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## Oligopolies of Violence in Post-Conflict Societies

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## **Oligopolies of Violence in Post-Conflict Societies**

Daniel Lambach

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## Oligopolies of Violence in Post-Conflict Societies

### Abstract

In post-conflict societies, security is provided by a broad range of actors including the state as well as various non-state formations. The paper identifies three types of post-conflict societies and analyses dynamics of the security market in cases where international troops have intervened. A comparison of seven countries shows that intervention forces were able to establish themselves as market leaders when a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program was successfully conducted in the immediate post-conflict period. Such a program should be embedded in an inclusive peace agreement that is backed up by a credible and robust troop commitment from the international community.

Key words: Post-conflict societies, security market, oligopoly of violence, international intervention, disarmament.

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the workshop 'Legitime Gewaltoligopole in Postkonfliktgesellschaften unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Liberia und Sierra Leone', German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Hamburg, 19 March 2007.

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## **Zusammenfassung**

### **Gewaltoligopole in Postkonfliktgesellschaften**

In Nachkriegsgesellschaften gibt es neben dem Staat eine Vielzahl von Akteuren, die für ihre Klientel Sicherheit anbieten. Dieses Papier unterscheidet drei Typen von Postkonfliktgesellschaften und analysiert die Dynamiken auf dem Sicherheitsmarkt in Ländern, in denen es zu einer internationalen Intervention kam. Ein Vergleich von sieben Fällen zeigt, dass sich internationale Truppen dann als Marktführer etablieren konnten, wenn ein Entwaffnungs- und Demobilisierungsprogramm erfolgreich durchgeführt wurde. Ein derartiges Programm muss in ein inklusives Friedensabkommen eingebettet sein, welches durch eine robuste Interventionsstreitmacht abgesichert wird.

# Oligopolies of Violence in Post-Conflict Societies

Daniel Lambach

## Article Outline

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical Framework
3. International Intervention and Oligopolies of Violence
4. Conclusion

## 1. Introduction

In post-conflict societies, security is a scarce good. Memories of violence are fresh and the gulf between the formerly warring parties is still deep. The psycho-social scars of war are often long-lasting and may take decades, or even whole generations to heal, if they do at all. For example, the aftereffects of the American Civil War (1861-1865) could still be felt in the South for a long time. Even today the memory of the war is kept alive and has an undeniable influence on federal politics (Grant 2003).

In academic literature and political practice alike, post-conflict phases are generally understood to be transitory stages between war and peace, although the possibility of backsliding into conflict is acknowledged (Collier et al. 2003: 83, Sambanis 2004: 847). In contrast, this paper argues that post-conflict societies have to be understood as distinctive spaces that follow their own logic, not just as an 'in-between' phase. Understanding this particular logic of post-conflict spaces could produce insights directly relevant for policy. One instance where such understanding would improve policy is in the field of development aid where, at the moment, most of the aid money is disbursed during the first few years after the end of vio-

lent conflict. However, at this stage the absorptive capacity of state institutions is still rather low; it only reaches a sufficiently high level after a few years, when international aid payments have already been reduced (François/Sud 2006).

Whereas post-conflict societies are similar in some ways, they differ in others. Recently, the idea has gained ground that each post-conflict situation is unique and must be understood on its own terms, paying particular attention to the historical and cultural setting. While this approach is to be commended for its sensitivity to local conditions, it goes too far in suggesting that post-conflict situations are fundamentally incomparable. Instead, this paper proceeds from the assumption that the degree of similarity between these countries is high enough to justify a comparative approach (Nieminen 2006: 264). In any case, this perspective seems to be preferred among policymakers and most academics, as the search for an 'optimum' recipe for post-conflict peace-building goes on, usually leading to debates about the best sequencing of particular measures (Paris 2005, Schneckener 2006). Rubin, however, points out the flaw in this overly optimistic strategy:

'Studies of state-building operations often try to identify "best practices" without asking for whom they are best' (2006: 184).

Rubin's comment highlights that state-building is a highly political endeavor which is carried out in a context of local actors and interests.

International state-building efforts frequently construe post-conflict countries as 'blank slates', malleable entities that can be quickly and decisively shaped by a dose of well-intentioned social engineering. As Krause and Jütersonke rightly point out, this perspective drastically overstates the capabilities of the international community (2005: 448-451). Faced with historical trajectories and cultural constraints of the societies it is trying to shape, external actors usually find their more ambitious projects frustrated.

Aware of the limited influence of external actors, this paper analyzes a particular field of action for external intervention forces in post-conflict countries, the provision of public security. It does not agree with Salomons that

'security – that is, freedom from violence and coercion – is the one absolute prerequisite to any effective recovery process after the intensity of armed conflict subsides' (2005: 19).

It nonetheless acknowledges that security is a very important good (though not necessarily the most important one) in post-conflict societies.

This paper presents some of the results of a research project called 'Legitimate Oligopolies of Violence in Post-Conflict Countries' conducted at the GIGA Institute of African Affairs in Hamburg (for further results, see Smith-Höhn 2006, 2007 and Basedau/Mehler/Smith-Höhn 2007).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Funding by the Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung (DSF) is gratefully acknowledged.

