks such as the implementation of comprehensive peace agreements were added which made peacekeeping missions more complex (de Coning, 2019). However, more significant changes happened after the end Cold War. During the mid-1990s, peacekeeping operations were increasingly confronted with armed groups and state actors that targeted civilians. Peacekeepers encountered systematic violence in Rwanda, former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Sierra Leone yet were ill-prepared to address these problems. Therefore, the United Nations Security Council adopted new resolutions which clarified the mandates and rules to ensure peacekeepers could act to protect civilians from violence. (United Nations Peacekeeping, n.d.a). This evolution created a new generation of multidimensional and robust peacekeeping operations that are larger, more ambitious and operate in hostile and complex environments to protect civilians and facilitate the peace process (Hunt, 2017).

Throughout this evolution, scholars have repeatedly addressed two key questions: How do peacekeeping operations achieve their predefined objectives and are they successful in doing so?

The first question has dealt with the issue of power. Early work highlighted the moral barrier that UN missions impose (Diehl 1993, p. 10) Later research emphasized that UN peacekeeping operations also raise the military costs (Fortna; 2008; Fjelde et al., 2019), political costs (Fjelde

et al., 2019), provide incentives for keeping the peace for the involved actors (Fortna, 2008) and reduce uncertainty for the involved actors (Fortna, 2008). Especially governments, who depend on the international community for recognition, may be sensitive to the increased political costs and the 'moral barrier' due to monitoring and reporting on human rights violations. These violations may lead to international shaming and even prosecution against individual perpetrators. (Fjelde et al., 2019).

Howard (2019) has further unpacked this question and devised a typology of power in peacekeeping. The author argues that peacekeepers exercise power in three basic forms: persuasion, inducement and coercion. Persuasion is situated in the realm of ideas and is about using ideas to change behaviour. Hence it is closely related to Edward Carr's (1946, p. 132) 'power over opinion' and Joseph Nye's (2004) concept of soft power. Inducement is a form of material power or 'hard power' in the form of 'carrots' that regulate behaviour through aid, employment, market restrictions and institution building (Howard, 2019). Coercion is also a form of hard power and is about limiting choice. However, unlike national militaries that can use offensive force, UN peacekeeping operations can only coerce actors by deterring, defending, surveilling and arresting (Howard, 2019). Based on this typology, Howard (2019) has argued that peacekeepers exercise both ideational (i.e. persuasion) and material forms of power (i.e. inducement and coercion) to influence behaviour.

The second question has dealt with the issue of success. Have peacekeeping operations been successful? A lively yet difficult debate has surrounded this question because there are many ways to measure success and failure. Do we wait until the mission has concluded (and if so: how many years?) or do we measure success while the operations are still deployed? Regardless of this debate, many scholars deem that mandate implementation is a fair way to evaluate UN peacekeeping operations (Howard, 2019). Since this thesis deals with the protection of civilians, we will only discuss the success of peacekeeping in fulfilling the mandate to protect civilians.

On the one hand, several quantitative studies have found compelling evidence that peacekeeping operations significantly reduce civilian victimization by rebel groups. (Hultman et al., 2013; Fjelde et al. 2019; Nomikos et al., 2021), especially when they are mandated under Chapter VII of the UN charter and tasked with the protection of civilians (Hultman, 2010). On the other hand, the same studies have not found the same positive effect of peacekeepers on one-sided violence that is perpetrated by governments. This led the authors to conclude that UN

peacekeeping operations struggle to safeguard civilians from government forces (Fjelde et al., 2019; Nomikos et al., 2021). Hence, despite the 'power of peacekeeping', UN peacekeeping operations have seemingly been unsuccessful in protecting civilians from one-sided government violence.

To explain this remarkable finding, Fjelde et al. (2019) have proposed an argument that is built around the first principle of peacekeeping: consent. The authors argue that host governments hold leverage over de peacekeeping operations because their consent is required. As a result, governments can somewhat escape the 'power of peacekeeping' because they can steer peacekeepers away from areas where they want to commit violence and hinder peacekeepers from carrying out their duties (Fjelde et al., 2019).

Duursma (2021) has called this resistance against peacekeeping operations the 'pinioning' of peacekeepers. Pinioning is the term that is generally used to describe the removal of the joint of a bird's wing to prevent the bird from flying. The author posits that the 'pinioning of peacekeepers' involves obstructing the movements or activities of peacekeeping operations to prevent them from implementing their mandates much like the pinioning of a bird prevents it from flying (Duursma, 2021).

According to Duursma (2021), a government pinions peacekeepers to balance challenges to its internal and external sovereignty. When a state faces a civil war or rebellion, its internal face sovereignty is challenged since the state loses its monopoly on violence and territorial integrity. In reaction, the government wants to fight the rebels and launch a counterinsurgency campaign to regain total sovereignty. In this campaign, Government officials might want to use indiscriminate violence against civilians. Valentino et al. (2004) find strong evidence that states utilise this strategy and resort to the mass killing of civilians to defeat strong insurgencies. The authors argue that by 'draining the sea' that harbours the rebels, governments try to cut off the insurgency from its civilian support (Valentino et al., 2004).

However, this violence might be condemned by the international community which – especially since the inception of the R2P (Responsibility to Protect) norm – can lead to intervention and thus the erosion of the external face of sovereignty (Duursma, 2021). To retain its external face of sovereignty, a government must signal to the international community that it is interested in managing the conflict while respecting the lives of civilians within its territory. To cope with this problem, states give consent to a UN peacekeeping operation which signals cooperation while in the meantime obstructing peacekeeping operations from properly fulfilling their

mandates. By doing this, a government can create leeway for its counterinsurgency campaign (Duursma, 2021).

Hence, since UN peacekeeping operations rest on host-state consent, governments can use it as leverage to negate the 'power of peacekeeping' and continue to target civilians by obstructing peacekeeping operations.

2.2   Variation in Violence

However, not all states obstruct peacekeeping operations and target civilians. If one considers four large multidimensional peacekeeping operations in African countries that have faced strong rebel insurgencies in the last decade one can see major differences in one-sided violence despite the similar mandates and personnel strength.
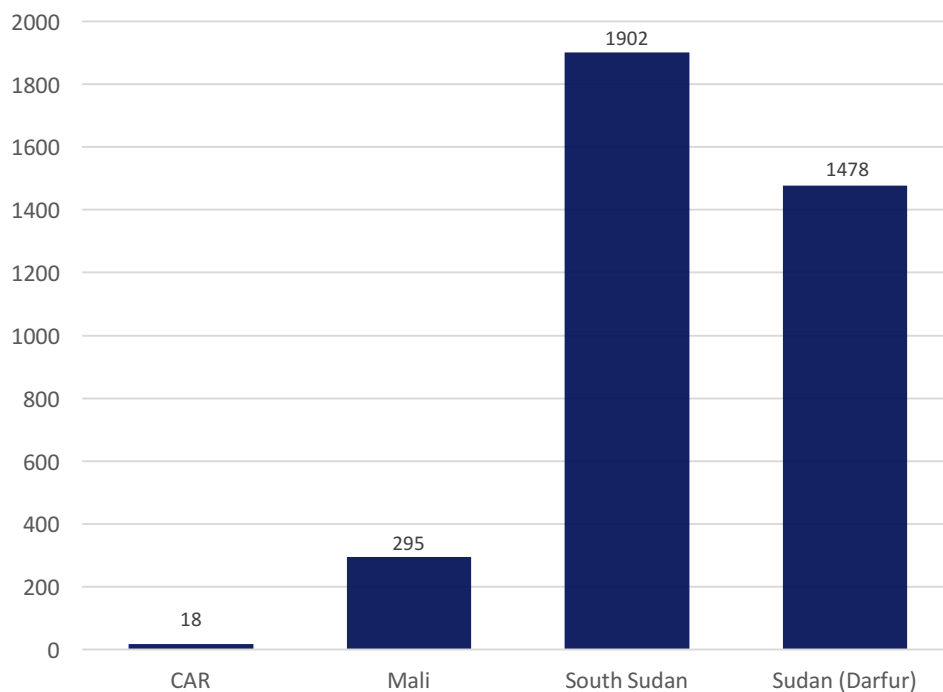
Figure 1. Fatalities of one-sided government violence (Based on Uppsala Conflict Data Program (n.d.))

