Low-Intensity Conflict and Third-Party Mediation in Africa: Do traditional forms of Peacebuilding Account for the Nuances of Low-Intensity Conflicts and What is the Role of Civil Society?

Verschuur, Juliette

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Juliette Verschuur

Prof.dr. MMA Kaag

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List of Abbreviations

AU – African Union

CBO – Community Based Organisation

CSO – civil Society Organisation

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

EU – European Union

GoS – Government of Senegal

IGO – Inter-Governmental Organisation

(I)NGO – (International) Non-Governmental Organisation

LIC – Low-Intensity Conflict

MILC – Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Conflict (dataset)

MFDC – Mouvement des Forces Démocratique en Casamance

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

OAU – Organisation of African Unity

P5 – Permanent five of the UN Security Council

PBC –peacebuilding commission (UN)

REC – Regional Economic Community

UCDP – Uppsala Conflict Data Programme

UN – United Nations

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Introduction

No two conflicts are the same. But what does one think of when referring to conflict? Typically, we associate conflict with thousand strong armies facing off across a battlefield, the Machine-Gun fire of the 20th century, proxy wars fought during the cold war across the world, or the development of weapons of mass destruction. Increasingly frequent in the world today are drone strikes, devastating warfare conducted from a control room without the need for large scale troops. Or one might think about guerilla warfare during the late 20th century, power hungry expansion, or ideological defence. While recently we have seen the return of the increasingly atypical scene of large interstate war to the forefront of world politics, the overall post World War II trend has been intrastate conflicts (see figure 1). When it comes to Africa, people may think of wars waged at corrupt governments, against tyrannical leaders, or, waged *by* corrupt governments and tyrannical leaders, just another string of opportunistic attempts by power-hungry people. The spread of terrorist cells across Sahelian West Africa since the 2010s is testament to the threat that these intrastate wars can pose, as intra-conflict-ridden states provide an ample breeding ground to make use of the chaos.

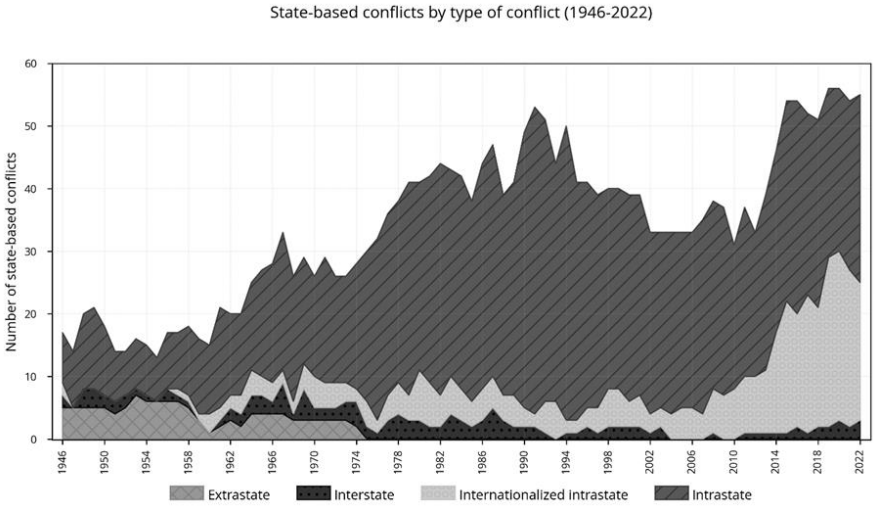

Figure 1. Types of Conflict UCDP. Davies et al. 2023

Notions of resistance, disenfranchisement, and identity are all sentiments that drive the low-intensity intrastate conflict that has become the new norm. And yet have these 3rd parties that all typically promote peacebuilding in their mediations adjusted their frameworks to account for this?

The conflict management environment is flooded by actors. Macro/political actors tend to be able to encourage governments, impose political sanctions pending the resolution of conflicts, and provide strength behind peace agreements as signatories. There is also the non-political flip side, where humanitarian and human rights (International) Non-Governmental Organisations ((I)NGOs) set up in the field and work on aiding civilians and resolving small disputes. So why do 3rd parties get involved in civil conflicts. Smaller scale, low-intensity conflicts (LICs) are frequently neglected, from global mainstream media, from 3rd party intervention and from the urgency and interest shown by the international community to other conflict types. But conflicts such as these can also be large money-makers for independent (i.e. non-state) actors. This thesis will explore the connection between diverse levels of 3rd party mediation across African LICs in order to understand whether the traditional Western liberal peacebuilding framework is applicable to all types of conflict. Due to time limit constrictions, this paper is not analysing other forms of conflict management such as peacekeeping interventions and operations, but purely peacebuilding in a non-violent intermediatory context. Having conducted in-depth research into one such LICs, and spent time in the field, I have been able to see and hear first-hand what the situation has been like, which led me along the trajectory of whether liberal peacebuilding is the right way to mediate such conflicts. The case of the Casamance region in Senegal and the recent surge in the number of (I)NGOs and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) aiming for peace is testimony to the inability of peacebuilding to resolve these conflicts swiftly and effectively.

In order to answer the question of *whether traditional forms of peacebuilding account for the nuances of low-intensity conflicts, and what the role of civil society is,* this paper has been divided into four parts. Part I consists of three chapters and is focused on cementing the understanding of some of the most important factors to keep in mind and consider when thinking about low-intensity conflicts. Chapter one of part one will focus on peacebuilding, a practice that has just as many proponents as

opponents. The purpose of this chapter is to understand the concept across all types of conflict and the framework that peacebuilding can so often be accused of refusing to deviate from. Despite having a predominantly UN origin, peacebuilding is not only restricted to the highest authority of all things international relations. Chapter two will explore the wide range of actors that can get involved in peacebuilding in a conflict. These have been divided into political and non-political actors, as the capacity and scope of involvement is different for the two. An equally important thing to understand when it comes to mediation in conflicts is the motivation for involvement, and this will be described through the geopolitical standpoint of 3rd parties. Finally, chapter three of the first part, 'intrastate conflict' will, after a brief description of conflict intensity, delve into the distinguishable characteristics of the two types of intrastate conflict and the ways that they can conclude. Part I is intended to aid the reader in the comprehension of the quantitative analysis of Part II, as it brings together 3rd party actors and their mediation in low-intensity intrastate conflicts through a series of hypotheses.

Part II will, in analysing the data surrounding the 3rd party mediation of LICs, draw conclusions with which the research question can be answered. Chapter one is dedicated to the Uppsala University's Conflict Data Programme (UCDP) and their dataset on managing intrastate Low-Intensity Conflict (MILC). Chapter 2 is the quantitative analysis of the array of conflicts that occurred in the latter half of the 90s and beginning of the 2000s. Using data from over 3500 recorded mediation attempts for the period, hypotheses have been drawn, and trends singled out. This will then be followed by a discussion of the main conclusions.

Part III brings together the qualitative and the quantitative of the previous chapters and applies it to a case study. In the first chapter, the historical framework of the Casamance conflict in Senegal will be explained in depth, followed by a qualitative analysis of the conflict mediation environment there in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 will focus on civil society as an actor in Casamance peacebuilding, followed by comparative case studies in chapter 4. After a conclusion of Part III, the final part will provide a discussion of the takeaways from the research and results, followed by the conclusion.

Before all of that though, a brief explanation of the methodology used for this research.

Methodology.

This paper was originally meant to be conducted in a purely qualitative capacity, by gathering data in the field through participant observation and various interview formats. However, due to circumstantial changes, and the discovery of large-scale quantitative data on the precise topic of 3rd party mediation, it became a mixed-method research project. It became necessary to use mixed methods of data collection so as to fully understand both the specifics and the statistics. A comprehensive review of pre-existing literature on the topics of peacebuilding, actor distinction, different types of LICs, Casamance and other case studies, provided a good basis to be able to read between the lines of the information presented in the quantitative dataset. Through the formulation of hypotheses and subsequent statistical analysis of the global and African 3rd party intervention for the decade spanning 1993-2004, I have been able to isolate the data necessary and turn it into a presentable visualisation of the situation, as well as draw solid conclusions on LICs in Africa. A number of interviews conducted in late January and early February of this year (2024) are also included, along with time spent with organisations in the Casamance. As such, the various methods have all been instrumental to the presentation of a comprehensive research. Some constraints to the original research, such as an underwhelming response from (I)NGOs on request of interviews and having to leave the field after not even half the time allocated to be there, threatened to undermine the research process, however, in adapting the research methods these problems have been mitigated.

Part I

Chapter 1. Peacebuilding

1.1. What is Peacebuilding?

Since the end of the Cold War there has been much focus on the concept of liberal peace, and how it goes hand in hand with liberal democracy, which is the ruling view of peacebuilding[1]. Most of this stems from the post-Cold War world order, as well as the post-9/11 environment where the threat of weak and conflict-ridden states reinforced the West's argument that the international community would be more stable and encounter less conflicts if there was a general adherence to the liberal democracy[2]. Development and peace therefore also go hand in hand, and as the Western world is still determined to spread its beliefs to the far-flung corners of the world, it is no surprise that "the focus on institution building and democracy enhancement remained central to United Nations (UN) missions, despite the fine line between this and violations of national sovereignty and accusations of Western bias"[3]. This liberal peacebuilding framework dominates international interventions, at the top level of Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGOs) as well as civil society. As the leading figures of the international community, peacebuilding is closely linked with and dictated by the ideals of liberal democratic ruling, as it is believed that this is where the peace of the western world is found[4]. Boutros Boutros Gali's 1992 Agenda for Peace has, coupled with the Millenium Development Goals, dictated the trajectory of conflict management to put out into the world the statement and understanding that democracy equals peace, or rather, that peace can be ensured through liberal development and democratic governance[5]. As a result, the objective of peacebuilding is to work towards this goal,

[1] Thania Paffenholz, Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment, 2009: 43.
[2] Timothy Donais, "Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas Of Local Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes", Peace and Change/Peace & Change 34, no. 1 (1 January 2009): 6.
[3] Jenny Pearce, "The International Community and Peacebuilding", *Development* (Rome) 48, no. 3 (22 August 2005): 42.
[4]Timothy Donais, "Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas Of Local Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes", Peace and Change/Peace & Change 34, no. 1 (1 January 2009): 5.
[5] Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", International Interactions 35, no. 1 (17 March 2009): 61. Devon Curtis, 'Introduction; The Contested Politics of Peacebuilding in Africa', in: *Peacebuilding, Power, and Politics in Africa* ed. Devon Curtis and Gwinyayi A Dzinesa. (United States: Ohio University Press 2012): 7.

through a series of different methods, in order to bring about the liberal peace[6]. As a result, peacebuilding grew at an accelerated rate, with "the proliferation of institutions, units, and programs tasked with peacebuilding in Africa. These include institutions at the global level, the continental, regional, and national levels, as well as local"[7]. Since then, the international community (heavily dominated by the US) has been consistently accused of sticking so tightly to their ideas, that they have actually prolonged conflict through the inability to adapt to specific situations[8].

1.2. The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission

The UN's 'Peacebuilding Orientation' document presents its beliefs that the most pressing issues that require assistance are in providing support to basic safety and security, political processes, provision of basic services, restoring core government functions, and economic revitalisation[9]. Priority is given to "those that will enhance peace consolidation, or that will significantly reduce the risk of relapse into conflict and begin to resolve key causes of the conflict"[10]. Since the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)'s establishment in 2005, it has been active in 26 countries and regions overall. The PBC is theoretically there to provide support to governments struggling under the threat of conflict, regionally or internationally, and generally at the behest of said governments[11]. In 2022 for example, the Commission worked with the following 14 peacebuilding cases: Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Central Asia, Colombia, The Gambia, the Great Lakes, Guinea-Bissau, the Lake Chad Basin, Liberia, the Pacific Islands, the Sahel, South Sudan, and Timor-Leste[12]. One only has to read a document produced by the UN's PBC to find the underlying framework and message.

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[6] Devon Curtis, 'Introduction; The Contested Politics of Peacebuilding in Africa', in: *Peacebuilding, Power, and Politics in Africa* ed. Devon Curtis and Gwinyayi A Dzinesa. (United States: Ohio University Press 2012): 10.
[7] Devon Curtis, 'Introduction; The Contested Politics of Peacebuilding in Africa', in: *Peacebuilding, Power, and Politics in Africa* ed. Devon Curtis and Gwinyayi A Dzinesa. (United States: Ohio University Press 2012): 7.
[8] Patrick M. Regan, "Third-party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 1 (February 1, 2002): 56.
[9] Judy Cheng-Hopkins and United Nations, UN Peacebuilding: An Orientation, Orientation (Peacebuilding Support Office, 2010): 12.
[10] Judy Cheng-Hopkins and United Nations, UN Peacebuilding: An Orientation, Orientation (Peacebuilding Support Office, 2010): 13.
[11]United Nations. "United Nations Peacebuilding Commission Country and Regional Engagements," (2023):2.
[12] United Nations. "United Nations Peacebuilding Commission Country and Regional Engagements," (2023):2.

For example, in South Sudan the PBC has been present for many years aiming:

> *"To promote inclusive and timely implementation of the transitional road map, including by fully complying with the 35 per cent quota for women at the national and local levels, as provided under the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and as a measure of promoting the women and peace and security agenda, as well as the holding of elections in 2024"*[13].

A further example of the PBC's involvement can be seen in Liberia, where:

> "*The Commission highlighted the upcoming elections as being a crucial milestone towards consolidating peace, democracy, reconciliation and sustainable and inclusive development in Liberia and within the region. The Commission called for stakeholders to fully adhere to the rule of law and the Farmington River Declaration, in which all stakeholders are committed to peaceful elections. The Commission underlined the important role of Liberian young people and women in electoral processes and encouraged their meaningful participation"*[14].

Recommendations to both these states and countless others are hinged on the promotion of democratic elections and the promotion of women and youth issues within conflicts. That is not to say that they should not be promoting these important freedoms, however, the assumption that these are the only ways to provide conflict management presents as the stock response. The first sentence of the Liberian quote perfectly identifies the idea that peacebuilding is designed to instigate a 'smooth' transition from war torn state to peaceful liberal democracy. It does however ignore the context of Liberian history and culture by trying to formulate the conflict into a box that only democracy can fix. There is little wonder as to why the fiercest critics of peacebuilding have branded it as a modern

[13] General Assembly Security Council. "Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its Seventeenth Session," (February 2024): 7.
[14] General Assembly Security Council. "Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its Seventeenth Session," February (2024): 6.

Mission Civilisatrice[15]. There is also very little in any of the PBC's documents or webpages that talks about conflict distinctions and how peacebuilding can be varied depending on the type of conflict and/or the intensity. Both of which will be discussed further on in this paper.

At the same time, new initiatives in 2024 included "forging closer ties with regional and subregional organizations, which culminated in the visit to the African Union Commission and institutionalizing regular meetings between the Commission and Peace and Security Council of the African Union. Member States could consider expanding this initiative to other regions"[16]. While the delegation of conflict response to more regionalised IGOs such as the African Union (AU) is following the correct path of capacity building, after twenty years of both the AU and the PBC's existence, one would think would be already pretty well established, especially with other regional organisations outside of Africa.

1.4. The UN and Civil Society

Civil society is the term for grassroots movements that can hold governments and institutions accountable. They are made up of so many aspects of everyday life and will be covered further in the chapter on Actor Distinction. In terms of civil society engagement, while the PBC claims to involve local communities in peacebuilding, their methods can be considered to be a "fundamentally disempowering form of local ownership, where internal political forces are expected both to uncritically adopt and to actively implement an external blueprint for post-conflict transformation"[17]. An issue so often seen when the macro- and meso- actors try to involve the micro-level of civil society is the overriding of projects and dictating of funds and support. However, in late 2023 the PBC launched what is expected to become an annual Civil Society Organisation (CSO)-UN Dialogue on Peacebuilding, in order to strengthen strategy and policy as well as aiming to include more of civil

[15] (*Civilising Mission*) Roland Paris, "International Peacebuilding and the 'Mission Civilisatrice'", Review of International Studies 28, no. 4 (1 October 2002): 637-656.
[16] General Assembly Security Council. "Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its Seventeenth Session," (February 2024): 19.
[17] Timothy Donais, "Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas of Local Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes", Peace and Change/Peace & Change 34, no. 1 (1 January 2009): 7.

society to alter and improve upon peacebuilding in its actions and end goals[18]. The PBC is also highlighting to great extent their increasing engagement with civil society especially with women and the youth, in line with Resolution 1325[19]. In the below visualisation however, while it gives the impression of a strong and committed increase in engaging with civil society (aside from the drop in 2023) [20], it does not show *how* the UN engages with civil society in these instances, but only how many representatives were in meetings.

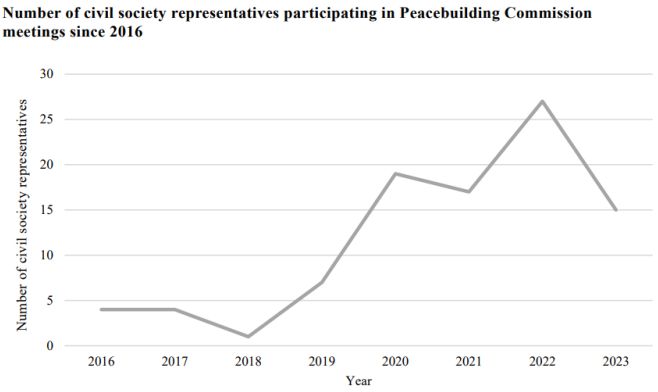

Figure 2. Civil society in PBC meetings. UN Peacebuilding Commission (2023).

The UN is not the only actor that makes use of this peacebuilding framework. Other IGOs, states and NGOs also frequently stick to the same concept of dialogues, talks and workshops, focusing on "disarming, destroying weapons, repatriating refugees, training security forces, monitoring elections, and advancing the protection of human rights"[21]. It is also a common enough feature that while peacebuilding organisations claim to engage sincerely with communities and civil society on the ground, in order to 'enhance' the process, more often than not they are still importing their tools for use through local populations. The likes of which in turn, are treated no better than as puppets to fulfil the top-down approach through local engagement. This will be further discussed in the following chapter.

[18] "CSO-UN Dialogue | PEACEBUILDING", n.d. https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/cso-un-dialogue
[19]"Civil Society Partnership | PEACEBUILDING", n.d., https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/civil-society-partnership
[20] General Assembly Security Council. "Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its Seventeenth Session," (February 2024): 17.
[21] Thania Paffenholz, Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment, 2009: 45

Chapter 2. Actor Distinction

2.1. Political Actors

This generally encompasses the higher level of 3rd party conflict management. The first type are IGOs of which the UN is obviously the largest, but in the case of Africa, other IGOs include mainly the AU or the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and sometimes the European Union (EU). These international and regional organisational bodies participate in peacebuilding missions across the continent. They are also able to engage in conflicts spanning across the whole timeframe, from early warning systems to conflict resolution to post-conflict rebuilding[22]. When one thinks about macro-level actors in a conflict, they are they intervening party that can bring about a definitive end. Macro-actors are capable of providing incredibly substantial amounts of support, financially, in training, or in military resources[23]. They can mobilise armies to help in times of full-blown war and can carry enough power within the institution to impose sanctions that are damaging enough to a country's economic development and growth. While the concept of having these macro-level actors involved in conflict situations as 3rd party actors can be seen as generally positive, the question of agenda must be put forward. As explained in the previous chapter, there is always a question of how these macro-level actors are going about their role. For example, there have been times where aid is only given after certain stipulations are agreed upon by the receiving country, or cash flows used in underhand ways that increase the benefit to the actor[24]. In terms of peacebuilding however, their main responses are the ones described in the peacebuilding chapter above, including bringing parties to the table, and encouraging the securing of institutions and liberal market economics. States, as meso-actors, are often seen as the bridge between the warring parties, to bring together conflicting sides for dialogue or peace talks. States that intervene can be ones with particular vested interest in the outcome of a conflict or concerned members of the international community.

