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Master thesis

Mediation Onset in Recurring Civil Wars

Exploring the effect of war recurrence on the likelihood of mediation onset in civil wars

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Abstract

How does conflict recurrence impact the likelihood of mediation onset in an intrastate conflict? In this thesis, I argue that a history of armed conflict will affect the conflict actors' decision to accept mediation. To explore this proposition, I use dyadic data on recurrence and mediation in intrastate conflicts from 1975 to 2013. First, I explore the hypothesis that mediation onset is less likely in recurring intrastate conflict episodes than in initial conflict episodes. Mediation onset appears to be slightly less common in recurring conflict episodes. However, results from the regression analysis do not support the claim that this difference is caused by recurrence per se. Second, I focus exclusively on recurring intrastate conflict episodes. I analyze how the outcome of the previous conflict episode affects the likelihood of mediation onset. The results indicate that mediation onset is more likely in conflict episodes recurring after the previous episode ended with a negotiated agreement than in conflict episodes recurring after other previous outcomes. This is evidence of the need to consider historical ties between conflict actors when understanding decisions to accept mediation in intrastate conflicts.

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All errors in this thesis are my responsibility alone.

Espen Olsen Enger
Oslo, June 2023

R-scripts can be provided upon request.

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1. Introduction

One of the biggest hurdles to peaceful lives in a great number of countries all over the world, is the inability to permanently resolve civil wars. Many civil wars see a termination of the armed conflict, only to see it restart again later. In fact, more than 50% of the countries experiencing civil war between 1945 and 2009 saw a return to internal armed conflict (Walter, 2013). Countries like Colombia, Iran, Senegal, India and Ethiopia have experienced armed conflict between the same actors reoccurring more than five times (Kreutz, 2010). There is an extensive literature on civil war termination. Various answers have been provided to the question of why peace sometimes endures and sometimes collapses. However, once civil wars do reoccur there is a lack of research on how the conflict resolution dynamics is affected. This thesis contributes by investigating how the prospects of mediation are affected by war recurrence. My results indicate that previous experiences of armed conflict do affect the likelihood of mediation in ongoing conflict episodes.

Since the end of the Second World War, the most prevalent conflict type has, by far, been intrastate conflict (Pettersson et al., 2021). These conflicts take place within the border of one state, and one of the conflict parties is the country's government. Even though these wars are internal affairs, the international community has taken great interest in ending them. Mediation is widely recognized as a tool that can be used to facilitate a peaceful termination. It is a unique tool because it gives external actors a rare possibility to peacefully influence internal disputes, having received an invitation from the belligerents (DeRouen et al., 2011). For mediation to be an effective conflict resolution tool, a first essential step is for the warring parties to be willing to accept mediation. The academic literature has identified a plethora of factors influencing the likelihood of mediation onset. Some examples are: conflict duration and intensity (DeRouen et al., 2011), power ratio between the government and the rebels (Clayton, 2013; Clayton & Gleditsch, 2014), rebel objectives (DeRouen et al., 2011; Lutmar & Terris, 2018), and the government's reputational concerns (Keels & Greig, 2019).

In research on mediation onset, conflict episodes are often treated separately, in isolation from previous conflict episodes between the same actors. Alternatively, both periods of active conflict, and inactive periods between actors, are considered parts of the same conflict. Both approaches fail to account for the potential effect of conflict recurrence on the likelihood of mediation onset. One would expect a relationship between conflict actors, and their decision

to accept mediation, to be influenced by previous experiences of warfare. Consequently, I investigate the following research question:

> *How does conflict recurrence impact the likelihood of mediation onset in an intrastate conflict?*

I explore the relationship between conflict recurrence and mediation onset in two ways. First, I examine the difference in likelihood of mediation onset in recurring intrastate conflict episodes compared to in initial conflict episodes. Then, I focus exclusively on mediation onset dynamics in recurring intrastate conflict episodes, addressing variation within this group of conflicts. I identify three types of conflict recurrences based on how the previous conflict episode ended. Conflicts can recur after a failed agreement, after a previous military victory, or after the previous episode ended with inactivity. This variation affects the cost-benefit analysis of the belligerents, resulting in different implications for the likelihood of engaging a mediator.

1.1 Main Findings

I examine the research question using quantitative methods. A dataset with information on both conflict recurrence and mediation is assembled using various sources. The final data sample has near global coverage on intrastate conflicts from 1975 to 2013. Regression analyses are conducted to investigate the relationship between conflict recurrence and mediation onset.

First, I explore the difference in likelihood of mediation onset in recurring and initial (non-recurring) intrastate conflict episodes. Descriptive numbers suggest that mediation onset is slightly less common in recurring conflict episodes than in initial episodes. However, when controlling for relevant variables in multivariate regression models, the negative relationship loses statistical significance. The main finding in this part of the analysis is that recurrence per se does not negatively affect the likelihood of mediation onset.

Second, I focus exclusively on recurring intrastate conflict episodes and investigate differences within this conflict type. More precisely, I explore how the likelihood of mediation onset is affected by the outcome of the previous conflict episode. I find that

conflicts recurring after the previous episode ended with a negotiated agreement, are more likely to see mediation onset than conflicts recurring after the previous episode ended with inactivity. Mediation onset also seems to be more likely in recurring conflict episodes after an agreement than after military victory. However, this finding fails to reach statistical significance and can therefore not be concluded.

My findings contribute to advancing the field on mediation onset. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first attempt at actively addressing the impact of conflict recurrence on mediation onset. Previous conflict history seems to affect the conflict actors' decision to accept mediation. More research should actively consider historical ties between actors when investigating decision-making behavior in ongoing conflicts.

1.2 Thesis Outline

The structure of the thesis is as follows. First, I clarify the use of the concepts *conflict*, *armed conflict*, and *war* in the next section. In the next chapter, I review the literatures on peace negotiations in intrastate conflicts and conflict recurrence. I situate my thesis within these fields of research, before I identify the gap this thesis will contribute to fill.

The third chapter presents the theoretical framework used in this thesis. I draw on bargaining theory of war and explain how a war can be seen as an extreme bargaining situation. Then I explain the role of mediation in civil war. Finally, I theorize how war recurrence affects the bargaining situation and thus the likelihood of mediation onset. I derive hypotheses to be tested in the empirical analysis.

Chapter 4 presents the dataset assembled for this thesis and the various sources I draw the data from. Additionally, I explain the operationalizations used for my dependent variable, explanatory variables, and control variables.

In the Methods chapter, I explain the statistical model used in the empirical analysis. Furthermore, I discuss some methodological challenges associated with my chosen statistical model and measures taken to overcome them.

The results of the empirical analysis is presented in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 discusses some broader implications of two main findings from the empirical analysis. In Chapter 7, I also highlight some important limitations of my research and suggest avenues for future research. Finally, in Chapter 8, I summarize my research and hint at some policy implications of my findings.

1.3 Clarifications

1.3.1 *Conflict*, *Armed Conflict*, and *War*

The terms "conflict", "armed conflict", and "war" will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis unless stated otherwise. This decision is not meant as an argument for the concepts being identical. Indeed, distinguishing between them is essential in some research. The term "conflict" is an everyday term, not implying any use of violence per se. However, when referring to conflicts in International Relations (IR) conflict research, these are often violent and labelled "armed conflicts". The violence must also result in a minimum number of deaths to be considered an armed conflict. A common threshold, used by e.g., the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), is 25 battle-related deaths (BRD) per year (Pettersson et al., 2021). Finally, a "war" is often considered a particularly intense armed conflict, with a higher number of deaths. The UCDP defines a war as a conflict reaching at least 1000 BRD in a calendar year (Pettersson et al., 2021).

Regardless of the differences between the three terms, I argue that using them interchangeably is purposeful in this thesis. First of all, this thesis is only concerned with armed conflicts. Researching non-violent conflicts is of great importance, also within conflict research, but such conflicts are not the focus of this study. Consequently, when referring to conflicts, these are always armed conflicts, unless specified otherwise. Secondly, I do not distinguish between war and (armed) conflict. I am interested in armed conflicts of both low and high intensity. Labelling them as either "wars" or "armed conflicts" based on a specific threshold would create a dichotomy that is not present in this thesis. Therefore, the terms "conflict" and "war" will be used interchangeably to cover both low- and high-intensity conflicts.[1]

[1] The exact violence threshold for a conflict to be included in my own analysis, will be presented in the chapter on *Data and Operationalizations*.

2. Literature Review

This thesis is situated both within the literature on conflict resolution and peace negotiations in civil wars, and the literature on conflict recurrence. Both strands of research will be outlined below with a focus on the parts relevant for the thesis' research question. When looking at the literature on peace negotiations, emphasis will be put on a particular type of negotiations, namely mediation. Then, I will draw on the literature focusing on the onset of mediation, looking at the main factors identified as essential to explain the occurrence of mediation. With regards to conflict recurrence, I spend time on defining the concept before looking at the literature examining why and when civil wars recur. Finally, I intend to bridge the two strands of literature by identifying a research gap and discussing how this thesis contributes to filling this gap.

2.1 Peace Negotiations in Intrastate Conflicts

For an intrastate conflict to terminate peacefully, the warring parties need to reach some sort of negotiated settlement instead of settling their differences on the battlefield. Given the enormous costs of armed conflict, negotiating a solution to disputes, instead of forcing it by military means, intuitively seems like an attractive option. Nevertheless, many conflicts run their course without seeing peace negotiations, and the success of negotiations vary greatly in different conflicts (Arı, 2023; Kaplow, 2016). I focus on the peace negotiations that involve a third-party mediator.

2.1.1 Mediation

With regards to the study of peace negotiations in civil wars, most attention has been given to a particular type of negotiations, namely mediation. There exists some variation concerning the definition of international mediation, but most scholars define it as

> (…) a process of conflict management where disputants seek the assistance of, or accept an offer of help from, an individual, group, state or organization to settle their conflict or resolve their differences without resorting to physical force or invoking the authority of the law. (Bercovitch et al., 1991, p. 8)

Two main features from this definition distinguish mediation from other conflict management tools: mediation's voluntary nature and the involvement of a third party. First, the fact that

mediation is voluntary for all parties involved sets it apart from management tools such as military intervention and economic sanctions. Second, mediation is different from bilateral negotiations, because a third party is involved. Who this mediator is varies from conflict to conflict. The most common mediator is a representative of a state, often from a major power. Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) are also likely to mediate civil wars, with the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) as prominent actors. Finally, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals sometimes also mediate (DeRouen et al., 2011; Menninga, 2020).

The literature on international mediation, with regards to both interstate- and intrastate conflicts can be organized into three sections: the antecedents of mediation, mediation approaches and mediation outcome.[2] Antecedents of mediation is concerned with the period prior to (potential) mediation and relevant conditions facilitating the occurrence of mediation. This is the focus of this thesis, and the following section is devoted to exploring the current state of the literature on mediation onset. The literature on mediation approaches covers the various strategies a mediator can pursue. Finally, a considerable share of the literature on mediation is concerned with mediation outcome. This body of research looks at the different outcomes of mediation, both short-term and long-term, and the various factors influencing these outcomes (Duursma, 2014). Even though these phases of the mediation process can be, and sometimes are, studied separately, they are highly interdependent and often studied simultaneously. This encourages a short introduction to the literatures on mediation approaches and mediation outcome.

How a mediator approaches a conflict varies significantly. Even though the mediator has been accepted by the conflict parties, it is not merely a bystander to the conflict. The mediator has an active role in resolving the conflict, and this role can be performed in different ways. One common way to categorize mediator approaches is based on the degree of intervention (Duursma, 2014). Beardsley et al. (2006) distinguish between facilitative, formulative, and manipulative mediation. Facilitative mediation entails low levels of intervention, and the mediator makes no substantive contribution to the negotiations. The mediator's task is to facilitate communication between the conflict actors. A higher level of intervention takes place when formulative mediation is used. With this approach, the mediator helps identify

[2] See Duursma (2014) for a brilliant literature review on international mediation, encapsulating both interstate- and intrastate wars.

solutions to the conflict that are acceptable to the belligerents. Finally, the most intervening form of mediation is manipulative mediation. Manipulative mediators use their position or leverage to influence the negotiations. By incentivizing the actors, using both "sticks and carrots", the mediator pushes the belligerents toward a solution (Beardsley et al., 2006).

As mediation is meant to contribute to resolving conflicts, a natural focus in the mediation literature is whether it is successful in this regard. Most studies find that a conflict is more likely to end with a formal, negotiated agreement when mediation is used (Beardsley, 2008; Beardsley et al., 2006; Kathman & Shannon, 2016). The use of mediation is also associated with a reduction in violence (Ruhe, 2021). However, when it comes to producing lasting peace, mediation is less effective, and perhaps even ineffective (Beardsley, 2008).

There are also various factors affecting the outcome of mediation attempts. Some of these factors are related to who the mediator is and how it behaves in a conflict. What approach the mediator chooses, how powerful and knowledgeable the mediator is, and whether the mediator is biased toward one conflict actor, can affect the outcome of the mediation attempt (Beardsley et al., 2006; Kathman & Shannon, 2016; Svensson, 2007b, 2007a; Wiegand et al., 2021). Other factors, such as relative rebel strength and the government's reputational concerns also affect the likelihood of mediation success (Clayton, 2013; Keels & Greig, 2019). Finally, some studies also look at the effect of mediation in combination with other resolution tools. Mediation combined with humanitarian aid is found to increase the chances of civil wars ending (Greig, 2021). Additionally, mediation in tandem with peacekeeping has a positive effect on agreement duration (DeRouen & Chowdhury, 2018).

2.1.2 Mediation Onset

The big question in the literature on mediation onset in intrastate conflict is: when do mediation occur? When answering that question, there are three central actors to consider: the country's government, the rebel group, and the potential mediator. Given the fact that mediation is voluntary to all parties involved, the literature has focused on the motives of all three parties to engage in mediated peace talks.

To consider the motives of all three actors are important. However, evidence points to the fact that some third-party will be ready to provide mediation in a conflict, if the conflict actors are ready (Clayton & Gleditsch, 2014). As such, I will only consider the conflict actors'

motivation in this thesis. This decision is further justified by the fact that this thesis is only interested in whether mediation takes place in a conflict. The focus is not on what kind of mediator that potentially mediates a conflict. Regardless, before I explore the literature on the conflict actors' motivation, I briefly mention contributions in the literature that investigate the potential mediator's motives.

The Mediator's Motives

Clayton and Gleditsch (2014) argue that third parties are likely to offer mediation when they have an interest in the resolution of the conflict and when they believe that mediation will have a positive effect. As mediation is not without potential costs, both reputational, political, and strategic, for the mediator, the benefits must outweigh the costs. Geographical proximity is one factor that might increase a third-party's willingness to mediate. Civil wars are often not strictly confined within borders and are often likely to affect the stability of the geographic region. Therefore, third party actors have an incentive to engage in intrastate conflicts in its neighborhood (Greig & Regan, 2008; Scalera & Wiegand, 2018). The country experiencing armed conflict can also have other linkages with a third party, making involvement more likely. Examples of such linkages are alliance partnerships and historical ties. Prior efforts at resolving the conflict, both military and diplomatic, might also increase the likelihood of a third party offering to mediate. Evidence points to this effect being particularly strong when the same actor was engaged earlier, but there is also a positive effect when a different actor was engaged (Greig & Regan, 2008).

Another factor likely to influence a third party's willingness to offer mediation to the belligerents in a civil war is the potential mediator's economic affinity with the country experiencing the armed conflict. However, in what way the economic relationship influences the likelihood of the third-party offering mediation is found to be ambiguous in the literature. Greig and Regan (2008) theorized that extensive trade ties between the parties would increase the likelihood for a mediation offer, but found the opposite relationship in their empirical analysis. On the other hand, Scalera and Wiegand (2018) find a positive relationship between economic affinity and the likelihood that a third party will mediate. They look at EU's motivation for mediating and find that EU is more likely to mediate when the country experiencing armed conflict have higher amounts of trade with Germany (Scalera & Wiegand, 2018).

The Conflict Actors' Motives

The decision by the conflict actors to engage in mediation resembles the decision of the potential mediator in that the benefits must outweigh the costs for them to accept mediation. Mediation onset requires both the government and the rebel group to reach the conclusion that mediation is preferable to continued warfare. What factors influence these cost-benefit calculations? As both the government and the rebel group are parties to the same conflict, some factors influence the calculations of both parties. However, as the belligerents have different characteristics and different starting positions in the war, their calculations will also be affected differently by various factors.

I. W. Zartman was an early contributor to the literature on timing of peace initiatives, with his seminal work, *Ripe for Resolution*, published in 1985.[3] In his contribution, Zartman argues that a conflict must reach a ripe moment before the conflict parties will turn to methods of peaceful resolution. In other words, for the belligerents in an armed conflict to turn to mediation, they must be ready to do so (Zartman, 2008). This resembles a tautology, and Zartman's ideas have indeed been criticized for stating the obvious.[4] Nevertheless, his ideas have to a great extent been used as a steppingstone for much of the literature on mediation onset. In particular the ideas of a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS). An MHS is present in a conflict when the disputants feel locked in a painful conflict with no way of escalating to victory. When this is the case, a peaceful resolution will appear more attractive to the conflict actors and thus more likely. Zartman stresses that it is the conflict actors' perception of a ripe moment that is essential. However, this perception is largely based on objective elements of an MHS, such as high numbers of casualties and considerable material costs (Zartman, 2008).

Arguably the most recognized factors in the literature affecting the likelihood of mediation onset, are conflict duration and intensity. These factors have a clear link to Zartman's MHS concept. There exists some variation in the literature, but overall, the main finding is that the longer a conflict endures and the more intense it is, the higher the likelihood of mediation occurring (Böhmelt, 2021; DeRouen et al., 2011). Duration is often measured in years or months and intensity in battle-related deaths (BRD). Mediation is more attractive in longer and deadlier wars because of the increased costs of continued fighting.

[3] A more recent version of Zartman's ripeness theory will be referred to here, namely his contribution to Darby and Ginty's book, *Contemporary Peacemaking*, published in 2008.
[4] See for example: O'kane (2006).

Another, widely accepted, empirical finding is that mediation is more likely to occur when the rebel group poses a serious, military threat to the government. The more powerful the rebels are, relative to the government, the more costs it can inflict on the incumbent. These increased costs will make the government more willing to accept mediation (Clayton, 2013).[5] This positive relationship is also connected to battlefield dynamics. Mediation becomes more likely as the rebels achieve victories on the battlefield and are able to sustain military activities close to the country's major cities (Greig, 2015).

Governments are also concerned with their reputation. Accepting mediation can be seen as a signal of weakness, displaying that it is not able to defeat its challengers and thus willing to give concessions to rebel groups posing a threat. This reluctance of engaging in mediation is not directly related to the costs of the ongoing conflict. Instead, agreeing to mediation now could increase costs in the future as other potential challengers could be encouraged to take up arms against the state. Therefore, when there are many potential challengers to a government, the government is less likely to accept mediation. One way of identifying potential challengers in a country is by looking at the number of ethnic groups excluded from the political process (Keels & Greig, 2019).

Finally, a much-cited finding in the mediation onset literature, is that the likelihood of mediation occurring in a civil war is affected by the rebels' objectives. Intrastate conflicts fought over territory are more likely to be mediated than other conflicts, such as conflicts over increased political power. An explanation is that in territorial conflicts, the rebel group only needs to challenge the government in one particular area. The government might not be able to project all its superior force in some peripheral area. This facilitates the possibility that rebels can challenge the state regardless of their inferiority, and thus force mediation onset (Clayton, 2016; DeRouen et al., 2011; Lutmar & Terris, 2018).

2.2 Conflict Recurrence

The other strand of research relevant for this thesis is concerned with conflict recurrence. This academic literature has grown concurrently with the recognition of recurring wars being one

[5] Even though the rebels would become more powerful than the government, they would still be interested in participating in mediated peace talks. As a rebel group does not enjoy the legitimacy of a government, they have incentives to gain the recognition of participating in mediated peace talks (Clayton, 2013).

of the main obstacles to countries seeing durable peace. As mentioned in the introduction, more than half of all countries experiencing civil war see a return to internal armed conflict. In fact, previous armed conflict within a state is one of the best predictors for the country experiencing civil war in the future (Kreutz, 2020; Walter, 2013). As the word *recurrence* refers to something that happens again, the meaning of *civil conflict recurrence*, at its most basic, is a civil conflict starting again after being terminated sometime in the past. A general academic definition is provided by Bara et al. (2021): "Civil war recurrence, by most accounts, thus refers to a return to collective violence between a government and a rebel group over a political incompatibility that reaches a certain level of intensity" (Bara et al., 2021, p. 916).

There are four key theoretical dimensions to this general definition, concerned with; the government actor, the rebel group actor, their incompatibility, and a violence threshold (Bara et al., 2021). The first dimension, concerned with the government, is more or less undisputed in the literature. Following the definitions of the UCDP, and most other academic definitions, the government must be a party to the armed conflict for it to be considered an intrastate conflict. A government is usually considered the party controlling the state's capital (UCDP, n.d.). In relation to recurring intrastate conflicts, this means that the government must be party to both the previous conflict episode and the repeat one.

The second and third dimensions, concerned with the rebel group and the stated incompatibility, are more contested in the literature. Mainly, there is a debate on how to treat temporal changes of the rebel group and the incompatibility from one conflict episode to the next. All scholars would agree to a statement saying that a conflict is recurring if there has been a return to armed conflict between the exact same actors over the same incompatibility as the previous episode. However, variation exists with regards to allowing for changes in the armed opposition and incompatibility between the previous episode and the recurring one. There is no straightforward answer to the question: Is a conflict recurring if the new armed conflict episode is between different actors from the previous one and over a different incompatibility? The question is even more difficult to answer if the rebel group and incompatibility only slightly changes. Some studies have conceptualized recurrence in a strict sense, only treating a new conflict episode as a recurrence if it is between the same actors and over the same incompatibility as the previous episode (Gromes, 2019; Gromes & Ranft, 2021; Walter, 2015). Other scholars look at the country-level, arguing that a country experiences

conflict recurrence if it sees return to armed conflict, independent of what actors are challenging the state and what the stated incompatibilities are (Collier et al., 2003). Finally, some scholars allow for some change in the rebel actor. For example, allowing for new groups to join the rebel group challenging the state, as long as some of the original rebel group's combatants participate in the new conflict (Zeigler, 2016).

