

# Human-rights Promotion, the Media and Peacemaking in Africa

Brian Burgoon ([b.m.burgoon@uva.nl](mailto:b.m.burgoon@uva.nl))

Andrea Ruggeri ([a.ruggeri@uva.nl](mailto:a.ruggeri@uva.nl))

Ram Manikkalingam ([rmanikkalingam@gmail.com](mailto:rmanikkalingam@gmail.com))

Department of Political Science  
(Amsterdam Institute of Social Science Research)  
University of Amsterdam  
O.Z.Achterburgwal 237  
1012 DL Amsterdam

## Abstract

This paper explores how media attention to human-rights violations, one manifestation of human-rights promotion via “naming-and-shaming,” affects the intensity of violence in African conflicts. Scholars and practitioners are divided on the broad efficacy of human-rights promotion in the context of conflict: some argue that human-rights promotion helps pacify by stabilizing and civilizing conflicts, and others argue that such promotion can spur conflict by making combatants fear reprisals. Poor measurement of human-rights promotion and its role in shaping conflicts, however, has obscured adjudication of this debate. The present paper remedies this problem by developing detailed and daily measures of human-rights “naming and shaming” in New York Times reporting and opinion pieces, matching these data with daily data on conflict intensity in seven African conflicts. Based on the resulting data, we find support for the view that such media naming and shaming pacifies more than provokes the intensity of violence.

Chapter prepared for submission in Carsten de Dreu, ed., *Conflicts Within and Between Groups: Functions, Dynamics, and Interventions*.

In the corpus of civil wars, the armed conflict between combatants has frequently been accompanied by widespread violation of human rights that considerably exacerbates the human toll of war. With the rise of mass media, people are now better informed than ever about such violation as the stories and images of atrocities are made public, discussed and debated. This process has sometimes encouraged the international community (e.g. governments, international organizations) to intervene in domestic conflict, by pressuring the actors involved to improve human rights conditions (Lebovic and Voeten 2006). In more extreme cases, foreign powers (either unilaterally or collectively) have become involved militarily in countries ravaged by civil war, citing the avoidance of further violence and bloodshed as important motivations to do so (e.g. Kaufman 1996).

Despite the growing involvement of media and governments in protecting human rights in the context violent conflicts, we know little about how media attention affects the conflicts themselves. Recent scholarship has analyzed the effects of foreign interventions on conflict duration and post-conflict stability, but little attention has been given to the effects of substantive human-rights demands often underlying these interventions. And studies on the effects of human rights promotion by media and non-governmental organizations have focused on implications for actual violations of these rights (e.g. Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Franklin 2008; Hafner-Burton 2008; Conrad and Moore 2010). But little theoretical or empirical connection has been established between these issues – attention to human rights violations on the one hand and duration or intensity of conflicts on the other. The few exceptions (Ruggeri and Burgoon 2012; Schudel et.al. 2012...), furthermore, have focused on yearly measures of media attention to human-rights violations that obscure the possibility and likelihood that any implications such attention might have for conflict is temporally more fine-grained – visible in developments occurring from one month or day to the next.

These shortcomings and silences are a problem, since media attention to human rights

has potentially large, but also uncertain, implications for conflicts. Human rights promotion is seen by practitioners of conflict mediation as a way to support justice and to promote long-term peace, or at least to promote justice without worsening conflict. Intuition and anecdotes suggest that such promotion can indeed embolden belligerent parties to make changes in human rights conditions that can serve to improve political legitimacy and stabilize social opposition in ways that promote peaceful transition. But mediation experiences also suggest that promotion of human rights can complicate negotiations to end hostilities or can spark intransigence among leaders who worry about post-conflict revenge for previous human rights abuses. The problem is that we lack systematic investigation to adjudicate between these plausible and competing implications of human rights promotion.

This paper attempts such adjudication by exploring whether media attention to human rights influences the intensity of civil conflicts. We start by articulating arguments on how human-rights promotion by the international media has offsetting effects that in some ways can help resolve and in other ways exacerbate domestic conflict. We then test these competing views in an empirical analysis of newly gathered monthly data on media reporting and conflict in seven African countries between 1988 and 2010. These data focus on detailed coding of reporting of human-rights abuses in the context of conflicts in these countries, and provide leverage to isolate the month-to-month effects of media reporting on conflict, net of *ex ante* human rights conditions. This analysis yields modest but important evidence that naming and shaming by media has a pacifying effect where civil conflicts are ongoing. Such findings suggest that even ‘soft’ interventions in the form of naming and shaming of human rights violations might well help build peace.