[22] Judy Cheng-Hopkins and United Nations, *UN Peacebuilding: An Orientation*, Orientation (Peacebuilding Support Office, 2010): 8.
[23] See Erforth, Benedikt. "Multilateralism as a Tool: Exploring French Military Cooperation in the Sahel." Journal of Strategic Studies 43, no. 4 (March 4, 2020): 560–82. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1733986.
[24] Hans Holmén, "NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa; potentials, constraints and diverging experiences" in the *Routledge Handbook of NGOs and International Relations*. Ed. Thomas Davies. (Routledge eBooks, 2019): 524.

2.2 Non-State Actors

Non-state actors can be both meso-level such as (I)NGOs, or micro-level actors encompassing the grassroots movements generally understood to be civil society. It is important to start by clarifying that the term CSO encompasses almost all form of non-state actor organisation. This includes "community groups, women's association, labour unions, indigenous groups, youth groups, charitable organizations, foundations, faith-based organizations, independent media, professional associations, think tanks, independent educational organizations and social movements"[25]. These days there is the developing idea that peacebuilding should be done through local and ground up approaches. This is reinforced by the fact that numerous studies have concluded that peacebuilding should be intended to be as a secondary (truly 3rd party) response to support national actors, i.e., the state and civil society[26].This alternative form of peacebuilding takes many names such as 'realist' [27]or, 'communitarian'[28] but is generally understood to be a bottom-up approach. The World Bank set about creating a document aimed at potential donors to civil society. They argue that there are seven functions of the CSO in peacebuilding: protection; monitoring/early warning; advocacy/public communication; socialisation; social cohesion; intermediation/facilitation; and service provision[29]. During times of conflict, when tensions are high, there can be increased mobilisation of civil society as a direct result, and if it is restricted, it can further exacerbate the ongoing troubles. It is also said that the role of CSOs is nothing more than secondary (if that), and they are seen as supporting actors to the main show, given that "only rarely do conflict parties turn to and accept the official mediation by a CoSO [Conflict Society Organisation] rather than by third states or international organisations"[30].

While also being capable of bringing parties to the table themselves, there is also a connection between the meso-level actors and the micro-, where large NGOs assign funding to the CBOs on the

[25]Reiner Forster and Mark Mattner, "Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Potential, Limitations and Critical Factors" no. 36445-GLB (World Bank, 2006): 2.
[26] Thania Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment*, 2009: 59.
[27] Ian S. Spears, "The False Promise of Peacebuilding", *International Journal (Toronto)* 67, no. 2 (1 June 2012).
[28]Timothy Donais, "Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas of Local Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes", *Peace and Change/Peace & Change* 34, no. 1 (1 January 2009).
[29]Reiner Forster and Mark Mattner, "Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Potential, Limitations and Critical Factors" no. 36445-GLB (World Bank, 2006): 12.
[30]Raffaele Marchetti and Nathalie Tocci, "Conflict Society: Understanding the Role of Civil Society in Conflict", *Global Change, Peace & Security* 21, no. 2 (1 June 2009): 210.

ground. In terms of indirect conflict management, the first and most glaring issue here is of funding. The actions and work of CSOs are heavily influenced by donors and while donors can provide much needed support on the political lobbying side, they can also result in the overhaul of the grassroots foundation of civil society. This thereby reduces its efficacy; due to the power they exercise and paths they dictate[31]. CSOs and CBOs frequently change their goals or interests in order to better suit those of donors. Additionally, the "donor preference for working with professionalised, Western-style organisations […] may encourage the 'NGO-isation' of local civil society", which again can heavily influence the operational functions of the CSO[32]. Another point is that when conflict draws on it can result in donor fatigue, while at the same time the lack of results yielded is often cited as failure. As a result, there is frequently a high turnover rate of donors dipping in and out of CSOs[33]. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for example, is a large NGO active across the globe in peacebuilding and pushes the agenda of aid for development, yet despite being classified as an NGO, it is funded by the US government[34]. Their office of Conflict Management and Mitigation adds that conflict mitigation is a part of what they refer to as 'Community-Based Development' (CBD). The goal of the CBD programmes is that they can "reinforce a sense of community, generate an improvement in livelihoods, help improve the community's ability to realize its goals, (attempt to) build transparent governance, and empower marginalized groups"[35]. As expected, the most successful of these are the ones that are transparent and inclusive, in order to have a representation of the community at large[36].

The majority of large (I)NGOs state that their work is community based, however much of the work of the peacebuilders can be built on the mentality of (even a well-meaning) saviour complex, and the attitude that local civil society would not be capable of carrying out the steps to achieving sustainable

[31] Christopher L. Pallas, "Aid Reduction and Local Civil Society in Conflict-Affected States: New Research and Stakeholder Dialogue", *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 11, no. 1 (1 April 2016): 105
[32] Christopher L. Pallas, "Aid Reduction and Local Civil Society in Conflict-Affected States: New Research and Stakeholder Dialogue", *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 11, no. 1 (1 April 2016): 106.
[33] Christopher L. Pallas, "Aid Reduction and Local Civil Society in Conflict-Affected States: New Research and Stakeholder Dialogue", *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 11, no. 1 (1 April 2016): 106.
[34] "U.S. Agency For International Development," U.S. Agency For International Development, n.d., https://www.usaid.gov/.
[35] USAID, "Community-Based Development in Conflict-Affected Areas". (Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, USAID. 2007): 6.
[36] USAID, "Community-Based Development in Conflict-Affected Areas". (Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation, USAID. 2007).

peace alone. To that end, the majority of methods are imported and implemented by external actors, and on the rare occasions that civil society is 'utilised', there is heavy supervision involved. For the (I)NGO actors, the concept of local ownership "is not about autonomy, but rather about domestic political structures taking responsibility for implementing a preexisting (and externally defined) set of policy prescriptions[37]. However, according to the World Bank, the movement towards including CSOs in peacebuilding attempts has been gaining momentum since the 1990s, and CSOs as actors in the process have become more widely recognised[38].

2.3. Why do 3rd parties get involved?

3rd party actors can get involved in conflict mediation for many reasons. It is easy to see why 3rd party involvement in African conflicts, from the West's point of view especially, is needed. In many cases the challenge to the status quo in the global world order is coupled with the opportunity to restructure the post-colonial states in the Western, democratic, image. When one peels back the overlying humanitarian layer, which is not being denied as a prominent reason, the extent of self-interest can become apparent. Oftentimes when promoting the liberal Western peacebuilding framework "peacebuilding agencies transmit such ideas […] in an effort to remake parts of the periphery in the image of the core"[39]. Additionally, much of the involvement of IGOs is hinged on conditionalities including the expectation for recipient states to alter and conform their governance structure to the western liberal democracy in order to receive aid. This involves actions such as economic liberalisation, a lack or reduction of humanitarian repression, and being sure to hold elections that can be described as truly democratic[40]. Through methods like this the West can still determine the world

[37]Timothy Donais, "Empowerment or Imposition? Dilemmas of Local Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding Processes", *Peace and Change/Peace & Change* 34, no. 1 (1 January 2009): 6.
[38] Reiner Forster and Mark Mattner, "Civil Society and Peacebuilding: Potential, Limitations and Critical Factors" no. 36445-GLB (World Bank, 2006): 4.
[39]Roland Paris, "International Peacebuilding and the 'Mission Civilisatrice'", Review of International Studies 28, no. 4 (1 October 2002): 639.
[40] Roland Paris, "International Peacebuilding and the 'Mission Civilisatrice'", Review of International Studies 28, no. 4 (1 October 2002):653.

order and shape the post-colonial world in their image. Of course, there are very few incentives to getting involved in costly and oftentimes futile (due to the lack of adequate understanding) peacebuilding missions.

For the UN and other high-level Western actors in peacebuilding, a functional liberal economy and peaceful regional security will always be the goal. Maintaining peace around the world is beneficial to all in this grouping, as it demonstrates the power of these regional and intergovernmental powers to react when the current order is challenged. However, there are still issues with the application of peacebuilding methods. On the continent for example, the AU has multiple frameworks for conflict prevention, as well as management and early warning systems, yet the general response at the outbreak of a conflict is to sanction[41]. When the Sahel G5 created their own group because of the inability of ECOWAS to react, it made the whole purpose of the Regional Economic Community (REC) redundant, not to mention the clear statement made when Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso eventually decided on complete withdrawal[42].

For state actors, I would argue that there are two main reasons for involvement. The first is to do with regional security, where the spillover effects of conflict, including reduced trading and more illegal activity as well as floods of refugees, make it important to those states for them to get involved[43]. A reason for this is to be sure to repair the country's balance before it has a knock-on effect on them. As can be seen in West Africa, states are consecutively succumbing to the waves of conflict emanating from their neighbours at an alarming rate. Other states, either ex-colonial or other Western powers, can also have vested interests in the fate of the warring country. For example, France's involvement as a 3rd party in mediation is incredibly high[44]. Interests include the economic stability of their own state, regional balance, and stability, as well as defending the borders of Europe from renewed waves of refugee crises.

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[41] See Freire, Maria Raquel, Paula Lopes, and Daniela Nascimento. "'Responsibility to Protect' and the African Union: Assessing the AU's Capacity to Respond to Regional Complex Humanitarian and Political Emergencies." African Security Review 25, no. 3 (May 24, 2016): 223–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2016.1176936.

[42] Vicky Wong, "Ecowas: Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso quit West African bloc", *BBC News*, 28 January 2024, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-68122947.

[43] Thania Paffenholz, Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment, 2009: 57

[44] Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, no. 1 (17 March 2009): 71.

(I)NGOs can have varying stakes in conflict management but are generally understood to be more neutral about it. While seemingly 'non-governmental' these organisations are often funded by the state or large donors and are capable of intervening for the personal gain of someone or something[45]. As the 'unbiased' sector of peacebuilding, for the most part the humanitarian and indeed the NGOs' role in theory is to respond to conflicts, focusing on the social and economic factors, all the while still having to report progress and successes in order to keep the attention and interests of donors and organisational management[46]. This accountability to funders (which can also be heavily dominated by states) governs (I)NGO reasoning for intervention, even if the organisation itself has noble intentions, the dog-eat-dog world of securing funding that affects grassroots organisations also reaches the top. This is due to the fact that a lack of success or interest from donors can result in the withdrawal of funding. Therefore, stakeholder determination of funds to and in organisations has led to NGOs being "accused of parachuting into a conflict, introducing some foreign problem-solving techniques based on Western principles and values, and leaving rapidly to do the same in someone else's conflict"[47]. There is also the inverse issue of NGOs profiting off of conflict, going in "without progressive ambitions but with the sole purpose to tap into the new financial flows suddenly available"[48].

2.4. Geopolitical Implications.

From a geopolitical standpoint, there are many factors that influence the 3rd party engagement in African conflicts. One example of this is the flourishing wartime economies that can be tapped into and used to prolong conflicts to the benefit of insurgent groups. The blood diamonds of Sierra Leone were almost definitely the reason for the conflict's longevity, and the spillover from these reached almost all corners of the world, resulting in the necessity for a clampdown on said diamonds in order

[45] Roland Paris, "International Peacebuilding and the 'Mission Civilisatrice'", Review of International Studies 28, no. 4 (1 October 2002): 641. Molly M. Melin and Isak Svensson, "Incentives for Talking: Accepting Mediation in International and Civil Wars", *International Interactions* 35, no. 3 (28 August 2009): 255.
[46] Pamela Aall, "NGOs, Conflict Management and Peacekeeping," *International Peacekeeping* 7, no. 1 (March 1, 2000): 121.
[47] Pamela Aall, "NGOs, Conflict Management and Peacekeeping," *International Peacekeeping* 7, no. 1 (March 1, 2000): 121.
[48] Hans Holmén, "NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa; potentials, constraints and diverging experiences" in the *Routledge Handbook of NGOs and International Relations*. Ed. Thomas Davies. (Routledge eBooks, 2019): 518.

to restrict insurgent funding streams[49]. Precious metals and other resources have long been the source, or at the very least the scourge, of many conflicts in West Africa and elsewhere. While this is talking about the key actors in conflict (generally insurgent groups), it can also be seen as extra reasons for 3rd parties to get involved. For example, untapped oil fields along the Senegal/Guinea-Bissau maritime border adds further dimension to whether a 3rd party wants to intervene[50]. The US in the 2010s was searching for a way to source a higher percentage of oil from Africa, therefore the US began to express greater interest in the security of the West African coast[51]. The crisis of small arms trafficking in Africa continues to permeate through the large-scale civil wars all the way to the smallest of conflicts, despite the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in Ecowas Member States being in force since November 1998[52]. This is being blatantly ignored as "The West African region is replete with instances of countries facilitating the armament of their neighbours' opponents[53]. This weaponry has been in circulation throughout the continent and includes trafficked weapons from post-soviet nations.[54]

When looking at conflict management and peacebuilding it is easy to forget the main actors in a conflict. What do the warring parties do to resolve a conflict if anything? How can the government not quell insurgent uprisings? The distinction between the warring parties is also of great significance. While there can of course be disparity between different sides of inter-state conflicts, the disparity between parties in intrastate conflicts is far greater and can also cause the longest drawing conflicts. The likes of which will be described in the following chapter.

[49] Osita Agbu, *West Africa's Trouble Spots and The Imperative for Peace-Building*, (Dakar, Senegal: Codesria, 2006): 89.
[50] Martin Evans, "Sénégal: Mouvement Des Forces Démocratiques de La Casamance (MFDC)", BRIEFING PAPER, *Armed Non-State Actors Project*, Chatham House. (December 2004):16.
[51] Martin Evans, "Sénégal: Mouvement Des Forces Démocratiques de La Casamance (MFDC)", BRIEFING PAPER, *Armed Non-State Actors Project*, Chatham House. (December 2004): 16.
[52] The Economic Community of West African States "Declaration of A Moratorium on Importation, Exportation, And Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa", 31 October 1998.
[53] Louisa N. Lombard, "Chapter 10 – A Constant Threat; Armed Groups in West Africa" in *Small Arms Survey 2006: Unfinished Business* eds. Eric G. Berman and Keith Krause (Oxford University Press, USA, 2006): 256.
[54] Rachel J Stohl, "Fighting the Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms", *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* 25, no. 1 (1 January 2005): 64.

Chapter 3. Intrastate Conflict

3.1. Intensity

Before delving into the topic of intrastate conflict, it is first prudent to define conflict intensity. This paper is focusing on the low intensity, which, according to the UCDP, is calculated as having between 25 (to qualify as an armed conflict) and 999 conflict related deaths per year[55]. Anything above this counts as high intensity conflict and is essentially war. The intensity of a conflict can alter the type of 3rd party response to conflict. High-intensity, high casualty war is generally thought of when discussing conflict, with 3rd party responses being to send troops or military equipment or engage in large peacekeeping missions to train national armies. However, low-intensity conflicts (LICs) are also damaging to country and people. Where the intrastate LIC does not progress into full blown civil war, it can often be overlooked, especially when being considered for international 3rd party intervention. The intensity of a conflict, therefore, can strongly affect what types of 3rd party mediation occurs. Simply because LICs have lower casualties, does not mean that they are not also damaging the parties involved especially as some can draw on for decades.

3.2. What are intrastate conflicts?

These are classified as dyadic conflicts. The dyad is counted when at least one actor is the state, and the other a rebel or insurgent group. This also generally leads to asymmetries of power and capability[56]. Intrastate conflict is separated into two further types; successionist or secessionist, which in terms of the UCDP are classified as being caused by governmental or territorial incompatibilities (figure 3). When it comes to intrastate LICs, governments and 3rd parties can also decide not to engage with rebels at all. Whether or not they do engage depends on many things, such as whether

[55] "UCDP Definitions - Uppsala University", 23 April 2024, https://www.uu.se/en/department/peace-and-conflict-research/research/ucdp/ucdp-definitions.
[56] Molly M. Melin and Isak Svensson, "Incentives for Talking: Accepting Mediation in International and Civil Wars", *International Interactions* 35, no. 3 (28 August 2009):254.

"rebels have been able to see some success on the battlefield in a way that is most likely to impose political, economic, and social costs on the regime"[57], or whether the rebel movement poses a threat to important areas of land of land or is close to a major city[58]. When they do engage, it may not necessarily be in the aid of all out peace, and the granting of certain concessions to rebels can be seen as a way to appease and deescalate the situation while not necessarily conceding to any significant and damaging demands[59]. There is often an issue of finding adequately strong concessions to come to a peace agreement where everybody is happy. The difficulty of this can often lead to an agreement-free slide towards a stalemate consisting of armed (but not engaged) standoffs between government and rebel forces.

3.3. Separatist vs. Successionist conflicts.

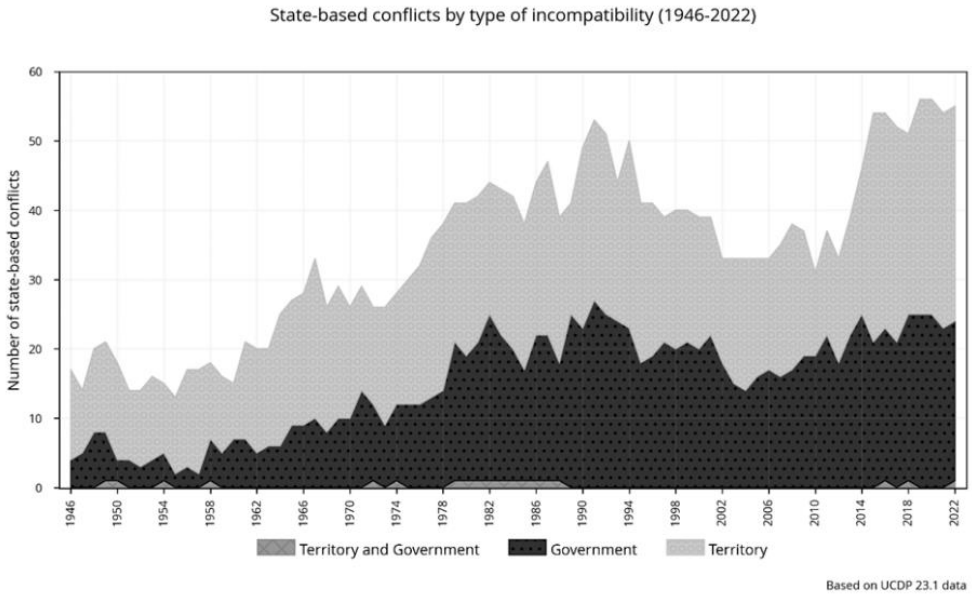

Figure 3. Types of intrastate conflict 1946-2022. Davies et al. (2023)

Separatist conflicts are a form of intrastate conflict where one region is searching for autonomy. They can also be known as *secessionist* or *territorially based* conflicts interchangeably. The so-defined

[57] J. Michael Greig, "Nipping Them in The Bud", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 2 (13 September 2013): 355.
[58] J. Michael Greig, "Nipping Them in The Bud", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 2 (13 September 2013): 355.
[59] Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, "Divide and Conquer or Divide and Concede: How Do States Respond to Internally Divided Separatists?", *The American Political Science Review* 105, no. 2 (28 April 2011): 276.

insurgents are a group limited to a particular area or region, that seek independence based on ethnic or religious differences, marginalisation from the rest of the state, or the continued struggling for independence from the destructive and haphazard way decolonisation carved up the continent[60]. In an echo of the decolonisation struggle, they are the embodiment of modern-day resistance to unwanted rule. While these can oftentimes be dismissed as idealistic movements by a small group of rebels, they can also wield unexpected amounts of power through the territorial nature of the conflict. If the region searching for autonomy is distanced far from the capital, and the state control there is weak and difficult to maintain, it can provide strength in the rebel movement[61]. Despite this low-impact security that rebels can maintain, the chances of negotiated settlements do not improve for separatists because of this, and governments can also be quite content with drawing out negotiations as the imminent threat is not there. Because of this, separatist conflicts exist in a never quite resolved stalemate "where rebels are too weak to extract concessions or obtain negotiated settlements, yet too secure to easily be eradicated by governments"[62]. This is because methods of conflict management even by the government, are different when it comes to the two, as in within separatist conflict, the territorial division and containment of violence to that area makes the conflict more manageable, coupled with the fact that separatist movements are rather limited in their goals[63].