Finally, the fourth dimension to Bara et al.'s (2021) general definition is concerned with a violence threshold. All scholars operate with a specific violence threshold that must be crossed for violent clashes within a country to be classified as an intrastate conflict. The typical measure for this is to count battle-related deaths (BRD), and the most used cutoffs are arguably 25 and 1000.[6] Variation among the studies looking at conflict recurrence is related to what violence threshold is applied for a violent event to be considered an intrastate conflict in the first place. Additionally, there is some variation with regards to the repeat conflict episode. Whether the selected violence threshold for the original conflict episode must be reached anew, or if the threshold is altered when considering recurrence. Moreover, how long must peace (period below the selected violence threshold) endure before armed conflict is restarted for it to be considered a conflict recurrence and not just part of the original conflict episode?

These cutoffs, for both level of violence and duration of peace, is to some extent always arbitrary. However, studies have applied various cutoffs for different reasons. Nilsson and Svensson (2021) uses 25 BRD per calendar year and explains that this is in line with many other studies on conflict termination and recurrence. One of the advantages of using this low threshold is that more conflicts can be studied, and one can distinguish between low-intensity and high-intensity conflicts. They use the 25 BRD per calendar year for both the initiation of the original conflict episode and for recurrence. The armed conflict then recurs if the threshold is reached again after minimum one calendar year below the threshold (Nilsson & Svensson, 2021). A different example with regards to both violence threshold and duration of peace is Walter (2015). She sets the threshold to 1000 BRD per year and the war does not recur until it reaches this threshold again after two years of peace.[7] Her rationale for this high

[6] E.g.: For an intrastate conflict to be included in the UCDP database it must reach 25 BRD per year, while the Correlates of War (COW) project applies a threshold of at least 1000 BRD during the conflict.
[7] To be regarded as peace, there has to be minimum two years below the violence threshold of 1000 BRD per year, and at least one of those years must be below 25 BRD per year (Walter, 2015).

threshold and relatively long peaceful period is to avoid classifying an ongoing but less severe conflict as a recurrence (Walter, 2015). A third approach to the violence threshold can be found in The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) Conflict Recurrence Database. The original conflict episode is identified using the 25 BRD per year threshold, but after this every violent event related to that conflict is counted. For a conflict episode to be considered a recurrence in this database, a violent event of any size must happen after one calendar year of peace (Jarland et al., 2020).

2.2.1 Why do some Civil Wars Recur?

In this section, the focus will be on the main substantial matter that has been dominant in the academic literature on civil conflict recurrence. The question that has fostered a plethora of different answers is: why do some civil wars recur? Or put differently: Why does peace last for a long time after some civil wars, while others see a rapid return to armed conflict? This section will give an overview of some of these answers, focusing on those that can give valuable insight related to the thesis' research question. Most explanations in the academic literature can roughly be divided into four different strands. One strand focuses on how certain attributes of a state that contributed to the initiation of the initial conflict episode, might also be (partly) responsible for the subsequent one. Second, some of the literature argue that the character and dynamics of the initial conflict episode can affect the chances of conflict recurrence. The third strand is concerned with how the termination of the initial conflict episode affects the likelihood of recurrence. Finally, some scholars look at how variation in post-conflict environments can affect the prospects of recurrence (Karlén, 2017). These four strands of explanations will be explored below. The third strand, concerned with how the previous war was terminated, will be presented last as this strand is the most insightful for the thesis.

State Attributes

Many studies pertain to the first strand, focusing on the fact that states with certain attributes are prone to intrastate conflict. These attributes increase the likelihood of civil war onset in general, including both initial and repeat episodes. Furthermore, some of the attributes are aggravated by war itself, thus further increasing the chances of renewed warfare, sparking what is often labelled the "conflict trap". The most well-established factor promoting war initiation (and recurrence) is economic development. Low economic development and low

quality of life in a country leads to increased risk of civil war. War has detrimental economic consequences, worsening the situation, which results in an even greater risk of war recurrence (Collier et al., 2003; Walter, 2004).

Dynamics of the Previous Conflict Episode

The second strand is concerned with the effect of the characteristics and dynamics of the initial conflict episode. One such characteristic is duration. Studies find that the longer the initial conflict episode lasted, the better the chances that peace will endure and recurrence will be avoided (Walter, 2004). Second, when the rebels in a civil war have more ambitious goals, for example seeking a complete overhaul of the country's political system instead of minor reforms, the chances of recurrence are higher (Kreutz, 2010). Other, more specific characteristics have been identified in recent studies. The use of private military and security companies in civil wars has been found to increase the likelihood of the war reigniting (Bara & Kreutz, 2022). Nilsson and Svensson (2021) find that civil wars involving Islamist actors are more likely to recur.

Post-Conflict Environment

Variation in the post-conflict environment can also affect the likelihood of war recurrence. A first, somewhat intuitive finding, is that the likelihood of war recurrence decreases the longer peace can be sustained. This means that the chance of relapsing into conflict is greatest in the first years after the initial conflict episode (Kreutz, 2010; Quinn et al., 2007). It is also shown that bad governance and weak institutions in the aftermath of a civil war increase the chances of recurrence (Walter, 2015). Some post-war factors also play into the "conflict trap"-dynamics. Walter (2004) finds that if people's quality of life is reduced in a post-civil war environment, the more likely the war is to recur. Additionally, post-war economic development, reduces the probability of civil war recurrence (Quinn et al., 2007). How the country's security forces are organized after a civil war also plays an important role. If the appointment of officers is diverse and based on merits, and the people has oversight and control of the process, then the chance of recurrence is reduced (Berg, 2020). Finally, the combination of a country's military being an important part of the post-conflict economy, and rebel forces being kept separate during the integration of the military, increases the likelihood of recurrence (Bussmann, 2019).

Termination of the Previous Conflict Episode

The literature concerned with the effect of war termination on war recurrence is particularly insightful for this thesis. This literature will prove useful even though the dependent variable (DV) of interest is the onset of a repeat conflict episode and not the onset of mediation as is the case for this thesis. The reason is that the independent variable (IV), war termination, is similar to the IV of this thesis. Lessons can thus be learned from understanding the consequences of different types of war termination. The main bulk of the literature focuses on the different effects of military victory, both government and rebel victory, and negotiated agreements on peace duration. However, there is no unambiguous answer provided to what outcome is the most "favorable" in terms of peace duration.

Most studies looking at the effect of war termination on conflict recurrence have found that military victories perform better than negotiated agreements in terms of peace duration (Kreutz, 2010; Ohmura, 2011). However, the answer is more nuanced and not as straightforward. First, there are differences with regards to what conflict actor is victorious. Quinn et al. (2007) find that rebel victories are more stable and less likely to break down into renewed conflict than government victories. Kreutz (2010) argues that the opposite is true, that conflicts ending in government victory are particularly stable and less likely to recur than negotiated agreements or rebel victories. Other studies have challenged the conventional wisdom that victories are more stable than negotiated agreements. By disaggregating and investigating the underpinning assumptions of the claim that victories perform better, Gromes and Ranft (2021) find no support for this claim. Another study suggests that the positive effect of victory on peace duration is reversed if the rebel actor challenging the state was a coalition plagued by internal rivalry. This is especially the case following rebel victory (Zeigler, 2016).

In addition to being studied in contrast to military victories, the effect of negotiated agreements on peace duration has been scrutinized. How the agreements are arranged, especially with regards to security guarantees, has been found to influence the duration of the peace. It is widely-cited in the literature that negotiated agreements combined with the deployment of international peacekeeping forces strengthens the peace and reduces the likelihood of war recurrence (Almuslem, 2020; Kreutz, 2010; Quinn et al., 2007).[8] However,

[8] Ohmura (2011) counters this by saying that negotiated settlements are not related to sustainable peace, regardless of the deployment of peacekeeping forces. Instead, the positive effect of military victory on peace duration is strengthened if combined with peacekeeping forces (Ohmura, 2011).

some have questioned the effect of peacekeeping, arguing that its effect is dependent on a conducive environment (Gromes, 2019). Finally, some studies have also looked at other aspects of the negotiated agreement than security guarantees. For instance, Keels and Mason (2019) find that the risk of renewed fighting is reduced when land reform provisions are included in peace agreements.

2.3 Research Gap: Mediation Onset in Recurring Civil Wars

The reviews of the literature on mediation onset and on civil war recurrence given above, do in combination conclude in the research gap that this thesis will contribute to fill. This gap is concerned with how the mediation onset dynamics are in recurring intrastate conflicts. As seen above, the literature on mediation onset has identified and examined a plethora of factors relevant to the occurrence of mediation in civil wars. Additionally, there is a vast literature on conflict recurrence, investigating why so many intrastate conflicts recur, and discussing how to avoid it. Nevertheless, a combination of the two strands of research is rarely observed.

The literature on mediation onset has to a great extent studied intrastate conflict episodes separately.[9] Intrastate conflicts are usually treated in one of two ways. The first, and most common, way is to treat conflict episodes in isolation (Böhmelt, 2021; Clayton, 2013; Keels & Greig, 2019). A period of active conflict is examined without considering the potential impact of a previous period of active conflict between the actors. Secondly, some treat periods of active fighting, and inactive periods between actors, as part of the same conflict (Arı, 2023). In these instances, historical ties between the actors are considered. However, this way of treating conflicts might fail to account for the potential effect of active conflict episodes periodically terminating.

A reason why it is important to study mediation onset dynamics in recurring intrastate conflict episodes, is the fact that the dynamics are likely to be influenced by the repetition of events. Repeat events are likely to be highly contingent. "Whether through learning, path dependence, or other mechanisms, it is almost always the case that our subjects – be they voters, nations, or others – respond differently to reoccurrences of the same phenomena" (Box-Steffensmeier & Zorn, 2002, p. 1070).

[9] DeRouen et al. (2011) is an exception, briefly looking at the effect of conflict recurrence on mediation onset.

Furthermore, some preliminary analysis suggests that conflict recurrence do in fact influence the likelihood of mediation onset in intrastate conflicts. In their introduction to the new "Civil Wars Mediation" (CWM) dataset, DeRouen et al. (2011) found evidence of mediation becoming less likely with successive wars. As they pointed out, this finding is somewhat contradictory to the well-documented finding that intractable wars are more prone to mediation. They also call attention to the need for more research to understand this relationship (DeRouen et al., 2011). I will further test the negative relationship between conflict recurrence and mediation onset suggested by DeRouen et al. (2011).

Additionally, I will examine recurring conflict episodes more closely. Even though all intrastate conflict recurrences share the feature that they are repeat conflict episodes, they're nature is highly varying. One variation, that will be investigated in this thesis, is the difference in the outcome of the previous conflict episode.

There are generally three main ways in which an intrastate conflict can end, and subsequently three main ways in which it can restart. First, a war can end with a negotiated agreement. This might take the form of a comprehensive peace agreement, or it can be less extensive, such as a ceasefire agreement. Recurrence after this war outcome, entails that at least one of the conflict actors (the government or the rebel group) reneges on the agreement (Kreutz, 2010).

Second, the war outcome might be a military victory to one of the sides. This means that either the government or the rebel group defeats or eliminates the other. The war recurs if the belligerents wage war again in the future (Kreutz, 2010).

Finally, a civil war can also be considered terminated if the chosen violence threshold is not reached or if one of the conflict actors ceases to exist. Multiple explanations exist for why a civil war fails to reach the violence threshold. One of the belligerents might not be capable of resuming the war having suffered extensive blows by the opponent (short of defeat). However, there might also be strategical reasons, such as regrouping or reorientation. A common reason for why an actor ceases to exist is that it forms an alliance with other actors, and thus creates a "new" actor. The war restarts after a period of inactivity when the belligerents again wage war, reaching the violence threshold (Kreutz, 2010). How this variation in conflict recurrence is expected to affect the chances of mediation onset will be theorized using bargaining theory in the next chapter.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this thesis will be based on bargaining theory. Arguably, the most well-known use of bargaining theory in conflict research is to explain the occurrence of war. However, many scholars have also applied bargaining theory to explain war duration and recurrence. In this chapter, I first present the foundation for the bargaining theory of war. Then, I look at how war can be seen as a bargaining breakdown, introducing the central concepts of *information* and *commitment problems*. Thirdly, I explore the view of war being something more than a bargaining breakdown, namely a bargaining process. This section will put emphasis on civil wars. Fourth, the role of mediation in the bargaining situation is explained. Finally, the impact of conflict recurrence on this bargaining situation will be theorized, deriving testable hypotheses for the following analysis.

3.1 Bargaining Theory of War

Bargaining theory has become a leading theoretical framework for the study of a plethora of interactive phenomena in international relations (IR). The theory is rooted in an economic view of interactive settings. Bargaining is seen as the process of coming to an agreement on the provisions of a contract. The process can be thought of as an exchange between a seller and a buyer over an item, where the parties have to agree on a contract that specifies the price for it (Kennan & Wilson, 1993). This way of thinking has been adopted within many fields in political science, perhaps most prominently in conflict research. An extensive list of scholars have applied bargaining theory to understand the many facets of war (Fearon, 1995; Powell, 2002; Reiter, 2003; Smith & Stam, 2004; Wagner, 2000). Bargaining in international politics is about division of gains from joint action between actors. Cooperating in bargaining can be incentivized when there are potential gains from acting jointly. However, the competitive side of bargaining, concerned with the parties' desire to maximize their own share of the gains, is usually emphasized in conflict-/war environments (Powell, 2002).

An important premise in bargaining theory is that the actors involved are considered to be rational and unitary (Fearon, 1995).[10] Rationality implies "(…) that an actor orders one's interests or preferences and makes the choice that ranks in highest in the order in a given situation" (Choi, 2015, p. 111). The central puzzle in bargaining theory of war is: how can the

[10] Rationality will also be assumed in this thesis. This is, however, not meant to discredit explanations based on e.g., *irrationality* or *bounded irrationality*.

occurrence of war between rational actors be explained? A straightforward answer to this question could simply be that war is profitable. This answer misses a vital point, however, namely that war is always costly. A war will always be inefficient *ex post*, because in principle the final outcome of the war could have been agreed upon by the conflict actors without suffering the costs of fighting (Fearon, 1995). So how, then, can it be explained?

3.2 War as Bargaining Breakdown

Probably the most frequently cited article from the literature concerned with conflict research using bargaining theory is James Fearon's (1995) seminal article, *Rationalist Explanations for War*. As the article's title reveals, Fearon (1995) answers how war can occur even though the actors involved are rational (and unitary). He gives multiple reasons for how the bargaining process between two actors can break down and result in war.[11] The terminology he uses, and the way he uses it, has to a great extent become the standard way of applying bargaining theory to the study of war.[12] This is also the case when war is studied as part of the bargaining process and not the breakdown of it, as will be explored below.

Fearon (1995) provides three explanations for why war can occur regardless of war's *ex post* inefficiency puzzle. One explanation is concerned with issue indivisibility. The point of departure for this explanation is that for a bargaining range to exist between two states, the issue at hand must be possible to divide between them. However, what if it is something about the nature of the issue at stake making it impossible to divide? If so, the parties may not be able to find a negotiated solution, making war a plausible outcome. Examples of indivisible issues could be issues regarding who should rule a certain area or what state an area of particular importance should pertain to.[13] However, in practice negotiations between states are usually complex matters involving multiple issues. To solve apparent problems of indivisibility, one side could offer money or other concessions to make up the other side's loss. As such, Fearon (1995) argues that issue indivisibility is a theoretical tenable explanation for war, but probably one of little empirical relevance (Fearon, 1995, pp. 389–

[11] Attentive readers notice that Fearon's (1995) article is based on interstate quarrels while this thesis is concerned with intrastate conflicts. However, his ideas have also proven to be of great relevance in the study of civil war. This will become clear later in the chapter.
[12] It is important to note that Fearon (1995) did not invent the central concepts in bargaining theory. It is his employment and thorough use of the concepts that has become very influential in the studies of war.
[13] Even though the issue of e.g., who should rule a country seems indivisible, it can be argued that in theory it is divisible, by for example agreeing to alternate who rules year by year (Fearon, 1995, pp. 388–389).

390). The other two explanations for war, concerned with information problems and commitment problems, are thus viewed as the main explanations for war.

3.2.1 Information Problems

In the literature on causes of war it is commonly stated that wars can occur due to miscalculations by rational actors. The actors disagree on their relative power relationship, or they miscalculate the other's willingness to fight. Conflicting estimates of the relative power between the actors in dispute, and thus conflicting estimates of who will win a military conflict, can eliminate the bargaining range. In the extreme case that both sides are certain they will win militarily and subsequently can impose their preferred settlement, striking a bargain appears unattractive. The only possible explanation for these miscalculations, under a strict definition of rationality, is the presence of private information. Private information exists when one actor has superior knowledge on relevant factors. In this case, the actors may have private information on factors such as military capabilities, strategies, and plans. When actors have private information, miscalculations on likely outcomes of armed conflict can indeed follow (Fearon, 1995, pp. 390–393). Miscalculations can also eliminate the bargaining range even though the actors agree to their relative power, if they miscalculate the other's willingness to fight (Fearon, 1995, pp. 393–395).

Fearon (1995) agrees with the existing literature that miscalculations due to private information can shrink or eliminate the bargaining range. However, he argues that the existing accounts do not go far enough in explaining *how* the miscalculations result in war. Starting again from the premise that war is costly, if the actors have private information and they know that this could result in war, they have incentives to share the private information to avoid deadly escalation. Therefore, to understand why war occurs, one must understand why states do not share this private information (Fearon, 1995, p. 395). The answer to this is that the actors have incentives to misrepresent or withhold private information to keep, or gain, a strong bargaining position. States may for example have incentives to appear more powerful than they are to get concessions from the other, or act unwilling to fight to avoid appearing as an aggressor (Fearon, 1995, pp. 395–396).

Given the fact that a state has these incentives, and it knows that the other state has the same incentives, how could one trust the information shared by the other actor? If there is a way for the states to convey private information in a trustworthy manner, then the information

problem could be overcome, and war avoided. The problem is that most signals sent by a state cannot be trusted and will not alter the other state's calculations.[14] Signals that can be trusted and that will alter the states' cost-benefit calculations are called costly signals. Such signals could be to build weapons or mobilize troops. However, these signals could even increase the risk of war happening if the other state feels threatened and forced to respond. Finally, for the signal to be "costly" enough, the state might actually have to go to war. The obvious consequence of this, however, is that war is not avoided (Fearon, 1995, pp. 395–401).

3.2.2 Commitment Problems

Although both states have the same assessment of the bargaining range, and the incentives to misrepresent private information have not led to armed conflict, war can still occur. This final mechanism is concerned with commitment problems. Two states cannot reach a negotiated agreement because for structural reasons they cannot trust each other to uphold the deal. The structural conditions of anarchy play a big role in this explanation. Fearon (1995) presents two distinct situations in which at least one of the states has incentives to renege on a peaceful bargain.[15] The peaceful bargain would be mutually preferable to war if it could be enforced, something that the anarchic international system puts a stopper on (Fearon, 1995, pp. 401–402).

The first situation in which a war could result from commitment problems is called preemptive war. To explain this, Fearon (1995) provides a gunslinger analogy and applies the logic to an international conflict situation. The logic is that states would prefer to defeat its opponent, escaping the fear of retaliation. However, a peaceful bargain would be preferable to a costly war. A problem arises if military technology creates offensive advantages, ensuring that striking first in a potential battle is advantageous. As anarchy makes sure that no power can enforce the peaceful solution, the states may be incentivized to strike first out of fear of being second. In this way, war could be the result. Empirically, this logic would more likely narrow the bargaining range and exacerbate other causes of war than eliminating the bargaining range completely (Fearon, 1995, pp. 402–404).

[14] These signals are often referred to as "cheap talk".
[15] Fearon (1995) actually presents three situations. However, the logic in the third situation is strikingly similar to the logic of preventive war and thus not presented here (Fearon, 1995, pp. 408–409).

Preventive war is the second situation in which commitment problems can result in war. This logic is arguably more empirically prevalent and important than the preemptive logic. When explaining this, Fearon (1995) introduces a dynamic component in his bargaining model, meant to display that state leaders consider the future when making decisions. This explanation for war is that without some third party capable of enforcing agreements (which is the anarchic feature), one state may not be able to commit to a deal in the future. Because of this, the other state might be incentivized to attack now instead of striking a bargain. Consider a dispute between State A and State B. State B is more powerful than State A at a given time, t_1. State A, however, is a rising power and will be more powerful than State B at a later time, t_2. If a bargain was struck in t_1, State A would not be able to credibly commit not to renege on the deal in t_2. The reason is that State A knows that it will be stronger in t_2 and thus could demand more. State B anticipates this and will therefore go to war in t_1, when it is strongest, out of fear of the unfavorable bargain it will have to accept in t_2. War is therefore used as a preventive measure (Fearon, 1995, pp. 404–408).

To sum up this section, war can be seen as the result of bargaining breakdown. For war to occur between rational actors, the bargaining environment must be ridden with information or commitment problems. Other scholars argue that bargaining continues even though war erupts. This view will be explored below. Information and commitment problems remain central concepts in this alternative view of war.

3.3 War as a Bargaining Process

It seems intuitive to think that bargaining stops when extensive violence breaks out. However, many scholars argue that war can be seen as a bargaining situation, albeit an extreme one (Powell, 2002; Reiter, 2003; Smith & Stam, 2004; Wagner, 2000). A criticism directed at the literature treating war as a bargaining breakdown is the empirical fact that most wars do not end in decisive military victory. They end with some sort of bargained outcome (Reiter, 2003; Smith & Stam, 2004). Therefore, seeing war as a costly lottery occurring when bargaining fails, “randomly” drawing a winner, seems empirically implausible. Instead, the tradition treating war as part of the bargaining process, argues that all aspects of war can be analyzed using bargaining theory.

> Fighting breaks out when two sides cannot reach a bargain that both prefer to war. Each side fights to improve its chances of getting a desirable settlement of the disputed issue. The war ends when the two sides strike a bargain that both prefer to continuing the war, and the outcome is literally the bargain struck. Finally, the duration of peace following the war reflects the willingness of both sides not to break the war-ending bargain. (Reiter, 2003, p. 29)

This way of understanding war is not new and can be traced all the way back to Carl von Clausewitz. In his pioneering book *On War* (*Vom Kriege*), Clausewitz argued that war was not something distinctively different from politics. Instead, he stated that war was an extension of politics, a tool to reach political goals (Clausewitz, 1976, pp. 87–88). In more recent times, Thomas Schelling is viewed by many as the first to frame conflict situations as bargaining situations. He encapsulates this bargaining situation in an enlightening manner by stating that bargaining between actors can be both explicit and tacit. Explicit bargaining refers to the intuitive form of bargaining, where the two parties talk to each other and e.g., offer concessions. However, tacit bargaining, seen as moves and countermoves on the battlefield is also of great importance in the bargaining situation (Schelling, 1960, pp. 5–6). Treating all facets of war as part of the bargaining process, instead of "only" the outbreak of war, is beneficial in this thesis. The duration, outcome and consequences of war is of interest here when looking at what impact conflict recurrence has on the conflict actors' decision to initiate mediation.