The paper will proceed as follows: It will begin by explaining the concept of 'oligopolies of violence' (Mehler 2004) which serves as the analytical framework for this study. It then scrutinizes the term 'post-conflict' and distinguishes between three types of post-conflict societies. In the third part, it analyzes dynamics of security provision in post-conflict countries where an international intervention had been undertaken. The paper concludes by discussing the dynamics of security provision in post-conflict spaces.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1. Oligopolies of Violence**

In post-conflict situations, the state is frequently unable to fulfil its mandate to exercise a legitimate monopoly over the means of physical coercion (Weber 1968: 55-56). This means that there is an unfulfilled demand for protection in such an environment. As a result, alternative producers of violence enter the 'security market'<sup>2</sup> where the state is unable or unwilling to provide security as a public good (Mehlum/Moehne/Torvik 2002). In post-conflict countries, militias, vigilantes, and warlords frequently offer protection from violence (including their own) in particular territorial or social spaces.

Security markets in post-conflict societies can exhibit varying degrees of concentration. Frequently markets will be supplied by a small number of competitors without any single one of them being able to monopolize it completely. This situation has been described as an 'oligopoly of violence' by Mehler (2004). This concept is useful in that it illustrates the heterogeneity of violence actors as well as the unequal relationships between them. It forces the analyst to consider the strategic environment in which armed groups (inter-)act, and which they create through their interaction. It is similar to the concept of security governance (e.g., Hänggi 2005: 9), but instead of emphasizing the cooperative aspects, it explicitly leaves the question unanswered how market actors relate to each other.

Expanding this concept, security markets can be described along three dimensions: Structure, type of interaction, and mode of differentiation. Structure describes the level of market concentration, ranging from a monopoly to a polypoly of violence, with the oligopoly situated between these two extremes. In a 'true' oligopoly, no single supplier is able to capture a market share of more than 50-60%. Where an actor manages to exceed this margin without monopolizing the market (a maximum market share of 80%), we speak of 'market dominance' or a 'market leader'.

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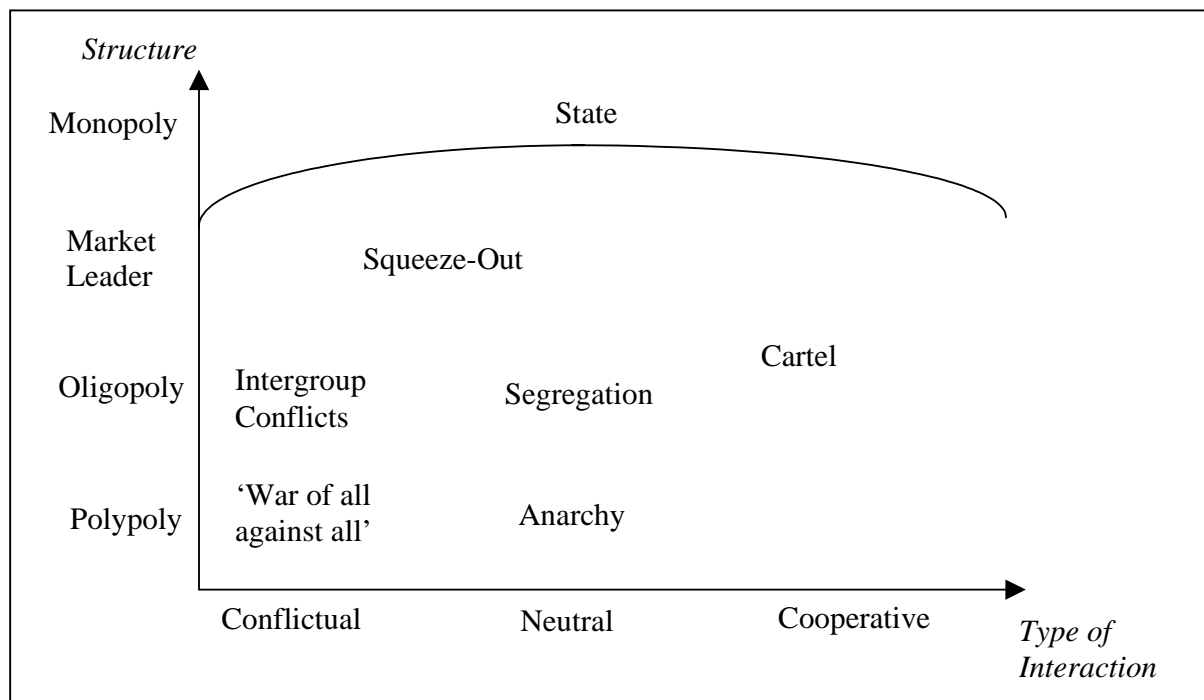
<sup>2</sup> This differs from the concept of 'markets of violence' (Elwert 1999).



The type of interaction between market actors can be situated along a continuum from cooperative to conflictual behavior (see *Figure 1*). The latter indicates that there are frequent violent clashes between major market actors while the former is characterized by an absence of violence and cooperation in good faith. Three intermediate types (cooperative-neutral, neutral, conflictual-neutral) are added to capture nuances although a clear delimitation of types is not easy. Cooperative oligopolies are also called ‘cartels of violence’, although they are likely to be rare and unstable (Mehler 2004: 540).