Successionist conflicts, or *government-based* discontent, on the other hand are intrastate conflicts focused on the overthrow and changing of political regimes. When it comes to successionist conflicts they are usually shorter term, as coups generally fall one way or the other far quicker than separatist attempts to isolate from the metropolitan[64]. Successionist conflicts are about replacing a believed to be corrupt government or challenging the status quo, oftentimes resulting in civil wars or military coups, and "in centre-seeking conflicts, violence is difficult to contain and peaceful coexistence

[60] David Forniès et al., "A Report on Secessionist Movements in Africa and Human Rights Violations," CIEMEN (2022):45.
[61] J. Michael Greig, "Nipping Them in The Bud", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 2 (13 September 2013): 355.
[62] David Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan, "It Takes Two", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 4 (27 May 2009): 575.
[63] Kolby Hanson, "Live and Let Live: Explaining Long-term Truces in Separatist Conflicts", *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 3 (8 October 2020): 410.
[64] David Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan, "It Takes Two", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 4 (27 May 2009): 583.

difficult to maintain without confidence-building and disarmament measures"[65]. Because of this, successionist conflicts illicit a swift response from governments as they are directly challenged by their existence.

While they may seem easier to resolve, as the conflict is not necessarily 'big', there can be a mis-mediation of these types of lower-intensity intrastate conflicts, as "it is difficult to overcome the commitment problems and entrenched hostility that develop between belligerents the longer a conflict continues without third party assistance"[66]. Unfortunately, there is also an issue that the distribution of 3rd party involvement is not necessarily hinged on the conflicts that need it most but based on geopolitical factors. Just as for all levels of 3rd party actors there is some form of accountability, a necessity for results, and pressure from supporters and donors, it can all lead to a shirking away from engaging in certain conflicts. The promotion of peacebuilding methods show 3rd parties can be heavily intertwined in the conflict[67]. While there is a fine line for 3rd party mediators to remain neutral otherwise distrust and scepticism grows on the opposite side, there are also some authors who argue than a certain level of bias or integration with one party can improve the chances at successful mediation, for example to build trust and foster a relationship based on deeper understanding of grievances[68]. Even though 3rd parties can encourage negotiations, the nature of intrastate conflicts means that it is oftentimes more beneficial, both financially and in terms of power, to keep LICs bubbling away in the background, for the sole reason that there are few incentives, nor acceptable concessions to do so[69]. And yet, when it comes to LICs, despite what one might think about asymmetries of power, if a rebel group is not dealt with swiftly from its onset, it is likely that it will continue to fester among the countries population and result in low-intensity conflict that can draw on for decades.

[65] Kolby Hanson, "Live and Let Live: Explaining Long-term Truces in Separatist Conflicts", *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 3 (8 October 2020):410.
[66] J. Michael Greig, "Nipping Them in The Bud", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 2 (13 September 2013): 337.
[67] J. Michael Greig, "Nipping Them in The Bud", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 2 (13 September 2013): 354.
[68] J. Michael Greig, "Nipping Them in The Bud", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 2 (13 September 2013): 356.
[69] David Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan, "It Takes Two", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 4 (27 May 2009): 574.

3.4. Ending Intrastate LICs

Factionalisation is a common issue for the rebel party, as the more extreme sections strive for their own attainment of victory, which oftentimes reduces a government's willingness to engage with them. It results in drawn-out peace negotiations as the ability to make commitments in a negotiation to a settlement becomes hampered by out-of-control factions reducing credibility[70]. In fact, the state often uses the internal divisions to its own advantage and "forgo attempting to 'settle' disputes with these movements in favour of trying to divide […] and conquer the [Self Determination] movement by fighting factions individually, fostering conflict between factions"[71].

Many separatist LICs become the longest running conflicts due to the fact that one side will accept nothing less than, and the other is willing to provide almost everything, bar that freedom[72]. This is explained the fact that many separatist LICs do not officially end but slip into what has been termed as a Long-Term Truce, or what I would describe as a state of quasi-post-conflict[73]. For a conflict to have 'terminated' in a long-term (coincidental, almost) truce, "first, fighting halts or substantially declines for at least two years, marking a major transition from conflict to peace. Second, no major state or rebel force collapses, disarms, or concedes to enable this peace. Instead, states and rebels simply agree to disagree, whether as part of a de jure ceasefire or a de facto change in posture"[74]. With multiple factions all wanting different versions of the same end goal, and with a tiring population and unrelenting primary parties, the devolution into this state of quasi-post-conflict almost seems to happen without much notice. Examples of the occurrence of long-term truces include Nagaland in India, Transnistria in Moldova and the Casamance region of Senegal (and case study later on), where "governments and rebels stopped fighting without major forces on either side either

[70] Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, "Divide and Conquer or Divide and Concede: How Do States Respond to Internally Divided Separatists?", *The American Political Science Review* 105, no. 2 (28 April 2011): 275.
[71] Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, "Divide and Conquer or Divide and Concede: How Do States Respond to Internally Divided Separatists?", *The American Political Science Review* 105, no. 2 (28 April 2011): 275-276.
[72] Professor Paul Diedhiou (University of Ziguinchor), interview with author, Ziguinchor, Senegal. 26th January 2024
[73] Kolby Hanson, "Live and Let Live: Explaining Long-term Truces in Separatist Conflicts", *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 3 (8 October 2020).
[74] Kolby Hanson, "Live and Let Live: Explaining Long-term Truces in Separatist Conflicts", *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 3 (8 October 2020): 395.

side collapsing, disarming, or conceding"[75]. Once again, the distinction between separatist and successionist can be seen to have an effect on the duration and intensity of conflicts. Hanson's coding of long-term truces does ignore certain conflicts based on technicality, that I would still quantify as being in a quasi-post-conflict conflict, therefore there are distinctions between the two. In my opinion, the existence of physical truces, agreements or discussions inferring an official end to the conflict does not mean that it is upheld, and this is what comprises a lot of the variations that make separatist conflicts so distinct. Further categorisation of these conflicts can vary between accounts, however, it can be argued that it is in the quasi-post-conflict where civil society becomes a dominant actor, after the political actors both international and state have all but retired from the third-party scene.

[75] Kolby Hanson, "Live and Let Live: Explaining Long-term Truces in Separatist Conflicts", *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 3 (8 October 2020): 396.

Part I Conclusion.

The aim of this section of the thesis was, through the three chapters, to provide the basis for the quantitative analysis of 3rd party mediation in the following part. Peacebuilding as a concept is not inherently bad, however the current Western liberal framework that it feeds off is reminiscent of past times. As a result of this continued modus operandi, the accusation and belief that 3rd party interests are promoted above all else when it comes to peacebuilding continues to dominate the field[76]. It is understandable that such a complex concept such as peacebuilding should have some flaws, however, that the flaws are dictated by Western self-interest can, and should be, changed.

The inclusion of civil society is a start; however, it is still accused of being a far too top-down approach of going in and dictating what has to be done, and then using civil society to achieve it. The distinction of actors can help to clarify the complicated world of conflict management, with multitudes of actors all engaging in their own worlds of conflict resolution. The politicised 3rd party involvement in conflict management can incentivise governments to actively participate in negotiations and is often done due to the stakes involved for that external actor. On the other hand, the non-political can engage the grassroots movements to a degree, but with this comes the battle for support and funding and the complacency of civil society. Finally, the focus on intrastate LICs is the final step to separate the wood from the trees. Using the information above to analyse the quantitative aspects of conflict in the next part, both the qualitative and quantitative data will come together to form my argument that the current belief in the universal nature of peacebuilding, as well as 3rd party intervention as a whole, was not created nor adjusted for the nuances of LIC, especially in separatist conflicts.

[76] Ian S. Spears, "The False Promise of Peacebuilding", International Journal (Toronto) 67, no. 2 (1 June 2012): 300.

Part II

Chapter 1. The Uppsala Conflict Data Programme

The Swedish university of Uppsala has been conducting studies on conflict since the 1980s, and as a result, can be described as one of the leading authorities of the coding and compiling of conflicts globally[77]. Its interactive and up to date website shows all available conflict knowledge for intra and interstate wars within a country, listing information about any and every conflict with incredible detail. However, the true crowning glory of the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP) is the numerous sets of data comprising all distinct aspects of conflict. In terms of their methodology, there is a general basis that requires a conflict to contain within a year at least 25 related deaths to be included in any database as an armed conflict. This is the standard for all of the UCDPs datasets[78].

The UCDP has some of the most comprehensive datasets when it comes to LICs, as intensity generally comprises part of larger datasets of worldwide armed conflicts. The particular dataset that will be analysed here, is the 'Managing Intrastate low-intensity conflict', (MILC). Notably, the data is coded through *events,* meaning times where a 3rd party intervened, as opposed to being simply coded through year and corresponding actor's involvement. Most important to clarify is their distinction of 3rd party, as an actor "that is involved in either helping the warring parties to regulate the incompatibility, or to change conflict behaviour or to regulate other conflict issues, and thus works as an intermediary between the primary parties to the conflict"[79]. Incompatibility is the term used to distinguish the type of intrastate conflict, depending on whether the conflict is one of government or territory, i.e., succession or secession. By analysing the MILC dataset through many different angles, filters, and functions, it was possible to isolate the necessary data from the plethora of information recorded for each coded mediation attempt. The results of the analysis here will also be applicable

[77] "About UCDP - Uppsala University", 13 March 2024, https://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/about-ucdp/.
[78] "UCDP Methodology - Uppsala University", 13 February 2024, https://www.uu.se/en/department/peace-and-conflict-research/research/ucdp/ucdp-methodology.
[79] Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, no. 1 (17 March 2009): 61.

into the case study of the Casamance in part III. The benefit of having experienced the quasi-post-conflict environment of a low-intensity separatist conflict first hand helps to give substance to each of the conflicts and mediation attempts coded within these databases, especially to remember that while they may not have the most damaging or obvious immediate effects of war, there is still a legacy from these conflicts that continues in the daily lives of all those involved.

1.1 Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Conflict

The MILC is described as having been created "to follow low-intensity intrastate armed conflicts until they either escalate to civil war or are terminated, and to map conflict management activities undertaken by third parties"[80], the data for which spans from 1993-2004. Thanks to Melander et al., who compiled and wrote the accompanying literature to the MILC dataset we can already isolate certain facts and conclusions from different comparisons. They noted that the middle east has the most recorded 3rd party involvement "relative to the number of active conflict dyads", whereas Africa falls short of relative amounts of third-party intervention, given the large number of conflicts it has experienced[81]. What is worth keeping in mind however is that they state that African conflicts, because many did not escalate into a full-blown war, were responsive to 3rd party mediation attempts in the low intensity while the Middle East was not receptive to similar attempts[82]. I would also add that it cannot be solely due to the 3rd party mediation but also the nature of intrastate conflicts. When one compared the power and strength of both the governments and insurgents of Middle Eastern states to many in Africa the disparity is clear enough. Nevertheless, the importance of this dataset is in the fact that it is led by the number of 3rd party mediation attempts.

The data set also includes actors on all levels of 3rd party conflict, the macro-, meso- and micro- have been distinguished as single or group of 'states', single or group of 'IGO' and 'other'. It is then

[80] Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, no. 1 (17 March 2009): 59.
[81] Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, no. 1 (17 March 2009): 58.
[82] Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, no. 1 (17 March 2009): 59.

further broken down into whether it also falls under the category of 'P5', a 'neighbouring state', the 'UN' or and 'IGO'[83]. Each country has a specific code that represents it universally, through the Gleditsch/Ward Identification system[84]. Not only countries, but common organisations, regional or subregional, and frequent NGOs are also coded. Each dyad also has its own unique code that is translatable across the datasets. There then follows "nine different types of third-party measures: indirect, direct, unclear, and bilateral talks; good offices; arbitration; fact-finding missions; permanent observers; and peacekeeping operations"[85]. In terms of talks, indirect talks are the form of intermediary role where information is passed from one side to the other. Direct talks are between both sides of the conflict with a 3rd party present. Bilateral talks are one side of the conflict with a 3rd party, which do not include negotiations[86].

[83] Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85.
[84] Frida Möller and Birger Heldt, "codebook for the dataset Managing Intrastate Low-Level Conflict (MILC)" *Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP), Department of peace and conflict research* Uppsala University (September 2007):7.
[85] Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, no. 1 (17 March 2009): 61.
[86] Frida Möller and Birger Heldt, "codebook for the dataset Managing Intrastate Low-Level Conflict (MILC)" *Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP), Department of peace and conflict research* Uppsala University (September 2007):9.

Chapter 2. Hypotheses and Analysis

2.1. Introduction

The two figures below break down the 3472 recordings of mediation attempts in the MILC into a simple format. This encompasses the category of mediator; 'Single State', 'Group of States etc., shown here with the number of interventions that were territorially based (i.e., separatist), what the percentage of the total number of times that category of 3rd party mediator was present in mediation attempts, the percentage each category makes up of the total mediation attempts for each incompatibility, the same for the governmental (or successionist) based conflicts globally, as well as the overall total % that the category makes up[87]. This is to make it clearer to see the global averages. The same has then been worked out for Africa, with much smaller numbers, especially on the territorial front. From these we can easily see some distinguishing features of LICs in Africa (see appendix figure 1. for calculations). For example, mediation attempts occur far less in territorial conflicts in Africa. As figure 6. further below shows, there is not an extortionately significant difference between the number of conflicts in Africa categorised either as separatist or successionist for the percentages to be explained away through this. In Africa, single states are less frequent mediators in conflicts overall, but when present, are involved 90% of the time in government-based incompatibilities compared with only 31% globally in the time period. A small increase in both 'group of states' and 'single IGOs' can be seen in Africa compared to worldwide, as well as a larger increase in the 'other' category, which includes faith-based organisations, human rights organisations, civil society and, frequently in Africa, charismatic and pan-African (former-) presidents such as Nelson Mandela or Julius Nyerere. Almost half of the global total of the category other was present in African mediation. It is good to keep these contrasts in the back of one's mind when going through the rest of the data, as these are the numbers with which other percentages are calculated.

[87] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/

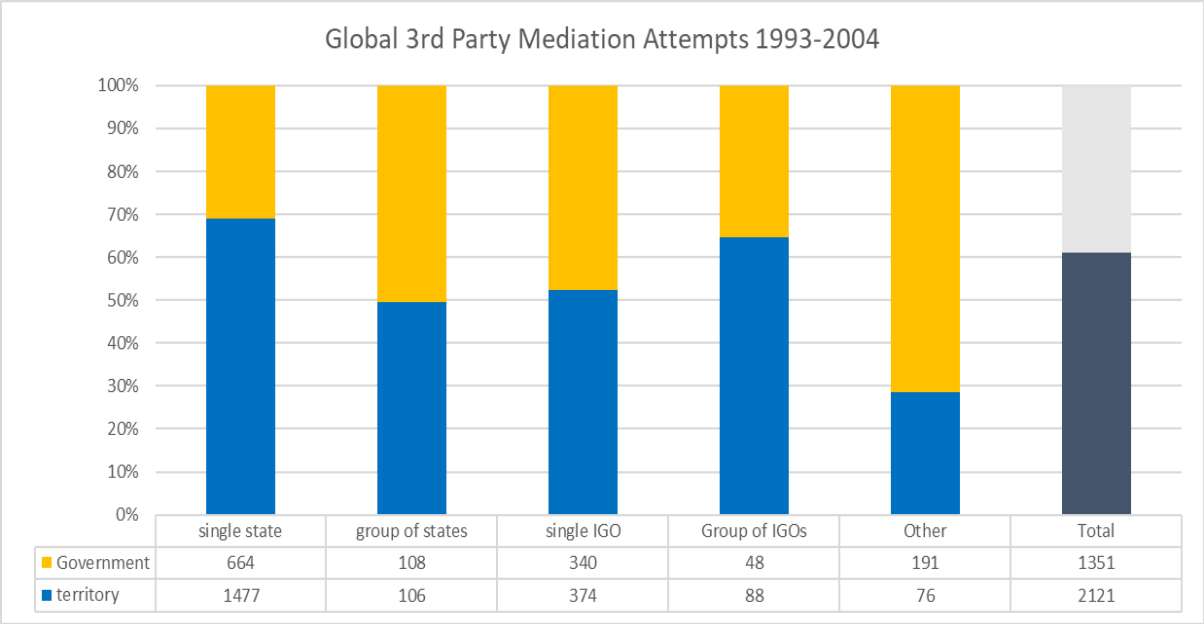

Figure 4. Mediation attempts by actor 1993-2004. Compiled from the MIILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009).