The literature seeing war as a bargaining process has to a great extent employed the same concepts as the literature on the outbreak of war, when explaining war's variation. Therefore, *information* and *commitment* remain as key terms when explaining the duration, outcome, and consequences of war. These terms have been used in a similar fashion when explaining both interstate and intrastate wars. However, there is also some variation between the two types of wars. Literature on both interstate and intrastate conflicts will be utilized below when explaining the relevance of information and commitment problems to understand duration, outcomes, and consequences of war. The particularities of these problems in intrastate conflicts will be emphasized as these conflicts are the focus of this thesis.

3.3.1 Information Problems

As explained earlier, war can actually occur as a way of revealing credible information about capabilities or resolve. If war is not seen as the "endgame" of bargaining, then this information-revealing ability that fighting has can continue to play a role during the war. As the fighting continues, an increasing amount of credible information about the other actor's ability to inflict and absorb costs is revealed. When credible information is continuously conveyed, the actors have less private information and their beliefs about how the war will probably end, will converge. The fighting does, therefore, not necessarily result in one side winning, but instead it resolves the actors' differences of opinions on what the end of the war will look like (Smith & Stam, 2004; Wagner, 2000).

When "enough" information is revealed, and the actors have similar beliefs about how the distribution of the issue at stake will look like if the war is fought to the end, then the actors should be able to reach a negotiated agreement. A bargaining space is created by means of war as there is no longer disagreement between the belligerents on the other's capabilities and resolve (Reiter, 2003). Smith and Stam (2004) say that the actors' beliefs will converge if the war continues sufficiently long without either side winning decisively. When their beliefs have converged sufficiently, then the actors will prefer to make a deal right away, because waiting only entails suffering more costs (Smith & Stam, 2004).

The informational situation in a war can also affect the consequences, and potential recurrence, of the war. War is more likely to recur after short wars than after long wars because enough credible information might not have been revealed in short wars. The longer the initial conflict episode, and the more battles that are fought, the greater the convergence of beliefs in the two actors' estimate of what future battle outcomes would look like. A greater convergence of beliefs at the end of a war thus leads to a more stable peace, making recurrence less likely (Reiter, 2003; Smith & Stam, 2004). Nevertheless, should a subsequent conflict episode break out after a long initial conflict, then it should be relatively short. The reason is that much of the learning needed to negotiate an agreement happened during the initial conflict episode. However, this convergence of beliefs should diminish over time after the initial episode because the common learning process ends when the war ends (Smith & Stam, 2004).

Applying the same logic as in the argument above, saying longer wars reveal more credible information, the way the war ends can also affect the informational situation. War is found to be more likely to recur after stalemated outcomes than after non-stalemated ones (Box-Steffensmeier et al., 2003). Smith and Stam (2004) argue that this could be because the disputants' beliefs have not converged sufficiently when a conflict ends in a stalemate, implying that the belligerents still disagree about each other's capabilities. A war can also be more likely to recur if there is new information available after the war. When the war comes to an end, and information about capabilities has been revealed, the outcome is considered to reflect the distribution of power. If this power balance changes considerably, then the war might restart to realign the distribution of goods in accordance with the new information. The problem of incentives to misrepresent private information, that explained the outbreak of the initial conflict episode, can thus be in play again to explain its recurrence (Werner, 1999).

Information problems are often considered to be more acute in intrastate wars than in interstate wars, despite the fact that the belligerents live and operate within the same border. In an interstate war, both states are considered to have a relatively clear picture about the other's capabilities and resolve from the outset. This is not the case in intrastate wars, where the informational situation is more asymmetric. The government and the rebel group will both be uncertain about the other's resolve. However, this information should arguably be revealed relatively quickly in a war. With regards to information about capabilities, on the other side, the rebel group has more information about the government, than the government has of it (Greig, 2015; Walter, 2013).

One reason why the rebels have a favorable position with regards to the balance of information, is that the actor challenging the government is often multifaceted. Insurgents often consist of multiple factions that change substantially during a conflict, complicating the government's task of attaining relevant information about them (Walter, 2013). Additionally, the nature of many civil wars makes it difficult to estimate the rebels' capabilities. Rebel groups often employ guerrilla tactics. This entails avoiding overt combat, hiding among civilians, carrying out hit-and-run attacks, and targeting only particular targets (Kathman & Shannon, 2016; Mattes & Savun, 2010; Walter, 2013). Additionally, rebel groups typically misrepresent information during war to strengthen their bargaining position (Keels & Greig, 2019). All these features make it difficult for the government to get a good assessment of the rebel group's strength, resulting in an environment less conducive to a negotiated agreement.

3.3.2 Commitment Problems

In addition to information problems, commitment problems also affect the duration, outcome, and aftermath of a war. Even though the conflict actors can overcome the information problem, a settlement might be prevented by commitment problems.

Leventoğlu and Slantchev (2007) illustrate how a commitment problem related to resolving a war can take the opposite form of the commitment problem that caused it. They argue that the conflict actors cannot credibly commit to not negotiate in the future. Both actors know that the other will want to settle the conflict as soon as possible, due to conflict's high costs. A commitment by Actor A to sustain fighting beyond the opportunity for peace is seen as incredible. The perceived costs of war are limited for Actor B because it knows that Actor A will not sustain fighting beyond the opportunity for peace. With lower expected costs, Actor B demands so much that Actor A prefers to continue fighting than concede. However, Leventoğlu and Slantchev (2007) argue that fighting can resolve this commitment problem and thus help end the war. The reason is that war is destructive, making the potential gains from winning smaller as war endures. As continuation becomes less attractive, it would take weaker threats by Actor A to prevent Actor B from exploiting the peace negotiations. The incredible threat to wage a long war that prevented an agreement earlier in the war is thus made credible by the destructive force of war itself (Leventoğlu & Slantchev, 2007).

The importance of commitment problems has been highlighted in the literature on intrastate conflicts. Fearon (2004) explains how commitment problems can make civil wars difficult to end. Due to fluctuations in the government's capabilities, rebel groups can inflict severe pain on the incumbent. During these periods of relative weakness, the government might have incentives to give concessions to the rebels. However, these promises of concessions are incredible because the rebels know that the period of government weakness is temporary. When the government regains its power, it has incentives to renege on the deal. The rebels anticipate this and do not agree to a deal in the first place (Fearon, 2004).

Commitment problems are particularly pertinent in intrastate conflicts. The underlying reason is that the actors in a civil war must live within the same borders after the conflict (Clayton, 2016). This contextual fact provides a breeding ground for the inability of the government to credibly commit to a negotiated deal. The government's commitment problem is viewed in

the literature as the main reason why deals are more difficult to arrive at in civil wars. When peace agreements in interstate wars are signed, the disputants (usually) retreat behind their borders and keep (at least some of) their operational capacity. With the signing of a peace agreement in a civil war, on the other hand, the rebel group is expected to disarm and demobilize. This puts the rebel group in a very vulnerable position, which the government cannot credibly commit not to exploit by reneging on the deal. The rebel group is aware of this, preventing a negotiated agreement from happening (Kathman & Shannon, 2016; Mattes & Savun, 2010; Regan & Aydin, 2006; Walter, 2013).

In addition to the government's commitment problem in a civil war, the rebel group can also have problems credibly committing to uphold a deal. Svensson (2007a) argues that it is the rebels, not the government, that have the most acute commitment problem when signing a peace agreement. The reason is that the decision on rebel disarmament, does rarely happen simultaneously with the signing of an agreement. Rebels usually make this decision after signing the agreement. So, instead of the rebel group becoming vulnerable, Svensson (2007a) states that it is the government that experiences a decline in power. The government transfers both power and legitimacy by agreeing to a deal with a rebel group, thus improving the rebels' position vis-à-vis the government. This creates a commitment problem for the rebels, as they might not be able to commit not to exploit their improved position by demanding more or restarting the fight from an improved position. As the commitment problem logic then works, the government anticipates this, making it reluctant to agree to a deal (Svensson, 2007a). An additional rebel group commitment problem is caused by the potential for rebel fragmentation. A rebel group's composition can often change, and even though some rebels might agree to a deal, others might not. Fearing that some fragments of the rebel group will renege on the deal, or that the composition of the rebel group will change substantially in the future, the government might be reluctant to accept a deal (Rudloff & Findley, 2016).

3.4 The Role of Mediation in Civil Wars

The aim of this thesis is to explore the likelihood of mediation onset in intrastate conflicts. What role, then, does mediation play in the bargaining situation in these conflicts? Mediation is seen as a tool with the ability to alleviate information and commitment problems. However, there are also costs associated with initiating mediation in a conflict.

3.4.1 Tool to Overcome Information and Commitment Problems

Information problems that exist between conflict actors, and that are particularly severe in civil wars, can be alleviated by mediation. As the relationship between the belligerents is plagued by distrust, a third-party mediator can provide reliable information to the parties, helping them overcome the information problem (Clayton & Gleditsch, 2014; Keels & Greig, 2019). This information-revealing role can be filled by a mediator even though the mediator is lenient toward one side in the conflict. Some even argue that biased mediators are more effective in this regard (Kathman & Shannon, 2016).

Mediation can also play a role in alleviating the commitment problems in civil war. By being present in the peace process, a mediator can signal its willingness to continue its efforts in helping the implementation of the peace agreement. By being publicly involved in negotiations, showing that it has interests in resolving the conflict, the mediator can "guarantee" the peace (Svensson, 2007a).[16] Nevertheless, mediation alone is often considered insufficient to guarantee peace and overcoming the commitment problems. Instead, mediation can contribute to overcoming these problems in tandem with other tools (Kathman & Shannon, 2016). One way is to help include power-sharing arrangements in the agreement, making it less attractive, or less viable, to renege on the deal (Mattes & Savun, 2010). A second way is to combine mediation with security guarantees in the form of peacekeeping. It is well-documented that the mediation-peacekeeping combination alleviates commitment problems and reduces the risk of conflict recurrence (Beardsley et al., 2019; DeRouen & Chowdhury, 2018).

The beneficial ability of mediation to overcome information and commitment problems is part of the conflict actors' cost-benefit analysis when considering the use of mediation. The more severe the information and commitment problems are in a conflict, the greater the need for, and benefits of, mediation. However, this need for mediation is weighed against the costs associated with engaging a third-party mediator.

[16] This guarantee can be more or less credible. Svensson (2007a) believes that government-biased mediators are the most credible guarantors.

3.4.2 Costs of Initiating Mediation

Agreeing to mediation is a decision that entails costs (Greig & Regan, 2008). However, these costs are not the same for the different actors involved in an intrastate conflict. The rebel group actor is considered to have strong incentives to, and few costs associated with, opening dialogue with the government (Clayton, 2013; Greig & Regan, 2008; Melin & Svensson, 2009). Rebel groups do not enjoy the legitimacy and recognition that a state's government does. Accepting mediation, provides the rebel group with both (Clayton, 2013; Greig & Regan, 2008). Furthermore, negotiating with the government also gives the rebel group a chance to address their issues in search of an improved situation (Clayton, 2013). If the negotiations turn out to be unfruitful to the rebels, they can simply abandon the negotiations without having suffered any noticeable costs.

The government, on the other hand, suffers great costs by agreeing to mediation (Clayton, 2013; Melin & Svensson, 2009). Initiating mediation entails the possibility of giving concessions to the rebel group. The government usually has more power, legitimacy, and resources than the rebels. It would prefer to enjoy these goods solely, without having to share with the rebel group. Moreover, providing the rebel group with legitimacy by accepting mediation can signal that the government is weak. It signals, both domestically and internationally, that the government has lost the capacity to effectively control its own territory (Melin & Svensson, 2009). Furthermore, legitimizing one rebel group can signal to other potential challengers that the government is weak and willing to give concessions (Keels & Greig, 2019; Walter, 2006).

Both the rebel group and the government must agree for mediation to happen. As explained above, the rebel group has few reasons to refuse mediation. The government, on the other hand, suffers great costs by accepting mediation. Consequently, the government is usually considered the veto player when the conflict actors decide on the use of mediation. Given that mediation onset is very costly to the government, mediation only occurs when the costs of continued conflict are higher than the costs of mediation.

3.5 War Recurrence and Bargaining

The theory section has shown that a civil war can be seen as an extreme bargaining situation between a government and a rebel group. In this bargaining situation, the belligerents

continuously decide on whether they prefer to continue the fight or if they prefer to initiate peace negotiations. The belligerents are considered to make cost-benefit assessments based on the factors outlined above, and choose the option thought to maximize their gains.

This thesis aims to explore how conflict recurrence affects this bargaining situation and the likelihood of mediation onset. It will do so in two different ways. First, I will look at the chances of mediation onset in recurring intrastate conflict episodes compared to in initial conflict episodes. This is done to explore the preliminary findings by DeRouen et al. (2011) that mediation onset is less likely in recurring civil wars than in initial wars. The second section focuses exclusively on recurring intrastate conflict episodes. I investigate how the outcome of the previous conflict episode affects the likelihood of mediation onset in the recurring episode. In this section, I first look at the recurring conflict episodes that saw mediation in the previous episode. I do this to scrutinize Aduda's (2019) evidence of failed mediated agreements decreasing the likelihood of subsequent mediation onset. However, I am interested in recurring conflicts more generally, not only the ones that have a history of mediation. Therefore, my final and main contribution looks at how the likelihood of mediation onset is affected by the previous outcome in all recurring intrastate conflict episodes. To my knowledge this has not been done in previous research and will therefore contribute to advancing the field.

3.5.1 Mediation Onset in Recurring vs. Initial Intrastate Conflict Episodes

How is the bargaining situation, and prospects for mediation onset, different in recurring intrastate conflict episodes compared to initial episodes? DeRouen et al (2011) briefly test the effect that war recurrence has on the likelihood of mediation onset in civil wars. They find that mediation is less likely to occur in recurring civil war episodes than in initial war episodes. This shows, they argue, that mediators are more reluctant to intervene the more rounds of violence the conflict actors are engaged in (DeRouen et al., 2011). However, this finding is somewhat contradictory to the widely accepted notion that intractable wars are more likely to attract mediation (Böhmelt, 2021; DeRouen et al., 2011). As DeRouen et al. (2011) put it: "… recurrence also is a reflection of intractability and as such should lead to more mediation" (DeRouen et al., 2011, p. 667). Nevertheless, I base my expectations on DeRouen et al.'s (2011) findings and hypothesize:

H1: Mediation onset is less likely in recurring intrastate conflict episodes than in initial intrastate conflict episodes

3.5.2 Mediation Onset in Recurring Intrastate Conflict Episodes: Effects of Previous Outcome

The main contribution of this thesis is to explore variation with regards to the likelihood of mediation onset in recurring civil wars. Even though recurring wars share the feature that they are repeat wars, the group of wars is heterogeneous. One should therefore expect the bargaining situation to look different in different recurring wars. The variation to be investigated here is how the previous conflict episode ended. As described earlier, there are three types of recurring wars in this regard. Wars recurring after the breakdown of a negotiated agreement, wars recurring after a previous military victory, and wars recurring after previous inactivity.

The Need for Mediation

For mediation to occur in a conflict, there must be a need for it. As explained above, great information and commitment problems should incentivize mediation because mediation is a tool capable of alleviating these problems. If the information and commitment problems are minor, mediation might be redundant, and the belligerents can instead opt for less costly bilateral negotiations.

It is easily argued that there is a need for mediation in most intrastate conflict episodes. As existing research has pointed out, information and commitment problems are considered prominent in intrastate conflicts (Clayton, 2016). Nevertheless, these problems are arguably more severe in intrastate conflicts recurring after a military victory than conflicts recurring after the breakdown of a negotiated agreement or after previous inactivity. In a war that ends with a decisive military victory, there is little doubt about the actors' military capacity. Immediately after a war that ends with a military victory, a lot of credible information has been revealed (Mattes & Savun, 2010; Mukherjee, 2006). However, when a war recurs after one side has been defeated, the previously defeated actor must practically be considered a "new" actor. An actor B that has rebuilt after being militarily defeated has acquired new capabilities that were not revealed in the previous conflict episode. This means that in the recurring episode, actor A will have almost no information about actor B's military

capacity.[17] The information problem should therefore be severe in recurring wars after a military victory.

Similarly, the commitment problem in an intrastate conflict recurring after a military victory is more severe than in the two other types of recurring conflicts. Clayton (2013) argues that relatively strong rebel groups can more credibly commit to restart fighting if an agreement is abandoned. This makes it less attractive for the government to renege on the agreement, making the commitment problem less severe. If one side is militarily defeated in a conflict, its power has been greatly reduced. The starting point, then, in the potential recurring conflict episode is likely one of great power disparity between the belligerents, enhancing the commitment problem.

The arguments above points to a greater need for mediation in the recurring conflict episodes after a military victory than after a previous negotiated agreement or previous inactivity. However, a greater need for mediation does not necessarily result in a greater likelihood of mediation occurring. The perceived costs of mediation compared to the costs of continued conflict is decisive for mediation onset.

The Costs of Mediation Onset

How are the costs of mediation onset in a recurring intrastate conflict episode affected by the outcome of the previous episode? Aduda (2019) finds that failed mediated agreements negatively affects the likelihood of subsequent mediation onset. She argues that failed agreements provide information on the extent to which mediation was capable of solving the commitment and information problems (Aduda, 2019). According to Aduda (2019), failed agreements display the persistence of the commitment problem. The conflict parties were not able to uphold the deal, providing evidence of the commitment problem being inadequately addressed (Aduda, 2019).

With regards to information problems, an agreement that fails can point to toward private information being withheld or misrepresented during previous talks. An alleged benefit of mediation is to ensure a flow of credible information. When the agreement then fails, the belligerents can question mediation's ability to overcome the information problem.

[17] In this situation, actor B would probably have a great deal of information on actor A. However, this asymmetrical informational situation does not alleviate the information problem.

Additionally, a mediator might have pressured the conflict actors to reveal information they would otherwise have kept secret. If this information is misused, the conflict actors might be reluctant to share such information again (Aduda, 2019).

When the agreement fails, the belligerents' point of departure is one of deepened mistrust. The perceived costs associated with initiating mediation are higher, thus making mediation onset less likely (Aduda, 2019). Based on Aduda's (2019) findings, I investigate the hypothesis:

H2: In recurring intrastate conflict episodes where mediation occurred in the previous conflict episode, mediation onset is less likely after the breakdown of a negotiated agreement than if an agreement was never reached

Considering all recurring intrastate conflict episodes, instead of only those where mediation was previously used, I argue that the likelihood of mediation onset is different. The costs of mediation onset might increase, as Aduda (2019) argues, after agreement failure. However, the conflict actors experiencing agreement failure, have also experienced being able to agree to mediation, and to a negotiated settlement. The literature has shown that previous mediation attempts increase the likelihood of subsequent mediation onset compared to those conflicts where mediation has not been attempted at all. Having suffered the costs of initiating mediation once, the costs of trying mediation again are lower (Clayton, 2013; Keels & Greig, 2019; Ruhe, 2015).

I argue that the conflict actors' perceived costs of mediation onset are lower in conflict episodes recurring after the breakdown of a negotiated agreement compared to those recurring after a military victory or after previous inactivity. The ability of the conflict actors to previously reach an agreement is evidence of more compatible bargaining positions than if they were not able to agree. The costs associated with mediation onset might have increased after agreement failure, but arguably not to the same level as the conflict episodes recurring after military victory or inactivity.

Moreover, in conflicts that end with a negotiated agreement, the government had to negotiate with the rebel group and agree to a deal. Given governments' high costs of negotiating with rebels, this implies that the government suffered intolerable costs of conflict. When the conflict recurs, the government fears that the rebel group can inflict great damage again,

perhaps making mediation appear as the more attractive option. The lesson learned from the previous conflict episode is different, however, if it ended with inactivity or military victory. If the previous conflict episode ended with inactivity, the government learned that the rebel challenge eased off without having to make concessions. In a similar manner, the winning side in a military victory learned that it could reach its goals without making compromises. If the conflict recurs after these outcomes, why change from a strategy that proved successful the last time?

The discussion has shown that there might be a greater need for mediation in conflict episodes recurring after military victory than after agreement failure or previous inactivity, due to more severe information and commitment problems. However, the costs of initiating mediation are higher in conflict episodes recurring after military victory or previous inactivity than after a previous negotiated agreement. With regards to mediation onset, I argue that costs associated with initiating mediation is decisive. I present two hypotheses:

H3a: Mediation onset is more likely in intrastate conflict episodes recurring after the breakdown of a negotiated agreement than in intrastate conflict episodes recurring after a military victory.

H3b: Mediation onset is more likely in intrastate conflict episodes recurring after the breakdown of a negotiated agreement than in intrastate conflict episodes recurring after previous inactivity.

4. Data and Operationalizations

This chapter will first present the data used in the analysis. A summary of the dataset's structure and coverage will be given, along with a presentation of the unit of analysis. Subsequently, the operationalizations of my chosen dependent variable, explanatory variables, and control variables will be presented.

4.1 Data

I have constructed a dataset containing information on both mediation and recurrence in intrastate conflicts. Combining data from various sources, this has resulted in an unbalanced panel data set. The dataset has global coverage of the time period 1975-2013 and has a total of 1602 observations. The unit of analysis is dyad years, and the dyads are made up of a state's government and a rebel group. Figure 4.1 shows a map of all countries included in my dataset, and the number of observations (active dyad-years) per country. This gives an overview of countries plagued by internal conflicts in the given time period. The grey-colored countries did not experience intrastate conflict in the years between 1975 and 2013. However, due to missingness on the dependent variable, certain countries that did experience intrastate conflict in this time period are excluded, and thus also colored grey. Some noticeable examples are Israel and Myanmar.[18]

In my analysis I am concerned with mediation onset and not mediation incidence. In order to structure the data thereafter for the regression models, I remove all subsequent dyad years experiencing mediation after the first year of mediation in a dyad episode. This limits the number of observations to 1337. Furthermore, as Hypotheses 2 and 3 are only concerned with recurring conflict episodes, all observations from initial episodes are removed from the models exploring these hypotheses. There are 421 dyad years pertaining to recurring conflict episodes. Finally, the number of observations is further limited to 87 in the models exploring H2. H2 is only interested in those recurring conflict episodes where mediation was used in the previous episode.