In the Darfur region in Sudan, 1478 civilians were killed by one-sided government violence during the deployment of UNAMID in Darfur (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, n.d.). Similarly, the Government of South Sudan killed 1902 civilians while UNMISS was stationed throughout the country. These numbers are high compared to the one-sided violence in the CAR and Mali. In the CAR, the government has only killed 18 civilians after the deployment of MINUSCA while the Malian government has killed 295 civilians since MINUSMA was established, with

most of the fatalities occurring in 2020 (see Appendix A. for yearly data) (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, n.d.). This variation has not been addressed by Fjelde et al. (2019) and has received little attention in the literature. This thesis tries to fill this gap and explores three plausible explanations to explain the variation in one-sided violence.

2.3   Explaining Variation

The plausible explanations are *Aid Dependency, Third-party Enforcement Mission* and *UN - Host Government Relationship.* Each explanation rests on the central assumption that governments which are embroiled in violent conflict are motivated to regain the monopoly on violence, restore territorial integrity and thus re-establishing the 'internal face of sovereignty' while retaining the 'external face of sovereignty' (Duursma, 2021).

Aid Dependency

First, the *Aid Dependency* explanation considers the influence of ODA (Overseas Development Assistance) on one-sided government violence. The argument proposed is that states who are heavenly dependent on ODA will be less likely to use one-sided violence against civilians compared to states that are less 'aid-dependent'.

The argument builds on the work of Goldsmith (2001) who argues that some countries in sub-Saharan Africa rely heavily on and therefore can be seen as 'aid-dependent'. This aid dependency has been defined by Bräutigam (2000) as "a situation in which a country cannot perform many of the core functions of government, such as operations and maintenance, or the delivery of basic public services, without foreign aid funding and expertise." (p. 2). Bräutigam (2000) adopts a measure of 'aid-intensity' as an indicator for aid dependency. The author argues that a country becomes aid-dependent when it receives aid at levels of 10 per cent of GNP or above.

According to Bräutigam (2000), large amounts of aid delivered over long periods has the potential to undermine good governance and the quality of state institutions. To this point, Moss et al. (2005) have argued that aid-dependent countries are also sensitive to the so-called 'resource curse'. The authors conclude that ". . . states which can raise a substantial proportion of their revenues from the international community are less accountable to their citizens and under less pressure to maintain popular legitimacy." (Moss et al., 2005, p.1). This independence from the population might therefore eliminate constraints for the government to use one-sided

violence against civilians. Hence, at first glance, one might expect governments which are aid-dependent to be less constrained by their populations and can more easily resort to one-sided violence when fighting rebel groups.

To refine this argument this thesis draws inspiration from the work on rebel group behaviour. A first insight can be gained from the work of Weinstein (2006) who finds that the resource environment in which rebel groups operate shapes their behaviour. Rebel groups that operate in an environment that has little natural resources tend to commit far lower levels of indiscriminate violence because they must rely on the goodwill of the population for support. Conversely, rebel groups that operate in a resource-rich environment, or have the support of an external actor, perpetrate higher levels of violence against civilians because they are less dependent on civilians for their needs and survival.

Salehyan et al. (2014) build on these insights and research the role of external sponsorship to rebel groups. The authors argue that, unlike natural resources, external funding must be understood in principal-agent terms. Salehyan et al. (2014) find that the principal's preferences influence the agent's behaviour. Some external sponsors may be more concerned with human rights violations and indiscriminate violence while other principals may conceive indiscriminate violence as a way forward. Thus, depending on the principal, external sponsorship may reduce or increase levels of violence against civilians by rebel groups (Salehyan et al., 2014).

If one transposes these insights to the context of governments then one could argue that governments who operate in a resource-rich environment will be less constrained to use one-sided violence against civilians than governments who are aid-dependent and rely on donors for revenue. This is because wealthy ODA donor countries largely endorse liberal values and have strong human rights lobbies. For this reason, donor countries are likely concerned with the atrocities committed by the governments they support and will try to influence the recipient country's behaviour. This argument is supported by the work of Spence (2014) who demonstrates that donor governments try to influence the recipient's human rights behaviour through measures such as aid sanctions. By terminating or significantly reducing the flow of aid, donors can penalize states with poor human rights practices and pressure them into compliance (Spence, 2014). This termination of aid by OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) donor countries due to human rights concerns has happened on

46 occasions between 1960 and 1996 (Tomasevski, 1997, p. 78-9). Thus, host-state governments that are 'aid-dependent' might be reluctant to 'bite the hand that feeds them'.

Hence, on second glance, one might expect that governments which are dependent on foreign aid refrain from using one-sided violence when fighting rebel groups since they are constrained by their donor's preferences.

Third-party Enforcement Mission

Second, the *Third-party Enforcement Mission* explanation concentrates on the role of third party military interventions to explain the level of one-sided violence. Unlike UN peacekeeping operations, which are bound by the 'principles of peacekeeping', third-party military interventions are biased operations that actively support one party in a conflict and engage in offensive military operations (Wood et al., 2012).

Wood et al. (2012) explore the relationship between armed intervention and civilian victimization and conclude that armed interventions shift the balance of power between conflict actors and therefore alter the actor's incentives to victimize civilians. The authors argue that a military intervention increases the capabilities of the supported faction while the opposing faction's capabilities decline. When an actor's capabilities decline, it no longer has the ability to directly fight its adversary, extract resources and peacefully control the population. To overcome these hurdles, actors adopt more unconventional tactics such as terrorism and increase the level of violence against civilians. Wood et al. (2012) illustrate their argument with the example of Sierra Leone where the RUF resorted to high levels of one-sided violence following the military intervention by Nigerian Troops under the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) banner. Conversely, military engagement, resource extraction and controlling the population become easier when an actor's capabilities increase following a military intervention. As a result, the need to use one-sided violence decreases (Wood et al., 2012). Hence, biased third-party enforcement missions can help host-state governments to retain and regain internal sovereignty by enhancing their military capabilities.

According to de Oliveira and Verhoeven (2018), this realization has led African governments to change their attitude towards interventions. Whereas they used to associate intervention with regime change and Western-style democracy promotion, they now enlist it to 'buttress regime authority'. The authors conclude that "What was once seen as a dangerously revisionist practice is now perceived by African decision-makers as a way to enhance sovereignty." (de Oliveira &

Verhoeven, 2018, p. 8). Therefore, it seems that African governments increasingly use military interventions to shift the balance of power, restore territorial integrity and reinforce government authority. This enhances their capabilities to directly fight the rebels and reduces the need to use one-sided violence.

Therefore, the argument proposed by the *Third-party enforcement mission explanation* is that the presence of a biased offensive enforcement mission reduces one-sided government violence.

UN - Host Government Relationship

Third, the *UN - Host Government Relationship* explanation focuses on the relationship between the UN peacekeeping operations and the host governments to explain the variation in one-sided violence. The argument proposed is that two different types of relationships can arise between UN peacekeeping operations and the host-state governments. On the one hand, the relationship can be characterized as a 'partnership'; which leads to lower levels of one-sided violence. On the other hand, the relationship can be characterized as 'ambiguous'; which leads to higher levels of one-sided violence.

The *UN - Host Government Relationship* explanation argues that the type of relationship is determined by the motivation of the host-state government for accepting a peacekeeping operation, the type of consent that follows from this and the 'impartiality' of the peacekeeping operation. Hence, the type of relationship is intertwined with the first two principles of peacekeeping: consent and impartiality (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.c). Variation in these elements affects the relationship and therefore the level of One-sided violence.

The argument builds on the work of Sebastiàn and Gorur (2018), who argue that host-state consent is one of the most critical factors in determining the success or failure of peacekeeping operations; and the work of Duursma (2021) who looks at the motivations of governments for accepting peacekeeping operations to explain host-state resistance.

First, Sebastiàn and Gorur (2018) argue that, although formally consent is binary and either exists or not; in practice, host-state consent may be given with different levels of enthusiasm and conditions attached. The authors create a typology of consent and argue that consent can be strong, weak and compromised.