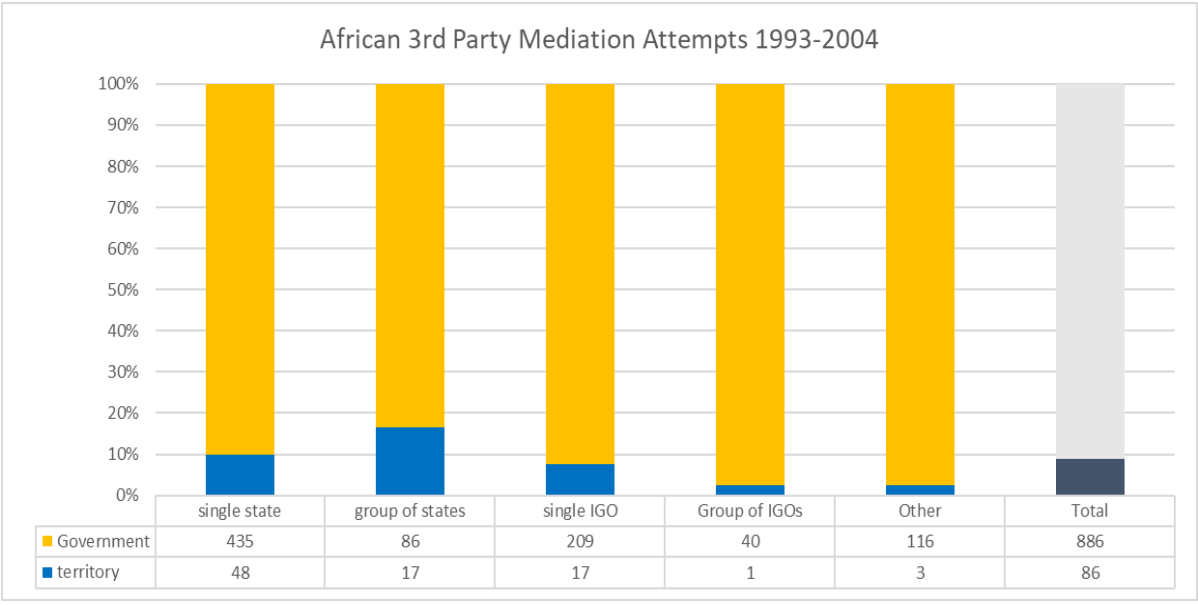

Figure 5. Mediation attempts by actor and category 1993-2004. Compiled from the MIILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009).

The global aspect in this case is incredibly interesting, as it shows us that 53% of all the recorded instances of all 3rd party mediation within the dyads were in separatist conflicts, whereas in Africa it only accounts for 8% of total mediation (see table 1 Appendix)[88]. An important caveat here is to remember is that there were multiple long running conflicts elsewhere in the world, such as the Yugoslav wars as well as continued Israeli-Palestinian conflicts (counted as a territorial dispute in this dataset), which garnered a lot of international 3rd party mediation attempts and can explain away part of the extreme difference between African and global trends for territorial resolution attempts within the decade[89]

2.2.1. Hypothesis One

H1: There is a lack of urgency within African separatist conflicts, accounting for the low levels of mediation on the continent.

	Africa		*Global*	
	Government	Territory	Government	Territory
No. of related mediation	902	87	1351	2121
No. of related conflicts	17	11	34	33
Average no. per conflict	53	8	40	64

Figure 6. Average mediation attempts for governmental (successionist) and territorial (separatist) conflicts. Compiled from the MIILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009).

A simple way to portray the stark difference in interest or urgency in separatist conflict is through the table in figure 6 above. Here it can clearly be seen that in terms of the low-intensity data between 1993-2004, territorial conflicts received an average of 8 mediation attempts per dyad in Africa, whereas globally, the average number of mediation attempts per dyad was 64. In contrast, governmental conflicts in Africa had an average of 53 recorded 3rd party involved mediation attempts

[88] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[89] Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, no. 1 (17 March 2009): 59.

compared to the global average of 40 per dyadic conflict[90]. While there was a slightly higher number of successionist conflicts in Africa compared to separatist ones during the timeframe, as well as compared to the global average of essentially 50/50, the difference is greatly disproportionate. This can be due to the lack of belief or conviction in the strength of African rebel groups. This can be seen in how "unlike in the 1970s when foreign military interventions were rampant in Africa, the 1990s witnessed a much-reduced interest in African conflicts" [91], and from the above data, this neglected interest presented itself in the separatist conflicts especially.

Possible reasons for this could be that the inherent threat from rebel groups in far flung extremities of the country is not on the same level as the imminent challenge to government present in successionist conflicts. This can be a state level consensus, but also on the international level the consensus of liberal peacebuilding policymakers and state officials has deemed it as such. As previously noted, rebel attempts to succeed the government challenge the status quo in ways that separatist conflicts do not immediately do, which also challenges the international world order to a level where intervention can be deemed necessary. Depending on the strength of the State, the necessity for international intervention can be reduced. If the State is able to keep rebel challenges as low intensity and retain a steady reign over the majority of the nation, then there is little for the international community within a peacebuilding agenda to do.

[90] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[91] Osita Agbu, *West Africa's Trouble Spots and The Imperative for Peace-Building*, (Dakar, Senegal: Codesria, 2006): 82.

2.2.2. Hypothesis Two

H2: Low-intensity conflict in Africa invites more involvement from actors with 'high stakes involved', namely post-colonial and neighbouring states.

Within the MILC database, while the overall categories are single/group of 'States', 'IGOs' and 'other', there is also a section that codes important distinctions within the umbrella terms. These are whether or not the state or group of states coded includes a member of the 'P5 Security Council', whether or not the state or group of states coded were 'Neighbouring States' to the conflict dyad, as well as whether the IGO involved was the UN or not[92].

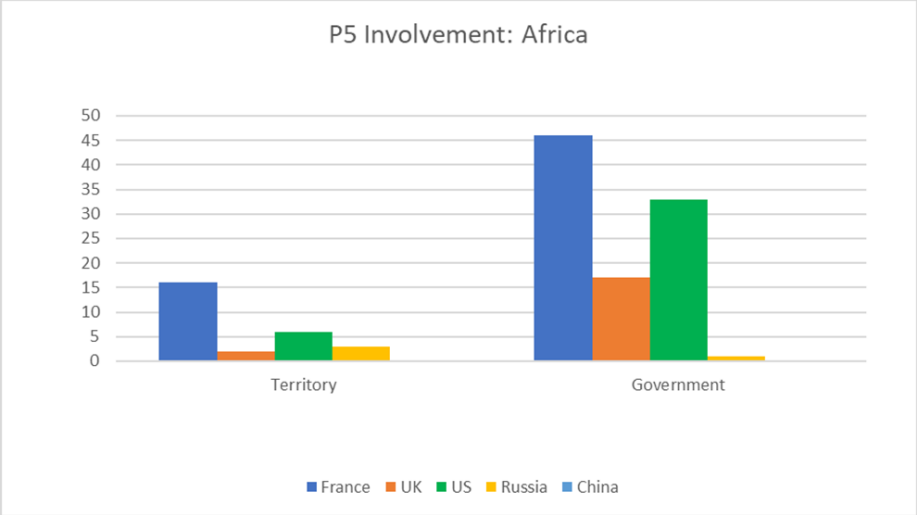

Figure 7. P5 State involvement in Africa based on type of conflict. Compiled from the MIILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009).

The P5 is comprised of the two main ex-colonial powers, France and the UK, the powerhouse of the US, as well as China and Russia. It is worth noting that the latter two operated a policy of non-involvement over the years in Africa until recently[93]. The above data could be extracted from the MILC dataset.

[92] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[93] See Leonid Issaev, Alisa Shishkina, and Yakov Liokumovich, "Perceptions of Russia's 'Return' to Africa: Views from West Africa," South African Journal of International Affairs 29, no. 4 (November 8, 2022):425-44. https://doi.org/10.1080/10220461.2022.2139289.

Within the P5 distinction it is then possible to work out the percentage that each member state was involved in a mediation effort by using their individual country codes to distinguish how often they occur within the P5 category.

Unsurprisingly, France took up 53% of the P5 category in Africa but was also active in a much higher proportion of territorial (or separatist based) conflicts (figure 7.)[94]. The next most invested P5 state in mediation of African conflicts was the US, taking 31% of the coding, however, 91% of that was government based. The UK (with the exception of one instance of Russian state involvement) rounded off the P5 collection with 16% of the total security council member's mediation attempts[95]. Compared to the other P5 states, where the numbers run in the late 80-100% range for Government based incompatibilities, France cuts in at only 74% (Figure 2. Appendix). Here it is possible to see that there is at least some correlation between the old colonial powers' involvement in Africa and higher stakes. France has a strong reputation for wanting to retain a grip on its old colonies and the vested interests that it has in West Africa particularly, could also explain the much larger concentration of territorial conflicts than its P5 counterparts.

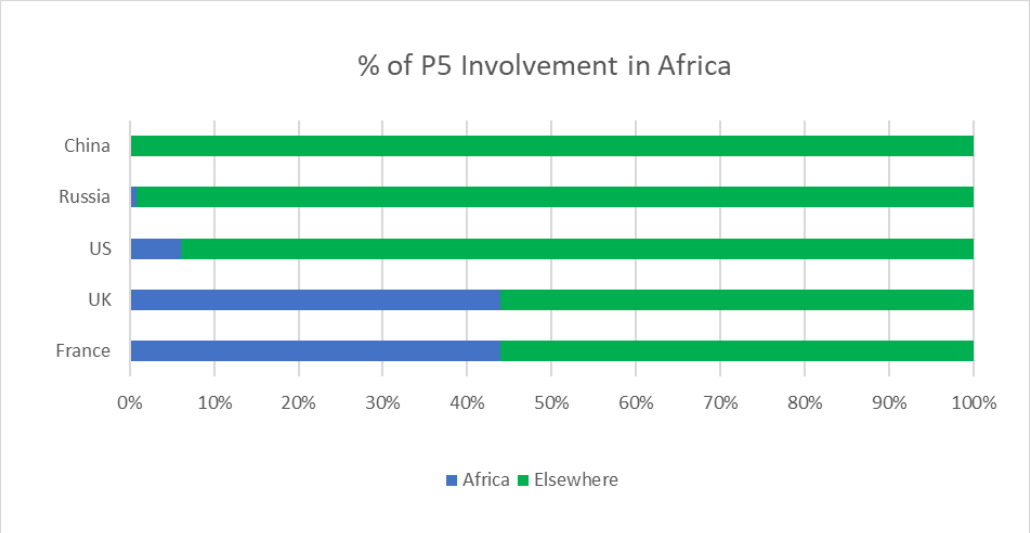

Figure 8. Percentage of total mediation by notable actors. Compiled from the MIILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009).

[94] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[95] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/

However, while at face value it would appear that France was the most active, especially compared to the UK, the percentage of African conflicts within the two ex-colonial powers' total mediation attempts globally was identical, sitting at 44%, while, despite being more active in Africa than the UK, US involvement only accounted for around 6% of their global total[96]. Therefore, while France was the most active P5 member involved in African LICs, which can be linked to the high stakes that are involved, both the old colonial powers had a far higher proportion of interventions in Africa compared to elsewhere[97]. Globally the US was involved in a huge and disproportionate number of conflicts compared to its fellow P5 members, the sheer volume of which would explain a reason for why the US presents as more active in African conflicts than the UK despite not being a former colonial state. As an aside, Russia has always stayed out of African conflicts from a political sense, however the deployment of Wagner and the Private Military Companies that have been spreading across the continent have been fostering Russian interests in the last decade and making good use of the blunders of the EU and P5 members to do so[98].

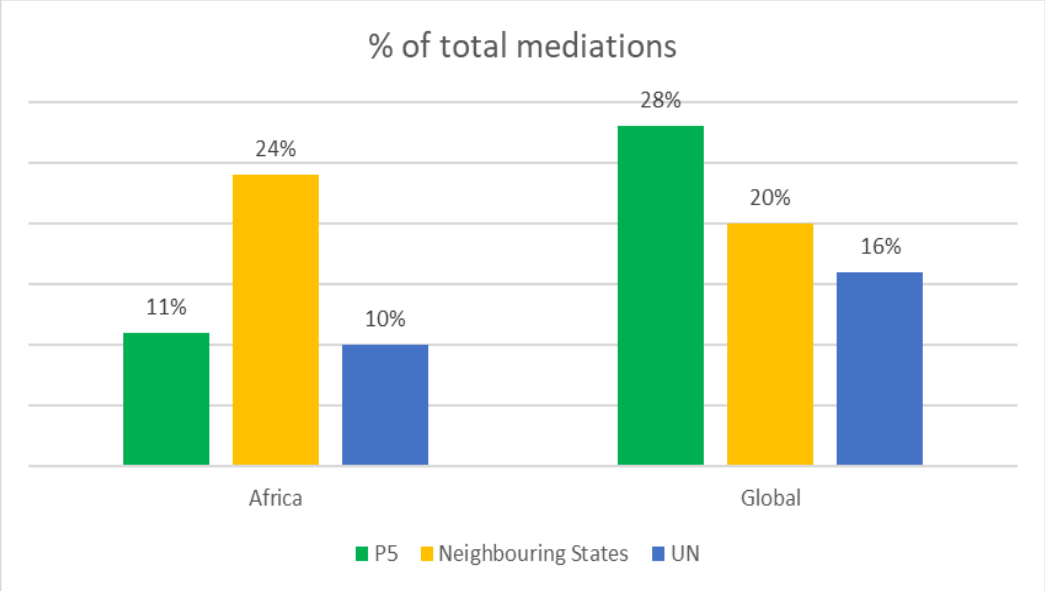

Figure 9.Specific actors as a percentage of total mediations 1993-2004. Compiled from the MIILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009).

[96] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[97] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[98] See Michael Amoah, "Private Military Companies, Foreign Legions and Counterterrorism in Mali and Central African Republic," Alternatives: Global, Local, Political, (February 14, 2023), or Leonid Issaev, Alisa Shishkina, and Yakov Liokumovich, "Perceptions of Russia's 'Return' to Africa: Views from West Africa," South African Journal of International Affairs 29, no. 4 (November 8, 2022): 425–44.

While when one isolates the data surrounding P5 states it can be argued that there is a high proportion of neo-colonial involvement from both France and the UK, it is in fact not the case. While both countries had a far higher proportion of African interventions overall, figure 9. shows that actually, the P5 was far below the world average in terms of mediation. In Africa one or more states of the P5 was responsible for around 11% of total 3rd party mediation, compared to 28% globally[99]. In fact, the P5 had the most notable difference between Africa and the global trend. An additional drop in UN involvement compared to globally resulted in a (minimal) increase in neighbouring states, making them the most invested as a definitive category. With UN involvement lower in Africa, at 10% of total mediations, there can be seen to be a gap that needs to be filled, and Neighbouring states were arguably the main actor left.

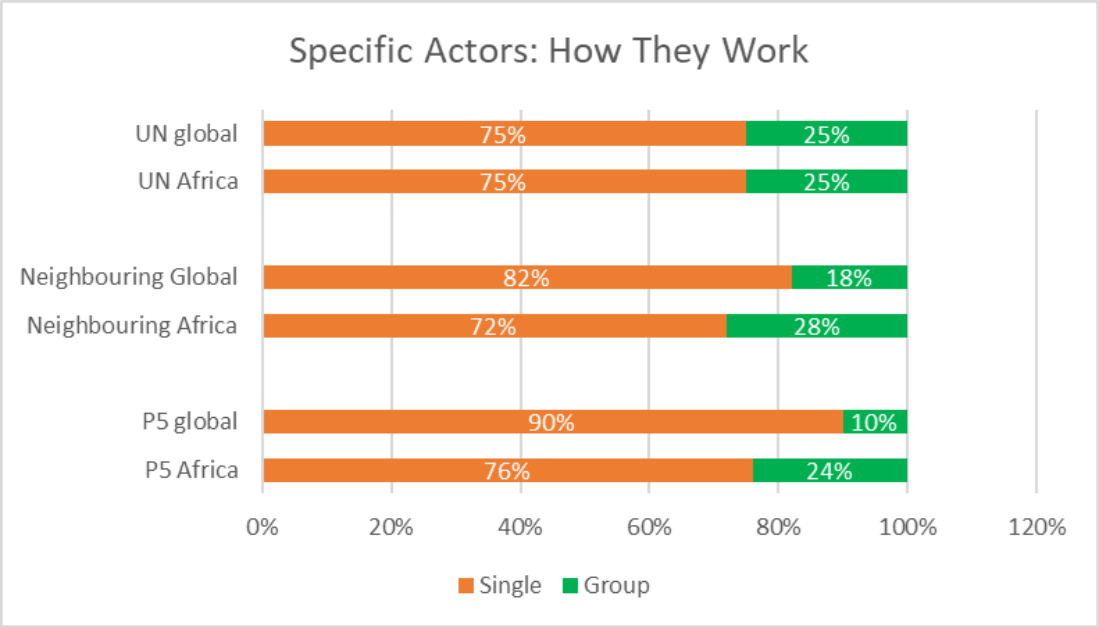

Figure 10. Specific, notable actors, and the percentage of group vs single mediation attempts 1993-2004. Compiled from the MIILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009).

Another interesting discovery from analysing the data, displayed in figure 10., showed that neighbouring states and P5 states were much more inclined to engage in 3rd party mediation as part of a collective attempt compared to globally. The P5 especially had the most significant difference to the

[99] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/

global trend, while neighbouring states had the highest overall percentage of group mediation. A possible reason for this could be in order to mitigate some of the sentiments of neo-colonialism or *mission civilisatrice* that recipient countries could feel against Western states. Working in a group can also strengthen the capacity and power behind a mediation attempt, especially if there is one or more neighbouring state involved.

	P5		Neighbouring States	
% of Category	Single State	Group of States	Single State	Group of States
Africa	16%	25%	33%	66%
Global	38%	47%	24%	57%

Figure 11. P5 and Neighbouring States as a Percentage of Category. Compiled from the MIILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009).

It is also important to know what proportion of the category each actor makes up. Through this we can really see the increase of the work of neighbouring states in Africa compared to the global average (Figure 11.). 'Neighbouring states' working alone make up 33% of the 'single state' category in Africa, compared to only 24% globally, and in 'group of states', they made up 66% of the category, while globally it is only 57%. African percentages for the P5 remained lower than the global average[100]. The strong representation of neighbouring states in Africa compared to the global trend can also be explained by the stakes and interests for those involved.

Refugee crises as a result of conflict are endemic in Africa, with the majority of people in conflicts fleeing to neighbouring states (and then the old colonial powers), flooding countries with thousands of people in need of food and shelter. Additionally, it is not just the displaced that seek refuge within the borders of neighbouring states, but also rebel groups, a situation that can lead to tensions at government levels. It is for that reason, that there is the assumption that they would be more active in African conflicts, as well as the low UN engagement.

[100] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/

2.2.4. Hypothesis three

The UN engages the most with governments, corresponding to the liberal peacebuilding framework.

The purpose of this hypothesis is to see not just the frequency of each category's mediation attempts in Africa, but also with which primary party actor they are engaging, to gain a deeper understanding of the way each level works. The assumption here is that while all actors would have engaged the most with the government sides of warring parties, which is unsurprising given that the other side are the rebel branded side. However, the UN would be by far the most frequent mediator engaging with the government when coded in its attempts.

In Africa, when each actor was involved, they engaged either with each party individually, together, or were involved in an activity that involved neither side. In figure 12., by separating these categories, it can be seen that around 65% of all the UN's mediation attempts were solely with the government[101]. The other four categories were lower but not too disparate to the UN, however, the category of other IGOs was the furthest below that of its international counterpart at 48%[102].