The foundation for my dataset is the third version of the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset (CTD), structured on the dyad-level, assembled by Kreutz (2010). This dataset has global coverage on all intrastate-, interstate-, and extrasystemic conflict-dyads between 1946 and

[18] This is due to missing data on mediation in the PNCC dataset. I elaborate on this in Section 4.2.1.

2020. For a conflict-dyad to be included in the UCDP CTD, and consequently in my dataset, it must fulfil the criteria of UCDP's definition of a state-based armed conflict, which says that:

> A stated-based armed conflict is a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year. (UCDP, n.d.)

This definition applies for all state-based conflicts, but in my constructed dataset I only include intrastate conflicts.[19] In addition to the benefit of using data from the UCDP, a widely-recognized source of conflict data, the main reason for drawing heavily on the UCDP CTD is that it has information on the beginnings and terminations of conflicts (Kreutz, 2010). This is essential when studying conflict recurrence, and imperative when I construct the explanatory variables for the analysis. The explanatory variables will be presented in detail later in this chapter.

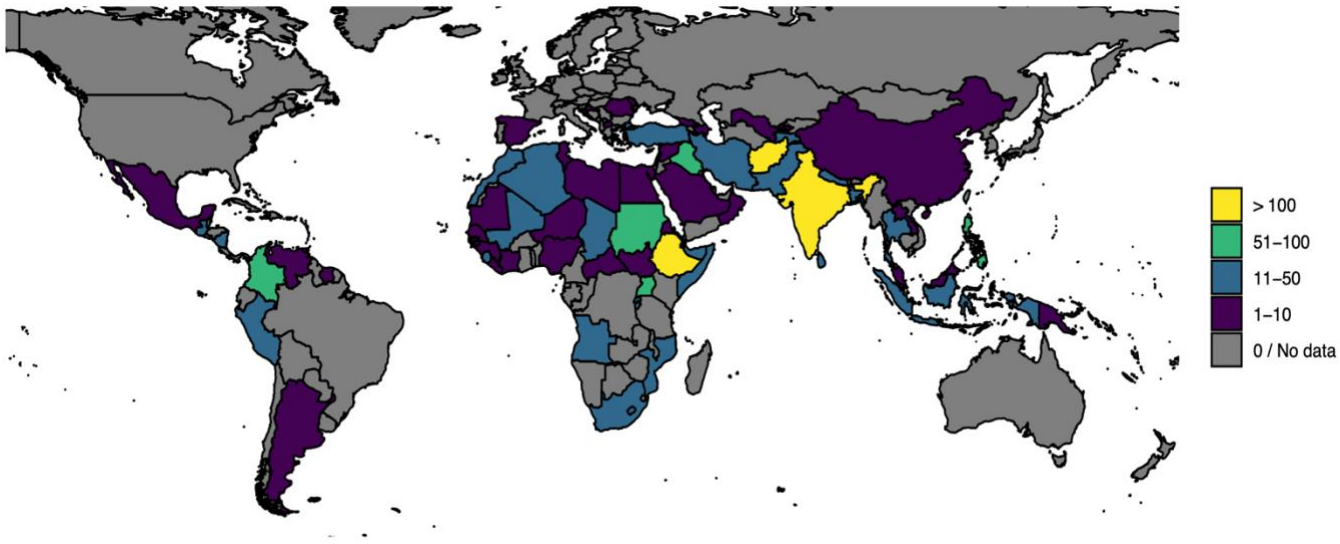

Figure 4.1: Number of observations by country

[19] The category "intrastate conflict" also include internationalized intrastate conflicts where other states intervene on one or both sides in the conflict (Kreutz, 2010).

4.1.1 Unit of Analysis: Dyad Years

The dataset's unit of analysis, *dyad years*, merits an elaboration. First of all, in conflict research a dyad refers to two opposing and armed actors. If these dyads are to be active in an armed conflict, fighting between the two actors must cause at least 25 BRD in a calendar year. Furthermore, in an intrastate conflict, the two actors must have a stated incompatibility and one of the actors must be a state's government (UCDP, n.d.).

A *conflict* differs from an active dyad because it is the stated incompatibility that is decisive when identifying a conflict, and not the actors. In an intrastate conflict this means that multiple armed disputes are identified as the same conflict as long as the government is party to all disputes and the incompatibility is the same. A single conflict can therefore involve multiple dyads (Harbom et al., 2008). An example can help illustrate this distinction. In Ethiopia in the 1970s and 80s the rebel groups (among others), the *Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party* (EPRP) and the *Tigray People's Liberation Front* (TPLF) fought the Ethiopian government. Both rebel groups had the same goal, to overthrow the government, and as such, both groups' dispute with the government is considered part of the same conflict. However, the EPRP and the TPLF were two separate rebel groups and their dispute with the Ethiopian government constitute two separate dyads (Kreutz, 2010).

The decision to use dyad-years as unit of analysis instead of conflict-years is theoretically motivated. In this thesis, I am interested in conflict recurrence and how the chances of mediation occurring between warring parties are affected by a history of previous armed conflict. The theoretical mechanism for this connection, outlined earlier, is based on the actors learning (or not learning) from previous experiences. It would, then, be unreasonable to count a conflict episode as recurring if the episode was between different actors than the previous one. Using dyads as unit of analysis ensures that a recurring conflict episode is between the same actors as the previous episode, with the opportunity to learn from previous interaction.

4.2 Dependent Variable: Mediation Onset

4.2.1 The Peace Negotiations in Civil Conflicts Dataset

The dependent variable in this thesis is the onset of mediation in a civil war. This variable is drawn from the Peace Negotiations in Civil Conflicts (PNCC) dataset (Arı, 2023). The PNCC dataset is structured over the dyadic version of the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset

(ACD) and has global coverage of the time period 1975-2013. There are two versions of the dataset, one disaggregated version focusing on the negotiation events, and one aggregated version structured on the dyad-year level.

The aggregated version of the PNCC dataset, which I draw the dependent variable from, has 2557 observations and shows whether peace negotiations occurred between a government and a rebel group (constituting a dyad) in a given calendar year. Furthermore, the dataset distinguishes between bilateral peace negotiations and mediated peace negotiations. This is a distinctive feature as most other datasets tend to only focus on mediation, or lump mediation and bilateral negotiations together in a collective "negotiation/peace talks"-category.

I draw the dependent variable from the PNCC dataset because it has detailed information on the occurrence of mediation in intrastate conflicts. Furthermore, the main reason why this dataset is chosen instead of other datasets containing information on mediation, is its structure. As noted above, the PNCC dataset is structured on the dyad-year level, and it is compatible with dyadic UCDP data. As my hypotheses encourage a dyadic structure, this is an invaluable feature. Moreover, the PNCC's UCDP-based structure makes it theoretically and practically compatible with my dataset's UCDP CTD-structure.

Even though I argue that the PNCC dataset is the best suitable dataset for my research, I want to address two concerns regarding its coverage.[20] First, the dataset has a limited temporal coverage, ranging from 1975 to 2013. Not having data prior to 1975 is a downside of the dataset, as there exists other datasets with information on mediation in civil wars going back to 1946. Missing information on recent negotiation events, after 2013, is also unfortunate. However, this is a more general issue in research on peace negotiations. Negotiations, bilateral or mediated, are regularly held secret. These events are, at times, kept from the public for years after they occurred. Consequently, reliable research on peace negotiations often lags behind the real time events.

[20] The potential consequences of these limitations for my findings will be discussed in Chapter 7.3.

The second concern is that despite the PNCC dataset's global coverage, 13 countries with active conflict-dyads in the period 1975-2013 are missing from the dataset.[21] The reason that applies to the majority of the missing countries, is that the PNCC dataset does not include coups or coup attempts (Arı, 2023). This means, for example, that the successful coup in Burkina Faso in 1987 which is coded in the UCDP CTD, is left out of the PNCC dataset. As coup attempts almost always end with military victory, this means that my dataset will have fewer observations with military victory as type of conflict termination, than if coups were included. However, this will not be influential when I look at conflict recurrence, because none of the coup-dyads that are left out, recurred. However, three additional countries, Myanmar, Israel, and the USA are left out without further explanation. The exclusion of 24 dyads in Myanmar and 11 in Israel has an impact on my dataset's number of observations.[22] According to the UCDP CTD, there were 143 active dyad-years in Myanmar, and 85 in Israel between 1975 and 2013.

4.2.2 Considering other Datasets

When choosing what dataset to draw the dependent variable from, three additional datasets were considered before the PNCC dataset was chosen. The most used dataset in research on mediation in intrastate conflicts is the Civil Wars Mediation (CWM) dataset (DeRouen et al., 2011). This dataset was the first to solely focus on mediation in civil wars. The main advantage of the CWM dataset is that it contains information on mediation in civil wars from 1946 to 2013. However, the dataset is organized by conflict episodes, making it less compatible with the dyadic structure necessary for my research.

Secondly, I considered the African Peace Processes (APP) dataset, assembled by Duursma and Gamez (2022). The main advantage of the APP dataset compared to the PNCC dataset, is that it has data until 2019. It also has a dyadic structure, like the PNCC dataset. The reason why I did not draw the dependent variable from the APP dataset is because it is limited to African countries, and it only has data from 1989. Finally, I considered the UCDP Managing Intrastate Conflict (MIC) dataset (Croicu et al., 2013). The MIC dataset is highly disaggregated and contains detailed information on third-party intervention in intrastate

[21] The 13 countries that are included in the UCDP CTD but not in the PNCC dataset are: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gambia, Ghana, Israel, Kenya, Lesotho, Myanmar, Panama, Paraguay, South Yemen, Togo, and the USA.
[22] Not including the USA, means that one dyad coded in the UCDP CTD, "the government of the USA – al-Qaida", yielding 13 dyad-years, are excluded from the dataset.

conflicts. It includes all active dyad years as well as the first three inactive post-conflict years. Furthermore, as it is a UCDP dyad-structured dataset, it is compatible with my dataset. Nevertheless, due to its limited geographical and temporal scope, only covering African dyads between 1993 and 2007, the PNCC dataset was deemed preferable.

4.2.3 Mediation Onset

I include the mediation variable from the PNCC dataset as is, as my dependent variable. My dependent variable, mediation onset, is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if mediation occurred in a given active dyad year, and 0 otherwise. An alternative to a dichotomous dependent variable, would be a count variable showing the number of mediation events in a dyad year. However, I am only interested in the conflict actors' decision to use (or not use) mediation. This decision is taken in a given year regardless of there being one or five mediation events that year. Counting the number of mediation events each year does therefore not provide any added value to my research. Moreover, as this thesis only focuses on mediation onset, all years of mediation after the first in a dyad episode are irrelevant. These observations are therefore removed. See Tables 4.1 and 4.2 for the variable's descriptive statistics.

Figure 4.2 illustrates the frequency of mediation attempts in intrastate conflicts. The blue line indicates the number of active conflict dyads each year from 1975 to 2013. Meanwhile, the red line shows the number of active dyad years where mediation occurred. Most intrastate conflict years do not see mediation.

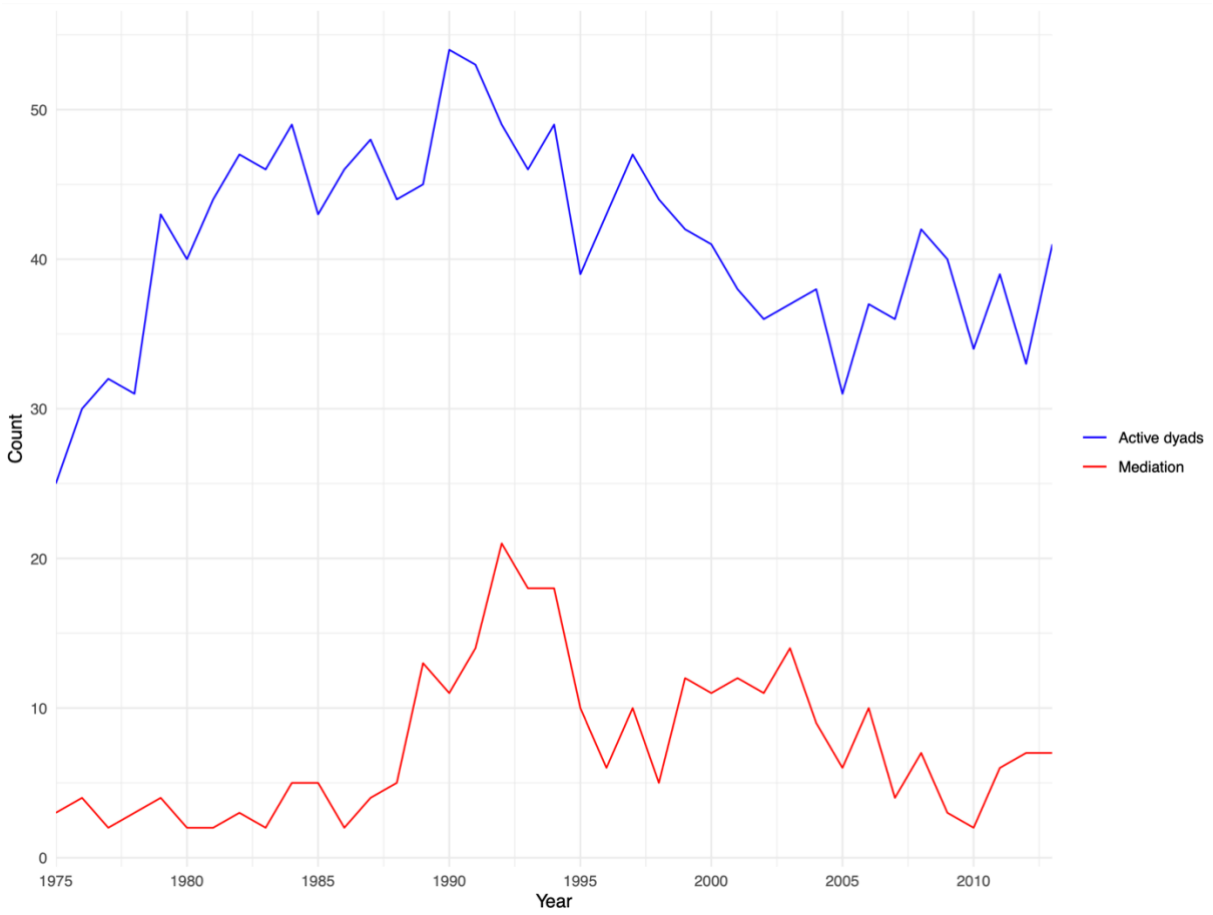

Figure 4.2: Frequency of mediation in intrastate conflicts

4.3 Explanatory Variables: Conflict Recurrence

Before turning to the description of the two explanatory variables in this thesis, I describe how conflict recurrence is defined and operationalized. The general theoretical definition of intrastate conflict recurrence, that most scholars adhere to, says that conflict recurrence is "(…) a return to collective violence between a government and a rebel group over a political incompatibility that reaches a certain level of intensity" (Bara et al., 2021, p. 916). This general definition also applies to this thesis. However, the details of this definition and the operationalization of it is, as mentioned earlier, a disputed issue.

The operationalization of conflict recurrence in this thesis follows the operationalization of the UCDP CTD and is both theoretically and practically motivated. As mentioned above, I am interested in the actors' learning process from one conflict to the next, and I therefore opt for a dyadic structure. With regards to conflict recurrence, this entails that both actors (the

government and the rebel group), and the stated incompatibility, must be the same in the new conflict episode as in the previous one for the new episode to be counted as a recurrence for a given dyad. This is a strict operationalization. One could argue that allowing for the actors to change to a limited extent would be more suitable. However, no relevant data is structured in this way. Furthermore, deciding on what change would be allowed, would be difficult and vulnerable to subjective assessments.

The violence threshold used in this thesis for a conflict dyad to be counted as active is 25 BRD per calendar year. The dyad must reach this threshold anew after at least one calendar year of inactivity (not reaching 25 BRD in a calendar year), for a conflict episode to be counted as a recurring one.[23] A violence threshold will always be somewhat arbitrary, but I follow the UCDP-coding which is highly regarded. The threshold could have been higher, for example 1000 BRD, or lower, including e.g., all events resulting in deaths. I find the 25 BRD per calendar year preferable. By using this relatively low threshold, violent conflicts of low intensity are also included. At the same time, it avoids classifying "minor" events as a conflict. Finally, I argue that using the same violence threshold for a recurring conflict episode as an initial (non-recurring) conflict episode is favorable. This ensures the comparability of recurring and initial conflict episodes by applying the same standards to both types.

To sum up, in this thesis, a conflict episode is seen as a recurrence when *a dyad with a stated incompatibility and previous experience with active conflict once more reaches the violence threshold of 25 BRD per calendar year, after at least one inactive calendar year*.

4.3.1 Recurrence

When investigating the effect of conflict recurrence on the likelihood of mediation in intrastate conflicts, I include a binary *recurrence* variable. I assign the value 1 to all dyad years that are part of a recurring conflict episode and 0 otherwise. This variable is based on the *dyadepisode*-variable in the UCDP CTD which shows the number of episodes observed

[23] Using at least one calendar year as the amount of time that has to pass from the previous conflict episode to the next one, for the next one to be counted as recurring, corresponds with the UCDP CTD coding (Kreutz, 2010).

for a dyad (Kreutz, 2010).[24] I do not distinguish between recurring conflicts based on the number of times it has recurred. Therefore, every observation with a value higher than 1 on the *dyadepisode*-variable is given the value 1 on my *recurrence*-variable, and the observations with the value 1 on the *dyadepisode*-variable are given the value 0. Using a dichotomous recurrence variable corresponds with the aim of Hypothesis 1, as it seeks to compare recurring conflicts episodes to initial conflict episodes.

Figure 4.3 shows the number of dyad years pertaining to initial and recurring conflict episodes from 1975 to 2013. Toward the end of the period there is almost an even ratio between the two types. This shows the prevalence of recurring intrastate conflicts and indicates that an increasing number of conflict episodes in recent times are recurrences.

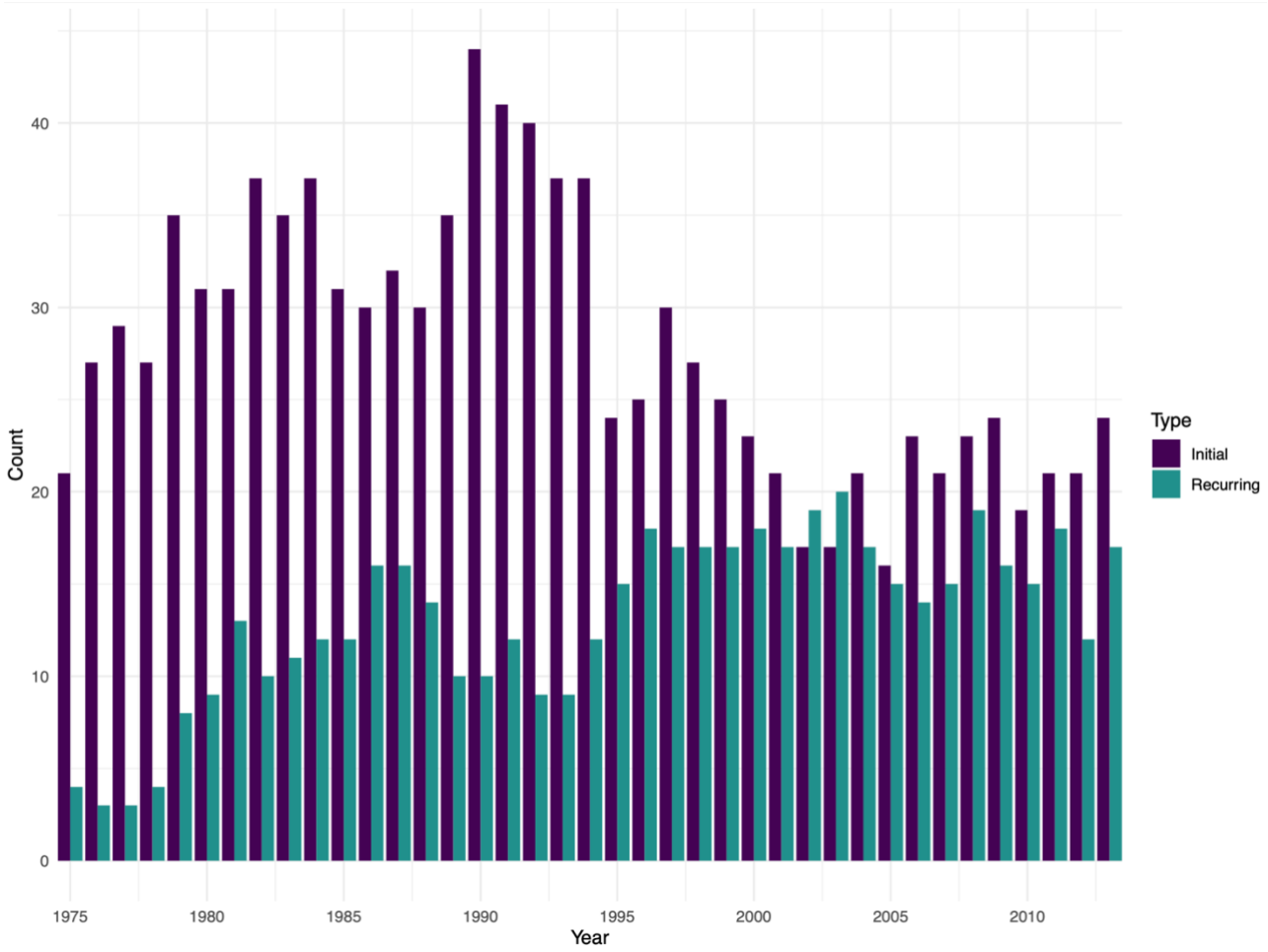

Figure 4.3: Dyad years pertaining to initial and recurring conflict episodes

[24] The *dyadepisode*-variable in the UCDP CTD assigns the value 1 to initial dyad episodes. If the dyad experiences a second episode it is given the value 2, a third episode is given the value 3, and so on (Kreutz, 2010).

4.3.2 Outcome of the Previous Conflict Episode

Testing Hypotheses 2 and 3, requires a different independent variable, as the hypotheses are interested in how the previous conflict episode ended. H2 and H3 are only interested in recurring conflict episodes. The observations used to explore these hypotheses are those with the value 1 on the *recurrence*-variable presented above.

To create a variable showing how the previous conflict episode ended, I construct a set of three dummy variables. I rely on the *outcome*-variable in the UCDP CTD to do this (Kreutz, 2010). The first variable shows whether the previous conflict episode ended in a *negotiated agreement*. As I am interested in the belligerents' act of reaching an agreement, and not the content of the agreement per se, this variable includes both peace agreements and ceasefire agreements.