Strong consent occurs when the government welcomes or invites the UN to deploy a peacekeeping mission, supports the mandate and is committed to the political process intended to resolve the conflict (Sebastiàn & Gorur, 2018). This type of consent is often found in cases where the host government views UN peacekeeping operations as a necessity for the restoration of peace and the consolidation of state authority. Weak consent is the result of a government that only reluctantly gives its consent in response to international pressure but is not committed to the political process or fulfilling the mandate. In these cases, UN peacekeeping missions are accepted as a 'necessary evil' and therefore cooperation may be limited. However, although the host-state governments might want to influence or reject the proposed peacekeeping operations, they cannot directly challenge the will of the UNSC because they lack international standing or domestic capabilities. Compromised consent arises when a host-state government does have the capabilities and leverage to push back to the UNSC. In these cases, governments can shape a mission's mandate and its operational and political parameters, or threaten to reject a mission's deployment altogether because they do not need to rely on UN peacekeepers to stabilize the country. Therefore, there is no genuine support from the government for the mission's presence, the proposed mandate, or the proposed political process (Sebastiàn & Gorur, 2018).

Second, Duursma (2021) engages with these different types of consent and argues that the variation in host-state resistance against peacekeepers can be explained by looking at the motivation of governments for giving consent to a peacekeeping operation. The author makes the distinction between 'internal-external sovereignty balancers' and 'internal sovereignty requesters'.

On the one hand, internal-external sovereignty balancers have the capabilities to deal with the conflict and retain internal sovereignty yet accept a UN peacekeeping force to help maintain external sovereignty and avoid further international military involvement under the 'Responsibility to Protect' doctrine. Nevertheless, 'internal-external sovereignty balancers' simultaneously obstruct peacekeepers to stop them from interfering with their counterinsurgency campaigns. 'Internal sovereignty requesters' on the other hand are unable to successfully regain the monopoly on the use of violence and re-establish territorial integrity by themselves. Therefore, they invite and cooperate with peacekeeping operations to restore its internal sovereignty (Duursma, 2021).

Based on the work of Sebastian and Gorur (2018) and Duursma (2021), the *UN - Host Government Relationship* explanation argues that the relationship can be characterized as a

'partnership' when it is initiated by "internal sovereignty requesters' and enjoy a strong form of consent brought about by internal pressures within the host state. Therefore, the host-state government relies on the peacekeepers to retain and regain its internal sovereignty which leads to cooperation and thus lower levels of one-sided violence. 'Ambiguous' relationships on the other hand are the result of what Duursma (2021) has called the balancing of internal and external sovereignty and enjoy weak or compromised consent that is brought about by external pressures. This undermines the implementation of the mandate and the mission's credibility in addition to possibly advancing the harmful agenda of an abusive host-state government. In these cases, the government can authorize the peacekeeping mission for some limited tasks to maintain popular support while preventing the mission to interfere with the government's abusive or oppressive strategies (Sebastiàn & Gorur, 2018). Hence, governments can push back against the peacekeeping operation while still giving formal consent. This 'resistance' is what Duursma (2021) has called 'pinioning'.

These different motivations and types of consent affect the impartiality of the peacekeeping mission. When the relationship can be characterized as a partnership, the mission is biased and supports the government. The UN loses its zeal of impartiality and actively supports one party in the conflict. When this is the case, the peacekeeping operation stands firmly on the side of the government, often with robust stabilization missions that strengthen the host-state government's position vis à vis its opponents. So, peacekeeping operations help the host-state governments retain and regain their internal sovereignty. This might lead to lower levels of one-sided violence by government troops because it increases the state's capabilities to directly fight the adversary, extract resources and peacefully control the population (Wood et al., 2012). Hence, the same rationale as proposed by the *Third-party Enforcement Mission* explanation applies here. In contrast, when the relationship can be characterized as more 'ambiguous', the peacekeeping mission is more impartial, tries to 'freeze' the conflict and come to a political solution. Here, the presence of peacekeepers can provide a sense of security to rebel groups and give them the space to regroup and rearm themselves (Reeder, 2015). This can be perceived by the host-state government as an enhancement of the rebel group's capabilities leading to more one sided-violence (Wood et al., 2012).

However, the relationship is of course not static. Sebastiàn and Gorur (2018) argue that: "The extent to which a host-state government welcomes a mission's presence can change as the government gains or loses domestic power, as the country's standing in the international arena rises or falls, and as the mission's activities align with or undermine the government's

interests." (p. 24). Hence, change in consent following domestic changes might influence the level of one sided-violence. Unfortunately, it is not possible to explore the effect of all domestic changes within this thesis. Therefore, we will limit ourselves to significant political change within the host state as a factor that might influence the UN – host government relationship.

The argument proposed is that significant domestic political change can lead the relationship to deteriorate/ameliorate which in turn affects the level of one-sided violence. On the one hand, a deteriorating relationship will coincide with increasing levels of one-sided violence. Vice versa, an ameliorating relationship will correspond with decreasing levels of one-sided violence.

3 Research Design

3.1 Methodology

To evaluate the three different explanations and formulate an answer to the research question, I will adopt a qualitative multi-method research strategy that combines within-case and between-case analysis.

First, through a within-case analysis, I will evaluate if the expectations derived from the theoretical explanations fit the observations within the case. The case studies will be guided by a set of observable implications (see Table 1) that help to evaluate the different explanations. However, this method is not sufficient to explain variation and evaluate the plausibility of the explanations since more than a single explanation may fit the observations.

Second, since this thesis tries to explain variation, I will conduct a between-case analysis to make valid inferences about variation in one-sided violence. Unfortunately, this comparative analysis can lead to unclear conclusions because causal complexity and simultaneously changing explanatory variables can make causal inferences difficult. The within-case analysis can mitigate these problems and provide additional evidence about cause and effect and help overcome the weaknesses of a comparative case study design (Levy, 2008).

Table 1. Observable implications

Observation	Mechanism	Consequences for Theory
	Third-Party Enforcement Mission	
♦ Presence of Third-party enforcement mission	♦ Shifts the balance of power, enhancing the military capability of the government and thus reducing the need for one-sided violence.	♦ Support for theory if presence corresponds with low levels of violence. Falsification if vice versa.
♦ Indiscriminate violence committed by enforcement mission	♦ Enables indiscriminate government violence.	♦ Falsification
	UN-host Government Relationship	
♦ Invitation of peacekeeping operation or imposition of peacekeeping operation.	♦ Invitation signals strong consent; Imposition of peacekeeping operation signals weak/compromised consent.	♦ Support for theory if 'Invitation' corresponds with low levels and 'Imposition' correspond with high levels of violence. Falsification if vice versa.
♦ Strong, weak or compromised consent.	♦ Strong consent signals support for the mandate, etc. Leads to little host state resistance. Weak/Compromised consent signals little/mixed support which can lead to host state resistance.	♦ Support for theory if 'Strong consent' corresponds with low levels and 'Weak/compromised consent' correspond with high levels of violence. Falsification if vice versa.
♦ Partial peacekeeping operation or impartial peacekeeping operation.	♦ Partial peacekeeping operation in support of government enhances government capabilities. Impartial peacekeeping operation restricts government actions.	♦ Support for theory if 'Partial operation' corresponds with low levels and 'Impartial operation' correspond with high levels of violence. Falsification if vice versa.
♦ Significant political change (i.e. Coup d'état).	♦ Can deteriorate/ameliorate relationship.	♦ Support for theory if ameliorating relationship leads to lower and deteriorating relationship leads to higher levels of violence
	Aid Dependency	
♦ ODA received ≥ 10 per cent of GNI	♦ Leads to 'aid dependency' which constricts the government.	♦ Support for theory if 'aid dependency' corresponds with low levels of violence. Falsification if vice versa.

3.2   Case Selection

A major problem confronting any between-case research design is the difficulty to identify truly comparable cases (Levy, 2008). This is also the case for this thesis where several factors such as political culture, political structure, history, rivalries, etc. might influence the outcome. A first way to mitigate this problem is via within-case analysis (Levy, 2008). A second way is to select cases that fit certain' scope conditions' to reduce the variation within the body of cases.

For the purpose of this thesis, the scope conditions were the presence of a strong rebel group, the presence of peacekeeping operation, the size of the peacekeeping operation, a civilian protection mandate and the period. First, the presence of a strong rebel group that challenges state authority was crucial because one-sided government violence is often part of a counter-insurgency strategy (Valentino et al., 2004). The incentive for governments to target civilians needed to be present. It had to be likely for one-sided violence to occur. Second, a peacekeeping mission had to be present. This is evident since the thesis is concerned with one-sided violence during peacekeeping operations. However, the size and mandate also mattered. The cases considered were large multidimensional peacekeeping operations with a 'civilian protection' mandate because the missions needed to be mandated to protect civilians and have 'sufficient' capacity to carry out this mandate. Third, the peacekeeping operations had to fall within the same timeframe to make the cases more comparable since peacekeeping operations always reflect the Zeitgeist and global power configurations of the moment (Andersen, 2018). Comparing a small observer mission such as UNOMIL (United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia) that was deployed in 1993 with large multidimensional peacekeeping operations like MINUSMA would not generate relevant inferences about the occurrence of one-sided violence.