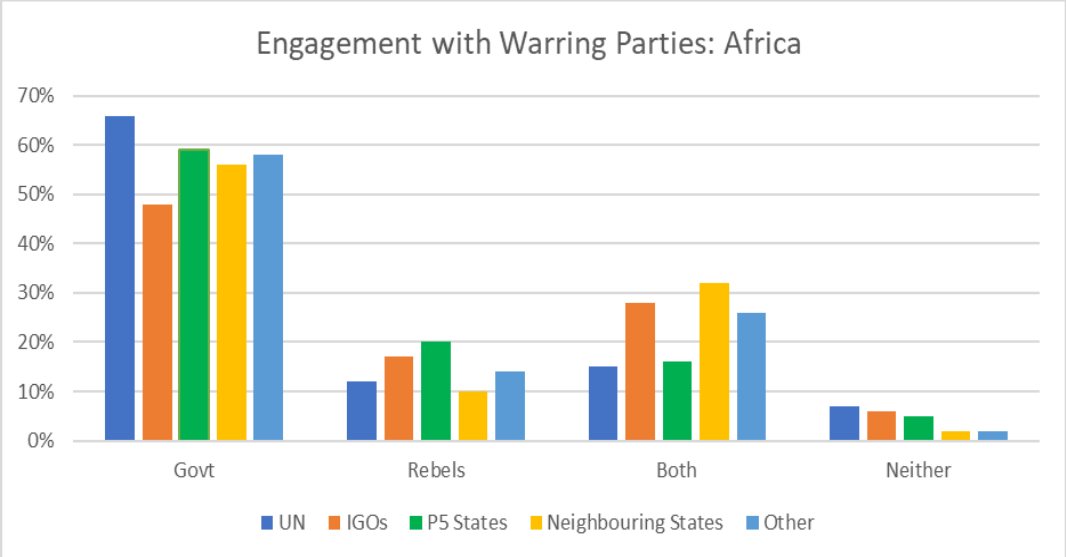

Figure 12. All Actors and Corresponding Warring Party: Africa. Compiled from the MIILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009).

[101] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[102] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/

The majority of this gap was made up by the other IGOs being far more engaged in talks where both parties were present, 28% of the time compared to the UN's 15%[103]. Somewhat surprisingly, the P5 in all of its talks in Africa was the most active in mediation attempts involving only the rebel party, at 20% to the IGOs 17%, and subsequent lower frequencies[104]. In terms of mediation between the two warring parties, the UN was the least engaged, closely followed by the P5 states (namely of course the US, UK, and France)[105]. An explanation for this can be seen through the liberal peacebuilding agenda of promoting stable democracy and helping states in the strengthening of their institutions in order to resist against (especially when it comes to the UN) predominantly successionist conflicts, which, as can be seen above, prove more of a challenge to the global status quo[106].

When it comes to resolution attempts that involved neither of the warring parties, the numbers correspond to the idea that the higher-level actors would have more ability to conduct fact finding, permanent observer or peacekeeping missions compared to less powerful neighbouring states and civil society, or religious organisations would be able to. It is also not a huge stretch that these actors can wield more power interfering in African states alone as there would be less pushback compared to other Western or strong Asian states for example.

In terms of the global trend, it is a different picture. Worldwide, when the UN intervened it was only 44% of the time that mediation attempts were directed at the government alone[107]. A far larger jump is the over twice as many instances where the UN was mediating between both parties globally compared to in Africa, yet with only a 7% increase in singular mediations with rebel groups[108].

[103] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[104] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[105] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[106] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[107] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[108] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/

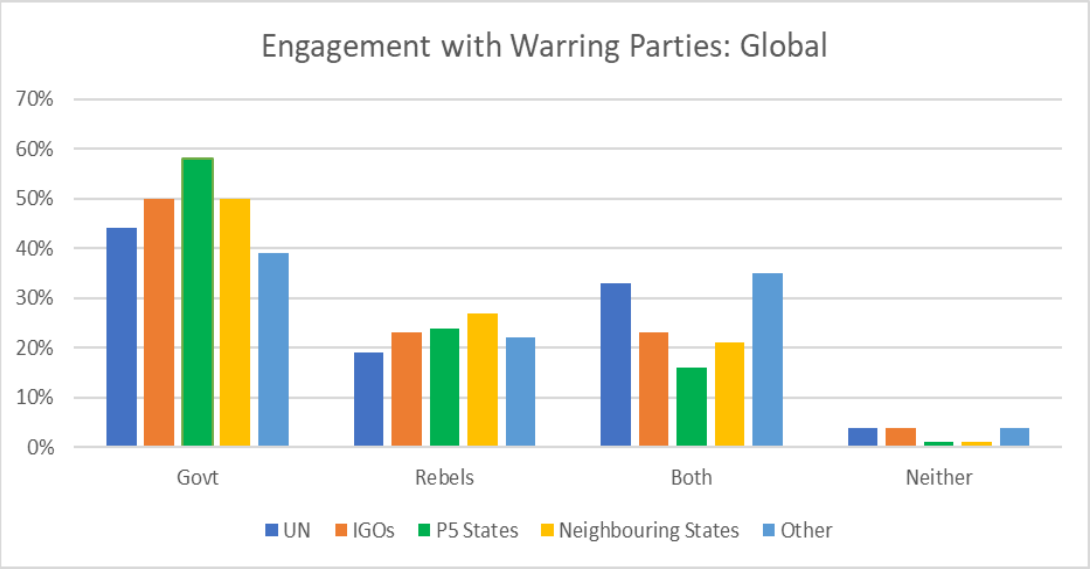

Figure 13. All Actors and Corresponding Warring Party: Global. Compiled from the MIILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009).

This shows that while the UN generally does not engage with rebel groups as much as other 3rd party actors, the limited amount of dual mediation attempts in Africa compared to globally can be put on the number of 'weak' states present in Africa in the late 90s early 2000s and the Western push to strengthen the democratic capacities of the continent. Additionally, minimal engagement with bringing rebel groups to the table can also be due to a lack of conviction in the power/threat of the African rebel groups, especially in LICs contexts[109], and the power it gives them to be acknowledged as such[110].

In terms of total mediation attempts, the UN's limited involvement in LICs in Africa compared to globally paints a different picture of the actual mediation landscape of the conflicts in Africa. Looking at it from the other angle, figure 14 shows each receiving warring party and the percentage of each actor that makes it up. Here it is possible to see the minimal UN engagement from H2 represented through the small percentages it made up of each category[111].

[109] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[110] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
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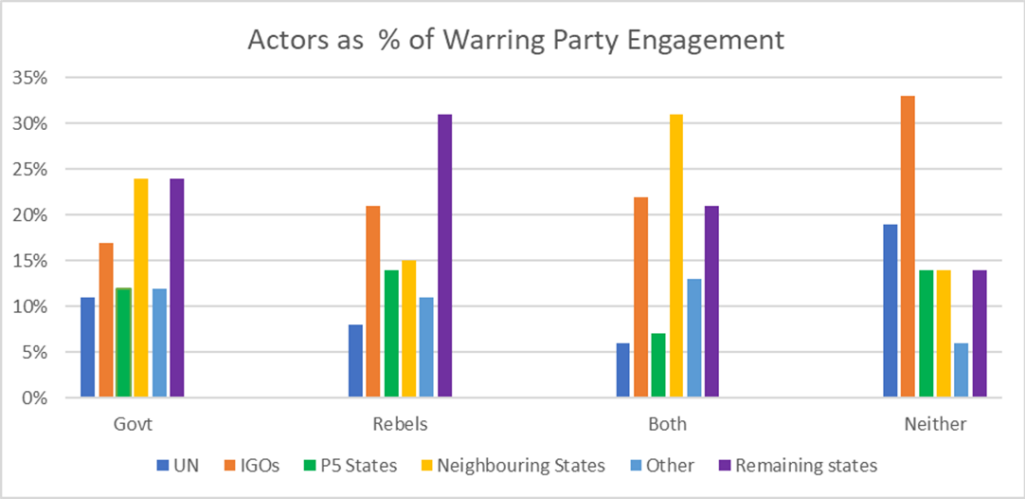

Figure 14. Total actors as a percentage of each warring party: Africa. Compiled from the MILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009)

The most active actor in the category of external intervention with no collaboration with either warring party was other IGOs, making up 33% of those activities such as the fact-finding missions and operations[112]. In terms of government-based mediations, neighbouring states and other states made up the highest percentage of that mediation, each representing just under a quarter of all mediation attempts[113]. Neighbouring states were also the most active in facilitating talks involving both sides of the conflict, with 31% of all those mediation attempts being coded as having at least one neighbouring state as a 3rd party actor[114]. This can once again be attributed to the stakes that are encountered by states that border conflict, such as large refugee crises, not to mention the very arbitrary nature of borders to many Africans, which are transcended by shared histories and ethnicities. Finally, the elevated level of mediation attempts with only rebels by other IGOs is unexpected in terms of percentage of total mediations within the category, however, it is pretty much on par with IGO's overall mediation attempts across the warring parties[115].

[112] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[113] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[114] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[115] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/

Chapter 3. Discussion

3.1. Data Conclusions

The main takeaways from the above data collection are as follows:

- Separatist conflict receives less overall mediation attempts from 3rd parties in Africa.
- African neighbouring states facilitated the majority of the mediation attempts involving both warring parties.
- The UN and the P5 actually intervened less in Africa than the global average.
- Neighbouring states play a larger role in African mediation than elsewhere.

The analysis of the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme has produced some expected results, as well as others that were not expected. In hypothesis 1, the understanding that the inherent threat of African rebels was less than that of other separatist movements across the world was visible through analysing of the MILC database. It helped to prove that separatist conflicts in Africa are overall simply less mediated, and especially compared to the global average, the difference is startling. Whereas separatist conflicts actually received more than 60% of the global mediation coded, in Africa it accounted for only 9% of Mediation attempts[116]. Given that there were only 17 successionist conflicts to the 11 separatist ones, the total number of mediation attempts for both was hugely unequal. Perhaps because none of the separatist conflicts in Africa ever developed into high-intensity conflicts there was less pressure to react, or perhaps because there is a general belief that separatist conflicts, while costly and an 'inconvenience' are often able to be handled within the country. What is more, the acceptance of 3rd party involvement cements at least some degree of legitimacy to the rebel group[117]. The relatively new post-colonial status of the nascent African states would have put more fear in the challenge to government in Africa, especially at up to three decades since independence, when the

[116] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[117] Molly M. Melin and Isak Svensson, "Incentives for Talking: Accepting Mediation in International and Civil Wars", *International Interactions* 35, no. 3 (28 August 2009): 254.

first post-colonial, Western-aligning leaders were being replaced with staunch pan-Africanists. This is not to say that the long-term truces and the slip into quasi-post-conflict environments do not still receive 3rd party mediation attempts. In fact, I would argue that this is where the majority of (I)NGO and CSO efforts are concentrated, however they are not as frequently coded in the MILC dataset, and only large international ones can be found, such as Amnesty International or the community of St Egidio. This also goes to show that while the environment can be flooded by NGOs, they are not considered to be there for conflict mediation.

When it comes to the second hypothesis the results were partially as expected. Less UN involvement in Africa compared to globally can be attributed to the lack of urgency of LICs and reduced priority when analysed against the peacebuilding framework. Therefore, 3rd party actors those of which have high stakes in African LICs are more present than the average global trend. This applies to neighbouring states, and France as a post-colonial P5 member state, but not the UK. France has always been more active in Africa than the United Kingdom since colonial times and post-colonially has always kept one hand in the pie so to speak[118]. France was also the most engaged in terms of separatist conflicts, also most likely stemming from the stakes that France has in West Africa's natural resources and the necessity of stable government in separatist conflicts, in order to make use of the special relationship that France holds with its ex-colonial states. In terms of Neighbouring states, the elevated levels of involvement compared to the global trend is not surprising.

Examples from across West Africa have proven that "the international community is slowly but surely retreating from being entangled in the intra-state conflicts occurring with alacrity in the West African sub-region [and] the onus therefore lies with member states"[119]. Especially given the nascency of the AU and capacity of the preceding Organisation of African Union (OAU). Nowadays, the AU is geared towards conflict resolution through multiple commissions, mechanisms, and systems for conflict management, but back in the early 2000s it was still finding its footing in terms of regional,

[118] Nathaniel Powell, "Battling Instability? The Recurring Logic of French Military Interventions in Africa," *African Security* 10, no. 1 (January 7, 2017): 49.
[119] Osita Agbu, *West Africa's Trouble Spots and The Imperative for Peace-Building*, (Dakar, Senegal: Codesria, 2006):84.

inter-governmental, organisation[120]. Similarly, ECOWAS as another IGO and sub-regional body, while being one of the most established of the RECs in Africa, has also experienced problems with engaging its mechanisms to put towards actively meditating in conflicts[121]. Therefore, when African nations were challenged by neighbouring conflicts and the knock-on effects of this such as the aforementioned increase in displaced refugees, rise in illicit trading across borders and governmental hostilities caused because of it, the high percentage of mediation attempts make sense. Today, the UN and AU participate annually in consultative meetings between the two peacebuilding departments where they continue to underline the necessity of improving peacebuilding to be a process that is undertaken by the entirety of society (with special attention paid to women and the youth), as well as strengthening national capacity to manage as the primary actor in peacebuilding[122].

Finally, the warring party that the 3rd party actor engaged with brings this section to a rounded end. Simply comparing frequency and iteration of actor can only get one so far in terms of understanding the motivations behind the coded mediation endeavour. While in this large of a dataset discovering the motivation for each individual actor is not possible, it is possible to read between the lines by looking at who is being engaged with the most by each actor. That the UN engages when involved a higher percentage of the time only with the government and less with rebel groups and in getting the two parties together is neither a coincidence nor is it a surprise. The UN agenda of Western liberal peace can be seen through its engagement with governments the majority of the time. However, to reiterate a note from earlier in the paper, while the goal is to secure institutions and democracy, according to the UN they get involved "at the request of concerned governments"[123], which would explain the higher proportion of government-based mediations. The disparity between the UN's

[120] Devon Curtis, 'Introduction; The Contested Politics of Peacebuilding in Africa', in: *Peacebuilding, Power, and Politics in Africa* ed. Devon Curtis and Gwinyayi A Dzinesa. (United States: Ohio University Press 2012): 8
[121] See Kwesi Aning and Fiifi Edu-Afful, "African Agency in R2P: Interventions by AU and ECOWAS in Mali, Cote Ivoire, and Libya," *International Studies Review* 18, no. 1 (March 1, 2016):1.
[122] Abdi Mahamoud Eybe et al., "Joint Statement of the 6th Informal Annual Consultative Meeting Between the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (UN PBC), 13 November 2023," *African Union Commission*, (November 13, 2023): 1.
[123] United Nations. "United Nations Peacebuilding Commission Country and Regional Engagements," (2023):2.

engagement with both parties is only quite so evident in Africa where just 15% of the time the UN was involved in talks between both parties compared to the global 33%[124].

3.2. Constraints to the database.

This analysis is unfortunately not as complete as it should be and there are several reasons for that. The first is that the database is rather dated and given that conflicts in Africa as well as globally are unique, the results from the analysis should be taken as sweeping understandings made from analysis of a slice of the history of conflicts on the continent and globally. The dataset is applicable to the Casamance conflict for example as parts of the conflict is coded. As can be seen with the Casamance, conflicts here are not necessarily complete, and can have been mediated in completely different ways for decades before the coding began. Additionally, during that time frame, due to the urgency and threat they posed; "attention by extra-continental powers was riveted on the geo-strategically explosive situations in the Persian Gulf and the Balkans"[125]. While they count as global outliers, resulting in a much higher push elsewhere in the world in the period, they cannot be removed as they are not true outliers and represent the varied nature of conflicts.

[124] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[125]Osita Agbu, *West Africa's Trouble Spots and The Imperative for Peace-Building*, (Dakar, Senegal: Codesria, 2006):82-83.

Part III

Chapter 1. Case study: Casamance

1.1 Historical Framework.

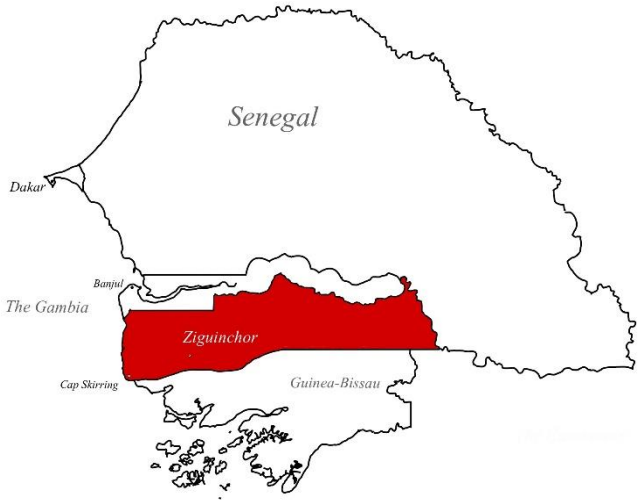

Figure 15. Map of Senegal and the Casamance, Author's Drawing (2024), based of Partners Global (2019)

Having conducted fieldwork in the Casamance for a couple of weeks on CBO engagement in conflict management before turning to the UCDP database allowed for a deeper understanding of what such long-term low-intensity separatist conflicts look like, and how 3rd party actors manifest themselves in regions of unrest. "Neither war nor peace" is the unofficial tagline for the Casamance separatist conflict[126]. This tumultuous conflict has fluctuated between multiple peace agreements[127]. The truth, however, is that none of them are sticking. Currently existing in the quasi-post-conflict context as described earlier, the lack of any definitive agreements between the

[126] Abdoulaye Ngom and Ismaila Sene, "The Casamance Conflict and Its Displaced Persons: An Overview." *International journal of humanities and social science* 11, no. 8 (2021) : 22.
[127] Mame-Penda Ba and Rachid Id Yassine, *Sortir de l'impasse du « Ni Paix Ni Guerre » en Casamance*. LAPSAD (August 2020): 45.

Senegalese Government and the *Mouvement des Forces Démocratique en Casamance* (MFDC) has resulted in the continued fear and effects of conflict to reign on, with cases of soldiers dying in clashes, land mines going off, and thousands still fleeing to neighbouring Gambia as recently as in the past two years[128]. First of all, it is imperative to understand the historical significance of the Casamance, an area separated both physically and mentally from Dakar and the north of Senegal. The Casamance case is the perfect example of how LICs can continue to draw on, despite countless mediation attempts and peacebuilding from neighbouring states, members of the P5 (France), and even UN involvement. Before delving into that part, a bit of historical and contextual framework is required.