The second dummy variable indicates whether the previous episode ended with a *military victory*. In these cases, one conflict actor was able to comprehensively defeat the other. Both government- and rebel group victories are grouped into this variable. The focus of this thesis is to explore the effect of the previous episode being fought to a decisive military victory. Distinguishing between what side was victorious is an interesting endeavor, but not relevant in this context.

Finally, the third dummy variable shows whether the previous episode ended with *inactivity*. An episode that ends with inactivity does not have a decisive outcome in the form of a victory or an agreement. The episode can end with inactivity for two reasons. First, the fighting between the two conflict actors can fail to reach the necessary violence threshold (25 BRD per calendar year) to be considered an intrastate conflict. Secondly, one of the conflict actors can cease to exist. In both cases, the original dyad involved in an intrastate conflict episode fails to reach the violence threshold and the episode for the particular dyad is considered terminated.

Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of how the previous episode ended for the recurring conflict episodes. It is clearly visible that most of the previous episodes ended with inactivity. Only 13 dyads in my dataset recurred after the previous episode ended with military victory.

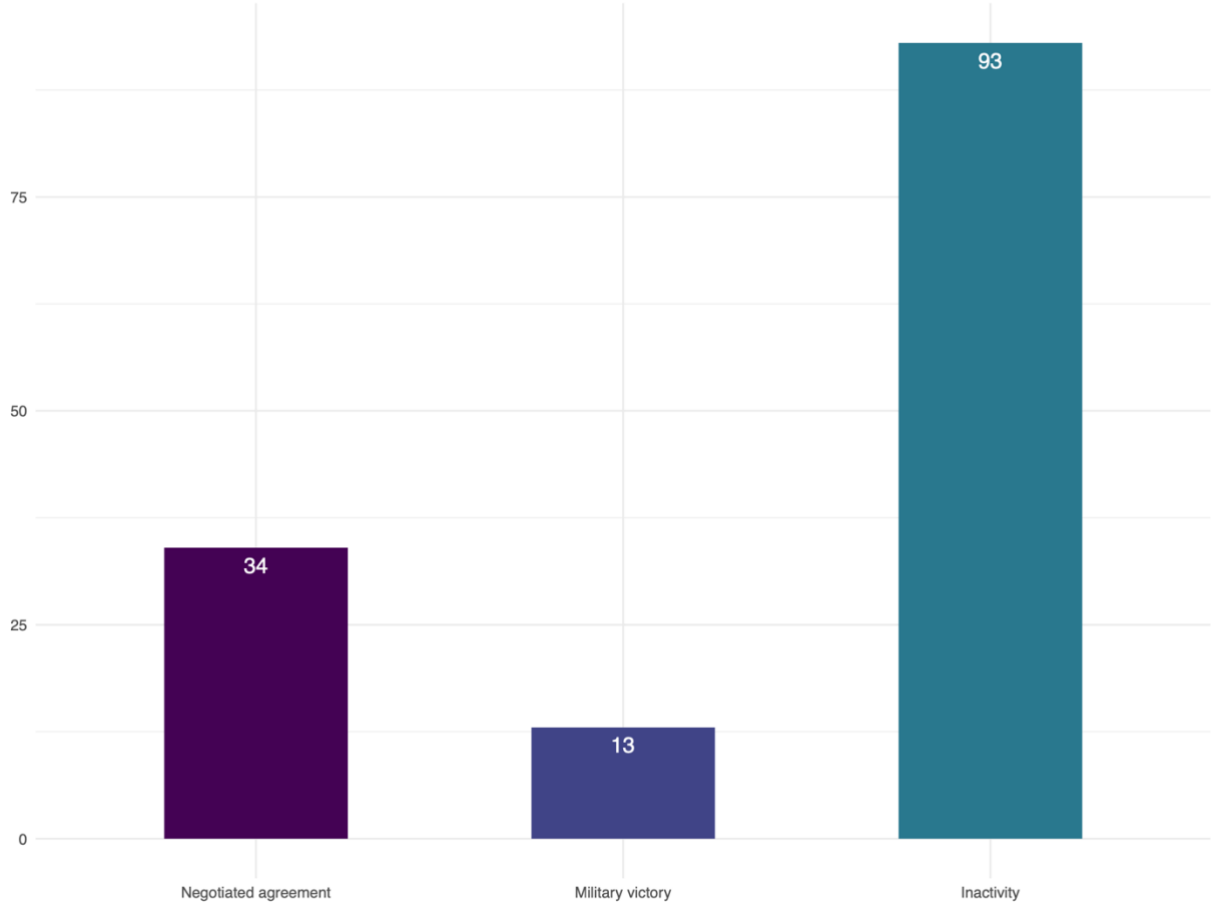

Figure 4.4: Outcome of previous dyad episodes

4.4 Control Variables

To reduce omitted variable bias, I include a number of theoretically motivated confounders. Given the different aims of, and explanatory variables in, H1 and H2/H3, two sets of control variables are necessary. Below, I first introduce the control variables included when exploring H1, and then the controls included when testing H2/H3. The two sets of controls are to a great extent overlapping due to *mediation onset* being the dependent variable in all hypotheses. However, separate justifications for inclusion are warranted as the explanatory variables differ. Finally in this section, I comment on the potential issue of posttreatment bias related to some of the proposed confounders.

4.4.1 Control Variables – Testing Hypothesis 1

The control variables included in the regression models testing Hypothesis 1 are variables found to be correlated with both mediation onset and conflict recurrence. To identify these variables, I rely on existing literature. The set of variables are displayed in Table 4.1.

A well-documented finding in the mediation onset literature is that conflicts fought over territory are more prone to mediation than conflicts over government (Clayton, 2013, 2016; DeRouen et al., 2011; Lutmar & Terris, 2018). Additionally, territorial conflicts are more likely to recur (Karlén, 2017; Quinn et al., 2007). I therefore include the variable *Incompatibility* coded 1 if the conflict is fought over government, and 0 if it was over territory. The variable is taken from the UCDP CTD (Kreutz, 2010).

A country's level of development is also found to be associated with mediation and recurrence. In the mediation onset literature, there is no consensus on how level of development is associated with the likelihood of mediation. Richer states might have more resources to bargain with, and buy off rebels, perhaps making mediation more attractive (Keels & Greig, 2019). Alternatively, more developed states can be more likely to resolve their conflicts internally, without needing a mediator (Lutmar & Terris, 2018). Regarding conflict recurrence, existing research is attuned. Conflict recurrence is more likely in less developed states (Bara & Kreutz, 2022; Collier et al., 2003; Walter, 2004). I control for economic development by including the variable *GDP per capita*. The variable is a point estimate from a latent variable model based on various sources, constructed by Fariss et al. (2022).[25] It gives yearly estimates for all included countries. This variable is preferred to more common GDP per capita-variables, from e.g., the World Bank, due to less missingness.

Population is also found to be correlated with both mediation onset and conflict recurrence. Böhmelt (2021) finds more populous countries to have a higher chance of mediation. Moreover, a large population may increase the risk of conflict recurrence by facilitating insurgent mobilization or complicating postwar peacebuilding (Berg, 2020). *Population (logged)* shows the yearly population size of the country experiencing civil war. The variable is drawn from the World Bank database (The World Bank, 2023). To constrain the variable, it is logarithmically transformed.

To control for ethnic fractionalization, I include two variables based on the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) dataset (Vogt et al., 2015). The first variable, *ethnic groups*, counts the number of politically relevant ethnic groups in a country each year. Keels and Greig (2019)

[25] I draw this variable from the V-Dem dataset that has imported the data from Fariss et al. (2022) (Coppedge et al., 2023).

find that the more ethnic groups in a country, the higher the likelihood of mediation onset. However, if the number of excluded ethnic groups increases, the likelihood of mediation onset decreases (Keels & Greig, 2019). Therefore, the second variable, *excluded ethnic groups*, counts the number of politically relevant ethnic groups that are excluded from executive state power in a country each year. Ethnic fractionalization in a country can deepen hostilities and facilitate rebel mobilization, increasing the likelihood of conflict recurrence (Berg, 2020).

Furthermore, I include a variable, *relative rebel strength*, capturing the strength of the rebel group relative to the government. More powerful rebels can inflict more costs on the incumbent. Increased costs make the government more willing to accept mediation (Clayton, 2013). The conflict recurrence literature finds that military imbalance decreases the risk of civil war recurrence (Gromes & Ranft, 2021). I draw the variable from the Non-State Actor (NSA) dataset (Cunningham et al., 2013). The original five-point ordinal-scale variable is changed, as suggested by Clayton (2013), to a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the rebel group is at least in parity with the state and 0 if it is weaker.

Finally, level of *democracy* might also be associated with both mediation onset and conflict recurrence. The effect of democracy level on mediation onset is ambiguous. Democracies might be seen as more amenable to peaceful resolution attempts, such as mediation. However, mediation can also be deemed redundant in democracies, as the necessary institutions and norms are present to solve a conflict internally (DeRouen et al., 2011). Higher levels of democracy should decrease the chances of conflict recurrence because grievances can be addressed by other means than violence (DeRouen & Bercovitch, 2008). To control for the yearly level of democracy in the country experiencing conflict, I adopt the polyarchy variable (*v2x_polyarchy*) from the V-Dem dataset (Coppedge et al., 2023). This variable is an interval scale going from low to high (0-1). Higher values are assigned to more democratic countries.

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Mediation onset	1,337	0.097	0.296	0	1
Recurrence	1,337	0.315	0.465	0	1
Incompatibility	1,337	0.615	0.487	0	1
GDP per capita	1,337	4.327	4.689	0.607	36.670
Population (logged)	1,337	17.304	1.574	12.891	21.004
Ethnic groups	1,337	7.980	7.116	1	53
Excluded ethnic groups	1,337	4.153	5.140	0	51
Relative rebel strength	1,235	0.056	0.230	0	1
Democracy	1,337	0.316	0.221	0.013	0.892

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics - Hypothesis 1

4.4.2 Control Variables – Testing Hypotheses 2-3

The control variables included in the regression models testing Hypotheses 2 and 3 are variables found to be correlated with both mediation onset and type of conflict termination. To identify these variables, I rely on existing literature. The set of variables are displayed in Table 4.2.

The seven confounders outlined above are also included here. Given the identical dependent variable in H1 and H2/H3, I limit the discussion to how these confounders are associated with type of conflict termination. Regarding *incompatibility*, territorial conflicts are less likely to end in agreement or rebel victory (Silverman et al., 2023). *GDP per capita* can be seen as a measure of state capacity. Civil wars in weak states are more likely to end in a manner favorable to the rebels. Developed countries are less likely to give concessions to the rebels (Gurses, 2015). A larger *population* is found to increase the likelihood of a conflict ending with a truce (DeRouen & Sobek, 2004).

A high degree of *ethnic fractionalization* in a country can make a negotiated agreement less likely. Many (excluded) ethnic groups in a country can mean that the government must consider them as potential future challengers when deciding how to address a conflict. The government might want to build a reputation of toughness if there are many potential challengers. This makes a negotiated agreement less likely (Walter, 2006). With regards to *relative rebel strength*, stronger rebel groups are more likely to get some of their demands

met, either through military victory or an agreement (Cunningham et al., 2009). Finally, civil wars in *democracies* are more likely to end in negotiated settlements (Phayal et al., 2019).

Features of the Previous Episode

In addition to these confounders, I include three variables that measure features of the previous conflict episode. It is likely that characteristics of the previous episode can affect both how the previous episode ended and the likelihood of mediation onset in the recurring conflict episode. The variable, *Duration previous episode (logged)*, shows the logarithm of number of days the previous episode lasted. Longer wars are more likely to end in negotiated settlements or in indefinite outcomes than in military victory (Gurses, 2015; Mason & Fett, 1996). Furthermore, longer wars are associated with higher costs which increases the likelihood of mediation onset (DeRouen et al., 2011; Greig & Regan, 2008). Even though the confounder measures the duration, and hence costs, of the previous episode, it will arguably also play a role in the recurring episode. Having experienced high costs in a long previous episode, mediation might appear more attractive in the recurring one.

The second variable measuring features of the previous episode, is the dichotomous variable *Intensity previous episode*. It is assigned the value 1 if the previous episode had a majority of years with more than 1000 BRD, and 0 otherwise. The UCDP CTD provides the yearly, dichotomous intensity variable (Kreutz, 2010). Deadlier civil wars increase the chances of an outcome favorable to the rebels (Gurses, 2015). Following the same logic explained in the previous paragraph, intense conflicts are also associated with higher costs thus making mediation onset more likely (Clayton, 2013; DeRouen et al., 2011).

Thirdly, I include the dichotomous variable *Mediation previous episode*. If at least one year in the previous episode saw mediation, it is coded 1. The variable is based on the data on mediation from the PNCC dataset (Arı, 2023). However, due to some missing data, data from other sources is used as a supplement.[26] See Table A.1 and adherent information in the Appendix for details. Previous mediation attempts are likely to encourage subsequent mediation (Clayton, 2013). Moreover, mediation increases the likelihood of a conflict ending with a negotiated agreement (Beardsley, 2008; Beardsley et al., 2006; Kathman & Shannon,

[26] The main reason why the PNCC dataset has some missing information is that the previous episode ended before 1975.

2016). Note that this control variable is only included in regression models testing H3. It is not included when testing H2 because H2 necessitates mediation in the previous episode for observations to be included. All observations included in the models testing H2 thus score 1 on the *mediation previous episode*-variable.

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Mediation onset	421	0.074	0.261	0	1
Previous negotiated agreement	421	0.197	0.398	0	1
Previous military victory	421	0.121	0.327	0	1
Previous inactivity	421	0.682	0.466	0	1
Incompatibility	421	0.451	0.498	0	1
GDP per capita	421	4.186	3.809	0.656	24.864
Population (logged)	421	17.701	1.407	14.673	20.939
Ethnic groups	421	8.938	7.176	1	40
Excluded ethnic groups	421	4.955	5.335	0	36
Relative rebel strength	378	0.019	0.135	0	1
Democracy	421	0.341	0.226	0.046	0.892
Duration previous episode (logged)	421	4.920	2.874	0.000	9.165
Intensity previous episode	421	0.197	0.398	0	1
Mediation previous episode	419	0.208	0.406	0	1

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics - Hypotheses 2-3

4.4.3 Posttreatment Confounders

Including control variables in a statistical analysis merits careful theoretical justification. Confounders are meant to reduce omitted variable bias by controlling for conditions that might influence both the dependent variable and the explanatory variable (King et al., 1994, pp. 168–175). An important consideration in this regard is the question of causal sequence. The control variable *Z*, must precede both the dependent variable *Y*, and the explanatory variable(s) *X*. If the explanatory variable precedes a confounder, the confounder is called a *posttreatment confounder* and its inclusion biases the explanatory variable's total effect estimate (Dworschak, 2023). This does not imply that posttreatment confounders are never to be included in regression models. Instead, it implies that its inclusion necessitates a sound justification.

In my statistical analysis, the issue of posttreatment confounders is highly relevant. The reason is that the dependent variable (*mediation onset*) and the explanatory variables

(*recurrence* and *previous negotiated agreement/previous military victory/previous inactivity*) adhere to different time periods. The likelihood of mediation is investigated in an ongoing dyad episode. Whether the dyad episode is a recurrence is a product of whether the dyad has experienced a conflict episode before. Furthermore, the outcome of the previous conflict episode is a feature of the previous episode. Therefore, when including control variables assigned to the same time period as the dependent variable, these will necessarily succeed the explanatory variables.

A way to deal with the issue of posttreatment confounders is simply to exclude them from the regression model. However, this must be weighed against the potential for omitted variable bias that comes with excluding possibly relevant confounders (Dworschak, 2023). I argue that to reduce omitted variable bias, including the posttreatment confounders in my regression models is the better option.[27]

Furthermore, I also argue that the potential for posttreatment bias is low with most of my included confounders due to their stable and slow-changing nature. The variables *GDP per capita*, *population*, *(excluded) ethnic groups* and *relative rebel strength* are relatively stable over time. Controlling for these features can therefore be seen as controlling for a condition that also was present in the previous dyad episode. An exception is the *democracy*-variable. A country's level of democracy can change significantly in a short period of time. Consequently, I run the regression models both with and without the *democracy*-variable. Ultimately, there is a potential for posttreatment bias in my regression models that must be considered when interpreting the results.

[27] Regardless, I do also report the bivariate relationship between the explanatory variable(s) and the dependent variable. These results are (obviously) not affected by posttreatment confounders.

5. Methods

This chapter focuses on the methods used to investigate the hypotheses presented in Chapter 3. First, I present my choice of statistical model, the linear probability model (LPM), which is used to test all my hypotheses. Then I discuss three methodological challenges associated with an LPM and the measures taken to lessen them. Ultimately, I argue that a linear probability model with clustered standard errors is well-suited for this research.

5.1 Linear Probability Model

The regression model I use is a Linear Probability Model (LPM). An LPM is a linear regression model used to explain a binary dependent variable. The effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable is estimated using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) estimation. A coefficient in an LPM is interpreted as the estimated change in probability that Y = 1 given a one-unit change in the explanatory variable, holding constant possible other independent variables in the model (Stock & Watson, 2020, pp. 393–397; Studenmund, 2017, pp. 408–415).

An LPM with multiple regressors can simply be displayed as:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_n X_{ni} + \epsilon_i$$

where Y_i is a dummy variable, the β_0 is the intercept, the Xs are independent variables, the βs are the regression coefficients and the ϵ_i is an error term (Studenmund, 2017, p. 409).

A short comment is warranted on why I do not use a regression model with fixed effects. When performing regression analysis with panel data in social sciences, including fixed effects has to a great extent become the gold standard. Using fixed effects entails controlling for all time-invariant variables within some category. This enables comparison *within* a group, as all variation *between* groups is removed (Huntington-Klein, 2021). I argue that using fixed effects in this research removes too much variation. First of all, I have a relatively small data sample. Secondly, my dependent variable (mediation onset) is binary, which can make the use of fixed effects misleading. Most of the dyads in my data never experience mediation. To "exclude" the predictive power of these dyads by using fixed effects is not preferable (Beck &

Katz, 2001). Instead of using fixed effects to reduce omitted variable bias, I include the theoretically motivated control variables presented above.

5.2 Methodological Challenges

In this section, I discuss three methodological challenges associated with an LPM and the measures taken to lessen them. The first two challenges are challenges pertaining to linear regression and OLS estimation in general. I first discuss the issue of multicollinearity and then the issue of a non-normal, non-randomly distributed and heteroskedastic error term. The final challenge is specific to an LPM and is concerned with the unboundedness of predicted probabilities.

5.2.1 Multicollinearity

It is impossible to compute the OLS estimator if one of the independent variables in the regression is a perfect linear function of the other independent variables. This phenomenon is called *perfect multicollinearity*. This is relevant in the regression models where I use a set of dummy variables as explanatory variables. If all of these dummy variables are included in the regression along with the constant, this would result in perfect multicollinearity. This is called a *dummy variable trap*. However, I avoid this by simply excluding one of the dummy variables from the regression (Stock & Watson, 2020, pp. 226–230).

Severe *imperfect multicollinearity* can also cause substantial problems, resulting in imprecise estimation of the coefficient on at least one independent variable. Imperfect multicollinearity means that two or more of the independent variables are highly correlated (Stock & Watson, 2020, pp. 230–231). Multicollinearity can be detected by estimating the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). This method looks at the extent to which a given independent variable can be explained by the other independent variables in the regression (Studenmund, 2017, pp. 251–253). I estimate the VIF for all independent variables in my regression models. See Table A.2. All variables, except the control variables, *population*, *ethnic groups*, and *excluded ethnic groups*, have a low VIF-score, indicating limited variance inflation. The high score of the three control variables mentioned above is not surprising as they are highly interconnected. Nevertheless, as I am not interested in the coefficient estimates of the control variables, I keep the three controls in my models.

5.2.2 Non-Normal, Non-Randomly Distributed and Heteroskedastic Error Term

The precision of OLS estimates relies on certain assumptions about the model's error term. The error term should be homoskedastic, and normally and randomly distributed (Stock & Watson, 2020, pp. 156–161; Studenmund, 2017, pp. 111–117). In an LPM, the error term is neither homoskedastic, nor normally distributed, mainly due to the dependent variable taking on only two values (Studenmund, 2017, p. 410). Furthermore, as is often the case with observational data, and particularly with panel data, the error term is not randomly distributed. The violation of these assumptions can lead to incorrect standard errors and wrong conclusions about the estimates' precision (Huntington-Klein, 2021).

To account for the errors being correlated hierarchically, I use clustered standard errors. Using clustered standard errors is a way of accounting for correlation between errors within groups (Huntington-Klein, 2021). In my research, I argue that the errors are likely clustered within *dyads*, as dyads share unique environmental features. Therefore, I use clustered standard errors on the dyad-level.

As I use panel data, the errors are potentially also correlated across time (called time-based autocorrelation). A common way to account for this is to use heteroskedasticity- and autocorrelation-consistent (HAC) standard errors (Huntington-Klein, 2021). To ensure the robustness of my results, I run the regression models with Newey-West standard errors which are HAC robust (Newey & West, 1987). See Tables A.3-A.6.

5.2.3 Unbounded Predicted Probabilities

Finally, the most common criticism directed toward the LPM is the unboundedness of the model's predicted probabilities. In an LPM, where the dependent variable (Y) is binary, the regression function corresponds to the probability that Y = 1, given the independent variables (Xs) (Stock & Watson, 2020, p. 395). Probabilities are bound between 0 (0%) and 1 (100%). However, the predicted probabilities produced by an LPM is not bound between 0 and 1 due to the model's linearity (Stock & Watson, 2020, p. 397; Studenmund, 2017, p. 410). An LPM could therefore produce "meaningless" (in the sense of being above 1 or below 0) predicted probabilities for some observations.

There is no easy fix to the unboundedness problem of an LPM. However, it is not necessarily a big problem. In a linear regression with binary independent variables all predicted results lie

within the permitted, 0-1, range (Hellevik, 2009). My explanatory variables are binary variables. When I introduce continuous control variables, predicted results outside the permitted range may occur. Nevertheless, even though the predicted probabilities for individual observations might be below 0 or above 1, this does not mean that the average effect of the explanatory variable on the dependent variable is wrong. I am not interested in predicted probabilities for individual observations. Instead, I am interested in the average effect of the explanatory variable(s) on the dependent variable. As such, I argue that the unboundedness problem is not of significant relevance in my research (Hellevik, 2009).