The scope conditions reduced the body of cases to a small number of cases available for comparison. Unlike large-N studies, a small-N analysis requires the careful, theory-guided non-random selection of cases to avoid biases (Levy, 2008). Hence, I selected four cases that have meaningful variation on the explanatory and the dependent variable(s) to avoid selection bias. The cases selected were Sudan (Darfur), South Sudan, the CAR and Mali

4   Case Studies

4.1   Sudan (Darfur)

The violent conflict that arose in Darfur, a region located in western Sudan on the fringes of the Sahara Desert, originated from the Arab-Fur War of 1987–89 which was at its root a conflict between those with land and those without (Schmidt, 2018). In 2003, the tensions in the region escalated into a rebellion against the central government with was initially led by two distinct rebel movements. The SLA (Sudan Liberation Army), and the JEM (Justice and Equality) Movement). Both rebel groups had different aspirations but were united in their opposition against the central government in Khartoum. The government in Khartoum responded by arming local Arab militias to counter the rebels. These militias – known as the 'Janjaweed' – became the face of destruction in Darfur (Schmidt, 2018). Together with government forces, the 'Janjaweed' conducted a brutal counter-insurgency campaign that resulted in the widespread killing and forcible displacement of civilians (Duursma, 2021).

In response, the AU (African Union) deployed AMIS (African Union Mission in Sudan) to monitor a short-lived cease-fire agreement in 2004 (Schmidt, 2018). While the mission would eventually number 7.200 personnel, it had no authority to enforce the ceasefire or to protect civilians. Furthermore, the funding provided by western countries was insufficient leaving the mission understaffed, underequipped, underfunded and therefore highly ineffective (Schmidt, 2018). Eventually, AMIS would be replaced by UNAMID, an African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation with the protection of civilians as its core mandate (Duursma, 2021). UNAMID would be deployed between July 2007 and December 2020 (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.d). However, regardless of its sheer size and strong civilian protection mandate, the operation struggled to provide civilian protection due to host-state resistance (Duursma, 2021). This led to the death of 1478 civilians at the hand of government forces while the peacekeeping operation was deployed (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, n.d.).

Aid Dependency

The Sudanese government was not dependent on ODA during the deployment of UNAMID. While Sudan was the largest African aid program for many donors in 1985, the arrival of the al-Bashir regime in 1989 and its subsequent policies and actions led to the termination of many official development cooperation programmes (Harmer, 2004). The net ODA disbursed to

Sudan fell from an average of 1034 million US dollars between 1988-89 to 239 million in 1999. Furthermore, the UN and the US imposed political and economic sanctions which led to Sudan's international isolation (Harmer, 2004). Under these conditions, the al-Bashir regime was lacking resources and desperate for allies or foreign investors to develop Sudan's oil industry (Schmidt, 2018). The regime found its new allies in foreign oil-producing companies primarily from Asia and notably China which developed Sudan's oil industry (Nour, 2011). Driven by these investments, Sudan's economy changed from being primarily dominated by agriculture to an economy dependent on the export of oil (Nour, 2011).

Because of the aid termination in the 1990s and the newfound oil revenue, the al-Bashir regime remained largely independent from ODA in the 21ste century. According to data from The World Bank, the net ODA received as percentage of Sudan's GNI (Gross National Income). averaged about 3,3 per cent between 2000 and 2019. In 2019, this value rose to 6,6 per cent (The World Bank, 2022a). This increase in ODA might be explained by the political change that followed the coup d'état which removed al-Bashir from power. Nonetheless, throughout the deployment of UNAMID, the Sudanese government never received more than 10 per cent of ODA, the cutline which would indicate aid dependency according to Bräutigam (2000). Hence, the government of Sudan cannot be characterized as 'aid-dependent' since the al-Bashir regime relied heavily on oil instead of ODA for state revenue.

This 'independence' from ODA corresponded with high levels of one-sided violence. This observation matches the expectations set out by the *Aid Dependency* explanation. Sudan's international isolation and independence from donors possibly eliminated the constraints to the use of one-sided violence when fighting the rebel insurgency. Furthermore, the rich recourse environment (i.e. the oil revenue) in which the Sudanese government operates might have enabled one-sided violence since the government did not rely on the population for revenue. Therefore, aid dependency is a plausible explanation for the high levels of one-sided violence that were observed in Sudan.

Third-party Enforcement Mission

No third-party enforcement mission was deployed in Darfur while UNAMID was present in the country. Although several external powers tried to influence the conflict to promote their interests, direct offensive military involvement never materialized (Schmidt, 2018). For instance, Libya, Chad, and Eritrea supported rival rebel factions by providing weapons to the warring parties (Schmidt, 2018). Similarly, China allegedly ignored the arms embargo imposed

on Sudan and provided the Sudanese Armed forces with ammunition and light weapons (Large, 2007). Despite these indirect forms of involvement, there was no direct intervention in support of the al-Bashir regime or the rebels. This absence of a third-party enforcement mission in support of the government corresponded with high levels of one-sided violence and matches the expectations set out by the *Third-party Enforcement Mission* explanation.

UN - Host Government Relationship

The relationship between UNAMID and the al-Bashir regime had its origins in the negotiations surrounding the 2004 ceasefire agreement and the AMIS intervention that was deployed to monitor the situation.

The agreement and AMIS were accepted by al-Bashir after international attention regarding the situation in Darfur increased because of the huge number of civilian casualties (Duursma, 2021). According to Duursma (2021), the Sudanese government hoped that accepting a ceasefire agreement and observer mission would mitigate international criticism, alleviate US pressure, avert a possible humanitarian intervention and therefore protect its external sovereignty. Hence, through the ceasefire agreement and AMIS, the international community got its foot in the door in Sudan. When AMIS failed to keep the peace due to the lack of financial means, a limited mandate, insufficient military capacity (Schmidt, 2018) and host-state resistance (Duursma, 2021); the calls for the replacement of AMIS with a UN peacekeeping mission grew louder. Consequently, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1706 on August 31, 2006, which called for extra capabilities and the extension of the mandate of UNMIS (United Nations Mission in Sudan) to also cover the Darfur conflict in addition to the war in the South (UNSC, 2006).

Resolution 1706 stated that the ". . . UNMIS' mandate shall be expanded . . . that it shall deploy to Darfur, and therefore invites the consent of the Government of National Unity for this deployment." (UNSC, 2006, p.3). This 'invitation' of consent was rejected by al-Bashir who stated in an interview that:

> "We totally reject resolution 1706. Its acceptance would mean placing Sudan under
> UN mandate. We will not accept such a situation under any circumstances and
> willingly, because it would turn us into another Iraq. I want to say that we signed a
> peace agreement about Darfur. . . . The agreement called for the deployment of
> African forces to maintain security in Darfur." (Asharq Alawsat, 2007, para. 33).

Following this rejection, a long negotiation process started that concluded with a high-level meeting in Addis Ababa on November 16, 2006, in which all parties agreed that a hybrid AU–UN mission would be deployed under UN command, but with a principally African character (Duursma, 2021). Subsequently, Resolution 1769 was adopted that authorized the deployment of a hybrid force of over 26,000 international troops, police officers, and civilian staff and made the protection of civilians UNAMID's core mandate (UNSC, 2007).

However, according to Duursma (2021), this consent was 'devious'. The author argues that: "It was a result of an effort by Khartoum to mitigate diplomatic pressure and maintain an acceptable level of external sovereignty rather than a commitment to the deployment of an effective peace mission in Darfur." (Duursma, 2021, p. 684). Thus, the consent was very minimal to start with.

The arrest warrant issued by the ICC on 4 March 2009 (ICC, n.d.) did not improve al-Bashir's perception of the international community and its intentions. In response to the arrest warrant, Bashir declared to the press that "the true criminals are the leaders of the United States and Europe" and that "bodies such as the ICC were instruments of neo-colonialism" (Asharq Alawsat, 2009, para. 9). This also affected the perception of UNAMID. The UN peacekeeping operation was intended to be an impartial actor to protect civilians and facilitate the peace process but was perceived by Bashir as a hostile 'partial' actor that was protecting the rebels. This can be illustrated by a statement made by al-Bashir in 2014 where he argued that "The UNAMID forces have become a security burden for us more than a support and they are incapable of defending themselves. These forces came to protect the rebellion and not the citizen," (Reuters Staff, 2014, para. 7). Moreover, al-Bashir called for a ". . . a clear program for the exit of UNAMID forces" (Reuters Staff, 2014, para. 8).