The Casamance is separated from the north of Senegal by the Gambia, which also marks where the tropical and abundant south is separated from the savannah. While the Gambia was a British colony, and the north of what is now Senegal was administered by the French, the Casamance had been originally Portuguese territory, before being switched into French hands[129]. Due to this, the French administration of the area was already seen as exclusive to the south, as the circles that stemmed from Dakar were the more revered and respected. The Casamance is the home predominantly of the Diola, and identity has been defined as more closely linked to those in neighbouring Guinea-Bissau or the Gambia than to the north of Senegal. While the highest proportion of Christians are found in the Casamance, it is not counted as a religious conflict. The Atika (militia) branch was built strongly on Diola traditions, which involves going into the forest for initiation and coming of age rituals, which just so happens to be where the rebels camped out[130]. There is therefore often the assumption that this is an ethnic conflict, as "the parallels between the public image of the rebels and these representations

[128] AfricaNews, "Senegalese Soldier Killed in Clash With Casamance Rebels - Army", Africanews, 17 January 2023, https://www.africanews.com/2023/01/17/senegalese-soldier-killed-in-clash-with-casamance-rebels-army/. AfricaNews, "Senegal: 4 Soldiers Killed in The Explosion Of An Anti-tank Mine in Casamance", Africanews, 15 December 2023, https://www.africanews.com/2023/12/15/senegal-4-soldiers-killed-in-the-explosion-of-an-anti-tank-mine-in-casamance/. AfricaNews, "Operation Casamance: At Least 6,000 People Flee To The Gambia", Africanews, 20 March 2022, https://www.africanews.com/2022/03/20/operation-casamance-at-least-6-000-people-flee-to-the-gambia/.
[129] Kim Mahling Clark, "Ripe or Rotting: Civil Society in The Casamance Conflict", A*frican Conflict & Peacebuilding Review* 1, no. 2 (1 January 2011): 154.
[130] Michael Lambert, "Violence and the War of Words: Ethnicity v. Nationalism in The Casamance". Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, 1998, Vol. 68, no. 4 (1998):597.

of Jola maleness are striking, and they are not lost on the Senegalese public"[131]. The argument that this is an ethnic conflict does not account for the fact that there is a disproportionately large number of Diola in the Senegalese military[132]. In the run up to the 90s where prospects in the Casamance were bleak, it was common for men to join either the military or the MFDC's armed faction simply on the basis of safety. This was because the conflict led to the frequent occurrence of neighbours turning on each other and reporting them to either armed group[133].

This early indication of exclusion is an often-cited reason for the underdevelopment, along with the constant presence of northerners taking charge of governmental roles that should have been filled by locals. The idea to merge and integrate the Casamance under Senegalese ruling at the time of independence was not a welcome one in the south, as the French had "treated the Casamance as though it were autonomous partly because the lack of infrastructure connecting the Casamance with the rest of the colony made it expedient to do so"[134]. However, the mindset of being different from the rest was burgeoning by the time that independent Senegal took ownership of the region. A claimed agreement was that the Casamance would be part of Senegal to begin with, and then would be allowed to take its own independence after a time, which, true or not, was used as the party line for the early separatist movement[135]. After twenty-two years of Senegalese independence under Senghor, culminating in a particularly difficult decade in the 70s due to drought in the north, which resulted in a rush to expropriate uncultivated land in the still lush south, the Casamance had had enough[136]. In response, a supposedly peaceful planned march in 1982 took place in Ziguinchor, the regional capital,

[131] Michael Lambert, "Violence and the War of Words: Ethnicity v. Nationalism in The Casamance". Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, 1998, Vol. 68, no. 4 (1998):597.
[132]Michael Lambert, "Violence and the War of Words: Ethnicity v. Nationalism in The Casamance". Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, 1998, Vol. 68, no. 4 (1998): 595.
[133] Michael Lambert, "Violence and the War of Words: Ethnicity v. Nationalism in The Casamance". Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, 1998, Vol. 68, no. 4 (1998): 586.
Mame Faye Ngome (USOFORAL), interview with Author, Ziguinchor, Senegal. 9th February 2024.
[134] Michael Lambert, "Violence and the War of Words: Ethnicity v. Nationalism in The Casamance". Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, 1998, Vol. 68, no. 4 (1998): 590.
[135] Kim Mahling Clark, "Ripe or Rotting: Civil Society in The Casamance Conflict", A*frican Conflict & Peacebuilding Review* 1, no. 2 (1 January 2011): 154.
Michael Lambert, "Violence and the War of Words: Ethnicity v. Nationalism in The Casamance". Africa: Journal of the International African Institute, 1998, Vol. 68, no. 4 (1998):589.
[136] Kim Mahling Clark, "Ripe or Rotting: Civil Society in The Casamance Conflict", A*frican Conflict & Peacebuilding Review* 1, no. 2 (1 January 2011): 156.

which was met with violent response from the Senegalese army[137]. It is argued that the heavy-handed response on the government's side became the catalyst for the separatist movement to take off and is generally cited as the beginning of the Casamance conflict[138]. For the rest of the 1980s the new, militarised MFDC took the time to organise its operations, resulting in the first bout of measurable (conflict related) deaths in 1990[139]. The MFDC was militarised and led by the Abbé Diamacoune Senghor, yet factions quickly developed as initial ceasefires and accords were signed, but not agreed with by the whole organisation[140].

The main factionalisation of the MFDC occurred after the death of the Abbé in 2007, at the same time as the original peace accord was broken[141]. Since then, conflict resolution attempts have generally been with one single faction, and total agreement across the board has been seemingly impossible[142]. Each president of Senegal has taken a different approach to resolving the conflict "either by making it a national priority; or through strategies of suppression, armed attacks, the signing of peace agreements, and detentions and liberations of prisoners, among others"[143]. Diouf, ascending to power only a year before, aimed to resolve the conflict through methods of joint understanding and even through acts of providing food to the insurgents in order to prevent the pillaging of local villages, however at the same time there were widespread arrests and continued repression which only led to drive "the rebellion further underground, away from political protest and towards armed violence"[144]. By the turn of the millennium, and the appointment of president Wade, there came a change in the mediation techniques. Wade took a far harder stance towards the separatists, by strengthening the army, and in doing so, reduced the insurgents' dependence on its bordering states of Gambia and

[137] Abdoulaye Ngom and Ismaila Sene, "The Casamance Conflict and Its Displaced Persons: An Overview." *International journal of humanities and social science* 11, no. 8 (2021): 21.
[138] Kim Mahling Clark, "Ripe or Rotting: Civil Society in The Casamance Conflict", A*frican Conflict & Peacebuilding Review* 1, no. 2 (1 January 2011): 156.
[139] Kim Mahling Clark, "Ripe or Rotting: Civil Society in The Casamance Conflict", A*frican Conflict & Peacebuilding Review* 1, no. 2 (1 January 2011): 161.
[140] Kim Mahling Clark, "Ripe or Rotting: Civil Society in The Casamance Conflict," A*frican Conflict & Peacebuilding Review* 1, no. 2 (1 January 2011): 158.
[141] Kim Mahling Clark, "Ripe or Rotting: Civil Society in The Casamance Conflict", A*frican Conflict & Peacebuilding Review* 1, no. 2 (1 January 2011): 154.
[142] Vincent Foucher, " « Tradition Africaine » Et Résolution Des Conflits", *Politix*, no.4 (1 December 2007) : 64.
[143] Partners Global, White Paper for a Sustainable Peace in Casamance: Perspectives from Women and Local Populations. (2019): 8.
[144] Martin Evans, "Sénégal: Mouvement Des Forces Démocratiques de La Casamance (MFDC)", BRIEFING PAPER, *Armed Non-State Actors Project*, Chatham House. (December 2004): 4.

Guinea-Bissau as they in turn became more hostile towards the MFDC. Today, while existing in a period of relative peace "the threat of mines and other explosive remnants of war contributes to maintaining the fear of permanent insecurity and to annihilating the desire [for refugees] to return to their villages"[145].

Figure 16. Photo taken by Author. The Casamance River, along the road from Cap Skirring to Ziguinchor, (January 2024)

1.2. Conflict Mediation in the Casamance.

When it comes to conflict resolution, there have been many attempts at peace, by "Casamance leaders, the Catholic Church, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, political authorities from neighbouring countries, women's associations, etc," who have all been involved at one point or another[146]. Currently, despite the continued addition of new peace accords, the 'neither war nor peace' limbo continues. It would appear that the current state, with its occasional flare ups and skirmishes that still take place, will not soon be over. Therefore, the region searches for the mitigation of this low bubbling low-intensity separatist conflict, as opposed to direct resolution. Over the last forty years, despite pushes from all levels of 3rd party actors, efforts for resolution between the

[145] Abdoulaye Ngom and Ismaila Sene, "The Casamance Conflict and Its Displaced Persons: An Overview." *International journal of humanities and social science* 11, no. 8 (2021):25.
[146] Abdoulaye Ngom and Ismaila Sene, "The Casamance Conflict and Its Displaced Persons: An Overview." *International journal of humanities and social science* 11, no. 8 (2021): 22.

Government and MFDC has been limited, given the lack of organisation of MFDC leaders, and government unwillingness to engage with a continued turnover of self-proclaimed leaders[147].

The Casamance, as a low-intensity separatist conflict in Africa, represents what has been discussed in the previous chapters. First of all, it fits the character description of an intrastate separatist conflict. It is territorially well positioned to hold control of a peripheral 'limb' of the country and has been separated by on and off allies in Guinea Bissau and the Gambia, the latter of which was especially known for being sympathetic to and providing safety to various rebel factions within its connected forests. Like in many separatist conflicts, factions play a huge role in the case of the Casamance and are often cited for being the reason that there has been no lasting peace[148]. The government has stated that peace negotiations are unable to take place due to the lack of a clear unified front, and yet from what I was told in interviews, each new government and each new president has only really attempted to connect with one of the factions during their time in power, Diouf, Wade and Sall have all over the last 40 years promised to resolve the Casamance conflict at the beginning of their tenure, but from thereafter it slipped to the bottom of the list of priorities. To some, this is a deliberate ploy by the Senegalese government in order to keep the Casamance from becoming the thriving economic powerhouse of the country it could be. The limited infrastructure that exists is in a perpetual state of closure, the city airport has been being 'renovated' for years, the ferry between Dakar and Ziguinchor has been suspended, it appears indefinitely since the riots that took place against the jailing of charismatic local mayor (and as of March 2024 Prime Minister) Ousmane Sonko. Train services are non-existent to the south, and the quickest way to Dakar on the trans-Gambian Highway is incredibly poorly paved, but quicker than the eighteen-hour drive around. The wartime economy has facilitated the ease of illegal timber trade across the border with the Gambia, as well as large Marijuana plantations that have sprung up in a legal no man's land[149].

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[147] Kim Mahling Clark, "Ripe or Rotting: Civil Society in The Casamance Conflict," A*frican Conflict & Peacebuilding Review* 1, no.2 (1 January 2011): 158.
[148] Kim Mahling Clark, "Ripe or Rotting: Civil Society in The Casamance Conflict," A*frican Conflict & Peacebuilding Review* 1, no.2 (1 January 2011): 158.
[149] AfricaNews, "Operation Casamance: At Least 6,000 People Flee to The Gambia". Africanews, 20 March 2022. https://www.africanews.com/2022/03/20/operation-casamance-at-least-6-000-people-flee-to-the-gambia/. Mame Faye Ngome (USOFORAL), interview with Author, Ziguinchor, Senegal. 9th February 2024

Chapter 2. The Casamance seen through the UCDP.

When looking at the results of the above hypotheses through the lens of the Casamance, it can be seen how the characteristics of low-intensity separatist conflicts are evidently dissimilar to successionist ones. As one of the eleven coded territorial conflicts in the database for the timespan 1993-2004, the Casamance was in the height of its violent sections of the conflict and provides a good base of understanding for the other ten. During the 90s, cyclical bouts of violence between the MFDC and the Senegalese army caused thousands to be displaced, many were killed or injured, and whole villages were deserted from fear[150]. It can be easy to become polarised by the context, especially through the literature on the conflict for example while the Casamance slipped between low-intensity (between 25-999 deaths) and inactive (less than 25 deaths) according to the UCDP, in the literature phrases such as "the very hard war phases of 1990-1991, 1992-1993, 1995 or 1997-1999 were followed by low-intensity violence" can be misleading[151]. The truth is that in fact the highest estimation of direct conflict related deaths in a year during the most violent times of the Casamance conflict is 320, in 1997[152].

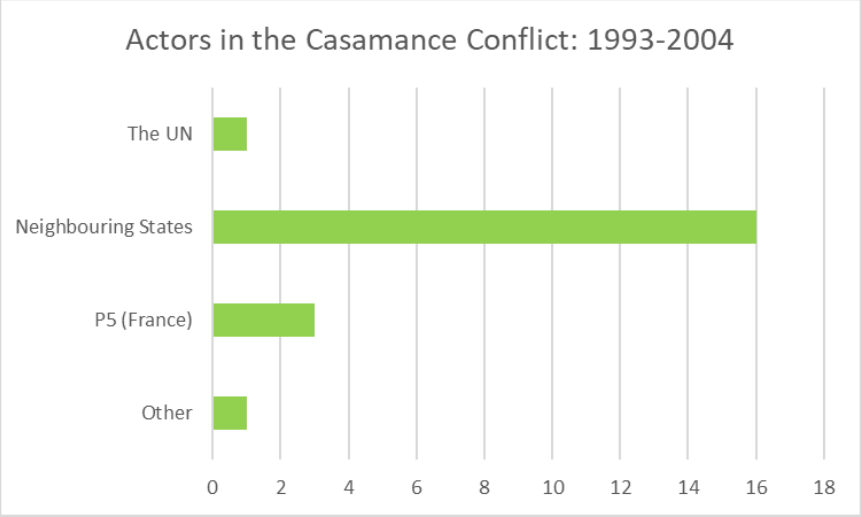

Figure 17. 3rd party Actors that Engaged in the Casamance conflict 1993-2004. Compiled from the MIILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009).

[150] Abdoulaye Ngom and Ismaila Sene, "The Casamance Conflict and Its Displaced Persons: An Overview." *International journal of humanities and social science* 11, no. 8 (2021): 23.
[151] Abdoulaye Ngom and Ismaila Sene, "The Casamance Conflict and Its Displaced Persons: An Overview." *International journal of humanities and social science* 11, no. 8 (2021): 22.
[152] "UCDP - Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Senegal: Casamance", n.d. https://ucdp.uu.se/additionalinfo/375/1.

During this time, the Casamance experienced 21 mediation attempts by 3rd parties in the period of low (aka active) intensity[153]. Of the low-intensity mediation, 16 occasions were by neighbouring states. The UN was only involved in one, France in three, and an 'unknown human rights group' for the last[154]. In fact, the Casamance can be considered one of the largest separatist conflicts of the time in Africa, obtaining just under a quarter of all the territorial mediation attempts by 3rd parties (See appendix figure 1). The high percentage of early mediation from the Gambia and Guinea Bissau tallies with the hypothesis that there is limited intervention from macro-level actors due to the less pressing nature of separatist conflicts to the international community but high stakes for neighbouring states[155]. The harbouring of MFDC rebels caused consequences for both Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia, unsettling domestic stability and as a result villages were sometimes "directly attacked (usually by aerial bombardment) by Senegalese forces in pursuit of maquisards across the Casamance's international borders"[156]. Not just insurgents, but also refugees, have been fluctuating across the borders in the thousands, to the Gambia especially, for decades[157].

The wartime economy, while not the most remarkable of the region, (compared to the Sierra Leonian blood diamonds) shows how the MFDC profited from cross border economic exchange, and this has caused the subsequent insecurity emanating from the Casamance. This is seen in how "the Casamance conflict helped precipitate the Bissau-Guinean civil war, and armed banditry has spread into The Gambia as well as eastwards into areas of Kolda region previously untouched by the conflict"[158]. It has also been stated that the Bissau-Guinean military was selling its arms and mines to the MFDC, due to sympathy based on the close identity shared between the two[159]. Other supplies of weapons came to the MFDC from Libya and Iraq through Mauritania and The Gambia. The effects felt by

[153] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/.
[154] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/.
[155] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/.
[156] Martin Evans, "Sénégal : Mouvement Des Forces Démocratiques de La Casamance (MFDC)", Briefing Paper, *Armed Non-State Actors Project*, Chatham House. (December 2004): 4.
[157] Martin Evans, "Contested Spaces, New Opportunities: Displacement, Return and The Rural Economy in Casamance, Senegal", in *Displacement Economies in Africa*, 57–78. Zed Books Ltd, 2014. 62
[158] Martin Evans, "Sénégal: Mouvement Des Forces Démocratiques de La Casamance (MFDC)", Briefing Paper, *Armed Non-State Actors Project*, Chatham House. (December 2004): 16.
[159] Martin Evans, "Sénégal: Mouvement Des Forces Démocratiques de La Casamance (MFDC)", Briefing Paper, *Armed Non-State Actors Project*, Chatham House. (December 2004): 5.

neighbouring states can be seen here in the way that the proximity of conflicts can lead to knock-on effects domestically. For Guinea-Bissau, the 1998 civil war "was partly the result of, and became a proxy for, the Casamance conflict"[160]. Therefore, it is understandable why there was such a push to try to facilitate talks with and between the warring parties, in order to be able to ensure the return of thousands of refugees, be able to effectively manage the inflow of illegal good as well as soothe political tensions from the earlier days of providing refuge to the MFDC from the Senegalese military[161].

In terms of France's record number of African territorial conflict mediation as a post-colonial (or neo-colonial) state, in Senegal there is an even distribution between the three categories of warring parties. France engaged once with the MFDC, once with the Government of Senegal, and once bringing the two together. The previous Senegalese presidents were fairly well known for being closely intertwined with and aligned with French interests, which could explain the French intervention, along with French concerns of security in the one region where they still exert some form of power[162]. The third and final hypothesis on which warring party is engaged with the most, and the answer being the state, also rings true in the case of the Casamance, where 50% of the times neighbouring states were involved, efforts were involving only the government. 25% were only with the rebels, and 25% were where both warring parties were involved[163]. These number are slightly different to the African trend, where neighbouring states are generally more geared towards government mediation (56%) and joint mediation (32%)[164]. The equal participation with rebels and both parties could serve to demonstrate the comparative strength that the MFDC had compared to other separatist rebel groups in Africa at the time, as the figures would indicate that the rebel group was being taken more seriously, and more weight was being placed on negotiations rather than strengthening government capacity.

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[160] Martin Evans, "Sénégal: Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de La Casamance (MFDC)", Briefing Paper, *Armed Non-State Actors Project*, Chatham House. (December 2004): 5.
[161] Martin Evans, "Contested Spaces, New Opportunities: Displacement, Return and The Rural Economy in Casamance, Senegal", in *Displacement Economies in Africa*, 57–78. Zed Books Ltd, 2014. 62
[162] Nathaniel Powell, "Battling Instability? The Recurring Logic of French Military Interventions in Africa," *African Security* 10, no. 1 (January 7, 2017): 49.
[163] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/
[164] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/

Chapter 3. Civil Society

The MFDC and Senegalese Government officially signed a comprehensive peace agreement in December 2004, right where the dataset ends, however just over two years later in January 2007 the *Accord General de Paix Entre le Gouvernement de la Republique du Senegal et le Mouvement des Forces Démocratique de la Casamance* was broken, and the country was once again thrown into bouts of cyclical (but all-around lower casualty) violence[165]. This time around however, the absence of neighbouring states or France can be clearly seen, and the presence of (I)NGOs shot up, as well as their involvement in trying to engage both sides for peace[166]. When I was in the Casamance there were signs for these multifaceted NGOs working for peace scattered all across the city, as well as local NGOs and CBOs. A large majority of external influence comes from USAID, along with other American and international NGOs and non-profits such as the catholic missionary CARITAS, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), World Education, the American Jewish World Service (AJWS), and the Catholic Relief Service (CRS). Far fewer European NGOs were present, but names such as COSPE and Handicap International (HI) were also dotted around. There are also Senegalese NGOs or Subsections of (I)NGOs that were present (mostly based in Dakar) in Ziguinchor such as TOSTAN, Partners West Africa, and CBOs that I found when there included Maison de la Paix and USOFORAL ('let's unite' in Diola).