Lastly, differentiation describes how actors have divided the security market. On the one hand, a homogenous market is differentiated territorially. That means that in a given locality, there will generally only be a single supplier of security. On the other hand, a heterogenous market is characterized by functional differentiation, i.e., it is divided along social, not territorial spaces. An example of a heterogenous market would be an ethnically mixed city quarter where each ethnic group relies on its own networks of solidarity and protection. Differentiation is very much a product of structural characteristics like settlement patterns, geographical features and social structure and is almost impossible to manipulate in the short term. Therefore, this paper focuses on the other two dimensions (structure and type of interaction) as illustrated in *Figure 1*.

**Figure 1: Market Forms by Type of Interaction and Structure**



Source: Own compilation

Finally, the question of levels of analysis needs to be addressed. As such, the 'oligopoly of violence' concept as developed by Mehler is not tied to any particular level. Indeed, it can easily be applied to various levels from single villages to whole countries. This paper analyzes security provision at the national level (or, where sub-state territories are considered, at the appropriate sub-state level) and thus considers whole countries as single markets. This obviously obscures local variation which is as relevant for security provision as it is in other fields. Research in Liberia and Sierra Leone has shown the fractal nature of security markets: As you get closer to the local and the individual level, new actors come into the picture while others fade away. Therefore, a focus on the national level gives rough approximation of the security market at the micro-level (although not an exact duplicate). The comparison at the national level is also necessitated by poor availability of data for sub-state contexts.

## 2.2. Post-Conflict Societies

### 2.2.1. What's 'Post-Conflict' about 'Post-Conflict Societies'?

When speaking of 'post-conflict' situations, one must be careful to explicate any preconceptions explicit or implicit in such a designation. The inherent difficulty of the term 'post-conflict' lies in the fact that the prefix 'post-' is a temporal signifier attached to a noun ('conflict') that has no fixed temporal content. As a result, the whole idea of 'post-conflict' invites a mental dichotomy that transforms 'conflict' and 'post-conflict' into synonyms of 'war' and 'peace'. In this dichotomy, 'conflict' signifies situations structured by violence carried out by organized actors according to a dominant conflict narrative, while 'post-conflict' implicitly signals the end of said violence and the return to a peaceful normality.

Yet it is doubtful whether such a simplified understanding of conflict/post-conflict helps us comprehend phenomena of large-scale violence. The discussion about the notion of 'new wars' (despite all the – justified – criticism levelled against the concept) has shown that contemporary conflicts are characterized by a dissolution of familiar dichotomies that had previously structured warfare, such as war/peace, soldier/civilian, politics/economics, and so on. Nevertheless, the dichotomized understanding of conflict/post-conflict still informs most contributions to the study of societies with a recent experience of internal war. These studies rarely bother to explicitly define what they mean by 'post-conflict', although some do, usually taking the level of violence as their main indicator:

'There are few truly postconflict situations. Conflicts become more or less violent, more or less manifest or latent, but they seldom stop altogether. "Postconflict" in this book is shorthand for conflict situations, in which open warfare has come to an end' (Junne/Verkoren 2005: 1, also Licklider 1995: 682).

This particular definition sustains the dichotomy by identifying post-conflict with the cessation of open warfare.

However, such an approach has its operational limits. Even where violence declines significantly, it is hard to pinpoint the end of a conflict with any accuracy. Recent research shows that internal conflicts end differently depending on which side wins: If state forces lose, conflict tends to accelerate towards the end of conflict. However, if the insurgent side loses, conflict slows down as the remaining guerillas withdraw into remote locations or hide among the population:

‘The end, in such cases is almost always indecisive, in the sense that there is seldom a climactic engagement that marks the terminal point of the insurgency’ (McCormick/Horton/Harrison 2007: 327).

Also, the level of violence is not, by itself, an effective indicator of the end of conflict:

‘Human security regularly deteriorates in the delicate period after wars are officially declared over. As a result, so-called post-conflict realities rarely bear much resemblance to what is implied by their definition. Rather, death and injury rates often remain comparatively high even after an armed conflict has come to an “end” ’ (Small Arms Survey 2005: 289).

In cases like Guatemala, death rates have actually increased since the signing of the peace agreement in 1996. Neither do other forms of human suffering end once the shooting is over as civil conflict is inevitably followed by higher rates of mortality and morbidity and a generally lower quality of life (Ghobarah/Huth/Russett 2003). Some researchers have started to describe these societies as ‘no peace, no war’ (Richards 2005a) or ‘no war, no peace’ (MacGinty 2006).

To get to a better definition, it is helpful to think of ‘war’ as ‘a state of mind shared among participants’ as Paul Richards proposes (2005b: 5). He also points out that a rigid distinction between ‘war’ and ‘peace’ (or ‘conflict’ and ‘post-conflict’) is impossible to sustain empirically. Instead, war often contains long periods of non-violence, while peace is frequently marred by (large-scale) violence. Therefore ‘conflict’ and ‘post-conflict’ situations are social constructs, discursive delimitations of the kind of behavior that is to be expected and allowed in a given set of circumstances.

Therefore, the central aspect of a definition of ‘post-conflict’ must be a narrative of peace. A conflict can be considered over when violence is no longer explained in terms of the dominant narrative of conflict. For example, the Guatemalan civil war was effectively over when violence in the country was no longer couched in terms of social revolution and counterinsurgency. Instead, current discourses describe post-conflict violence as ‘criminal’, thereby ascribing a different quality to it than to violence during the civil war. For the purposes of this pa-

per, I consider a conflict to be over when violence perpetrated by actors in the conflict is no longer employed in relation to the central narratives of the previous conflict. Note that both of these conditions are necessary. Accordingly, a conflict can end either when the narrative of violence changes or when the conflict parties are removed (or remove themselves) from the scene.