To ensure the robustness of my results, I also report logistic regression (logit) models in the Appendix. See Tables A.7-A.10. Non-linear models, such as logistic regression, are often suggested as a way of overcoming the unboundedness problem of the LPM (Studenmund, 2017, pp. 415–424). However, logistic regression comes with its own challenges, and is thus not preferred as the main model in this thesis. I mention two challenges with logistic regression below: interpretation difficulties and complexity.

The coefficient estimates in a logistic regression are presented as logged odds, which to most people are not readily interpretable. Results from logit models are therefore often presented in terms of marginal effects, which is similar to the results of a linear model. The problem with this approach is that there is no one marginal effect for a given variable in a logit model. Each observation has its own marginal effect (Huntington-Klein, 2021). To get one marginal effect from a logit model, all control variables must be held constant at a given value, while the explanatory variable increases with one unit. But at what value do one hold the controls constant? There is not a straightforward answer to this. One could create an "average" observation by holding constant all controls at their mean value. However, this might not be very meaningful, especially if some of the control variables are dummy variables (as some are in my models) (Studenmund, 2017, pp. 418–421).

Furthermore, it is also shown that the regression estimates from an LPM are often very similar to the marginal effects induced by a non-linear model. The use of non-linear models comes with more complexity and decisions to be taken, while the OLS estimator is standardized (Angrist & Pischke, 2008, pp. 103–107). It is important to make research as transparent and comprehensible as possible. Therefore, choosing between two viable models, I argue in favor of choosing the most accessible one, which in this case is the LPM.

To sum up, I choose a linear probability model to investigate my hypotheses as my dependent variable is binary. I use clustered standard errors to account for non-randomly distributed errors. The results of my analysis are presented in the next chapter.

6. Analysis

This chapter presents the empirical analysis meant to shed light on the thesis research question: *How does conflict recurrence impact the likelihood of mediation onset in an intrastate conflict?*

In the theory chapter, I derived four hypotheses meant to explore various aspects of the relationship between conflict recurrence and mediation onset:

H1: Mediation onset is less likely in recurring intrastate conflict episodes than in initial intrastate conflict episodes.

H2: In recurring intrastate conflict episodes where mediation occurred in the previous conflict episode, mediation onset is less likely after the breakdown of a negotiated agreement than if an agreement was never reached.

H3a: Mediation onset is more likely in intrastate conflict episodes recurring after the breakdown of a negotiated agreement than in intrastate conflict episodes recurring after a military victory.
H3b: Mediation onset is more likely in intrastate conflict episodes recurring after the breakdown of a negotiated agreement than in intrastate conflict episodes recurring after previous inactivity.

The results of the empirical analyses testing these hypotheses are presented below. Section 6.1 shows the results from testing H1. Then, in Section 6.2 the results from testing H2 are presented. Finally, the results from testing H3a and H3b are advanced in Section 6.3.

All regression models displayed in this chapter are linear probability models (LPMs). The coefficients of the explanatory variables are readily interpretable as the change in predicted probability that Y=1 given a one-unit increase in the explanatory variable, holding the included control variables constant. Clustered standard errors are used to correct for a correlated error term (Huntington-Klein, 2021).

6.1 The Effect of Recurrence on Mediation Onset

Table 6.1 shows the frequency of mediation onset in initial intrastate conflict episodes compared to in recurring intrastate conflict episodes. A first impression is that few years in an active conflict dyad see mediation onset. Secondly, mediation onset seems to be slightly more common in initial conflict episodes compared to recurring episodes. 10.8% of the dyad years in initial conflict episodes saw mediation onset, while the share is 7.4% in recurring episodes. This is in line with DeRouen et al.'s (2011) findings. The relationship between recurrence and mediation onset is scrutinized below using regression analysis.

Type	Dyad years	Mediation onset	Share
Initial	916	99	10.8%
Recurring	421	31	7.4%

Table 6.1: Frequency of Mediation onset in initial and recurring conflict episodes

Table 6.2 reports the statistical results of the analysis exploring the differences in likelihood of mediation onset in recurring intrastate conflict episodes compared to in initial episodes. Model 1 displays the results from a bivariate regression model. The independent variable, *recurrence*, is the only regressor included in this model. Similar to the findings by DeRouen et al. (2011), Model 1 reports a negative relationship between recurrence and mediation onset. The coefficient indicates that mediation onset is 3.4 percentage points less likely in a recurring intrastate conflict episode than in an initial one. However, the estimate's *p*-value is 0.055, barely failing to reach the $p < 0.05$ significance level.

In Models 2-5, I introduce various control variables. *Incompatibility*, *GDP per capita*, *population (logged)*, *ethnic groups*, and *excluded ethnic groups* are included as controls in all models. The control variables *relative rebel strength* and *democracy* are included in some models and excluded from others. The variable *relative rebel strength* is excluded from some models because of missing values. *Democracy*, on the other hand, is left out of some models due to its potential of introducing *posttreatment bias* (discussed in Chapter 4.4.3).

The estimate of the *recurrence* coefficient remains negative in Models 2 and 4. However, in Models 3 and 5, which include the *relative rebel strength* variable, the sign changes to positive. The reason for this might be substantial, but it might also happen because of the 102 observations that gets dropped due to missingness. Nevertheless, the coefficient estimate remains statistically insignificant in all regression models.[28]

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**
Recurrence	-0.034	-0.011	0.003	-0.014	0.002
	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.015)	(0.016)
Incompatibility		-0.072**	-0.075**	-0.067**	-0.069***
		(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.020)	(0.021)
GDP per capita		-0.004**	-0.003	-0.009***	-0.008***
		(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Population (logged)		-0.082***	-0.076***	-0.103***	-0.096***
		(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.013)
Ethnic groups		0.014***	0.013***	0.009**	0.009**
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.011***	-0.012**	-0.003	-0.004
		(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Relative rebel strength			0.223***		0.209***
			(0.059)		(0.057)
Democracy				0.306***	0.294***
				(0.067)	(0.067)
(Intercept)	0.108***	1.519***	1.398***	1.799***	1.668***
	(0.012)	(0.185)	(0.197)	(0.194)	(0.207)
Num. obs.	1337	1337	1235	1337	1235
R^2	0.003	0.089	0.120	0.112	0.141
Adj. R^2	0.002	0.085	0.115	0.107	0.135

Clustered standard errors are in parentheses. ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Table 6.2: The impact of recurrence on mediation onset

[28] All estimates remain statistically insignificant when using Newey-West standard errors. See Table A.3.

To meet the criticism of applying a linear regression model to a binary dependent variable, I run the models with same covariates using logistic regression. See Table A.7 for the results. The estimates of the explanatory variable have the same direction and level of statistical significance as the results in Table 6.2. This ensures the robustness of my results.

Based on these results, recurrence does not seem to affect mediation onset. I find no support for Hypothesis 1 as the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Consequently, my results do not lend support to DeRouen et al.'s (2011) finding that mediation onset is less likely in recurring intrastate conflict episodes than in initial episodes.[29]

I put forward two possible explanations for why I get different results from DeRouen et al. (2011). First, it is highly likely that the different results are driven by differences in data. The main difference between the studies, is that DeRouen et al. (2011) use conflict-level data, while I use a dyadic structure. As explained in detail earlier, there is a big difference between conflicts and dyads, with significant implications for what counts as recurrence. Moreover, the studies analyze different time periods. DeRouen et al. (2011) use data from 1946-2004, while I analyze data from 1975-2013. Figure 4.3 illustrated that recurring conflict episodes have become more prevalent in recent years. Analyzing different time periods can therefore yield different results.

A second possible explanation for the different results is a difference in research approaches. The main aim of DeRouen et al.'s (2011) paper is to present the new Civil Wars Mediation (CWM) dataset. However, they also conduct an exploratory study of determinants of mediation. They include multiple variables that are possibly associated with mediation onset in the same (probit) regression model and interpret every coefficient separately. This approach is not designed to address the causal link between one specific explanatory variable and the dependent variable, where relevant confounders are included. As I am interested in the particular effect of recurrence on mediation onset, I carefully select relevant confounders for the regressions. These different approaches might explain the different results.

[29] It is important to note that the coefficient estimates in most of my models have the same preceding sign as the coefficients in DeRouen et al.'s (2011) study, indicating a negative relationship. The reason that my results do not lend support to DeRouen et al.'s (2011) findings is that the estimates fail to reach statistical significance.

Regardless of my findings saying that the likelihood of mediation onset is not significantly different in recurring intrastate conflict episodes than in initial episodes, I still argue that a history of armed conflict will affect the belligerents' decision to initiate mediation. To further unpack this relationship, I address the likelihood of mediation onset exclusively in recurring conflict episodes in the next two sections.

6.2 The Effect of Failed Agreements on Mediation Onset in Recurring Conflict Episodes

The results of the statistical analysis exploring Hypothesis 2 are displayed in Table 6.3. In this analysis, only dyad years where mediation occurred in the dyad's previous episode are included. This results in a low number of observations. The explanatory variable is *previous negotiated agreement*, which indicates whether the dyad's previous episode ended with a negotiated agreement. Model 1 presents the bivariate relationship between the explanatory variable and the dependent variable, mediation onset. The coefficient estimate indicates a 14.3 percentage points higher probability of mediation onset if the previous conflict episode ended with a negotiated agreement.

Models 2-5 are multivariate regression models, structured in the same way as Models 2-5 in Table 6.2 (excluding *relative rebel strength* and *democracy* from some models). All control variables from Table 6.2 are also included in these models. Additionally, two variables featuring characteristics from the previous episode, *duration previous episode (logged)* and *intensity previous episode*, are added.

Coefficient estimates are consistently positive in all models, which is the opposite direction of the hypothesized relationship. However, in all models, except from in Model 3, the estimates are statistically insignificant.[30] When introducing the control variable *relative rebel strength* in Models 3 and 5, the size of the explanatory variable's coefficient increases considerably. In Model 3, the estimate even becomes statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. Nevertheless, the reason for these changes is most likely the reduction in number of observations from 87 to 75. The explanatory variable's coefficient estimate remains positive in the logit models. None of the estimates in the logit models reach statistical significance. See Table A.8. Overall, due to positive coefficients, I find no support for H2.

[30] This is also the case when using Newey-West standard errors. See Table A.4.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Previous negotiated agreement	0.143	0.148	0.378*	0.101	0.325
	(0.118)	(0.153)	(0.167)	(0.150)	(0.168)
Incompatibility		-0.075	-0.163	-0.064	-0.150
		(0.111)	(0.142)	(0.131)	(0.170)
GDP per capita		0.028	0.014	0.025	0.011
		(0.023)	(0.027)	(0.022)	(0.026)
Population (logged)		-0.083	-0.068	-0.089	-0.078
		(0.084)	(0.106)	(0.082)	(0.104)
Ethnic groups		0.034	0.052*	0.024	0.042
		(0.024)	(0.024)	(0.031)	(0.033)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.045	-0.068**	-0.033	-0.056
		(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.029)	(0.030)
Duration previous episode (logged)		0.127***	0.171**	0.126***	0.169**
		(0.034)	(0.048)	(0.034)	(0.051)
Intensity previous episode		-0.338**	-0.272	-0.305*	-0.242
		(0.117)	(0.132)	(0.118)	(0.140)
Relative rebel strength			-0.194		-0.205
			(0.157)		(0.181)
Democracy				0.389	0.382
				(0.324)	(0.308)
(Intercept)	0.130*	0.762	0.250	0.776	0.338
	(0.056)	(1.419)	(1.704)	(1.413)	(1.701)
Num. obs.	87	87	75	87	75
R^2	0.032	0.291	0.396	0.306	0.410
Adj. R^2	0.021	0.218	0.313	0.225	0.318

Clustered standard errors are in parentheses. ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Table 6.3: The impact of failed agreements on mediation onset

I linked Hypothesis 2 to Aduda's (2019) findings on failed mediated agreements reducing the likelihood of subsequent mediation onset. Consequently, my results do not support Aduda's (2019) findings. However, there are major differences between Aduda's (2019) research and the research conducted here. My attempt was to test her results in a different setting.

The similarity of the two studies is that both look at the impact of failed agreements for subsequent mediation onset. However, what the failed agreements are compared to is significantly different. Aduda's (2019) unit of analysis is dyad-quarters, in both active and inactive conflicts. She explores the likelihood of "subsequent mediation onset" in dyad-

quarters following mediation attempts and compares the failed agreements to partial mediation success and mediation that ended without an agreement. I look at active dyad years in recurring conflict episodes. The recurring episodes that did not experience agreement failure, experienced a decisive military victory/defeat or a failure to reach the violence threshold. I argue that this different basis of comparison might have produced different results. An additional possible explanation for the differences is the different data and control variables used. Furthermore, my data sample is very limited (n = 87) in these regression models.

Keeping in mind all the above-mentioned reservations, it is interesting to note that mediation onset does not appear less likely in recurring conflict episodes after an agreement breakdown compared to the other outcomes. It seems to be the case even though all the included recurring conflict episodes experienced mediation in the previous episode. This encourages further scrutiny by looking at all recurring conflict episodes, not only the previously mediated. The main contribution of this thesis, which follows in the next section, investigates this.

6.3 The Effect of Previous Outcome on Mediation Onset in Recurring Conflict Episodes

Tables 6.4 and 6.5 present the results of the main analysis of this thesis. The dependent variable is still mediation onset. In contrast to the previous regression models, I introduce a set of three dummy variables as the explanatory variables. *Previous negotiated agreement* shows whether the dyad's previous episode ended with a negotiated agreement. The *Previous inactivity* variable displays whether the previous episode ended with inactivity. Finally, *Previous military victory* codes whether the previous episode ended with military victory. All observations in my dataset on recurring conflict episodes fall within one of these categories. This entails that they are perfectly multicollinear, and one variable must be omitted from the regression model to avoid the *dummy variable trap*. The omitted category serves as the reference category when interpreting the coefficient estimates. The control variables are the same as in Table 6.3, with one addition. Given that I now look at all recurring conflict episodes, I include *Mediation previous episode* as a control variable.

In Table 6.4, *Previous military victory* is the reference category. The models in this table thus test Hypothesis 3a, which compares conflict episodes recurring after a negotiated agreement to conflict episodes recurring after a military victory. In all models, the coefficient of *Previous negotiated agreement* is positive and fairly strong, ranging from 0.085 to 0.163. However, the estimates never reach conventional level of statistical significance.[31] When using Newey-West standard errors, the coefficient estimate in Model 3 is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. See Table A.5.

The regression models in Table 6.5 test Hypothesis 3b. *Previous inactivity* is the reference category. The coefficient estimate of *Previous negotiated agreement* from the bivariate regression in Model 1, is positive and statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.[32] It indicates a 12.3 percentage points higher probability of mediation onset in recurring conflict episodes after a negotiated agreement than in recurring episodes after previous inactivity. When introducing control variables in Models 2 and 3, the estimates remain positive and significant. In Models 4 and 5, however, the estimates barely fail to reach the $p < 0.05$ significance level. The estimates remain significant at a $p < 0.1$ level.

[31] The estimate in Model 3 comes close to reaching statistical significance at the $p < 0.05$ level. The *p*-value is 0.0615.
[32] This coefficient estimate is statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ level with Newey-West standard errors. This is reported in Table A.6.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Previous negotiated agreement	0.090	0.115	0.163	0.085	0.132
	(0.065)	(0.075)	(0.086)	(0.072)	(0.081)
Previous inactivity	-0.033	0.007	0.040	0.008	0.041
	(0.034)	(0.059)	(0.066)	(0.056)	(0.061)
Incompatibility		-0.023	-0.018	-0.040	-0.036
		(0.030)	(0.033)	(0.029)	(0.031)
GDP per capita		-0.004	-0.004	-0.009***	-0.010**
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Population (logged)		-0.039	-0.032	-0.069**	-0.064**
		(0.020)	(0.025)	(0.020)	(0.024)
Ethnic groups		0.005	0.004	0.003	0.002
		(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.010	-0.012	-0.003	-0.005
		(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Duration previous episode (logged)		0.003	0.005	0.003	0.005
		(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Intensity previous episode		-0.031	-0.001	-0.008	0.021
		(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.049)	(0.049)
Mediation previous episode		0.111	0.149*	0.087	0.122
		(0.061)	(0.071)	(0.056)	(0.066)
Relative rebel strength			0.094		0.060
			(0.167)		(0.177)
Democracy				0.275**	0.290*
				(0.098)	(0.115)
(Intercept)	0.078*	0.744*	0.570	1.191***	1.076**
	(0.032)	(0.340)	(0.413)	(0.332)	(0.387)
Num. obs.	421	419	376	419	376
R^2	0.034	0.116	0.156	0.136	0.178
Adj. R^2	0.030	0.094	0.131	0.113	0.151

Clustered standard errors are in parentheses. ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Table 6.4: The impact of previous outcome on mediation onset (military victory excluded)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Previous negotiated agreement	0.123*	0.108*	0.123*	0.077	0.092
	(0.054)	(0.044)	(0.048)	(0.043)	(0.046)
Previous military victory	0.033	-0.007	-0.040	-0.008	-0.041
	(0.034)	(0.059)	(0.066)	(0.056)	(0.061)
Incompatibility		-0.023	-0.018	-0.040	-0.036
		(0.030)	(0.033)	(0.029)	(0.031)
GDP per capita		-0.004	-0.004	-0.009***	-0.010**
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Population (logged)		-0.039	-0.032	-0.069**	-0.064**
		(0.020)	(0.025)	(0.020)	(0.024)
Ethnic groups		0.005	0.004	0.003	0.002
		(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.010	-0.012	-0.003	-0.005
		(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Duration previous episode (logged)		0.003	0.005	0.003	0.005
		(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Intensity previous episode		-0.031	-0.001	-0.008	0.021
		(0.051)	(0.052)	(0.049)	(0.049)
Mediation previous episode		0.111	0.149*	0.087	0.122
		(0.061)	(0.071)	(0.056)	(0.066)
Relative rebel strength			0.094		0.060
			(0.167)		(0.177)
Democracy				0.275**	0.290*
				(0.098)	(0.115)
(Intercept)	0.045***	0.751*	0.611	1.199***	1.116**
	(0.012)	(0.355)	(0.434)	(0.342)	(0.399)
Num. obs.	421	419	376	419	376
R^2	0.034	0.116	0.156	0.136	0.178
Adj. R^2	0.030	0.094	0.131	0.113	0.151

Clustered standard errors are in parentheses. ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Table 6.5: The impact of previous outcome on mediation onset (inactivity excluded)

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 display the coefficient estimates, with a 95% confidence interval, from Model 3 in Tables 6.4 and 6.5.[33] The coefficient estimate of the explanatory variable displayed in Figure 6.1 is 0.163. This indicates a 16.3 percentage points increase in

[33] Model 3 is chosen because it includes all control variables except from *democracy*. The potential issue with including the *democracy*-variable is already explained.

probability of mediation onset when the previous conflict episode ended with an agreement, compared to military victory. However, as is evident from the wide-ranging confidence interval, the estimate is not very precise. The estimate's possible values range from -0.008 to 0.333. The fact that the estimate might take on a negative value, is evidence of statistical insignificance at the $p < 0.05$ level.

The explanatory variable's coefficient estimate displayed in Figure 6.2 is 0.123. This estimate is (nearly) identical to the estimate from the bivariate regression model in Table 6.5. The interpretation is thus the same, indicating a 12.3 percentage points higher probability of mediation onset in recurring conflict episodes after an agreement than after an inactivity-outcome. The confidence interval is narrower than the confidence interval of the explanatory variable in Figure 6.1. All values within the 95% confidence interval are positive, ranging from 0.027 to 0.218. Even though all values are positive, there is substantial variation in the size of the estimate. The positive effect of 12.3 percentage points might in reality be as low as 2.7 or as high as 21.8.

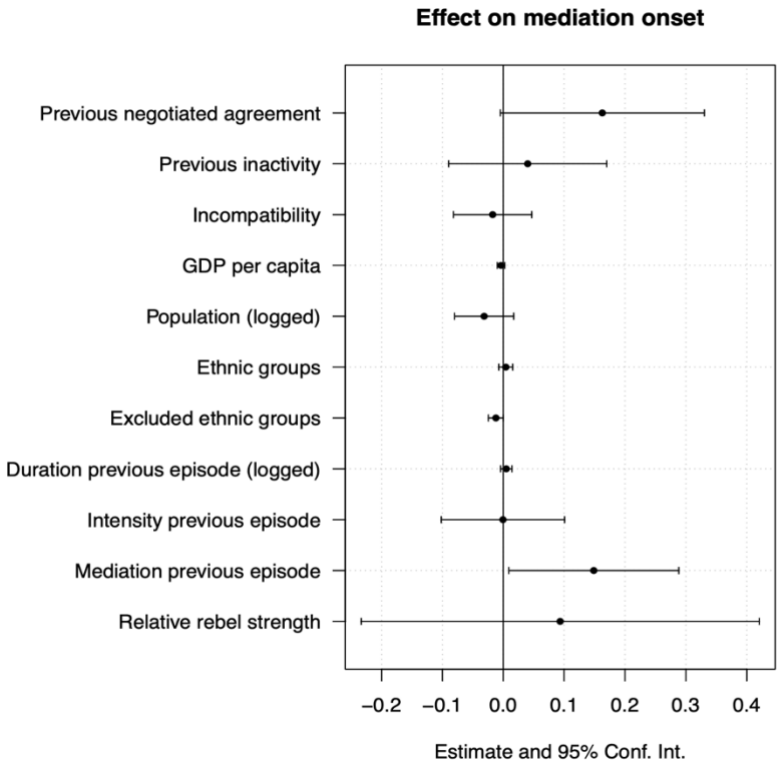

Figure 6.1: Coefficients and CIs from Model 3 in Table 6.4

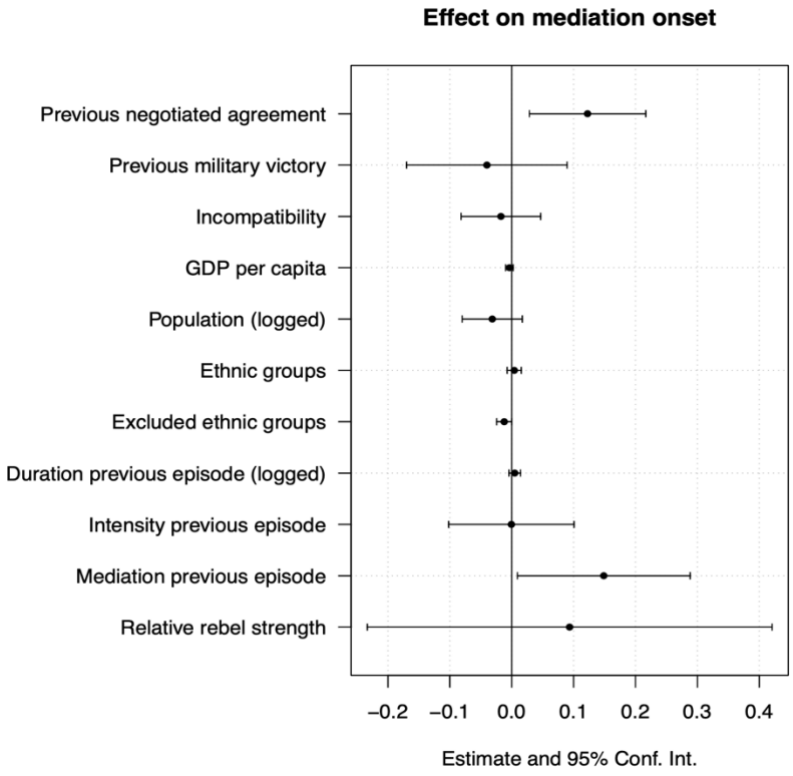

Figure 6.2: Coefficients and CIs from Model 3 in Table 6.5

I report the results of logistic regression models in Tables A.9 and A.10 to ensure the robustness of the results. The same variables as in Tables 6.4 and 6.5 are included. All coefficient estimates remain positive in the logit models. Table A.9 shows that none of the estimates for the explanatory variable reach conventional levels of statistical significance. This corresponds to the estimates in the LPM. The significance levels are slightly different in Table A.10 compared to in Table 6.5. In the logit models, the explanatory variable's coefficient estimates are statistically significant in all models. Furthermore, the estimate in Model 1 is significant at the $p < 0.001$ level, and the estimate in Model 3 is significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. These results strengthen my finding that there is a positive relationship between previous negotiated agreement and mediation onset.