In terms of literature, only the large INGO projects are really recorded, such as the USAID's *Support to the Casamance Peace Process* which took place between 2007-2009. It highlights the three key actors as the 'Government', 'MFDC' and 'Civil Society' showing the increasing belief that civil society is a relevant part of the peace process. The aim of this project was to encourage peace by engaging with the three actors to "increase the capacity of key stakeholders", "facilitate the effective participation of civil society in the peace process" and "assist the GoS and MFDC to overcome obstacles to peace negotiations"[167].This was done through the creation of dialogue sessions, training

[165] Pettersson, Torsten, Stina Högbladh, and Magnus Öberg. "Organized Violence, 1989–2018 and Peace Agreements". *Journal Of Peace Research* 56, no. 4 (3 June 2019).
[166] "UCDP - Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Senegal: Casamance", n.d. https://ucdp.uu.se/additionalinfo/375/1.
[167] Clark, Kim Mahling. *Support to the Casamance Peace Process.* USAID (2009): 6.

workshops and technical assistance. In the report it states that the interaction with government officials and MFDC fighters is limited due to sensitivity, which it explains as being due to the fact that "the GoS has always rejected 'internationalisation' of the conflict, so in order to avoid being accused of interfering in sovereign affairs, it was necessary to focus on supporting Senegalese actors, as opposed to taking a direct role in any negotiations or mediations"[168]. In the results section it is clear that there was very little achieved by the end of the project. The government's interest fluctuated over the three years, the MFDC failed to organise itself to engage in meaningful talks (yet "fostered great cohesion within the civilian and political wings") and civil society efforts were "often fruitful in a limited way, but were uncoordinated with similar efforts in other communities or linked to meso or macro efforts"[169].

A second project undertaken in the Casamance was *UNAAM KAYRAAY*. It was also supported by USAID, but they were just one in a whole host of international partners this time around. *UNAAM KAYRAAY* or *Engaging Civil Society for Peace in the Casamance*, took place from 2017-2019 and "sought to address grievances, share concerns of mutual interest, and to enhance conflict resolution and advocacy skills that would decrease negative stereotypes and perceptions of differences"[170]. Their 'theory of change' process meant that the enhancement of skills and raising visibility and awareness to engage the government would result in a legitimisation of the peace process[171]. Through cross border talks with Gambian and Guinean communities on a whole host of topics such as "Border Security Management", "strengthen[ing] the Senegambia Women's Forum for Peace in Casamance", "Social Mobilization Campaigns for Peace through Organized Diffusion" amongst others[172]. In terms of results, the return was once again relatively limited. Outcomes such as communication between local law enforcement and civilians, and connections formed with other actors were again cited, yet the project once again fell short of any concrete results[173].

[168] Clark, Kim Mahling. *Support to the Casamance Peace Process.* USAID (2009): 6.
[169] Clark, Kim Mahling. *Support to the Casamance Peace Process.* USAID (2009): 14.
[170] Partners Global. UNAAM KAYRAAY: Engaging Civil Society for Peace in the Casamance. (2019):6
[171] Partners Global. UNAAM KAYRAAY: Engaging Civil Society for Peace in the Casamance. (2019):8
[172] Partners Global. UNAAM KAYRAAY: Engaging Civil Society for Peace in the Casamance. (2019): 11-12.
[173] Partners Global. UNAAM KAYRAAY: Engaging Civil Society for Peace in the Casamance. (2019):50

In the quasi-post-conflict state that Senegal today finds itself in, and in the throes of a long-term truce, the priorities of Peacebuilding, regardless of whether or not it is UN or NGO based, are even less linked to the conflict context. Today, from speaking to locals, professors and leaders of peace-based community organisations, there is an overall Casamançais sentiment that original support for the MFDC and separatist movement has been replaced with the desire for stability and resumption of normal life. The MFDC are fractured, and citizen support is waning, many combatants are throwing down their weapons and joining CBOs to end the conflict[174]. As seen from the analysis above, as is so often the case, the lack of higher-level involvement due to lesser threat to the status quo than successionist conflicts has resulted in the appearance of countless civil society actors trying to resolve it. For the people of the Casamance, despite the outward perception of relative calm, the rurally planted land mines, skirmishes nearby to, and plundering of villages have led to unstable living conditions for generations now. This is the quasi-post-conflict reality for them. The local CBOs are the ones working towards to goals for the communities, rehabilitating and reintegrating rebels, to provide safe ways for them to do so without the risk of retribution. In other cases, activities such as clearing land mines with the help of Handicap International around the countryside so people can return to their homes. These are just a few examples of the type of activities that can seem menial to the higher ups but are integral to restoring a functioning region if not an outstanding peace.

For example, the CBO USOFORAL was founded on the basis of a woman who experienced the effects of the conflict first hand, where one son in the military killed his brother in the MFDC. Because of this she set up the CBO, to encourage women to get involved in peace processes. In speaking to one of the coordinators of USOFORAL, I was able to gain an understanding of their direction of conflict mitigation, which she assuredly described as distinctly "not peacebuilding"[175]. By using a holistic approach to conflict resolution, the aim was to get the women who were now heads of households across the region together in an apolitical setting in order to discuss the important matters

[174] Abdoulaye Ngom and Ismaila Sene, "The Casamance Conflict and Its Displaced Persons: An Overview." *International journal of humanities and social science* 11, no. 8 (2021): 22.
Professor Paul Diedhiou (University of Ziguinchor), interview with author, Ziguinchor, Senegal. 26th January 2024
[175] Mame Faye Ngome (USOFORAL), interview with Author, Ziguinchor, Senegal. 9th February 2024.

for everyday living[176]. The aim of empowering women is manifested a range of different fields, such as in encouraging women to stand up to the sexual violence endured from fighters on both sides of the conflict, to creating agro-ecological centres for greater independence[177]. The likes of the latter teach women how to make mango vinegar from the glut of mangos that are grown in the Casamance, as there is no infrastructure to transport them to Dakar before they go bad. In fact, Dakar imports its mangos from Morrocco instead of making use of its own naturally produced ones[178]. USOFORAL has a selection of external sponsors but makes sure that they are aligned with the goals of the CBO as opposed to allowing the funding to dictate the trajectory of work, which is as previously mentioned, a trap that many CSOs fall into. She also raised the problem of the conflict dragging on because "la guerre nourrit plus qu'il tue" (the war sustains more than it kills), referring back to the illicit trade of goods, especially when it comes to the quasi-post-conflict environment where fatal attacks are becoming increasingly infrequent[179].

On the other hand, a second CBO that I managed to spend time with and speak to the leader of was far more pro-peacebuilding and sticking to traditional methods of conflict mediation. Maison de la Paix was the first local peace seeking CBO anybody told me about when I asked in Ziguinchor, despite not being mentioned in any of the literature I had found before heading out on fieldwork. I think the main reason for this was that all organisations and projects I found were also based on the role of women in Peacebuilding and so it was erroneously ignored. However, Henry Ndecky and his organisation took a more (let us call it) practical approach to how civil society can be engaged in conflict mediation.

In an introductory meeting for new employees that I was allowed to sit in on he expressed that it didn't matter what people's backgrounds are, so long as they bring initiative and keep young people talking about the importance of continued interaction between all parties, especially to bring new generations on to the side of peace and avoid generational resurfacing of old mentalities to the continued sentiments of the Casamance's oppression[180].

[176] Mame Faye Ngome (USOFORAL), interview with Author, Ziguinchor, Senegal. 9th February 2024.
[177] Mame Faye Ngome (USOFORAL), interview with Author, Ziguinchor, Senegal. 9th February 2024.
[178] Mame Faye Ngome (USOFORAL), interview with Author, Ziguinchor, Senegal. 9th February 2024.
[179] Mame Faye Ngome (USOFORAL), interview with Author, Ziguinchor, Senegal. 9th February 2024.
[180] Henry Ndecky (Maison de la Paix), Interview with Author, Ziguinchor, Senegal. 30th January 2024.

Figure 18. Photo taken by the Author. CBO Maison de la Paix, Ziguinchor. (February 2024)

In a private interview, he extended the sentiment to include (I)NGOs and external donors[181]. He is also an 'official' mediator between the two sides, and as civil society, they are there to represent the public power[182]. It is important he told me, that negotiators remain impartial, so as to build trust, and that (I)NGOs are vital in terms of funding and support, however, this generally goes through a plethora of different channels or organisations, each with their own plans and goals, and it would be better if the flow of resources was more streamlined[183].After this I was sent out into the field to see what sort of work the 'House of Peace' was conducting. It ended up being a trip to a town on the edge of Cap Skirring called Diembering to go and confer with the town hall there on the USAID mission to get 800,000 people from the Casamance region officially documented. The project is called USAID/Aliwili II extension which is supported by the Catholic Relief Service (CRS) the state,

[181] Henry Ndecky (Maison de la Paix), Interview with Author, Ziguinchor, Senegal. 30th January 2024.
[182] Henry Ndecky (Maison de la Paix), Interview with Author, Ziguinchor, Senegal. 30th January 2024.
[183] Henry Ndecky (Maison de la Paix), Interview with Author, Ziguinchor, Senegal. 30th January 2024.

CARITAS Senegal and Dynamique de la Paix (a subsection of Maison de la Paix), yet it is incredibly difficulty to find any information about it online.

Both of these interviews serve as examples of the ways that civil society engages in important steps to reach a lasting peace agreement in quasi-post-conflict settings, or at least for that when peace is officially obtained, or the long-term truce ends in peace the environment is already as prepared as possible to make the most out of it.

Figure 19. Photo taken by the Author. View from the Diembering Town Hall, Casamance. (2024)

Chapter 4. Comparative Case Studies

In order to see how this translates to other countries on the ground, this chapter will briefly analyse two other low-intensity intrastate conflicts in Africa, one separatist and one successionist.

4.1. Angola

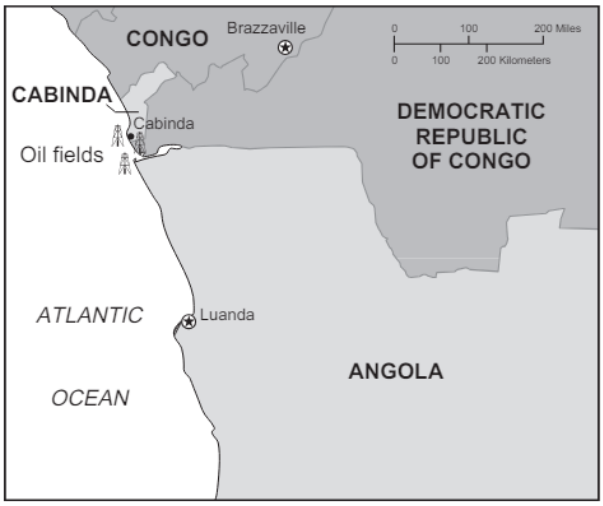

Figure 20. Map of Angola and Cabinda. Ciment (2015).

In terms of parallels with other separatist conflicts one only has to look at the Cabinda conflict in Angola. Just like the Casamance in Senegal, the Cabinda province was not a part of Angola until independence in 1975, and therefore it was believed that the administration from the Angolans was illegal and oppressive[184]. The Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC) was the collaboration of a collection of different groups fighting for secession[185]. although to a greater extreme, the oil rich region nestled in between the DRC and Congo bears similarity to the Casamance's own resource abundance below the desert, cutoff of the Gambia. The general sentiment in Cabinda was (and is) the exploitation of their resources, with generally very little in return, despite over half of the Angolan oil being produced in the region[186]. As such, a guerilla style conflict has been occurring since the 1960s.

[184] David Forniès et al., "A Report on Secessionist Movements in Africa and Human Rights Violations," CIEMEN (2022): 11.
[185] James Ciment, *Encyclopedia of Conflicts Since World War II*, *Routledge eBooks*, 2015: 83.
[186] James Ciment, *Encyclopedia of Conflicts Since World War II*, *Routledge eBooks*, 2015: 83.

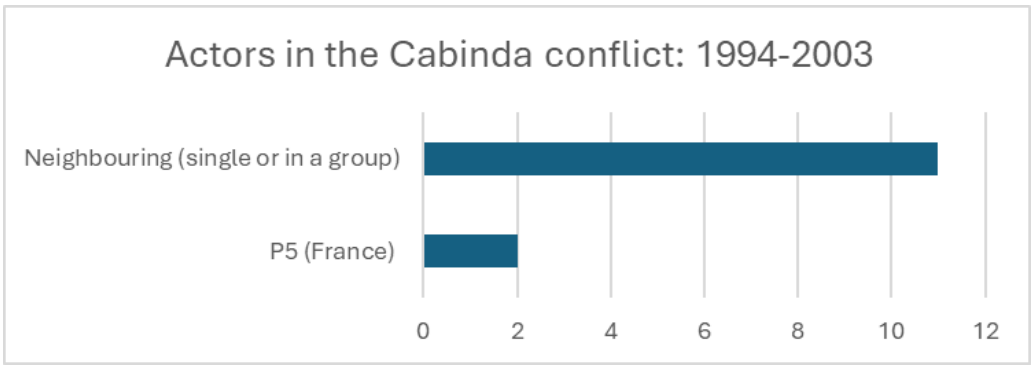

Figure 21. Actors in the Cabinda Conflict. Compiled from the MIILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009).

Concerning mediation, according to the MILC, there were thirteen coded attempts by 3rd parties, once again the majority (70%) being from neighbouring states. These neighbouring states engaged either with the government or both warring parties but never with the rebels alone. In fact, not one mediation attempt in the ten years that the conflict is coded was with the rebels alone. Neither the UN, nor ECOWAS, nor any other IGO participated in any mediatory attempts within the separatist conflict in Angola.

Following Hanson's coding process for long-term truces, Angola does not qualify to be considered as such, because the rebels "agreed to disarm or merge into the state, either as part of a peace agreement or with a formal or tacit amnesty"[187]. However, it is also stipulated that despite agreements, "terms were never fully implemented" in Angola, as agreements in 1995 fell through and conflict continued[188]. As a reminder, for a conflict to qualify as a long-term truce according to Hanson's coding, it must; have had a significant halt or drop in violence for at least two years; the Government has to have retained control over the area; rebels still have to be armed and able to fight, and not have fled or retreated[189].

[187] Kolby Hanson, "Live and Let Live: Explaining Long-term Truces in Separatist Conflicts", *International Peacekeeping* 28, no.3 (8 October 2020): 403.
[188] Kolby Hanson, "Live and Let Live: Explaining Long-term Truces in Separatist Conflicts", *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 3 (8 October 2020): 403.
[189] Kolby Hanson, "Live and Let Live: Explaining Long-term Truces in Separatist Conflicts", *International Peacekeeping* 28, no. 3 (8 October 2020): 402.

4.2. Guinea-Bissau

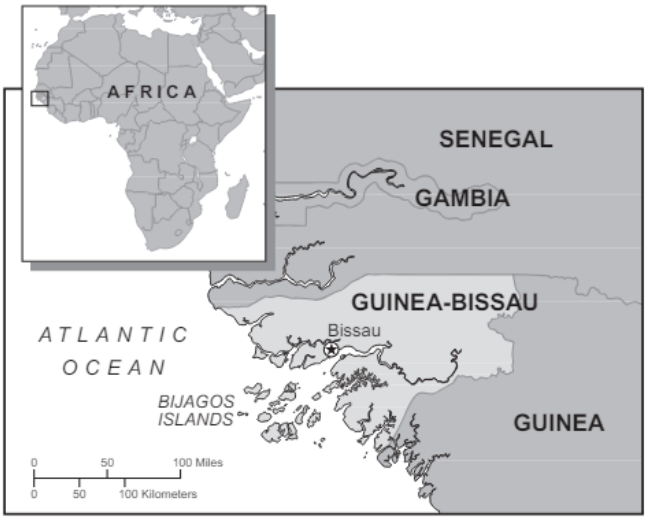

Figure 22.Map of Guinea-Bissau. Ciment (2015)

In contrast, by selecting a successionist conflict from the time period, we can see the difference in how they are mediated compared to separatist ones. The 1998 coup in Guinea-Bissau shows the difference in 3rd party response. Another former Portuguese colony, the country has been plagued by numerous military coups, with varying degrees of success since independence in 1974[190]. By 1998, after multiple attempted coups and a highly contestable general election, the coded mediation attempts started merely five days after it broke out[191].

[190] James Ciment, *Encyclopaedia of Conflicts Since World War II*, *Routledge eBooks*, (2015): 186.
[191] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/.

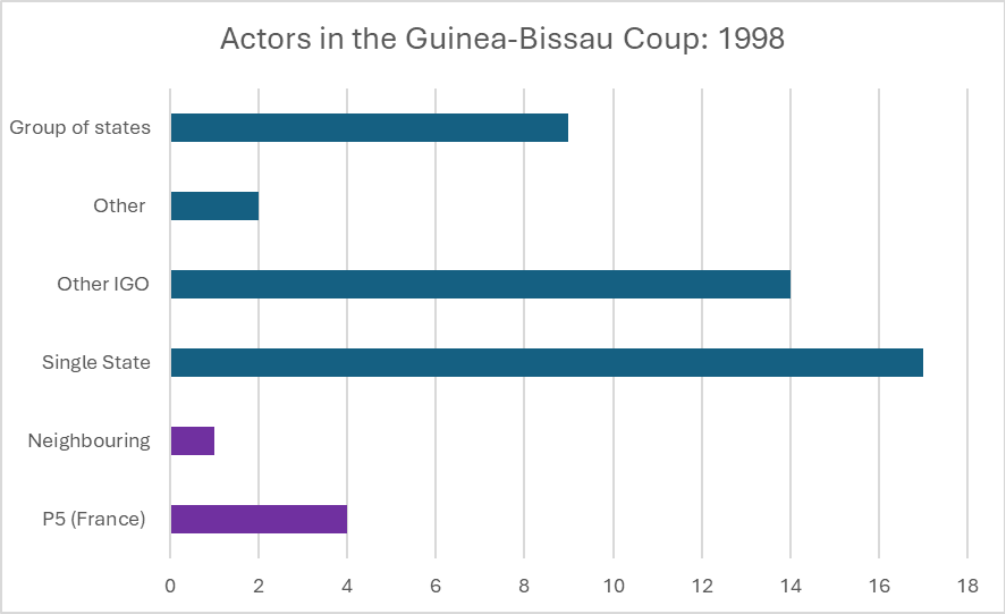

Figure 23. Actors in the Guinea-Bissau Coup 1998. Compiled from the MIILC dataset. Melander et al. (2009).