### 2.2.2. Types of Post-Conflict Countries

There is an intuitive logic to the idea that not all post-conflict societies are alike. Indeed, these societies are profoundly shaped by the nature of the preceding conflict. For example, it can be hypothesized that the longer, the more all-encompassing and the more violent a conflict was, the deeper and longer-lasting its aftereffects will be. On the other hand, post-conflict societies also share similarities, not least in the challenges they have to face, from the reconstruction of infrastructure to the rebuilding of interpersonal trust.

Clearly, extreme positions postulating either the complete incomparability of cases or their total similarity offer no help for the analysis of the problem at hand. A mediating approach is necessary that identifies different types of post-conflict societies. To this end, a review of 14 post-conflict countries and territories was undertaken. Cases were selected from Chojnacki's Warlist (2005) and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)<sup>3</sup> database. Care was taken to include a wide variety of wars, from large-scale conflicts like Mozambique to riot-like violence in Pakistan (the Mohajir/Sindh conflict) or Nigeria (the Sharia riots). One qualifying criterion was that a conflict had to be coded as ended by 2004 at the latest so that a judgment about the post-conflict situation could validly be made.

In-depth case studies were conducted using expert interviews and a review of the literature to come to an assessment of the post-conflict security market. It turned out that market structure and the type of interaction among market actors varied so much that it was impossible to isolate causal factors with a uniform impact on all cases. The only variable that came close to such explanatory power was the intensity of the previous conflict, where a high intensity tended to produce a lesser degree of market concentration. This was particularly true for cases with a relatively low intensity of violence, although evidence from high-intensity cases was less conclusive. Similarly, other preliminary hypotheses held only for certain subsets of the whole population of cases. From this, a typology of post-conflict countries was constructed that differentiated three types according to two key variables: Intensity of conflict, and international intervention (see *Table 1*).

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.ucdp.uu.se/>

**Table 1: Types of Post-Conflict Countries**

	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>No Intervention</i>
<i>High Intensity</i>	Type I	Type II
<i>Low Intensity</i>	---	Type III

Source: Own compilation

Whereas high-intensity conflicts more closely resembled classical models of civil war and were often resolved through peace agreements or military victories, low-intensity conflicts had more in common with banditry, riots and criminal violence. As for the second variable, military interventions by external, multilateral forces (typically UN peacekeepers or UN-mandated forces) either after the end of hostilities or in the last phase of the conflict have had a decisive influence on the structure of the security market. Market dynamics in the three high-intensity cases without an intervening force were markedly different from cases where such a force was present. The cases were then grouped according to their respective types (see *Table 2*).

**Table 2: Post-Conflict Societies by Type**

	<i>Country</i>	<i>Conflict Timespan</i>	<i>Intervention</i>	<i>Intensity</i>
<i>Type I</i> 'High Intensity, External Intervention'	Afghanistan	1979-2001	Yes	High
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	1992-1995	Yes	High
	Cambodia	1979-1991	Yes	High
	Kosovo	1998-1999	Yes	High
	Liberia	1990-1996; 2001-2003	Yes	High
	Mozambique	2001-2003	Yes	High
	Sierra Leone	1991-2002	Yes	High
<i>Type II</i> 'High Intensity, No intervention'	Guatemala	1962-1995	No	High
	Peru	1981-1999	No	High
	Somalia (Somali-land)	1988-1991	No	High
<i>Type III</i> 'Low Intensity'	Mexico (Chiapas)	1994-1995	No	Low
	Niger (Tuareg)	1990-1995	No	Low
	Nigeria (Sharia riots)	1999-2003	No	Low
	Pakistan (Mohajir)	1994-1997	No	Low

Source: Own compilation based on Chojnacki 2005, UCDP database, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kriegsursachenforschung (AKUF) database<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sozialwiss.uni-hamburg.de/publish/Ipw/Akuf/index.htm>.

The types can be described as follows. In Type I cases, military intervention led to the entry of a strong competitor into the security market, usually resulting in a rapid change of market structure. International forces frequently achieved market dominance if they were of sufficient strength. As a result, they regularly became the target for disgruntled parties unhappy with the new status quo. In Type II cases where such forces were absent, the surviving parties to the conflict continued to dominate the security market through their access to arms and their organizational advantage. Unless one side had been militarily defeated, oligopolies of violence continued to exist for years after the conflict. Even where one side had been a victor on the battlefield, the winning coalition might have fragmented in the post-conflict environment, leading to a reconstitution of the oligopoly, albeit with different actors. Type III cases were usually ended by the victory of government forces (in conflicts between state and non-state actors) or through a military intervention by the state (in conflicts between sub-state actors). Usually, the state was able to assert its monopoly or, at the very least, its dominance on the security market in subsequent times. However, the underlying conflict was only 'frozen' but not resolved which might lead to further violence at some later date.