To further explore the robustness of the results in Table 6.5, I rerun the models excluding some influential observations. Influential observations are observations that have a significantly larger impact on the values of various estimates, such as coefficients and standard errors (Nurunnabi et al., 2016). I check for influential observations in Model 3 and

find three dyad episodes with a total of five observations potentially driving the results. See Figure A.1. I exclude these observations and rerun all the models from Table 6.5. For the results see Table A.11. The size of the explanatory variable's coefficient estimates is slightly smaller, and the coefficient in Model 1 becomes statistically insignificant. However, all estimates remain positive and the estimates in Models 2 and 3 remain significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. This strengthens the robustness of my results.

In Table A.12, I include two potential mediating variables in the regression models testing H3b.[34] The variables *duration (logged)* and *duration between episodes (logged)* measure the ongoing episode's duration, and the duration between the previous episode and the ongoing episode. It is possible to imagine that the effect of the previous outcome on the likelihood of mediation onset decreases with time. Nevertheless, the results indicate that there is no such effect.

Based on the presented results, I find no decisive support for Hypothesis 3a. Due to consistently positive coefficient estimates it appears there is a higher likelihood of mediation onset in recurring conflict episodes after a negotiated agreement than after a military victory. This is in line with the hypothesis. However, as the coefficients fail to reach conventional levels of significance, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. A possible explanation for why the estimates fail to reach statistical significance is that there are few conflict episodes recurring after military victory in my data.

I do find support for Hypothesis 3b. The coefficient estimates are positive in all models, and statistically significant in Models 1-3. Conventional levels of statistical significance are not reached in Models 4 and 5, when the *democracy* variable is introduced. First of all, this might imply that a country's level of democracy influences the effect of previous outcome on the likelihood of mediation onset. However, the change in effect and level of significance might also be due to *posttreatment bias*. As the *democracy* variable varies considerably over time, it might be problematic to include it as a confounder in this research. Return to Chapter 4.4.3 for a more detailed discussion on this topic.

[34] To fully explore this potential mediating effect, a more fitting model is necessary. However, I briefly investigate this potential effect by including an interaction term between the duration variables and the explanatory variable.

Finally, a comment is warranted on how strong the effect of previous negotiated agreement is when compared to other variables found to affect the chances of mediation onset. As presented above, the estimate shows a 12.3 percentage points increase in probability of mediation onset in recurring conflict episodes after a previous agreement, compared to after previous inactivity. To compare this effect, Clayton (2013) finds a 9 percentage points increase in probability of mediation onset when the rebel group in a conflict is at parity with the government compared to when it is weaker (Clayton, 2013). Furthermore, Keels and Greig (2019) find a 9.5 percentage points decrease in probability of mediation occurring in an average civil war state with four excluded ethnic groups compared to a state with no excluded ethnic groups. These examples illustrate that a potential increase of 12.3 percentage points in probability of mediation onset is indeed a significant effect.

7. Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss some broader implications of the two main findings from the empirical analyses. First, I discuss the finding that it seems to be no apparent difference regarding the likelihood of mediation onset in recurring and initial intrastate conflict episodes. Secondly, I scrutinize the finding that mediation is more likely in intrastate conflict episodes recurring after an agreement was previously reached than in other recurring episodes. In addition to these discussions, I highlight important limitations of my findings. Finally, I suggest avenues for future research.

7.1 Still Hope for Mediation in Recurring Conflict Episodes

In the theory chapter, I argued that mediation onset should be less likely in recurring intrastate conflict episodes than in initial episodes. This expectation was to a large extent based on the findings by DeRouen et al. (2011). They argued that the negative relationship between recurrence and mediation onset is evidence of mediators being more reluctant to intervene in a civil war that has recurred. However, they also mention that war recurrence signals a high level of intractability, which is generally found to make mediation more attractive.[35] Their finding somewhat contradicts this notion (DeRouen et al., 2011).

The descriptive numbers in Table 6.1 point toward mediation onset being somewhat less common in recurring conflict episodes compared to in initial episodes. Similarly, most of the regression models also reported a negative relationship between recurrence and mediation onset. This was as expected and in line with DeRouen et al.'s (2011) findings. However, the estimates from the regressions consistently failed to reach conventional levels of statistical significance.

It seems plausible that mediation onset is less likely in recurring intrastate conflict episodes. However, my results do not support the notion that this difference is driven by recurrence itself. Instead, the difference may be the result of other factors associated with recurring conflict episodes. An important task for future research would be to further explore the differences between initial and recurring conflict episodes. If certain characteristics can be exclusively attributed to recurring episodes, this could help tease out the potential

[35] E.g.: Long, deadly, and evenly fought conflicts are more prone to mediation (Böhmelt, 2021; Clayton, 2013; DeRouen et al., 2011; Greig, 2015).

mechanisms explaining the difference in likelihood of mediation onset in recurring vs. initial intrastate conflict episodes.

In a further attempt to address how a history of armed conflict can affect conflict actors' decision to accept mediation, I looked at the likelihood of mediation onset exclusively in recurring conflict episodes. Regardless of the evidence that recurrence *per se* does not affect the likelihood of mediation onset, I still argue that previous experiences are likely to shape current behavior. The empirical results support this notion, and it is discussed in the next section.

7.2 Recurring Conflict Episodes: History Destined to Repeat Itself?

In recurring intrastate conflict episodes, my results provide evidence of previous experiences affecting the conflict actors' current decision to peacefully resolve their differences. The results in Tables 6.4 and 6.5 suggest that mediation onset is more likely in recurring conflict episodes after a previous negotiated agreement than in recurring episodes after other outcomes. This positive effect is statistically significant (in three models) when compared to recurring conflict episodes after previous inactivity. There is also a positive effect when compared to recurring conflict episodes after previous military victory, but it is not statistically significant. The lack of significance might be because of the small number of conflict episodes recurring after military victory in my data.

What does it mean that mediation onset is more likely in recurring conflict episodes that have experienced agreement breakdown compared to those that have experienced an inactivity-outcome (and possibly also military victory)? It suggests that some conflict dyads are generally more open to peaceful resolution than others. Existing literature has pointed to the positive impact of previous mediation attempts on subsequent mediation onset (Clayton, 2013). My results imply that the experience of being able to reach an agreement can also positively affect the possibility of trying peaceful resolution again.

Furthermore, my results challenge the notion that reaching a fragile agreement is more damaging to the chances of future mediation efforts than not reaching an agreement (Aduda, 2019). Ideally, negotiated agreements in conflicts should be tailored to facilitate enduring peace, and avoid conflict recurrence. Nevertheless, should a conflict recur, the positive

experience of being able to reach an agreement might be more prominent than the negative experience of failing to uphold the agreement.

Much of the existing research on mediation onset has found a discrepancy between where mediation is mostly needed and where it is most likely to occur (Clayton, 2013, 2016; Greig, 2015). My results are in line with this pessimistic reality. Mediation is often not accepted in conflicts with a great need for it. I argued that the need for mediation is greatest in conflict episodes recurring after a military victory due to severe information and commitment problems. However, my results clearly indicate that mediation is certainly not more likely to occur in these recurring conflict episodes. The costs associated with initiating mediation seems to be decisive in whether mediation occurs in a conflict.

Finally, a more general implication of my findings, is the importance of studying conflicts as dynamic phenomena. The conflict actors' decision on whether to use mediation in an ongoing conflict episode seems to be influenced by previous experiences. The fact that actors learn from previous experiences is not a new finding (Box-Steffensmeier & Zorn, 2002). Nevertheless, a large proportion of the mediation onset research has sidestepped this feature. Historical ties between actors have not necessarily been ignored in existing research, and such features are sometimes controlled for. However, I argue that the effect of previous interactions on future decisions must be studied actively. I suggest some areas for future research in the final section of this chapter.

7.3 Limitations

Measures were taken to ensure the robustness of my results and to limit extensive problems. Nevertheless, I recognize that my research has important limitations. In this section I highlight some of these limitations.

7.3.1 Data Limitations

An important limitation of my thesis is limited data. Data limitations might affect the external validity of my inferences. External validity "(…) captures the extent to which inferences drawn from a given study's sample apply to a broader population or other target populations" (Findley et al., 2021, p. 366).

Limited Temporal Scope

The first limitation of my data is the limited temporal scope. The UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset has information on all intrastate conflicts from 1946 to 2020 (Kreutz, 2010). However, the Peace Negotiations in Civil Conflicts (PNCC) dataset, which I draw my dependent variable from, only has data from the time period 1975-2013 (Arı, 2023). This limited scope might reduce the generalizability of my findings for intrastate conflicts occurring either before 1975 or after 2013.

Limited Geographical Scope

A bigger limitation regarding generalizability is the data's limited geographical scope. The population of cases investigated in this thesis is not limited to a specific region, and the findings thus strive to be generalizable to intrastate conflicts worldwide. As shown by the map in Figure 4.1, I use data on conflicts from all over the world. Nevertheless, certain conflict dyads are excluded from my dataset due to missing information on mediation in the PNCC dataset. Missing data is always a challenge. However, it is most problematic if the observations excluded due to missingness would be expected to systematically differ from those included (Halperin & Heath, 2020, pp. 395–396). The missing observations from the PNCC dataset can be divided into two categories: coups and coup attempts, and specific countries.

The PNCC dataset does not include coups and coup attempts (Arı, 2023). This limits the generalizability of my findings for coup attempts that classify as intrastate conflicts. As mentioned in Chapter 4.2, coup attempts almost always end with military victory. However, in my study, type of conflict termination is only important when looking at previous outcome in recurring conflict episodes. None of the excluded coup-dyads recurred according to the UCDP CTD (Kreutz, 2010). Consequently, for my main analysis, looking at recurring conflict episodes, these dyads would not have been included anyway, and my results should therefore not be affected.

In addition to exclusion of coups and coup attempts, the PNCC does not have information on conflict dyads in Myanmar, Israel, and the USA. No explicit explanation is given for why these countries are left out. In Chapter 4.2, I mentioned that this certainly decreases the number of observations in my dataset. Not including these countries obviously limits the generalizability of my findings for conflicts in these countries. However, I argue that it should

not affect the findings' generalizability beyond this. With regards to conflict recurrence and mediation onset, nothing indicates that the conflicts in these countries should be systematically different from other conflicts.

A possible solution to increase both the temporal and geographical scope of the data would be to include data from other sources. Due to potential issues with combining data from multiple sources and the limited scope of this thesis, this is not done in this thesis. Limited data thus remains as a threat to the thesis' external validity. Nevertheless, I argue that this limitation does not have significant consequences for my findings.

7.3.2 Posttreatment Bias

A second limitation is the possibility of posttreatment bias in my empirical analyses. This limitation was thoroughly introduced in Chapter 4.4, when presenting my control variables. My explanatory variables and my dependent variable (DV) are associated with different time periods. When I control for features related to the same time period as the DV, the confounders come after the explanatory variables in time. This can be problematic. A potential consequence of controlling for posttreatment confounders is posttreatment bias. This entails that a part of the treatment effect is excluded. The results can be biased, through both inflated and attenuated coefficient estimates (Dworschak, 2023).

One way to avoid the issue of posttreatment bias is to not control for posttreatment confounders. This, however, is difficult when the explanatory variables and the DV are associated with different time periods. Nevertheless, I do report the bivariate relationship between my explanatory variables and the DV, where the confounders are excluded.

My main models are multivariate regression models where posttreatment confounders are included. I argue that the importance of reducing omitted variable bias trumps the potential for posttreatment bias. Additionally, the potential for posttreatment bias is arguably reduced by the fact that most of the included confounders are relatively stable over time. This is not true for the variable measuring *democracy level*. Consequently, this variable is excluded from some models. Ultimately, however, the potential for posttreatment bias remains a limitation of my research, and the results should be interpreted with this in mind.

7.4 Avenues for Future Research

A general recommendation for future research is to treat conflicts more dynamically. Previous experiences are likely to affect actors' current behavior and decision-making. Instead of merely "controlling for" historical ties between actors, they should be examined more directly, as potential explanations for current behavior. This should be done using both large n-studies and more in-depth case studies. Large n-studies have the ability to explore and suggest general relationships between variables. To further scrutinize these relationships and tease out potential mechanisms, methods such as process tracing are well suited. Particularly interesting would be to talk to central conflict actors to explore how historical ties affect the decision-making process in a conflict episode.

I also make some specific recommendations for future research. First, following the limitations of this thesis, better data on peace negotiations in intrastate conflicts would contribute to advancing the field. Multiple sources with extensive information already exist (E.g.: Arı, 2023; Croicu et al., 2013; DeRouen et al., 2011; Duursma & Gamez, 2022). Nevertheless, there is still a need for data on peace negotiations in intrastate conflicts with global coverage and with a longer temporal span. For research to be as valuable as possible, data on recent events is essential.

A second specific recommendation is also related to data collection. As discussed in this thesis, defining and operationalizing conflict recurrence is not a straightforward task. I opted for a dyadic data structure, consequently yielding a strict definition of conflict recurrence. However, allowing for some change in the conflict actors when identifying recurring conflict episodes might prove more fruitful. As an illustration, consider the armed struggles in the Cabinda region in Angola. The rebel movement *Frente da libertação do enclave de Cabinda* (FLEC) has fought the Angolan government to gain independence. In the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset, three conflict actors with relation to FLEC is coded (FLEC-R, FLEC-FAC, and FLEC-FAC-TN). Consequently, the three rebel groups make up three separate conflict dyads together with the Angolan government (Kreutz, 2010). However, all three groups are fragmentations of the same rebel movement. The people participating in the different groups share much of the same conflict history. Therefore, it would make sense to count the episodes involving these groups as recurrences of the same conflict.

To allow for some change in the conflict actors (like in the example above) when identifying conflict recurrences could produce valuable knowledge. The fact that groups splinter could in fact be key to understanding conflict recurrence. It is not difficult to imagine one part of a rebel group preferring to continue armed fighting, while another part does not. This could plausibly result in the group splintering, and one of the splinter groups reigniting the armed conflict. To see this renewed fighting as a recurrence instead of coding it as a new conflict episode is desirable. Detailed information on conflict actors already exists. By agreeing to how much change in the conflict actors would be allowed for a conflict episode to be counted as recurring, structuring data this way should be feasible. Such data could advance research on conflict dynamics.

Finally, this thesis addressed implications for mediation onset. While the onset of mediation is an important first step toward peaceful resolution of conflicts, it is still the outcome of mediation efforts that is decisive to the ending of conflicts. Future research should address how conflict recurrence affects the chances of mediation being successful.

8. Conclusion

This thesis contributes to the extensive body of literature on mediation in intrastate conflicts. In an attempt to bridge research on conflict recurrence and mediation, I asked: *How does conflict recurrence affect the likelihood of mediation onset in an intrastate conflict?* To answer the question, I systematically analyzed intrastate conflicts between 1975 and 2013.

Leveraging both bargaining theory and existing research, I put forth expectations of how conflict recurrence was related to mediation onset. I hypothesized conflict recurrence to have a negative effect on the likelihood of mediation onset (H1). Furthermore, I expected the outcome of previous conflict episodes to affect the chances of mediation onset in recurring conflict episodes (H2-H3). H2 stated that mediation onset should be less likely after the breakdown of a negotiated agreement when mediation was used in the previous conflict episode. H3, however, expected the opposite when there was no prerequisite of previous mediation attempts.

To test the hypotheses, I constructed a dataset containing information on both conflict recurrence and mediation by combining the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset and the Peace Negotiations in Civil Conflicts dataset (Arı, 2023; Kreutz, 2010). Relevant control variables were included using various sources. The final dataset had a near global coverage of intrastate conflicts between 1975 and 2013.

The results from my empirical analysis gave no decisive support for H1. The likelihood of mediation onset does not seem to be negatively affected by conflict recurrence per se. Looking only at recurring conflict episodes, I found no support for H2. The results do point at a higher likelihood of mediation onset in recurring conflict episodes after a previous agreement than after a military victory. However, due lack of statistical significance, H3a is not decisively supported. Finally, I do find support for H3b. Mediation onset seems to be more likely in recurring intrastate conflict episodes after a previous agreement compared to after a previous inactivity-outcome.

My findings contribute to strengthening the understanding of when mediation occurs in intrastate conflicts. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis is the first to actively explore the effect of conflict recurrence on mediation onset. The finding that the outcome of the previous

conflict episode is associated with the likelihood of mediation onset, is novel. This highlights the importance of studying conflicts not as isolated events, but as dynamic interactions also across conflict episodes. To fully understand dynamics in ongoing conflict episodes, previous experiences must be considered.

The findings also have important policy implications. First of all, even though recurring intrastate conflicts might have proven difficult to permanently resolve, there is still a possibility to attempt mediation in these conflicts. Furthermore, my findings provide evidence that a failed agreement might not be particularly damaging for the initiation of future mediation efforts. In fact, the positive experience of being able to reach an agreement, might exceed the negative experience of not being able to uphold the agreement.

Finally, the most important policy implication of my findings, is that some conflict environments seem to be more conducive to peaceful resolution than others. In order to stand a better chance of permanently resolving conflicts, understanding how previous experiences affect the conflict environment is vital. To identify and encourage features that make conflict environments more conducive to peace talks is an essential task of decisionmakers and stakeholders. Similar to the idea that "conflict begets conflict" (Walter, 2004), peaceful resolution seems to beget peaceful resolution.

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Appendix

Table A.1: Data on "Mediation previous episode" from other sources

Dyad-episodes with NA on variable	The previous episodes which the PNCC dataset don't have data on mediation	Data from other sources
40603 Iran – KDPI	40602 Iran – KDPI (1966-68)	NO mediation (CWM)
46503 Guatemala – FAR I	46502 Guatemala – FAR I (1965-74)	NO mediation (CWM)
53402 Malaysia – CPM	53401 Malaysia – CPM (1958-60)	NO mediation (CWM)
56402 Iraq – KDP	56401 Iraq – KDP (1961-1970)	YES mediation (CWM)
57102 Ethiopia – EPLF	57101 Ethiopia – EPLF (1973)	NO mediation (CWM)
62303 Colombia – FARC	62302 Colombia – FARC (1971-72)	NO mediation (CWM)
62404 Colombia – ELN	62403 Colombia – ELN (1973)	NO mediation (CWM)
62803 Indonesia – OPM	62802 Indonesia – OPM (1967-69)	NO mediation (CWM)
64402 Cambodia – KR	64401 Cambodia – KR (1967-75)	NO mediation (CWM)
67602 Uganda – Kikosi Maalum	67601 Uganda – Kikosi Maalum (1972)	–
83202 Angola – FLEC-FAC	83201 Angola – FLEC-FAC (1992)	NO mediation (APP)
90402 Ethiopia – SLM	90401 Ethiopia – SLM (1981)	–

74 dyad years have missing values (NAs) on the variable *Mediation previous episode*. These dyad years pertain to 12 unique dyad episodes, which are displayed in the column to the left in Table A.1. The column in the middle of the table shows the dyad episodes that the PNCC dataset does not have data on mediation. The final column shows whether there was mediation based on other sources (in parentheses). I find data on mediation for 10 of the 12 dyad episodes based on other sources. More details are reported below.

The CWM dataset records no mediation between the Iranian government and the *Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran* (KDPI) in the time period 1966-68 (DeRouen et al., 2011).

The CWM dataset records no mediation between the Guatemalan government and the *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (URNG) in the time period 1965-74 (DeRouen et al., 2011). The CWM dataset only operates with the rebel group name URNG. However, the URNG was formed in 1982 by multiple existing rebel groups. Among them, the *Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes* (FAR): https://ucdp.uu.se/statebased/469

The CWM dataset records no mediation between the Malaysian government and the *Communist Party of Malaya* (CPM) in the time period 1958-60 (DeRouen et al., 2011).

The CWM dataset records mediation between the Iraqi government and the *Kurdistan Democratic Party* (KDP) in the time period 1961-70. Mediation took place in 1969 (DeRouen et al., 2011).

The CWM dataset records no mediation between the Ethiopian government and the *Eritrean People's Liberation Front* (EPLF) in 1973 (DeRouen et al., 2011).

The CWM dataset records no mediation between the Colombian government and the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) in the time period 1971-72 (DeRouen et al., 2011).

The CWM dataset records no mediation between the Colombian government and the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) in 1973 (DeRouen et al., 2011).

The CWM dataset records no mediation between the Indonesian government and the *Organisasi Papua Merdeka* (OPM) in 1967-69 (DeRouen et al., 2011).

The CWM dataset records no mediation between the Cambodian government and the *Front uni national du Kampuchéa* (FUNK) in the time period 1967-75 (DeRouen et al., 2011). The Khmer Rouge (KR) was part of FUNK: https://ucdp.uu.se/actor/270

The APP dataset records no mediation between the Angolan government and the *Frente da libertação do enclave de Cabinda – Forças armadas de Cabinda* (FLEC-FAC) in 1992 (Duursma & Gamez, 2022).