This dyad had 44 mediations coded in the latter half of the singular year, with one interaction by Senegal being the only occasion where neighbouring states were concerned[192]. It was, however, a substantial proportion of the time other IGOs or their members that were involved. Ecowas, while non-existent in both the above separatist conflicts, was involved 9 times in the year, with singular or groups of ECOWAS countries also contributing to the mediation attempts a further 15 times[193]. The EU also facilitated talks twice, as well as the Commonwealth of Portuguese Speaking States a further three times. Portugal, as the former coloniser, racked up 10 of the codes as well. The intensity of involvement in the six months after the LIC started shows the huge disparity between the way these LICs are perceived by 3rd party actors. Between the two types of conflict, separatist and successionist the differences are distinct. All one has to do is look at the difference between 44 recorded attempts in 6 months compared to the 13 for Angola and 21 for Senegal in a decade[194].

[192] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/.
[193] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/.
[194] Data sourced from Erik Melander, Frida Möller, and Magnus Öberg, "Managing Intrastate Low-Intensity Armed Conflict 1993–2004: A New Dataset", *International Interactions* 35, nr. 1 (17 March 2009): 58-85. https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/.

Part III Conclusion.

Through combining the results of the hypotheses with an in-depth analysis and comprehension of the Casamance conflict, I have hoped to highlight the ways in which separatist conflicts are neglected and underestimated in their importance and how they can disrupt just as much as successionist conflicts. The Casamance has suffered in previous decades with a lack of tourism due to the threat of land and anti-personnel mines as well as banditry. Aside from popular Club Med destination Cap Skirring and capital Ziguinchor, the region is marked with fear-mongering warning on foreign travel advisories. The Australians, currently embroiled in a Zircon mining battle in the northwest of the Casamance, warn against any travel straying off the main road between the two towns[195]. On the other hand, the Americans, with very little political connection to Senegal, claim that only increased cautions are necessary in the Casamance, and the majority of the country is on the lowest danger classification[196]. The Dutch Reisadvies states that the whole country should have increased caution, and to only travel to the Casamance if absolutely necessary[197]. In the period that I was conducting research into CBO involvement in the conflict there came the decision from Dakar to postpone the elections which resulted in protests across the country but specifically in Dakar, St Louis in the north and the Casamance, resulting in deaths in each city. The threat was not to our person, however the lack of any news of the situation in Ziguinchor and being told repeatedly that the one and only road back to the airport at Cap Skirring was regularly blocked in instances like this, there was a 50/50 balance of how the situation would go. Additionally, the increase of military presence, in Ziguinchor especially, gave the distinct impression that there was a special watch on what would happen in the south, as they were expected to be the most outspoken, having watched their candidate Sonko being purposely sidelined, yet calm was restored with the rescheduling of the elections to a month after the original date[198].

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[195] Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade "Senegal." Smartraveller.gov.au. Accessed May 18, 2024. https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/destinations/africa/senegal.

[196] U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs "Senegal International Travel Information," n.d., Accessed May 18, 2024. https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Senegal.html.

[197] Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, "Reisadvies Senegal | Ministerie Van Buitenlandse Zaken," September 6, 2012, https://www.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/reisadvies/senegal.

[198] IEFS "Elections in Senegal: 2024 Presidential Elections", The International Foundation For Electoral Systems, 2 May 2024, https://www.ifes.org/tools-resources/election-snapshots/elections-senegal-2024-presidential-elections.

Part IV.

Chapter 1. Discussion.

There has, in recent years, been acknowledgement that pre-existing peacebuilding architectures are too top heavy and oftentimes unaligned to priorities on the ground. However, there are two main issues with the engagement of civil society in conflict management. The first relates to how employment of local NGOs or CBOs occurs. A British NGO Peace Direct has described there as being three different types of local peacebuilding. The distinctions between locally led, owned, and delivered are very important to the agenda of local first peacebuilding[199]. Locally led peacebuilding is the aim, where CBO determined priorities and attempts with silent partner type support from (I)NGOs and other 3rd parties allow for cultural understanding of conflict and the traditional types of resolution. Oftentimes the civil society route, while being proudly advertised by (I)NGOs, is actually a locally delivered approach, where they come in and dictate what will happen by giving funds and other types of support. The sheer number of (I)NGOs that will swoop into a conflict with no large-scale peacekeeping operations and no clear resolution in sight crowds the pond and muddies the water, resulting in unhealthy competition between CSOs as they battle for funding and support. There is also money to be made off the quasi-post-conflict situation that still 'requires' (I)NGO involvement, just as with the illicit trading. Of course, that is not to say that all (I)NGOs are harmful to conflicts, however, one must also remain sceptical at the perceived inherent 'goodness' of civil society.

This brings us to the second issue, civil society's flaws. Capacity is one of the largest problems that CBOs face, hence the need to seek external support, however, in doing so, they often then neglect the characteristics that make them civil society. It is therefore no wonder that there can be a hit on the voluntary nature of civil society as the muscling in of NGOs threaten to undermine the concept of civil society in search for the most efficient and receptive organisations to the western style, thereby changing civil society's priorities from non-material to material[200]. Firsthand experience has shown

[199] Kate McGuinness, *Local First: Development for the Twenty-First Century*. Peace Direct, Marstan Press, Kent (2012): 14.
[200] Kate McGuinness, *Local First: Development for the Twenty-First Century*. Peace Direct, Marstan Press, Kent (2012): 27.

me how donors have altered the trajectory of peace-based CBOs. At Maison de la Paix, their task of registering 800,000 undocumented people from communes around Ziguinchor as Senegalese nationals, while it could on the one hand be seen a noble and necessary cause, is a step removed from how Ndecky explained their role as important negotiators. The project also just so happened to be financed by three separate US based (I)NGOs and can also be perceived on the flip side as another subjugation of the Casamance people to force them to be integrated into the Senegalese identity.

Returning to the topic of 3rd party mediation, we must also beg the question of the relevance of their involvement in Separatist LICs. While the context of successionist conflicts shows a higher necessity for 3rd parties to get involved in mediation processes, even if it is only in order to dictate the outcome favourably to themselves, separatist conflicts can occur within comparatively functioning states and therefore even the state willingness to engage in conflict management can be reduced. In the Casamance for example, how will definitive peace come about when "no Senegalese government during the conflict has ever been prepared even to consider" secession[201], and the MFDC refuse to accept anything but independence. How much is 3rd party mediation going to do when the primary parties of such conflicts are not willing to engage with it. For neighbouring states, we have seen that they have a far greater investment in conflicts in Africa, specifically separatist states because of the immediate threat that they pose, and I would argue, the reluctance of IGOs to engage in what they would consider to be the lesser of the two types of intrastate conflicts. Of course, it is worth remembering that this is all in the context of low-intensity, the parameters for interest in international intervention and mediation in full scale war can however be seen already, through the increased threat that even low-intensity successionist conflicts pose through the number of mediations that occurred. High intensity separatist conflicts also pose issues, when there are stronger powers, higher stakes and conflicts are closer. The Yugoslav wars for example took place on Europe's eastern border, challenging EU security to a great extent, raising the commentary that "it seems unlikely that NATO member states would have devoted billions of dollars to peacebuilding in Bosnia if that war-ravaged

[201] Martin Evans, "Sénégal: Mouvement Des Forces Démocratiques de La Casamance (MFDC)", BRIEFING PAPER, *Armed Non-State Actors Project*, Chatham House. (December 2004): 16.

country were in sub-Saharan Africa, rather than right next door in Europe"[202]. The military prowess of Israel and surrounding Middle Eastern states resulted in far more mediation than their low-intensity counterparts in Africa.

If one steps back and look at the results of the hypotheses, we can see that it is not all LICs that are less mediated by 3rd party actors, but predominantly separatist LICs in Africa. Conflicts that drag on, even if they are 'low' intensity have impacts on all aspects of the society and are equally damaging to society and the prosperity of regions suffer for it. When these types of conflicts continue for years, and even decades, there is also the danger that even if there is a tentative quasi-post-conflict context, the lack of finality or improvement in many cases can result in generational resurfacing of old sentiments of neglect, ethnic differences, despair, and resentment. The comparative under-mediation of separatist conflicts in Africa in the late 90s and early 00s by all levels of actors is startling compared to global trends, where the data would lead one to believe that there were serious concerns over territorial disputes. Peace agreements drift in and out of validity, and are increasingly difficult to uphold, especially with the multiple factions that seem endemic to most separatist conflicts. From 3rd party points of view, the peacebuilding narrative can be more effective, or at least understandably applicable when it comes to coup attempts or other civil war types, to neutralise threats, disarm quickly, restore natural and democratic peace to a country, be that with a new leader or the surviving one. With separatist conflicts it is not so easy. The separatist conflict is contained to a region generally on the outskirts of the territory, far away from capital cities. Governments can remain strong as guerilla warfare is more frequent, with attacks occurring randomly on and between armed forces, mines planted in the surrounding region and no definitive event to end conflict. When you look at some of the countries where these separatist conflicts occur, democratic stability is not an issue. If one takes Senegal, for example, "the conflict presents little real threat to the Senegalese state […] more important are the challenges that the conflict poses to a country that sees itself as a model African democracy with a well-developed civil society"[203]. The 2024 election wobble caused the Senegalese

[202] Roland Paris, "International Peacebuilding and the 'Mission Civilisatrice'", Review of International Studies 28, no. 4 (1 October 2002): 654.
[203] Martin Evans, "Sénégal : Mouvement Des Forces Démocratiques de La Casamance (MFDC)", Briefing Paper, *Armed Non-State Actors Project*, Chatham House. (December 2004): 16.

to take to the streets immediately to defend their democratic rights all across the country, including in the Casamance. There was a great and instantaneous 3rd party response, more so than has been seen for the 40 years of conflict, as the international community raced with alacrity to condemn this dictatorial move by Sall. For the people living in the middle of the conflict however, safety is uncertain, collateral damage of civilians a guarantee and continued repression a standard feature. If the main aim of peacebuilding is restoring democracy, then a success can only be claimed when there has been the ascension of a fairly elected president and the establishment of strong democratic institutions, as well as security to the population through this[204]. And yet, what about in cases where military intervention has not been required, or cases where democracy has not been challenged. While the purpose of peacebuilding can be understood, the priorities in the slow-burning separatist LICs are diverse and require a different approach.

In response to this, my recommendation would be to change the reasoning behind 3rd party mediations and in doing so change the framework. While all conflicts are of course unique, the framework that has so far been deployed in the separatist conflict context can be defined as not only Western and charged with imposing those values on recipient states, but also as wholly redundant in the context. To change the framework would be to look further to the understanding of what causes separatist conflicts. Political actors are generally not going to support and agree with separatist movements, especially in Africa, as support and success for one would cause not only an international disaster from the political side of this but will bolster other separatist movements into the belief that they should be working on garnering government support. To accept secessionist movement *would* be to challenge the global status quo, that is why "official discourses tend to demonise secessionist demands to the point of grotesqueness, even when they may be based on well-founded grievances, with a worrying prevalence of the notion of national unity as a totem that cannot be discussed or questioned"[205]. The international community, by comparatively 'ignoring' separatist conflicts in Africa, appears to be making just that statement.

[204] Thania Paffenholz, *Civil Society & Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment*, 2009:47.
[205] David Forniès et al., "A Report on Secessionist Movements in Africa and Human Rights Violations," CIEMEN (2022):45.

Chapter 2. Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to understand what it is about LICs in Africa that do not ascribe to the traditional forms of Peacebuilding. As a result, through examining all of the factors that make up 3rd party involvement in conflict management of LICs, liberal Western Peacebuilding frameworks, actor distinction and their respective stakes, the characteristics of LICs, and scores of data on exactly who was involved in which type of conflict has led to the conclusion that it is not LICs that mediators shy away from but separatist ones. While the whole liberal Western peacebuilding framework is in desperate need of an overhaul, the likes of which are currently underway, the nuances of separatist LICs separate them from not only successionist conflicts of all intensities, but also from high intensity separatist conflicts, and this can be seen in the data of 3rd party mediation attempts as well as when compared to the priorities of peacebuilding. More often than not, for the IGOs or other states to intervene there must be some form of challenge to the status quo, either due to a shift towards or away from democracy, a threat of new waves of migrants arriving on domestic shores or the threat of reduced access to necessary resources such as uranium, or oil. As territorial LICs rarely encounter such conflict consequences, it is left to neighbouring states to get involved for the protection of their own interests, stopping illegal trading routes, the large proportion of refugees spilling across the borders, weakening of said borders, the spread of separatist sentiments to their own disgruntled people, et cetera. These threats notwithstanding, the disparity in separatist conflicts in Africa can be seen by the average of only 8 mediation attempts per conflict, even when a conflict spans over a decade. The quasi-post-conflict context also crops up mostly in separatist conflicts, in line with Hanson's long-term truces, as fighting generally dissolves over time, without peace agreements, but also without the true and definitive laying down of weapons, resulting in this stalemate. Perhaps then it is the perceived lack of urgency that inhibits more involvement by traditional Western mediation attempts, coupled with the catch-22 of civil society's (in)capabilities that results in conflicts such as the Casamance existing in the quasi-post-conflict. In terms of future research, a more recent and comparable database of 3rd party mediation from 2005 onwards could show the increasing role that civil society has and can play in these nuanced conflicts, as well as a comprehensive look at the

changes that the UN has been making to its peacebuilding architectures, and whether or not they are truly locally led or still stuck in the donor trap of locally delivered.

To conclude, my reasoning for the lack of a low-intensity separatist peacebuilding framework is that successionist conflicts more often than not lead to cataclysmic events such as coups. The environment for this is very delicately balanced, like a tinder box that could go off at any moment, and the fear of this on an international level result in a considerable amount of mediation attempts for government grievances, whether in high-, low- or even inactive-intensity contexts. In essence, to be certain that a low intensity successionist conflict has been put completely to bed, and the risk of civil war mitigated, IGOs and powerful states will intervene. In comparison, the lack of impending or inherent global risk from separatist conflicts in Africa can explain why they received such low mediation attempts overall, but especially from macro-actors. These conflicts, however, have a low, simmering, persistence that results in a continuation of all the impacts of LICs, restricting true post-conflict reconstruction and peace.

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Appendix

	Single State	*Group of States*	*Single IGO*	*Group of IGOs*	*Other*	*Averages*
Globally						
Territory	1477	106	374	88	76	(2121)
% of 3rd party total	69%	50%	52%	65%	28%	61%
% of Territorial Mediation Attempts	(70%)	(5%)	(18%)	(4%)	(3%)	
Government	664	108	340	48	192	(1351)
% of 3rd party total	31%	50%	48%	35%	72%	39%
% of Government Mediation Attempts	(49%)	(8%)	(25%)	(4.5)	(14%)	
Total	2141	214	714	136	268	3472
% of total Interventions	62%	6%	20%	4%	8%	100%
Africa						
Territory	48	17	17	1	3	(86)
% of 3rd party total	10%	17%	8%	2%	3%	9%
% of Territorial Mediation Attempts	(56%)	(20%)	(20%)	(1%)	(3%)	
Government	435	86	209	40	116	(886)
% of 3rd party total	90%	83%	92%	98%	97%	91%
% of Government Mediation attempts	(49%)	(10%)	(23.5%)	(4.5%)	(13%)	
Total	483	103	226	41	119	972
% of total Africa Interventions	51%	10%	23%	4%	12%	100%

Figure 1. Master table for the MILC dataset and many of the calculations in Part II

Africa	*P5 States*								
	France	UK	US	Russia	China		Total State mediation	P5 % of Total state mediation	P5 % of incompatibility
Territory									
	16	2	6	3	0	21	65	3%	32%
	26%	11%	8%	>1%	0%	18%	11%		
Government									
	46	17	33	1	0	97	539	16%	18%
	74%	89%	91%	100%	0%	72%	89%		
Totals									
	62	19	36	1	0	118	604		
Total %	53%	16%	31%	1%	0%	100%		19%	
Global									
	142	93	639	151	5				
	44%	44%	6%	>1%	0%				

Figure 2. Breakdown of the P5 involvement in Conflict mediation, Africa and total.

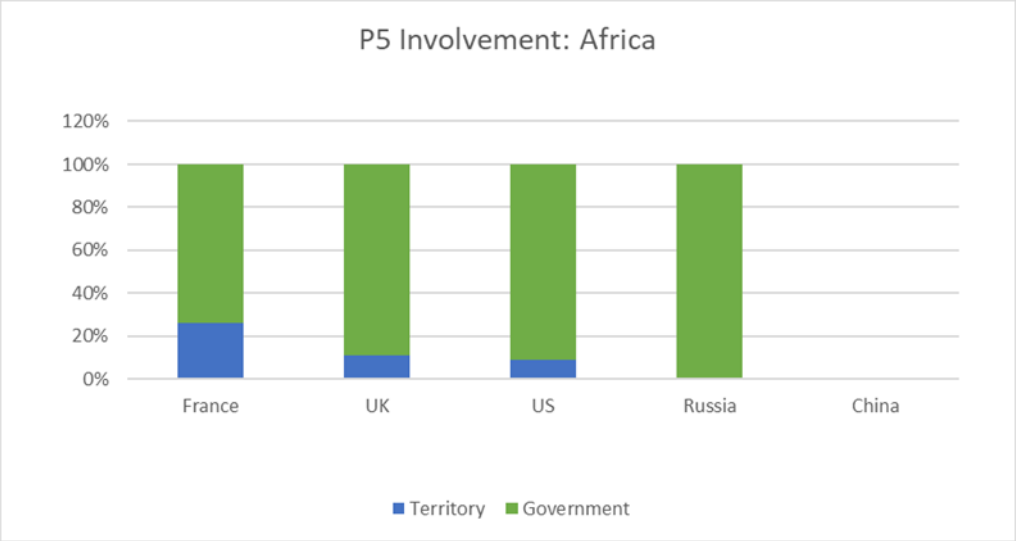

Figure 3. Unused table depicting the difference in P5 involvement by territory and government.

	P5				*Neighbouring States*				*UN*			
% of frequency	Single State		Group of States		Single State		Group of States		Single IGO		Group of IGO	
Africa	81	***76%***	26	***24%***	165	***72%***	67	***28%***	73	***75%***	24	**25%**
Global	872	***90%***	100	***10%***	564	***82%***	121	***18%***	342	***75%***	114	**25%**
% of category												
Africa		***16%***		***25%***		***33%***		***66%***		***32%***		**59%**
Global		***38%***		***47%***		***24%***		***57%***		***48%***		**16%**

Figure 4. Table of calculations for % of frequency and % of category by single or group of specific actors.

Warring parties	Govt	Rebels	Both	Neither
Africa				
UN	66%	12%	15%	7%
IGO(s)	48%	17%	28%	6%
P5 States	59%	20%	16%	5%
Neighbouring States	56%	10%	32%	2%
Other	58%	14%	26%	2%
Global				
UN	44%	19%	33%	4%
IGO(s)	50%	23%	23%	4%
P5 States	58%	24%	16%	1%
Neighbouring States	50%	27%	21%	1%
Other	39%	22%	35%	4%

Figure 5. Table of calculations for each actor's involvement by warring party

Warring parties	Government	Rebels	Both	Neither
Total no. of mediation attempts	548	155	245	36
UN	11%	8%	6%	19%
IGO(s)	17%	21%	22%	33%
P5 States	12%	14%	7%	14%
Neighbouring States	24%	15%	31%	14%
Other	12%	11%	13%	6%

Excluding other states

Figure 6. Table of calculations for the makeup of each warring party by actor.

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