### **3. International Intervention and Oligopolies of Violence**

#### **3.1. Case Selection and Hypotheses**

To minimize variation among cases, this paper concentrates on Type I as it offers the broadest empirical base. This mitigates the 'Small N, Many Variables' problem (Lijphart 1971) by holding several factors (intensity of conflict, international intervention) constant. Furthermore, the cases selected – Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Kosovo, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone – occurred in the same historical period (after the end of the Cold War). Finally, the intervening forces were all either UN peacekeepers or UN-mandated forces with a comparatively large number of military and police personnel (see *Table 3*).

In each case, the security market was analyzed three to four years after the end of conflict. This timeframe was chosen to allow comparison of the results with data gathered in field research in Sierra Leone and Liberia between 2005 and 2006 (see Smith-Höhn 2006, 2007 and Basedau/Mehler/Smith-Höhn 2007). It also represents a point where post-conflict structures have begun to solidify. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with country experts and from secondary literature.

**Table 3: International Intervention Forces**

<i>Case</i>	<i>Mission</i>	<i>Time span</i>	<i>Security Personnel<sup>5</sup></i>
Afghanistan	ISAF	2001-ongoing	35,500
	Operation Enduring Freedom	2001-ongoing	8,000
Bosnia-Herzegovina	UNMIBH	1995-2002	2,050
	IFOR/SFOR/EUFOR	1995-ongoing	32,000
Cambodia	UNAMIK/UNTAC	1991-1993	19,000
Kosovo	UNMIK	1999-ongoing	2,000
	KFOR	1999-ongoing	50,000
Liberia	UNMIL	2003-ongoing	15,100
Mozambique	ONUMOZ	1992-1994	7,750
Sierra Leone	UNAMSIL	1999-2005	17,400

Sources: United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations; NATO

The following causal hypotheses were developed to test the influence of several variables on market structure and on the type of interaction among market actors:

*H1: Intervention troops are market leaders or monopolists*

H1 is based on the assumption that intervention forces are usually of sufficient strength to quickly assert dominance on the security market. This proceeds from the international community's preferred strategy of 'saturating' a post-conflict country with troops to deter would-be spoilers from attacking the international forces. In addition, intervention troops are usually better armed, better trained, and better led than most non-state armed actors, further improving their leverage on the market.

*H2: Peace agreements increase market concentration and/or improve the quality of interaction*

This hypothesis proceeds from the assumption that a peace agreement supports the eventual emergence of a monopoly of violence either through the demobilization of fighters or their integration into a national army. A peace agreement is also supposed to reduce inter-group hostility, making interaction between market actors less conflictual, e.g. via power-sharing accords.

*H3: DDR programs support market concentration*

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs reduce the potential to employ violence of all participating parties. Since those programs never target all conflict actors equally, the market position of particular parties (usually state forces or international troops) is relatively strengthened.

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<sup>5</sup> Maximum number of military or police personnel deployed after end of major hostilities.

*H4a: The higher the number of parties to the conflict, the lower the market concentration and the more conflictual the relations*

H4a claims that a fragmented, non-cooperative market will basically stay the same during the transition from conflict to the post-conflict phase. This is based on the observation that conflicts destroy social capital and leave a legacy of inter-group tension that is hard to overcome. The higher the number of actors, the higher the degree of uncertainty on the market will be which acts as a disincentive against cooperation. Instead, the hypothesis posits that small actors will entrench themselves and try to stabilize their market position.

*H4b: The higher the number of parties to the conflict, the higher the market concentration*

This hypothesis is the opposite of H4a. It proceeds from the assumption that a fragmented security market is easier to dominate for intervention forces, since individual parties are of insufficient strength to resist the intervention troops' attempt to gain market share.

The variables were defined as follows:

#### *Market Structure*

An oligopoly is present where no actor is able to dominate the market, but where only a few (no more than six) actors control significant market shares on the national level. Since market share is impossible to measure on the security market, alternative indicators for market dominance are necessary: Where a single actor dominates the market, other actors will avoid direct confrontation with the market leader while defending their ability to exert violence and provide security. A monopoly is present where only a single actor maintains a sizeable armed force on the national level.

#### *Types of Interaction*

Interaction is conflictual when there are frequent violent clashes between at least two of the major market actors. Where such clashes occur infrequently, interaction was labeled as conflictual-neutral. Where interaction is neutral, violence between major actors is very rare. Hostility is still widespread, but does not lead to fighting; actors are mostly segregated from each other. A cooperative-neutral mode of interaction includes (a) the absence of violence between major actors, and (b) frequent contacts between actors. Finally, in a cooperative market, major actors frequently interact in good faith and sometimes coordinate actions.

#### *DDR*

DDR was coded as 'Yes' where all major parties agreed on a DDR program (or submitted to an international one) and where no party defected from the program. This includes DDR



programs which were targeted to particular (usually non-state) actors – not everyone has to be affected equally for a DDR program to be considered successful for the purposes of this analysis. A ‘partial’ DDR program describes cases where DDR was not wholly effective, usually because actors hid weapons and kept fighters from being demobilized. The variable was coded as ‘No’ where actors defected from the DDR program or where not all major actors were included in such a program.

#### *Peace Agreement*

This variable is coded as ‘Yes’ if a peace agreement is in place that all conflict parties have ratified. If such an agreement is absent or has not been accepted by all parties or excludes certain major actors (such as the Bonn Agreement of 2001 where the Taliban had been excluded from the negotiations), it is coded as ‘No’.