Hence, the relationship between the UN peacekeeping operation and the al-Bashir regime was 'ambiguous' to start with and deteriorated further during the deployment of UNAMID. This corresponded with high levels of one-sided violence and thus supports the *UN – Host Government Relationship* explanation.

Furthermore, while UNAMID was coming to its end, Sudan experienced significant political change when al-Bashir was ousted in a coup d'état on April 11, 2019. This political change has led the relationship between the (new) Sudanese authorities and the international community to ameliorate (Forti, D, 2021). This changing relationship coincided with decreasing levels of one-sided violence in the second part of 2019 and 2020. This observation carefully supports the

UN – Host government Relationship explanation although there is little known about the longer-term effects since UNAMID came to an end in 2020 and the UCDP data on one-sided violence for 2021 and onwards are not yet available.

4.2   South-Sudan

South Sudan became an independent state on July 9, 2011, after the population of southern Sudan voted to secede from Sudan in a referendum (Schmidt, 2018). This referendum was the result of the Second Sudanese Civil War that lasted from 1983 to 2005 and was fought between the central Sudanese government in Khartoum and the SPLM/A (Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army) which called for an end to northern Muslim dominance. Unfortunately, the SPLM was tormented by internal political power struggles that worsened after South Sudan became independent. These power struggles reached a critical point when President Salva Kiir fired Vice President Riek Machar, his long-time political rival. This personal and political dispute evolved into a full-fledged civil war after both men mobilized ethnic communities for support (Schmidt, 2018).

UNMISS, the United Nations peacekeeping mission that had been authorized the day before South Sudan's independence to safeguard the newly established country's peace and security, failed to protect the civilian population from either the rebel or government forces. (Schmidt, 2018). This failure is reflected in the data from the UCDP. Between 2011 and 2020, the Government of South Sudan killed at least 1902 civilians by one-sided violence (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, n.d.).

Aid Dependency

Before the independence, the South Sudanese economy was one with Sudan's economy and the oil development that started in the 1990s became the principal source of income for the north and the south (Shankleman, 2011). This remained the case after independence with the government of South Sudan relying heavily on oil for state revenue. This was reflected in a 2011 draft budget that indicated that 98 per cent of the domestic revenue for 2011 would come from oil transfers (Shankleman, 2011).

Despite the presence of revenue from the oil sector, South Sudan has become 'aid-dependent' since its independence. The ODA received as percentage of South Sudan's GNI during the deployment of UNMISS was only 5,1 per cent in 2011 yet rose to 10,3 per cent in 2012, dropped

back down to 8 per cent in 2013 but rose quickly again to 16,4 and 15,9 per cent in 2014 and 2015 consecutively (The World Bank, 2022a). After 2015, the data on ODA received as percentage of South Sudan's GNI are unfortunately missing yet data on the 'Net official development assistance and official aid received' to South Sudan suggests the dependence on ODA remained high (The World Bank, 2022b).

The presence of substantial oil revenue combined with considerable amounts of ODA makes South Sudan an ambiguous case. On the one hand, the independence from the population for revenue collection due to oil rent might eliminate constraints for the government to use one-sided violence against civilians. On the other hand, reliance on international donors who are concerned with human rights violations might raise the costs of violence and prevent civilian victimization during anti-insurgency campaigns.

The empirical observations show that South Sudan's dependence on ODA corresponded with high levels of one-sided violence. This observation goes against the *Aid Dependency* explanation. Therefore, in the case of South Sudan, 'aid dependency' did not seem to restrain the South Sudanese government and prevent them from using one-sided violence as a counter-insurgency strategy. Hence, the case of South Sudan undermines the explanatory power of the *Aid Dependency* explanation. The observation does suggest that the availability of revenue from natural resources (i.e. Oil rents) possibly enables the use of one-sided violence.

Third-party Enforcement Mission

A Third-party enforcement mission was deployed in South Sudan during the first phase of the South Sudanese civil war. On 20 December 2013, five days after the civil war broke out between the forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and the troops loyal to Vice President Riek Machar, Uganda unilaterally deployed a company of soldiers to 'evacuate its citizens from the country' (Apuuli, 2014). Soon, rumours started to spread that the UPDF (Uganda People's Defense Forces) were actively involved in fighting in South Sudan. At first, the government of Uganda denied these claims but on 14 January 2014, the Ugandan President Museveni confirmed the rumours and revealed that the Ugandan army was actively fighting the rebels in South Sudan (Among, 2014).

Initially, the UPDF consisted of between 80 and 250 soldiers. However, as the conflict escalated, the number rose to between 2000 and 5000 soldiers in addition to air support and

tanks (Apuuli, 2014). The Ugandan forces fought alongside the government until they voluntarily withdrew as part of a peace agreement in the fall of 2015 (Clottey, 2015).

During this period, the UPDF strengthened the South Sudanese government's military capabilities and its ability to retain and regain internal sovereignty. For instance, the UPDF helped the government recover the towns of Bor, Bentiu and Malakal back from the rebel troops (Apuuli, 2014). Surprisingly, the level of one-sided violence committed by the government troops was high in the period that the UPDF were fighting alongside the government forces. Between 2014 and 2015, a total of 505 civilians were killed in one-sided violence by government forces (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, n.d.). Furthermore, Human Rights Watch and a UN report accused the UPDF and the South Sudanese army of using cluster bombs during this campaign which resulted in civilian casualties ("UPDF used cluster", 2014). While these casualties are not included in the data from the UCDP, the indiscriminate violence used by the UPDF in support of the South Sudanese army questions the argument proposed by the *Third-party enforcement mission* explanation. Instead of reducing the need to resort to one-sided violence, the presence of a third-party enforcement mission appeared to enable indiscriminate violence in South Sudan. Hence, the case of South Sudan does not support the argument proposed by the *Third-party enforcement mission* explanation.

UN - Host Government Relationship

The first peacekeeping mission that was present in South Sudan was UNMIS. The mission was established when the UNSC adopted Resolution 1590 on May 24, 2005, to oversee the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that ended the second civil war in Sudan (UNSC, 2005). When South Sudan became independent in 2011, UNMIS was terminated and all the staff, equipment, supplies and other assets from UNMIS were transferred to a new peacekeeping mission that was dubbed UNMISS (UNSC, 2011a).

UNMISS was established with the adoption of Resolution 1996. According to the UNSC, the initial mandate was:

> *". . . to consolidate peace and security, and to help establish the conditions for development in the Republic of South Sudan, with a view to strengthening the capacity of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan to govern effectively and democratically and establish good relations with its neighbours." (UNSC, 2011b, p. 3).*

Hence, the peacekeeping mission was neither invited into the country by the new government of South Sudan to help resolve a conflict nor imposed through heavy international pressure in response to violence (as was the case with Sudan). Nevertheless, UNMISS was partly imposed by the international community as part of the roadmap to South Sudan's total independence. Therefore, in this initial phase of deployment when conflict was absent, the consent for UNMISS was high and the mission's mandate supported the government.

All of this changed on 15 December 2013 when the violence broke out in South Sudan's capital and quickly spread throughout the country resulting in a nationwide political and security crisis. Nine days later, the UNSC expressed grave concern about the situation and decided to increase the overall troop and police strength of UNMISS (UNSC, 2013). On May 27, 2014, the UNSC took further action unanimously adopting Resolution 2155 which reprioritized the UNMISS mandate from its former focus on 'consolidating peace and security and helping to establish the conditions for development' towards the protection of civilians, human rights monitoring and support for the delivery of humanitarian assistance (UNSC, 2014). This new mandate reflected the impartial stance of the UN which was mainly concerned with the protection of civilians instead of assisting the South Sudanese government to restore territorial integrity.