Table A.2: VIF scores

	VIF
Recurrence	1.102440
Incompatibility	1.395701
GDP per capita	1.553985
Population (logged)	3.507480
Ethnic groups	6.818574
Excluded ethnic groups	4.909149
Relative rebel strength	1.091913
Democracy	2.365696

	VIF
Previous negotiated agreement	3.217205
Incompatibility	2.588817
GDP per capita	4.496011
Population (logged)	6.890538
Ethnic groups	65.869950
Excluded ethnic groups	59.641680
Duration previous episode (logged)	1.820451
Intensity previous episode	2.507793
Relative rebel strength	1.559382
Democracy	1.435559

	VIF
Previous negotiated agreement	2.726708
Previous inactivity	2.640550
Incompatibility	1.313821
GDP per capita	1.585482
Population (logged)	5.903146
Ethnic groups	9.154581
Excluded ethnic groups	5.946150
Duration previous episode (logged)	1.223395
Intensity previous episode	1.724542
Mediation previous episode	1.502995
Relative rebel strength	1.234038
Democracy	2.899859

	VIF
Previous negotiated agreement	1.407670
Previous military victory	1.291913
Incompatibility	1.313821
GDP per capita	1.585482
Population (logged)	5.903146
Ethnic groups	9.154581
Excluded ethnic groups	5.946150
Duration previous episode (logged)	1.223395
Intensity previous episode	1.724542
Mediation previous episode	1.502995
Relative rebel strength	1.234038
Democracy	2.899859

Table A.3: The impact of recurrence on mediation. Newey-West SE

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**
Recurrence	-0.034	-0.011	0.003	-0.014	0.002
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.018)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Incompatibility		-0.072**	-0.075**	-0.067**	-0.069**
		(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.020)	(0.021)
GDP per capita		-0.004**	-0.003	-0.009***	-0.008***
		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Population (logged)		-0.082***	-0.076***	-0.103***	-0.096***
		(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.013)
Ethnic groups		0.014***	0.013***	0.009**	0.009**
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.011**	-0.012**	-0.003	-0.004
		(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Relative rebel strength			0.223***		0.209**
			(0.059)		(0.059)
Democracy				0.306***	0.294***
				(0.061)	(0.063)
(Intercept)	0.108***	1.519***	1.398***	1.799***	1.668***
	(0.011)	(0.178)	(0.190)	(0.199)	(0.214)
Num. obs.	1337	1337	1235	1337	1235
R^2	0.003	0.089	0.120	0.112	0.141
Adj. R^2	0.002	0.085	0.115	0.107	0.135

Newey-West standard errors are in parentheses. ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Table A.4: The impact of failed agreements on mediation onset. Newey-West SE

	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**
Previous negotiated agreement	0.143	0.148	0.378*	0.101	0.325
	(0.096)	(0.134)	(0.154)	(0.140)	(0.164)
Incompatibility		-0.075	-0.163	-0.064	-0.150
		(0.135)	(0.185)	(0.147)	(0.199)
GDP per capita		0.028	0.014	0.025	0.011
		(0.022)	(0.026)	(0.022)	(0.027)
Population (logged)		-0.083	-0.068	-0.089	-0.078
		(0.091)	(0.132)	(0.090)	(0.129)
Ethnic groups		0.034	0.052	0.024	0.042
		(0.030)	(0.037)	(0.035)	(0.040)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.045	-0.068*	-0.033	-0.056
		(0.029)	(0.032)	(0.033)	(0.035)
Duration previous episode (logged)		0.127**	0.171*	0.126**	0.169*
		(0.042)	(0.063)	(0.042)	(0.063)
Intensity previous episode		-0.338*	-0.272	-0.305*	-0.242
		(0.131)	(0.146)	(0.130)	(0.146)
Relative rebel strength			-0.194		-0.205
			(0.259)		(0.269)
Democracy				0.389	0.382
				(0.389)	(0.386)
(Intercept)	0.130*	0.762	0.250	0.776	0.338
	(0.049)	(1.531)	(2.089)	(1.526)	(2.057)
Num. obs.	87	87	75	87	75
R^2	0.032	0.291	0.396	0.306	0.410
Adj. R^2	0.021	0.218	0.313	0.225	0.318

Newey-West standard errors are in parentheses. $^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Table A.5: The impact of previous outcome on mediation onset (military victory excluded). Newey-West SE

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Previous negotiated agreement	0.090	0.115	0.163*	0.085	0.132
	(0.058)	(0.067)	(0.074)	(0.067)	(0.072)
Previous inactivity	-0.033	0.007	0.040	0.008	0.041
	(0.040)	(0.056)	(0.059)	(0.054)	(0.056)
Incompatibility		-0.023	-0.018	-0.040	-0.036
		(0.031)	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.037)
GDP per capita		-0.004	-0.004	-0.009*	-0.010*
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Population (logged)		-0.039	-0.032	-0.069*	-0.064
		(0.022)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.032)
Ethnic groups		0.005	0.004	0.003	0.002
		(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.010	-0.012	-0.003	-0.005
		(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Duration previous episode (logged)		0.003	0.005	0.003	0.005
		(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Intensity previous episode		-0.031	-0.001	-0.008	0.021
		(0.052)	(0.053)	(0.051)	(0.052)
Mediation previous episode		0.111*	0.149*	0.087	0.122
		(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.054)	(0.062)
Relative rebel strength			0.094		0.060
			(0.188)		(0.200)
Democracy				0.275*	0.290*
				(0.120)	(0.133)
(Intercept)	0.078*	0.744*	0.570	1.191*	1.076
	(0.038)	(0.364)	(0.430)	(0.453)	(0.533)
Num. obs.	421	419	376	419	376
R^2	0.034	0.116	0.156	0.136	0.178
Adj. R^2	0.030	0.094	0.131	0.113	0.151

Newey-West standard errors are in parentheses. $^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Table A.6: The impact of previous outcome on mediation onset (inactivity excluded). Newey-West SE

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Previous negotiated agreement	0.123**	0.108*	0.123*	0.077	0.092
	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.049)	(0.047)	(0.050)
Previous military victory	0.033	-0.007	-0.040	-0.008	-0.041
	(0.040)	(0.056)	(0.059)	(0.054)	(0.056)
Incompatibility		-0.023	-0.018	-0.040	-0.036
		(0.031)	(0.033)	(0.034)	(0.037)
GDP per capita		-0.004	-0.004	-0.009*	-0.010*
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Population (logged)		-0.039	-0.032	-0.069*	-0.064
		(0.022)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.032)
Ethnic groups		0.005	0.004	0.003	0.002
		(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.010	-0.012	-0.003	-0.005
		(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Duration previous episode (logged)		0.003	0.005	0.003	0.005
		(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Intensity previous episode		-0.031	-0.001	-0.008	0.021
		(0.052)	(0.053)	(0.051)	(0.052)
Mediation previous episode		0.111*	0.149*	0.087	0.122
		(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.054)	(0.062)
Relative rebel strength			0.094		0.060
			(0.188)		(0.200)
Democracy				0.275*	0.290*
				(0.120)	(0.133)
(Intercept)	0.045***	0.751*	0.611	1.199*	1.116*
	(0.013)	(0.371)	(0.442)	(0.458)	(0.540)
Num. obs.	421	419	376	419	376
R^2	0.034	0.116	0.156	0.136	0.178
Adj. R^2	0.030	0.094	0.131	0.113	0.151

Newey-West standard errors are in parentheses. ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Table A.7: The impact of recurrence on mediation onset. Logit

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Recurrence	-0.422	-0.096	0.004	-0.111	0.007
	(0.233)	(0.237)	(0.253)	(0.224)	(0.240)
Incompatibility		-0.908**	-0.863**	-0.725**	-0.679*
		(0.282)	(0.285)	(0.280)	(0.286)
GDP per capita		-0.096**	-0.074*	-0.154***	-0.137**
		(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.042)	(0.043)
Population (logged)		-0.925***	-0.833***	-1.016***	-0.930***
		(0.122)	(0.127)	(0.122)	(0.127)
Ethnic groups		0.116**	0.100**	0.065	0.049
		(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.040)	(0.040)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.066	-0.062	0.015	0.018
		(0.042)	(0.042)	(0.049)	(0.050)
Relative rebel strength			1.141***		1.114**
			(0.324)		(0.358)
Democracy				2.863***	2.855***
				(0.716)	(0.764)
(Intercept)	-2.111***	13.682***	11.993***	14.559***	12.998***
	(0.127)	(2.008)	(2.096)	(1.977)	(2.059)
AIC	852.817	748.110	692.859	732.624	678.774
BIC	863.214	784.498	733.810	774.209	724.844
Log Likelihood	-424.409	-367.055	-338.430	-358.312	-330.387
Deviance	848.817	734.110	676.859	716.624	660.774
Num. obs.	1337	1337	1235	1337	1235

Clustered standard errors are in parentheses. ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Table A.8: The impact of failed agreements on mediation onset. Logit

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Previous negotiated agreement	0.923	1.069	2.651	1.039	2.533
	(0.726)	(0.953)	(1.558)	(1.009)	(1.516)
Incompatibility		-0.828	-0.907	-0.809	-0.865
		(1.290)	(1.352)	(1.424)	(1.461)
GDP per capita		0.245	0.155	0.243	0.137
		(0.248)	(0.239)	(0.232)	(0.239)
Population (logged)		-0.700	-0.315	-0.704	-0.351
		(0.769)	(0.791)	(0.746)	(0.753)
Ethnic groups		0.195	0.300	0.191	0.283
		(0.185)	(0.164)	(0.203)	(0.183)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.295	-0.477*	-0.290	-0.447*
		(0.212)	(0.218)	(0.214)	(0.215)
Duration previous episode (logged)		1.020*	1.011*	1.019*	1.014*
		(0.415)	(0.443)	(0.415)	(0.449)
Intensity previous episode		-2.807*	-2.134	-2.770*	-1.968
		(1.213)	(1.102)	(1.092)	(1.127)
Relative rebel strength			-1.380		-1.430
			(1.063)		(1.144)
Democracy				0.168	0.902
				(1.954)	(1.726)
(Intercept)	-1.904***	3.379	-2.911	3.404	-2.585
	(0.492)	(11.571)	(12.316)	(11.406)	(11.928)
AIC	84.327	73.896	67.235	75.891	69.131
BIC	89.258	96.089	90.410	100.550	94.623
Log Likelihood	-40.163	-27.948	-23.617	-27.946	-23.565
Deviance	80.327	55.896	47.235	55.891	47.131
Num. obs.	87	87	75	87	75

Clustered standard errors are in parentheses. ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Table A.9: The impact of previous outcome on mediation onset (military victory excluded). Logit

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Previous negotiated agreement	0.869	0.846	2.032	0.567	1.661
	(0.607)	(0.857)	(1.212)	(0.867)	(1.251)
Previous inactivity	-0.584	-0.269	0.712	-0.343	0.529
	(0.515)	(0.899)	(1.254)	(0.850)	(1.215)
Incompatibility		-0.323	-0.235	-0.305	-0.249
		(0.440)	(0.480)	(0.397)	(0.414)
GDP per capita		-0.064	-0.075	-0.122*	-0.140*
		(0.051)	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.061)
Population (logged)		-0.400	-0.249	-0.593**	-0.484*
		(0.255)	(0.274)	(0.209)	(0.192)
Ethnic groups		0.017	0.010	-0.032	-0.044
		(0.075)	(0.074)	(0.076)	(0.076)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.110	-0.192	0.006	-0.046
		(0.092)	(0.142)	(0.101)	(0.137)
Duration previous episode (logged)		0.073	0.126	0.084	0.155
		(0.092)	(0.122)	(0.089)	(0.129)
Intensity previous episode		-0.472	0.160	-0.167	0.453
		(0.711)	(0.759)	(0.705)	(0.699)
Mediation previous episode		1.088*	1.451*	0.843	1.188*
		(0.553)	(0.600)	(0.543)	(0.578)
Relative rebel strength			-0.359		-0.437
			(0.998)		(1.360)
Democracy				2.811*	3.191*
				(1.235)	(1.374)
(Intercept)	-2.464***	4.368	0.724	6.958*	3.854
	(0.447)	(4.139)	(4.549)	(3.440)	(3.222)
AIC	215.229	204.313	181.628	202.137	178.840
BIC	227.357	248.730	228.783	250.591	229.924
Log Likelihood	-104.615	-91.157	-78.814	-89.068	-76.420
Deviance	209.229	182.313	157.628	178.137	152.840
Num. obs.	421	419	376	419	376

Clustered standard errors are in parentheses. ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Table A.10: The impact of previous outcome on mediation onset (inactivity excluded). Logit

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Previous negotiated agreement	1.453***	1.115*	1.320**	0.911*	1.132*
	(0.434)	(0.472)	(0.471)	(0.448)	(0.447)
Previous military victory	0.584	0.269	-0.712	0.343	-0.529
	(0.515)	(0.899)	(1.254)	(0.850)	(1.215)
Incompatibility		-0.323	-0.235	-0.305	-0.249
		(0.440)	(0.480)	(0.397)	(0.414)
GDP per capita		-0.064	-0.075	-0.122*	-0.140*
		(0.051)	(0.060)	(0.060)	(0.061)
Population (logged)		-0.400	-0.249	-0.593**	-0.484*
		(0.255)	(0.274)	(0.209)	(0.192)
Ethnic groups		0.017	0.010	-0.032	-0.044
		(0.075)	(0.074)	(0.076)	(0.076)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.110	-0.192	0.006	-0.046
		(0.092)	(0.142)	(0.101)	(0.137)
Duration previous episode (logged)		0.073	0.126	0.084	0.155
		(0.092)	(0.122)	(0.089)	(0.129)
Intensity previous episode		-0.472	0.160	-0.167	0.453
		(0.711)	(0.759)	(0.705)	(0.699)
Mediation previous episode		1.088*	1.451*	0.843	1.188*
		(0.553)	(0.600)	(0.543)	(0.578)
Relative rebel strength			-0.359		-0.437
			(0.998)		(1.360)
Democracy				2.811*	3.191*
				(1.235)	(1.374)
(Intercept)	-3.048***	4.099	1.436	6.615	4.384
	(0.270)	(4.245)	(4.624)	(3.486)	(3.147)
AIC	215.229	204.313	181.628	202.137	178.840
BIC	227.357	248.730	228.783	250.591	229.924
Log Likelihood	-104.615	-91.157	-78.814	-89.068	-76.420
Deviance	209.229	182.313	157.628	178.137	152.840
Num. obs.	421	419	376	419	376

Clustered standard errors are in parentheses. ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Figure A.1: Influential observations

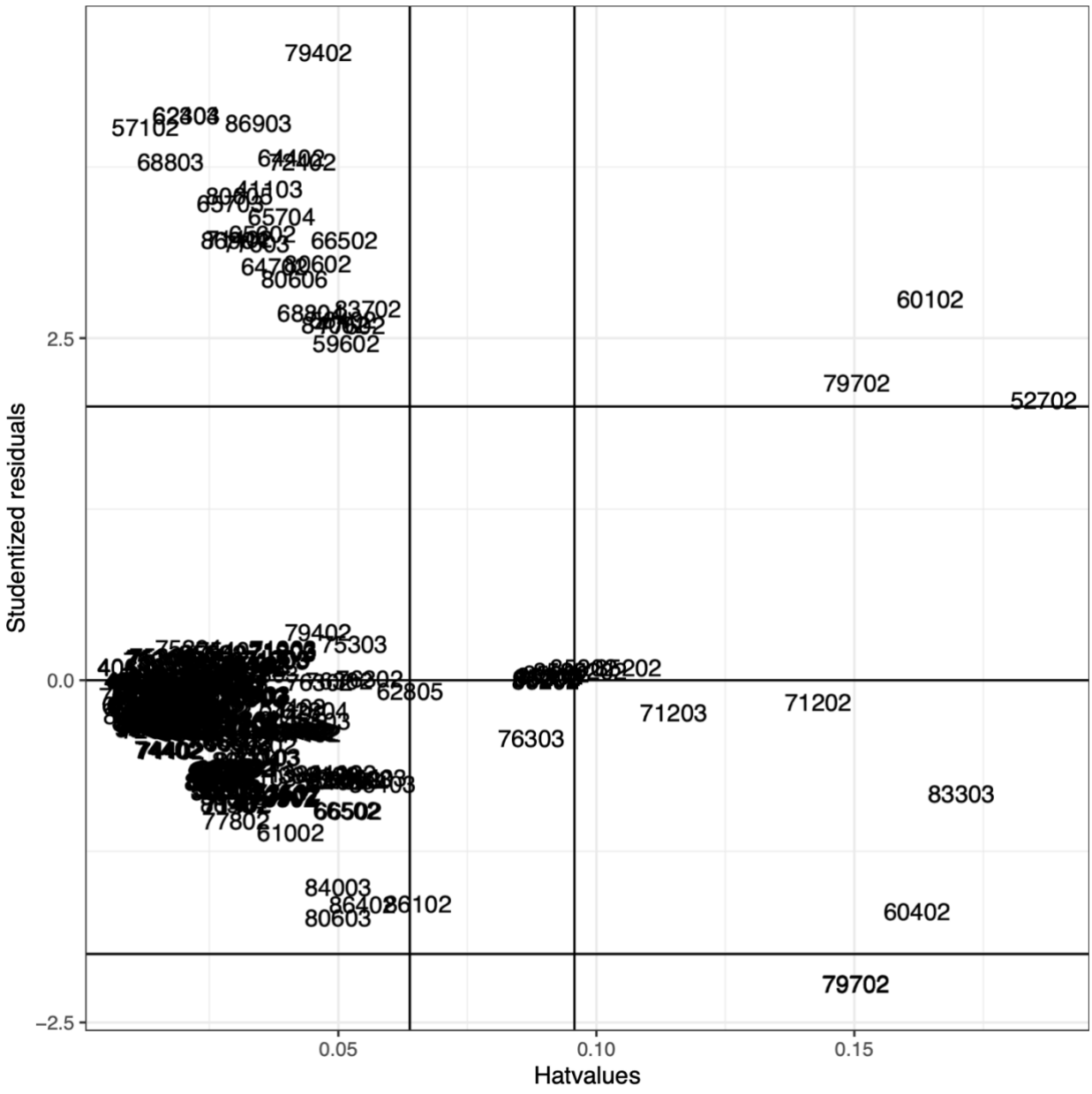

Table A.11: Regressions excluding influential observations

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Previous negotiated agreement	0.096	0.094*	0.110*	0.063	0.077
	(0.049)	(0.042)	(0.047)	(0.040)	(0.043)
Previous military victory	0.033	0.001	-0.037	-0.001	-0.037
	(0.034)	(0.056)	(0.065)	(0.053)	(0.060)
Incompatibility		-0.025	-0.025	-0.046	-0.047
		(0.030)	(0.033)	(0.029)	(0.031)
GDP per capita		-0.004	-0.004	-0.010***	-0.010**
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Population (logged)		-0.026	-0.025	-0.059**	-0.062**
		(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.020)	(0.023)
Ethnic groups		0.002	0.002	-0.001	-0.001
		(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.005)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.007	-0.010	0.001	-0.002
		(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Duration previous episode (logged)		0.003	0.005	0.003	0.005
		(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Intensity previous episode		-0.033	-0.010	-0.009	0.015
		(0.051)	(0.054)	(0.050)	(0.051)
Mediation previous episode		0.116	0.162*	0.093	0.134
		(0.064)	(0.076)	(0.059)	(0.070)
Relative rebel strength			-0.190*		-0.186**
			(0.090)		(0.065)
Democracy				0.300**	0.331**
				(0.102)	(0.114)
(Intercept)	0.045***	0.527	0.512	1.038**	1.080**
	(0.012)	(0.364)	(0.443)	(0.341)	(0.388)
Num. obs.	416	414	371	414	371
R^2	0.022	0.092	0.131	0.117	0.161
Adj. R^2	0.017	0.070	0.104	0.093	0.133

Clustered standard errors are in parentheses. ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05

Table A.12: LPM with interaction effects - Testing H3b

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Previous negotiated agreement	0.665	0.632	0.393	0.680	0.481
	(0.580)	(0.575)	(0.577)	(0.521)	(0.502)
Previous military victory	-0.253	0.569	0.500	0.740	0.693
	(0.438)	(0.789)	(1.027)	(0.747)	(0.963)
Duration (logged)	0.004	0.008*	0.009*	0.006	0.007
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Duration between episodes (logged)	-0.019	-0.008	-0.001	-0.003	0.006
	(0.022)	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.020)	(0.021)
Previous negotiated agreement * duration (logged)	-0.022	-0.009	-0.013	-0.006	-0.010
	(0.016)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.013)
Previous military victory * duration (logged)	0.003	-0.004	-0.012	-0.005	-0.012
	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.012)
Previous negotiated agreement * duration between episodes (logged)	-0.058	-0.066	-0.028	-0.081	-0.048
	(0.078)	(0.078)	(0.080)	(0.070)	(0.070)
Previous military victory * duration between episodes (logged)	0.037	-0.076	-0.065	-0.100	-0.092
	(0.060)	(0.111)	(0.146)	(0.104)	(0.136)
Incompatibility		-0.024	-0.022	-0.039	-0.039
		(0.029)	(0.033)	(0.028)	(0.031)
GDP per capita		-0.003	-0.003	-0.009**	-0.009**
		(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Population (logged)		-0.043	-0.035	-0.072**	-0.068**
		(0.022)	(0.026)	(0.021)	(0.024)
Ethnic groups		0.007	0.006	0.004	0.004
		(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Excluded ethnic groups		-0.013*	-0.015*	-0.006	-0.008
		(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)
Duration previous episode (logged)		0.003	0.006	0.003	0.006
		(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Intensity previous episode		-0.022	0.007	0.006	0.033
		(0.052)	(0.055)	(0.050)	(0.052)
Mediation previous episode		0.114	0.151*	0.090	0.124
		(0.060)	(0.071)	(0.053)	(0.065)
Relative rebel strength			0.091		0.050
			(0.166)		(0.178)
Democracy				0.285**	0.295*
				(0.102)	(0.115)
(Intercept)	0.153	0.803	0.620	1.233**	1.084*
	(0.168)	(0.425)	(0.498)	(0.378)	(0.423)
Num. obs.	421	419	376	419	376
R^2	0.049	0.128	0.164	0.149	0.185
Adj. R^2	0.031	0.094	0.124	0.113	0.144

Clustered standard errors are in parentheses. $^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$