#### *Number of Parties to the Previous Conflict*

This variable is coded as ‘Low’ if there were only two major actors (or stable alliances of actors) during the conflict, as ‘Medium’ if there were three or four major actors, and as ‘High’ if there were five or more major factions to the conflict.

### **3.2. Analysis**

Data is presented in Table 4. In five out of seven cases, a market leader had emerged three to four years after the end of conflict. In three cases, the market leader was an international intervention force; in the other two, it was the respective government of the country following the early withdrawal of international troops. The other two cases, Afghanistan and Cambodia, were characterized by oligopolies of violence and a return to conflict, albeit on a lower level and less openly than before the intervention. There, central conflict actors (the Taliban and the Khmer Rouge, respectively) rejected peace and continued to fight. Types of interaction covered the spectrum from conflictual to cooperative-neutral relations. Cooperative interaction could not be observed.

As for the hypotheses, H1 is partly confirmed. In three cases, international troops were market leaders at the time of observation, in another two (Mozambique and Sierra Leone) they had been before they were withdrawn and had handed over market dominance to government actors. However, Afghanistan and Cambodia contradict this hypothesis. Therefore, additional conditions seem to be necessary for intervention forces to successfully exert market dominance. A monopolization of force by external actors could not be observed and seems very unlikely in most post-conflict settings.<sup>6</sup> This observation should caution deci-

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<sup>6</sup> With the possible exception of very small countries. One example of such a case would be the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

sion-makers against undue optimism about the impact that intervention troops can have and its sustainability.

**Table 4: Determinants of Market Structure in Type I Cases**

Case	Year	Outcome Variables			Independent Variables		
		Structure	Interaction	Differentiation	DDR	Peace Agreement	Parties
Afghanistan	2005	Oligopoly	Conflictual	Homogenous	No	No	High
Bosnia-Herzegovina	1999	Market Leader (SFOR)	Neutral	Homogenous	Yes	Yes	Medium
Cambodia	1994	Oligopoly	Conflictual	Homogenous	No	Yes	Medium
Kosovo	2002	Market Leader (KFOR)	Conflictual-Neutral	Homogenous	Partial	Yes	Low
Liberia	2006	Market Leader (UNMIL)	Cooperative-Neutral	Heterogenous	Partial	Yes	High
Mozambique	1995	Market Leader (Government)	Cooperative-Neutral	Homogenous	Yes	Yes	Low
Sierra Leone	2006	Market Leader (Government)	Cooperative-Neutral	Heterogenous	Yes	Yes	Medium

Source: Own compilation

The proposition that a peace agreement contributes to market concentration and the peacefulness of interaction (H2) is also partly confirmed. In contrast to H1, only Cambodia contradicts this hypothesis. There, the 1991 Paris Agreement provided a basis for peace and had been signed by all major conflict parties. However, the Khmer Rouge defected from the agreement in 1992 when they found themselves sidelined after a realignment of political forces on the eve of UNTAC's (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) deployment. As a result, the hypothesis could be modified to say that 'working' peace agreements (i.e. inclusive accords that are respected by all actors) have the desired effect. Unfortunately, the observation that peace agreements that are respected by all sides lead to amicable relations is tautological and, hence, worthless.

H3 is confirmed in a rather straightforward manner. The data shows that where a DDR program was at least partially successful, the security market was dominated by a market leader. However, the direction of causality is unclear: on the one hand, a DDR program contributes to market concentration by reducing the capacity of spoilers to employ violence, on the other hand, an international force that dominates the market may be able to coerce other actors into submitting to a DDR process. Actually, this second proposition seems the more

likely since DDR programs are generally only implemented after the intervention force has been fully deployed.

It cannot be said with confidence whether the number of parties to the previous conflict has any effect on the post-conflict security market one way or the other (H4a and H4b). A higher number of parties seems to be associated with a less concentrated market due to the higher number of potential spoilers but the relationship is far from linear. If a correlation exists, it is, at best, a very weak one that would require further testing. No noticeable effect on the kind of interaction can be observed.

Generally, very little can be said about factors influencing the type of interaction, apart from the fact that relations on less concentrated markets tend to be more conflictual. This supports the argument that intervention forces establish themselves as market leaders mostly through their capacity to intimidate would-be spoilers. Where external forces have been withdrawn, are hampered by overly restrictive mandates or do not have sufficient strength, a conflictual mode of interaction is likely to continue into the post-conflict phase. Afghanistan is certainly a case where an insufficient number of troops contributed to the lack of control of international forces over the security market. Even though the international forces number more than 40,000, there are only 1.4 troops per 1,000 citizens. In comparison, most other missions had a higher per capita presence (Kosovo: 22.7, Bosnia-Herzegovina: 8.7, Sierra Leone: 3.2). Only two other missions had a similarly low presence on the ground, UNTAC (2.0) and ONUMOZ (Operations des Nations Unies au Mozambique) (0.4). While the first one failed, the second operated in a much more favorable environment where both conflict parties showed an earnest commitment to peace.