These developments put pressure on the relationship between the Government and UNMISS which became increasingly tense (UNMISS, 2017). There was a growing anti-United Nations sentiment stemming from misperceptions about UNMISS' role in the conflict. Allegations were made that UNMISS was not impartial and that it was aiding and abetting the rebels (UNMISS, 2017). This was reflected in a statement made by South Sudan President Salva Kiir in which he accused UNMISS of acting like a 'parallel government'. "We did not know that when the UNMISS was brought to South Sudan, they were brought as a parallel government with the government in South Sudan," the president declared on national television ("South Sudan President Salva Kiir", 2014, para. 12). Furthermore, President Kiir suggested that the UN were 'instigating Riek Machar to take action' and his government accused the UN of hiding rebels and guns at UN refugee camps ("South Sudan President: UN Seeking", 2014). Thus, the new impartial mandate and UNMISS' actions to protect civilians were perceived as hostile by the South Sudanese government and consequently its consent to the peacekeeping mission was compromised. As a result, demonstrations against the United Nations Presence were organized in several state capitals and the ability of UNMISS to move freely was obstructed (UNMISS, 2022).

Therefore, the relationship between the UN and the South Sudanese Government can be characterized as highly ambiguous since the South Sudanese civil war erupted in 2013. This ambiguous relationship corresponded with high levels of one-sided violence committed by government troops. Thus, in South Sudan, the proposed *UN-host government relationship explanation* matches the observations.

4.3   The Central African Republic

The present conflict in the CAR has been a story of protracted suffering. Calls for international assistance have resulted in no less than 13 peace operations, conducted by African sub-regional organizations, the AU, the EU, the UN and France since widespread political violence erupted in 1997 (Welz, 2016).

The latest 'chapter' of the conflict started in 2012 with the emergence of the Séléka rebel movement. The Séléka rebel movement, led by Michel Djotodia, emerged as a coalition of Muslim anti-government militias. The Séléka began an offensive in December 2012, targeting the Christian population and supporters of president Bozizé (Welz, 2014). Bozize's government signed a peace agreement with the Séléka in January 2013 after the movement was gaining ground but failed to adhere to the deal which led to renewed fighting. On 25 March 2013, Bozizé was overthrown by the Séléka and Djotodia declared himself President of the CAR. Djotodia officially dismantled the Séléka movement in September 2013 but the fighting continued between the now ex-Séléka and the emerging anti-Balaka rebels, a loose network of rebel groups that were established by predominantly young men who had lost their families in the Séléka offensive. In January 2014, Djotodia stepped down as president after being pressured by the leaders of ECCAS (Economic Community of Central African States). Following Djotodia's resignation, a National Transitional Council was established that elected Bangui's mayor Catherine Samba-Panza as the new President yet the fighting continued (Welz, 2014).

The initial international response was led by ECCAS but eventually its MICOPAX (Mission for the consolidation of peace in Central African Republic) operation was transformed into MISCA (African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic), an African-led mission under the auspice of the AU (Welz, 2014). At the same time, France was preparing 'Opération Sangaris' to fight alongside the AU troops. Both MISCA and Sangaris were authorized by the UNSC in Resolution 2127. However, behind the scenes, the UN had already started planning its own operation and on 10 April 2014, the Security Council adopted

Resolution 2149 which established MINUSCA, a UN operation which would deploy additional troops in addition to 'rehatting' the existing MISCA troops (Welz, 2014). The deployment of MINUSCA coincided with low levels of one-sided violence. Between 2014 and 2020, only 18 civilians were killed by one-sided government violence (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, n.d.).

Aid Dependency

While the CAR depended highly on ODA in the 1980s, the percentage of ODA received as percentage of the CAR's GNI dropped significantly since the mid-1990s (The World Bank, 2022a). It nevertheless started rising again after 2003, reaching 10 per cent in 2012 (The World Bank, 2022a). When the conflict escalated in 2013, the ODA received rose to 11.9 per cent first after which it skyrocketed to 31.9 per cent in 2014. In the following years, the amount of ODA received dropped slightly but reached over 30 per cent again in 2019 (The World Bank, 2022a).

Thus, while aid dependency was already relatively high in the years leading up to the 2012 conflict, the CAR government became very 'aid-dependent' after the establishment of the French 'Opération 'Sangaris' and MINUSCA in 2014. The ODA received averaged 28,4 per cent between 2014 and 2019 which is almost three times the 10 per cent benchmark proposed by Bräutigam (2000). This 'extreme' aid dependency observed in the CAR corresponded with very low levels of one-sided violence committed by government troops. Aid dependency is therefore a plausible explanation for the low levels of one-sided violence in the CAR.

Third-party Enforcement Mission

The main third-party enforcement mission that coincided with MINUSCA was the French enforcement mission named 'Opération Sangaris' which consisted of 2000 soldiers and was Launched in December 2013 (Yates, 2018). While other intervening forces such as MISCA were consolidated in the newly established MINUSCA, the new French operation remained outside of the UN command structure. The French operation started disarming the ex-Séléka rebels which left them defenceless against the growing Anti-Balaka movement. This was a mistake that increased the level of violence. The fighting continued between the rebel factions while the new president Catherine Samba-Panza remained in power at the mercy of the French troops and the international community since she did not have an army or control any armed faction (Yates, 2018).

The lack of national armed forces was a result of the 2013 coup d'état which had resulted in the complete collapse of the FACA (Central African Armed Forces) (Central Intelligence Agency,

2022). After the change in power, only 10 per cent returned and the national army remained underdeveloped because a UNSC arms embargo blocked most military equipment from entering the country. As a result, the government relied on the French troops and MINUSCA for its protection (Central Intelligence Agency, 2022).

Unsurprisingly, the presence of a French 'third-party enforcement mission' corresponded with low levels of government violence in the CAR considering the FACA were almost non-existent while the French troops were present. Troops that do not exist cannot kill. Hence, the lack of troops, rather than the presence of a French 'third-party enforcement mission' explains the low levels of one-sided violence in the case of the CAR.

However, after the French left in 2016, the FACA started developing again under the supervision of a European Union training mission (EUTM-RCA) and Russian security assistance from 2018 and onwards (Central Intelligence Agency, 2022). Furthermore, as of late 2021, around 2000 Russian private military contractors have been reported to fight alongside the FACA. This new (private) 'Third-party enforcement mission' and the CAR troops that it supports have recently been accused of indiscriminate killings (Central Intelligence Agency, 2022). Unfortunately, the UCDP data on one-sided violence for 2021 is not yet available. Therefore, it is at the time too early to tell if the presence of the new (private) 'Third-party enforcement mission' corresponds with increasing levels of one-sided violence. Nonetheless, the reports of violence committed by the FACA and private military contractors suggest that the presence of a (private) 'third-party enforcement' does not necessarily lead to lower levels of one-sided violence. Hence, the *Third-party Enforcement Mission* argument is not a plausible explanation for the low levels of one-sided violence observed in the CAR.

UN - Host Government Relationship

MINUSCA was established after the UNSC adopted Resolution 2149. In the resolution, the UNSC expresses concern for the situation in the CAR and cites a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the CAR to substantiate the decision to deploy a UN peacekeeping operation to replace the African-led MISCA (UNSC, 2014b). In the letter dated 27 January 2014, the Minister requested the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation to 'stabilize the country and address the civilian aspects of the crisis' (UNSC, 2014b, p. 4). Hence, according to the resolution, MINUSCA was invited by the transitional authorities of the CAR. This was not surprising since the new president Catherine Samba-Panza had almost no national forces at her disposal (Central Intelligence Agency, 2022) and controlled no armed faction (Yates, 2018).

Hence, her government lacked coercive power and relied on the international community to remain in power (Yates, 2018).

This 'intervention by invitation' was accompanied by strong consent. This was recognized by Sebastiàn & Gorur (2018), who have argued that consent was strong in the CAR because the state was under critical threat and MINUSCA was regarded as a way to consolidate state authority. The authors conclude that resistance against the mandate has been very limited in the CAR since the government depends on the international community to prevent the state from collapsing (Sebastian & Gorur, 2018). This strong consent is reflected in a statement made by Catherine Samba-Panza to the UN General Assembly in which she 'welcomed the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2149' and 'thanked all States that made their troops, materiel and financial contributions available to the Mission' (General Assembly, 2014, p. 10). Consent remained strong after Faustin Archange Touadéra was elected president in 2016. However, like his predecessor, Touadéra requested to lift the arms embargo so the national army could 'contribute at MINUSCA's side to the immense effort for the stabilization and return to peace in CAR' ("From UN Assembly podium", 2018).