Looking at the hypotheses together, it becomes clear that there is no monocausal explanation of market concentration. At first glance, even a partially successful DDR program seems to be sufficient. However, the success of such a program seems to be dependent on the deterrence effect of international forces acting in a peacekeeping function. Also, DDR programs are always part of more broader peace arrangements, usually being only one of a wide range of measures. Nevertheless, a DDR program seems to be a necessary condition for the sustainable improvement of public security: where such programs failed, the security markets remained oligopolies with a comparatively high level of violence.

### **3.3. Oligopolies of Violence and Human Security**

What effect do different kinds of market structure have on the human security of ordinary people in the country? Mehler predicts that the lower the market concentration, the higher the level of violence:

'Oligopolies of violence lead to a moderately high level of violence since each violence actor has to prove *his or her* ability to use it effectively (as a rule: The more oligopolists the more violence)' (2004: 545, italics in the original).

However, evaluating this claim is very hard to do since reliable data on violence are usually lacking in post-conflict countries. In most Low Income Countries – even those without a recent internal conflict – statistical capacity is generally low to non-existent. As a result, data like homicide statistics are frequently missing, biased or unreliable and very hard to compare across countries (Human Security Centre 2005: 81). In spite of these shortcomings, economists have calculated that the homicide rate in the immediate post-conflict period is some 25% higher than before the outbreak of civil war. However, homicides gradually return to their pre-conflict levels; after 10 to 15 years the civil conflict no longer exerts a statistically significant influence on the homicide rate (Collier/Hoeffler 2004: 10). Another study by Shaw (2002) shows that transition countries suffer from an overall increase in crime level. A significant proportion of 'new' crime will be facilitated by the lack of state authorities' capacity to effectively sanction deviant behavior. Broadhurst (2002) reports that crime rates in Cambodia were initially low after the end of the civil war but began to rise again after UNTAC ceased supporting the Cambodian police forces.

There are several further factors that have the potential to contribute to such a rise in crime and interpersonal violence. These include wartime grievances, an easier access to guns, a large pool of demobilized veterans, legacies of drug addiction, the emergence of new criminal actors, an erosion of social and legal norms sanctioning violence, the emergence of a 'culture of violence', and population displacement (Mueller 2003, Human Security Centre 2005: 80, UNODC 2005: 29).

Beyond direct violence, conflict also leads to psychological trauma. Epidemiological studies in post-conflict countries have shown that conflict leads to a higher prevalence of mental illness, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), mood disorders (such as depression), and other anxiety disorders. In most cases, the risks of suffering from one or more of these conditions was raised by a factor of three to ten compared with similar countries that had not experienced war (de Jong/Komproe/van Ommeren 2003: 2129).

Unfortunately, these studies only cover a limited number of countries and do not disaggregate their findings by country. Due to this lack of comparable data, we have to rely on indirect indicators and anecdotal evidence. For the five markets dominated by a market leader, this results in an uneven picture. In a 2005 survey of 700 Liberians conducted as part of this research project, 70% of respondents said that they personally felt somewhat or very safe. More than 85% reported that security had improved since the war. Lastly, 96% of respondents said that UNMIL (United Nations Missions in Liberia), the market leader, was impor-

tant for their personal security, with only 1.5% considering it a threat to their well-being. A similar poll taken in Sierra Leone in early 2006 showed comparable results although respondents generally were a bit more pessimistic, likely due to the uncertainty created by the recent withdrawal of UNAMSIL (United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone) forces (in December 2005) and the handing over of security provision to government actors. In spite of public scepticism, the police (88%) and the Armed Forces (85%) were rated as very important for citizens' personal security. These figures confirm the results of surveys conducted by the United Nations (Krasno 2005, 2006).

Similar polls in Kosovo showed a high degree of support for KFOR, particularly among minorities, as well as for para-state security organs like the Kosovo Police Service and the paramilitary Kosovo Protection Corps (ICG 2006: 3, Fn. 7). In general, interpersonal violence in Kosovo has been low in comparison with other post-conflict countries, despite well-publicized incidents suggesting the opposite. However, O'Neill rightly points out that this achievement of KFOR should be taken with a grain of salt: 'It does no good to maintain, as did former U.S. secretary of state Albright, Lord Robertson of NATO, and others that the murder rate in Kosovo is lower than in Detroit, Berlin, Moscow, or wherever. This is irrelevant; ask a Serb or Roma if they feel safer today than they did in early 2000. Many incidents go unreported' (2002: 107).

Just as in Kosovo, the international forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina managed to deter open violence relatively well. After a few years, homicide rates were at a level comparable to most Western nations, although experts suspect that unreported household violence was high. At the same time, the mobility of the population continued to be restricted by lasting fears about personal safety, with many citizens preferring to stay within their ethnically bounded areas.

Violent crime was the most salient security issue in Mozambique. After a very successful disarmament program, some demobilized veterans doubtlessly turned to banditry. According to human rights groups, certain criminals even enjoyed protection by high-ranking state officials. Coupled with the police's ineffectiveness as a crime-fighting force and the largely inoperable judicial system, public fear about crime was very high. Public dissatisfaction with the crime surge in the immediate post-conflict period led to the dismissal of the minister of the interior in 1996.