In return for this strong consent, MINUSCA firmly supported the government. It was authorized by the UNSC to 'take all necessary means to carry out its mandate' which prioritized the protection of civilians but also focussed on 'Supporting the implementation of the transition process, including efforts in favour of the extension of State authority and preservation of territorial integrity' (UNSC, 2014b, p. 9). Hence, MINUSCA was not an impartial peacekeeping operation but adamantly supported the fragile government of the CAR.

Therefore, the relationship between the UN and the host government can be characterized as a 'partnership' since the government of the CAR has 'invited' MINUSCA and provided the operation with strong consent; and MINUSCA has strongly supported the government with a partial mandate. This 'partnership' has corresponded with low levels of one-sided violence. Hence, the case of the CAR supports the proposed *UN-host government relationship* explanation. However, the lack of a national army may nevertheless be the most important explanation for the low levels of one-sided violence in the case of the CAR.

4.4 Mali

The most recent conflict in Mali started after a Tuareg armed rebellion broke out in the north of the country in January of 2012. This rebellion was the fourth attempt at Tuareg independence since 1963. However, the 2012 rebellion took on a different course than the previous rebellions and developed into a violent extremist insurgency (SIPRI, 2022).

The government of President Touré and the armed forces of Mali demonstrated a lack of capacity to deal with the rebellion (Francis, 2013). In response, Amadou Sanogo, a mid-ranked military officer led a coup d'état that overthrew the democratic government and installed a military junta. Under international pressure, Sanogo handed over power to a transitional government that was led by President Dioncounda Traoré. The political situation nevertheless remained volatile and mirrored in conflict. The rebels made use of this political crisis to capture territory. In response, the transitional authorities of Mali requested the deployment of an international force to stabilise the country and restore the authority of the Malian State throughout its national territory (Francis, 2013).

The first international response to the crisis came earlier in 2012 from ECOWAS which declared that it was preparing a military force to intervene in Mali (Caparini, 2015). However, due to resistance from within and outside Mali, the ECOWAS initiative was replaced with AFISMA (African-led International Support Mission to Mali), a joint AU and ECOWAS initiative. The mission was to help protect Mali's transitional institutions, strengthen the Malian armed forces and help the Malian army to restore state authority throughout the north. AFISMA was approved by the UNSC on December 20, 2012, and was envisaged to be fully operational by September 2013. However, when the strategic town of Konna in central Mali was captured by Islamist rebel groups on January 10, 2013, the Malian transitional government called on its former colonial power France for immediate assistance to push back the insurgency. France reacted quickly and on January 11, it deployed operation 'Serval', a French-led military intervention. The French and Chadian 'Serval' troops were successful in pushing back the insurgency and creating the operational space for the further deployment of AFISMA which was eventually replaced by MINUSMA, a UN peacekeeping mission (Caparini, 2015).

Aid Dependency

Unlike the oil-producing countries Sudan and South Sudan, the Malian economy is dominated by agriculture which accounts for about 40 per cent of its GDP (Bergamaschi, 2007). As a

result, the country's economy is very vulnerable to external shocks such as climatic conditions and international agriculture prices. Another main source of wealth in Mali is remittances from migrants. However, this is not a reliable source of income for the Malian Government (Bergamaschi, 2007).

Under these economic conditions, the government of Mali has relied heavily on foreign aid for its income. According to Jonathan Glennie, a research fellow at the Overseas Development Institute, Mali relied on aid for almost 50% of its government expenditure in the years leading up to the 2012 conflict (Glennie, 2011). This reliance on the international community led Bergamaschi (2007) to conclude that 'aid dependency' has deprived the Malian government of the will and capacity to engage in ownership and leadership towards its citizens.

The Malian government continued to rely on aid during the deployment of MINUSMA. According to data from the World Bank, the ODA received as percentage of Mali's GNI averaged 9,6 per cent between 2013 and 2019 (The World Bank, 2022a). Although this is just under the arbitrary 10 per cent benchmark which suggests aid dependency, Mali can nevertheless be characterized as 'aid-dependent' since the net ODA received as percentage of the Central government's expense averaged on 74 per cent between 2013 and 2019 (The World Bank, 2020c). Furthermore, the lack of government revenue that can be collected without being accountable to the international community or the population such as oil rents adds to this picture.

The aid dependency observed in Mali corresponded with low levels of one-sided violence. Thus, observation matches the expectations set forth by the *Aid Dependency* explanation. The Malian government's dependency on international donors might have restrained the authorities from using one-sided violence. Hence, *Aid Dependency* is a plausible explanation for the low levels of one-sided violence in Mali.

Third-party Enforcement Mission

A French-led third-party enforcement mission was present in Mali before and during the deployment of MINUSMA. Initially, the unilateral French operation 'Serval' which intervened at the request of the Malian transitional authorities pushed back the rebels and established the conditions under which the UN could deploy troops and begin to address issues of governance and reconciliation (Charbonneau, 2017). The operation was retrospectively authorized by the security council under the MINUSMA mandate to 'use 'all necessary means to support the UN

mission. 'Serval was operational until August 2014 after which it was transformed into operation 'Barkhane', a counterterrorism operation that conducts counterterrorism activities in the wider Sahel region (Charbonneau, 2017).

The French enforcement mission strengthened the military capabilities of the Malian armed forces, assisted the Malian troops in recapturing territory and conducted counter-insurgency/counter-terrorism operations (Central Intelligence Agency, 2022b). Initially, the French operations corresponded with low levels of one-sided government violence. However, after the 2020 coup d'état, the situation changed and the one-sided violence increased drastically. The French presence did not seem to prevent the Malian government from resorting to one-sided violence. Conversely, the French counterterrorism lens led to the regional restructuring of security governance through claims about the necessity of the 'war on terrorism' (Charbonneau, 2017). Therefore, the French presence might have enabled the one-sided violence by justifying violent 'counterterrorism' operations.

In addition to the French military presence, Mali's military government contracted Russian private military contractors in late 2021 to fight alongside the Malian Army (Central Intelligence Agency, 2022b). According to a New York Times investigation, civilian deaths have spiked in Mali since the Russian mercenaries began to operate alongside the military (Peltier et al., 2022). The authors found evidence that Malian soldiers and their Russian allies executed hundreds of men in the village of Moura. (Peltier et al., 2022). Unfortunately, the UCDP data on one-sided violence for 2021 and onwards is not yet available. However, the findings of Peltier et al. (2022) (among others) suggest that the presence of a new (private) 'third-party enforcement mission' has recently enabled instead of prevented one-sided government violence in Mali. Hence, it seems that missions that enhance military capabilities do not necessarily lead to lower levels of one-sided violence. Consequently, the Malian case only partly supports the *Third-party enforcement mission* explanation.

UN - Host Government Relationship

MINUSMA was established by the UNSC in Resolution 2100 which set out the transformation of AFISMA into a UN mission (UNSC, 2013b). The UNSC substantiated the decision by recalling a letter that was sent by the transitional authorities of Mali to the Secretary-General in which interim President Dioncounda Traoré envisaged the deployment of a United Nations operation to stabilize and restore the authority and the sovereignty of the Malian State throughout its national territory (UNSC, 2013b).

This 'invitation' for a UN peacekeeping operation was once more accompanied by strong consent. This consent remained strong for the following years with the government reiterating its support, commitment and gratitude to the UN and MINUSMA. This can be illustrated by a statement made by Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. The Malian President, who was elected for a first term in 2013 and a second term in 2018, addressed the UN General Assembly to express his gratitude to the UN for helping to bring stability to Mali. The president stated the following:

> *"This is the place to pay homage to the women and men of MINUSMA for their engagement and their sacrifice in a security situation that I know is complex and difficult. . . . I reiterate the profound gratitude of the people and Government of Mali towards the United Nations, our bilateral and multilateral partners, for their constant support in our emergence from crisis." ("At UN Assembly", 2018, para. 2-3).*

Hence, the strong consent that followed the 'intervention by invitation' signalled a partnership between the Malian authorities and the UN.

This 'partnership' was further cemented in MINUSMA's mandate. According to Resolution 2100, the priority of MINUSMA was the 'Stabilization of key population centres and support for the reestablishment of State authority throughout the country' (UNSC, 2013b, p. 7). Thus, MINUSMA had a partial mandate that strongly supported the Malian government. Hence, the relationship between the host government and the UN could initially be characterized as a 'partnership'. This corresponded with low levels of one-sided violence.

However, the relationship changed after the 2020 coup d'état, which after months of nonviolent protests led to the 'resignation' of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita after soldiers stormed the presidential buildings (Harding, 2020). The military briefly installed an interim president but retook power in a second coup d'état after which the junta proposed a five-year transition timeline (Lyamouri, 2022). These drastic political changes led Mali to become diplomatically isolated and the relationship between the UN and the Malian authorities to sour (Lyamouri, 2022). Therefore, we can conclude that after the coup d'états of 2020 and 2021, consent became compromised and the relationship became ambiguous.

This change in relationship corresponded with a change in the level of one-sided government violence. In the years leading up to the 2020 coup d'état, only 69 civilians were killed in one-sided violence. This number rose significantly and 226 civilians were killed in 2020 alone (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, n.d.). Unfortunately, the longer-term effects of this political

change cannot yet be assessed since the UCDP data on one-sided violence for 2021 and onwards is not available thus far. However, the aforementioned report by Peltier et al. (2022) suggests that one-sided violence has further increased.

So, in the first phase of the MINUSMA's deployment, the relationship between the Malian authorities and the UN can be defined as a 'partnership'. This period was characterized by low levels of one-sided violence. In the second phase, this relationship became ambiguous after the significant political change brought about by the coup d'états. This period corresponded with a substantial rise in one-sided violence. Hence, the empirical observations match the proposed *UN - Host Government Relationship* explanation.

5   Analysis

5.1   Overview

Table 1. Overview of cases, variables and outcomes

Case	Explanation Relationship UN – Host Government	Explanation Third-party Enforcement Mission	Explanation Aid–dependency	Outcome One-sided Violence Against Civilians
Sudan	Ambiguous	No	Independent	High
Sudan (Post-coup d'état)	Partnership	No	Independent	Low*
South-Sudan	Ambiguous	Yes (Uganda)	Aid-dependent	High
The Central African Republic	Partnership	Yes (France)	Aid-dependent	Low
Mali	Partnership	Yes (France)	Aid-dependent	Low
Mali (Post-coup d'état)	Ambiguous	Yes (France)	Aid-dependent	High*

* Coup d'états happened in 2019 and 2020. UCDP data on longer-term effects are missing.

5.2   Aid Dependency

The *Aid Dependency* explanation is supported by the cases of Sudan, the CAR and Mali. However, the aid dependency combined with high levels of one-sided violence observed in South Sudan contradicts the proposed theory. In South Sudan, aid dependency did not prevent

the government from resorting to one-sided violence to fight the rebel insurgency. Furthermore, the increase in one-sided violence in Mali in 2020 did not seem to follow a significant decrease in ODA although concrete World Bank data for 2020 and onwards are not yet available. Hence, while aid dependency most likely does affect government decision making, it is not sufficient to explain the variation in one-sided violence.

The cases do however suggest that the resource environment in which a government operates matters. The oil revenue at the disposal of the governments of Sudan and South Sudan appeared to enable one-sided violence. This suggests that the theory proposed by Weinstein (2006), which posits that rebels that operate in a resource-rich environment perpetrate higher levels of violence against civilians because they are less dependent on civilians for their needs and survival, holds true when considering the behaviour of governments.

5.3   Third-party Enforcement Mission

The *Third-party Enforcement Mission* explanation is supported by the case of Sudan and partly by the cases of Mali and the CAR. In Sudan, the absence of a third-party enforcement mission corresponded with high levels of one-sided violence. In Mali and the CAR, the French military operations which enhanced the military capabilities of host governments initially corresponded with low levels of one-sided violence.

However, evidence from South Sudan, Mali and the CAR undermines the plausibility of the *Third-party Enforcement Mission* explanation. In South Sudan, the presence of the UPDF corresponded with high levels of one-sided violence. Furthermore, UPDF were accused of using indiscriminate violence themselves. In Mali, the presence of French troops did not prevent the Malian Security Forces from increasingly committing one-sided violence after the 2020 coup d'état. Moreover, the recent presence of Russian private military contractors fighting alongside government troops in Mali and the CAR has coincided with reports of one-sided violence committed by both actors. Hence, the evidence from South Sudan and the initial reports from Mali and the CAR suggests that (private) 'third-party enforcement missions' which enhance military capabilities can rather enable instead of reduce one-sided violence. This finding questions the argument of Wood et al. (2012) who argue that military interventions that enhance military capabilities reduce the level of one-sided violence.

Therefore, the general argument proposed by the *Third-party Enforcement Mission* explanation does not seem to fit the observations although the French presence might have had a positive

impact in Mali and the CAR. Ergo, we can conclude that the argument is not successful in explaining the variation in violence.

5.4   UN - Host Government Relationship

The *UN – Host Government Relationship* explanation is supported by all cases. In Sudan and South Sudan, the ambiguous relationship between the UN and the host government coincided with resistance against the peacekeeping operation and high levels of one-sided violence. In the CAR and Mali, the 'partnership' between the UN and the host government corresponded with little resistance and low levels of one-sided violence.

Furthermore, the significant political change in Sudan led the relationship to ameliorate which was followed by a decrease in the level of one-sided violence. Conversely, in Mali, the coup d'état(s) led the relationship to deteriorate which was followed by increasing levels of one-sided violence. These observations further support the *UN – Host Government Relationship* explanation and lead us to conclude that the variation in violence can best be explained by looking at the relationship between the host government and the UN.

6   Conclusion

This thesis started from the empirical observation that the governments of Sudan and South Sudan resorted to high levels of one-sided violence while the governments of Mali and the CAR refrained from targeting civilians while UN peacekeeping operations were present. The existing literature already addressed why peacekeeping operations are unable to protect civilians from governments but not this 'variation in violence'. This thesis tried to fill this gap in the literature and asked the following question: *Why are some peacekeeping operations more effective in protecting civilians from one-sided government violence than others?*

The analysis has shown that the variation in one-sided violence can best be explained by looking at the relationship between the UN and the host governments. The 'partnerships' observed in Mali and the CAR coincided with low levels of one-sided violence while the 'ambiguous' relationship in Sudan and South Sudan corresponded with high levels of one-sided violence. The *Third-party Enforcement Mission* explanation did not match the theoretical propositions. While the presence of French troops did correlate with lower levels of one-sided violence, the

intervention of Ugandan troops in South Sudan and the recent deployment of Russian military contractors in the CAR and Mali questioned the argument of Wood et al. (2012) who argue that military interventions that enhance military capabilities reduce the level of one-sided violence. Furthermore, *Aid Dependency* did not seem to constrain governments yet the presence of an alternative source of income such as oil rents did correspond with higher levels of one-sided violence suggesting that the resource environment does matter.

However, while these results provide a tentative answer to the research question, the limitations need to be addressed. First, while the comparative design enabled the thesis to address variation, the decision to incorporate four cases was at the expense of the depth of the within-case analysis. As a result, conclusions about causality remained limited. Second, each case under consideration has its own history and characteristics that might influence the outcome. The scope conditions tried to limit the differences yet it was not realistic to consider all plausible variables due to space and time constraints. For example, the lack of military in the CAR is an alternative explanation that explains the outcome in the CAR but was not considered beforehand. Third, the thesis did not address the causal complexity. For instance, how do peacekeeping operations, ODA and third-party enforcement missions interact? The analysis tentatively suggests that low levels of one-sided violence occur in cases where there is a combination of a 'partnership', a third-party enforcement mission and high levels of ODA. This was the case in Mali and the CAR where the international community provided a 'package deal' of support. However, this causal complexity needs additional scrutiny to unpack its intricacies.

Hence, while these limitations reduce the weight of the results, they also provide fruitful avenues for further research. One possible avenue would be to strengthen the within-case analyses by disaggregating the UCDP data on one-sided violence and looking more closely at change. This would provide additional support for the *UN – Host Government Relationship* and strengthen the causal claims that a change in relationship precedes change in one-sided violence. Moreover, additional cases could be added to further test the arguments. The initial results nevertheless suggest that some peacekeeping operations are more effective in protecting civilians from one-sided violence because of their relationship with the host government.

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Appendix

Appendix A. Fatalities of one-sided government violence (Based on Uppsala Conflict Data Program (n.d.))

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
CAR								0	7	3	0	0	5	3	18
Mali							0	0	0	7	9	53	0	226	295
South Sudan					0	65	580	205	349	194	230	166	84	29	1902
Sudan*	40	169	0	9	41	21	26	82	371	427	65	58	148	21	1478
Total	40	169	0	9	41	86	606	287	727	631	304	277	237	279	3693

* Fatality data for the Darfur region.