Despite this inconsistent picture, violence levels seemed to be higher in the two 'true' oligopolies (without a market leader), thus apparently confirming Mehler's hypothesis. In Cambodia, open fighting between government forces and the Khmer Rouge, and also between different political factions escalated after UNTAC's withdrawal in late 1993 and continued until at least 1998, albeit with declining intensity. Similarly, violent crime in Phnom

Penh increased substantially during the same time period. Verkoren also reports that the war has left behind a 'culture of violence where the instant reaction to an apparent crime is to kill the perpetrator, rather than waiting for a case to work its way through the politicized, weak, and often corrupt court system.' (2005: 294) Particularly in rural areas, citizens were wary of the police and other state institutions. Similar observations can be made in Afghanistan where the ongoing war between the Taliban and the alliance of state forces and international troops continues to exact a high toll on the civilian population. There, distrust of the state and the international troops is widespread, particularly in the Pashtun south of the country. Even among ethnic groups favorable to the intervention, there is uncertainty whether the fledgling state and the international troops of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) will be able to guarantee their security. As a result, alternative schemes of protection, of which the Taliban, the various warlords, and tribal militias are only three examples, continue to be in demand, further stabilizing the oligopoly of violence.

Distrust of state institutions is not uncommon in the aftermath of civil war and was widespread in the other five cases as well. Nevertheless, the open fighting that characterized the post-conflict security markets in Afghanistan and Cambodia certainly represented a greater threat (in quantity as well as quality) to human security than revenge killings and violent crime in the other five markets. In this sense, Mehler's hypothesis that concentrated markets are safer for ordinary citizens appears to be corroborated.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This paper analyzed the structure and dynamics of security markets in post-conflict societies. Building upon Mehler's concept of 'oligopolies of violence', it described how security in post-conflict countries is provided by a broad range of actors beyond the state. With regard to security provision, three distinct types of post-conflict countries were identified. Focusing on one of these types, seven cases of countries which had been subject to an international military intervention were compared. The analysis shows that intervention forces were able to establish themselves as market leaders when a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program was successfully conducted in the immediate post-conflict period. Such a program should be embedded in an inclusive peace agreement that is backed up by a credible and robust troop commitment from the international community. Evidence from these cases also seemed to confirm Mehler's hypothesis that true oligopolies exhibit higher

levels of violence and represent a greater threat to human security than more concentrated security markets.

Beyond these results, the paper also points out three directions for further research on post-conflict societies. First, it is necessary to question the label 'post-conflict' and avoid the mental dichotomies that lead to a handy identification of 'post-conflict' with 'peace'. We should strive to understand the particular logic of post-conflict situations instead of dismissing them as brief, transitory stages. Such a perspective would also improve policy advice based on such research. Usually, political strategies for post-conflict strategies employ timeframes that are far too short. These approaches also grossly overestimate the possibilities for social engineering, imagining post-conflict societies as 'clean slates' upon which a bright new future can be written. As a result, reform agendas usually include a list of measures that even highly industrialized countries would find hard to implement (Ottaway 2002: 1007-1009). 'Good governance' is simply not feasible in countries shattered by internal war; 'good enough governance' (DFID 2005: 20) would be a much more realistic goal.

Second, post-conflict societies are too rarely evaluated in their own right. Instead, research and policy often approach these societies as passive victims of external forces beyond their control. By treating post-conflict countries as mere objects of Western policy and as staging grounds for international interventions, agency is being denied to local political actors and ordinary citizens alike. That local actors are only relevant to the degree in which they interact with external forces is evident in the discourse which casts these actors as either 'spoilers' (Stedman 1997) or 'change agents' (Mitchell 2006). This also entails that we broaden our focus beyond those post-conflict countries that the international community has intervened in and include other countries into the analysis. While there are often excellent single-case studies by political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, historians and area studies specialists about these other countries, they are usually not included in comparative research designs. Instead, research often strives to make itself 'policy-relevant' by focusing on the conditions of success or failure of international interventions. This paper lays the groundwork for such a comparative endeavor in that it identifies three types of post-conflict societies. Further research would be necessary to see whether these three types also apply to other areas beyond security provision.

The third conclusion is that we still know relatively little about how market dominance can be handed over from international forces to the new government of the country despite the fact that this phase is crucial for the overall success of any intervention. And even though all interventions nowadays train local security forces to prepare them for the handover of security provision responsibilities, we do not know when and under what conditions such a withdrawal should take place. Or maybe we do know, but refuse to admit it? It seems that

international forces are not withdrawn if and when local conditions permit but rather when their domestic audience demands it. As a result, local security forces are usually declared ready when international forces are leaving, not the other way around, turning the rationale of intervention on its head.

We know very little about what happens when international forces withdraw, not least because the country suddenly becomes less relevant to Western interests. The theoretical framework based on Mehler's 'oligopoly' concept as well as empirical results outlined in this paper both suggest that with the exit of a major market actor, other actors will struggle to claim as much of the departing actor's market share as possible. On the one hand, remaining major actors will try to improve their market position, sometimes through the use of violence. On the other hand, marginal actors will (re-)emerge to provide security for small sections of the population. This is a dynamic that is all too visible even outside post-conflict countries. For example, ethnic militias in Nigeria typically formed in those social or territorial spaces where the state had little to no presence (Agbu 2004: 15, Harnischfeger 2003). Similar processes could be observed in Karachi (Pakistan) and Sierra Leone after UNAMSIL's withdrawal. Clearly, there is much that can still be learned about post-conflict societies. However, if these lacunae are addressed there is reason to hope that the international treatment of these countries can be improved beyond their current state.



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