## 1. Human rights promotion and its implications for conflict

Amidst violent conflict and the many abuses of human rights that often accompany such conflict, many third-party actors frequently seek to improve human rights conditions to establish political stability and justice in such settings. This applies to third-party nation states; to regional international political institutions like the European Union or the United Nations; to economic institutions like the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank; and to a great many non-governmental actors, from mediation organizations to human rights NGOs, to dispersed media and journalists-commentators. The tools these actors use in their promotion of human rights are as diverse as their membership – including symbolic or official political resolutions; legal political and economic conditionality and sanctions; and formal legal proceedings to prosecute and punish human rights violators. But they also include a more diffuse, or “softer,” tool of human-rights promotion: informational reporting and monitoring that track, that is “name and shame,” human rights abuses and abusers.

Such attention to human rights from the media has steadily increased over the past decades. Ramos et.al.’s (2007) annual counting of articles in Newsweek and the Economist suggest a sea-change from less than ten articles annually around 1975 to a tenfold increase by 2000, with the Economist even citing violations 142 times in the year 2000 (Schudel et.al. 2012). The question for us, of course, is what if anything such attention yields in the conflict settings where human-rights violations are being named and shamed.

The answer has to do, in the first instance, with the contributions that such media attention might make to the development and protection of various kinds of human rights, from individual, to political to social rights – rights that feed into broader notions of justice, as well as more downstream and real political stability and wellbeing. But such human rights promotion may also be relevant for its more indirect implications for conflict itself. Most intuitively, human-rights promotion calls attention to justice, stability and wellbeing that may nudge conflicting parties in ways that help quell conflicts. On the other hand, anecdotes

abound of instances where human-rights promotion appears to complicate more than quell conflict – by taking bargaining chips off of negotiating tables, and by complicating already-tense and dense political confrontations.

Unfortunately, more systematic scholarly literatures on human rights and on violent conflict are of little help in judging how human-rights promotion affects conflict. They say plenty about related human rights development and about conflicts, but little about their interconnection. The literature focused on war termination says little about any aspects of human rights conditions affecting such termination (Goemans 2000), but the extensive literature on causes of war says plenty about how broad political and human rights conditions affect incidence of conflict. For instance, the enormous literature on “the democratic peace” explicitly discusses aspects of individual and political rights associated with democratic liberalism tend to promote peace, at least once such liberalism becomes institutionalized (Oneal and Russett 2002; Snyder and Mansfield 2000). There is also some insight into how social as opposed to political rights can matter to conflict, where absence of social rights appears to spur violence (Wang et.al.1993). As for specifically individual or civil rights – such as free speech or protection from torture, rape, recruitment of child soldiers, etc. – the literature has focused mainly on how conflict affects such rights (Poe and Tate 1994; Thoms and Ron 2007). Missing from this litany of insight, in any event, are ideas about whether human-rights *promotion* shapes the incidence, duration, or intensity of armed conflict.

The scholarship giving some attention to such promotion, meanwhile, provides only very limited information on how human-rights promotion might influence conflict. The literature on humanitarian intervention by governments and/or the UN or other peacekeeping missions identifies lessons about the conditions under which such interventions meaningfully save lives and promote stability (Seybolt 2009; Kuperman 2001; Doyle and Sambanis 2001; Regan 2002; Fortna 2004). But their focus is on military interventions and occupations –

rather than explicitly human rights-focused media pressure – help promote peace. The literature that *does* focus on the effects of diplomatic or economic pressure, meanwhile, has focused on effects for actual observance of human rights rather than conflict. For instance, we know plenty about the efficacy of UN and aid organizations for fighting corruption or violations of human rights (Hafner-Burton and Tsutsui 2007; Lebovic and Voeten 2006), or about the effects of naming and shaming in the media and by NGOs in diminishing human rights violations (Franklin 2008; Ramos et.al.2007). But none of this knowledge tells us what *human rights promotion* means for violent conflicts.

Even the partial exceptions say more about (particular aspects of) violence rather than the incidence or duration of actual war. A recent study by Murdie and Bhasin (2011), for instance, discusses and empirically establishes a positive relationship between human rights INGO activities and domestic protest. And Krain (2012) finds a negative correlation between naming and shaming and state-sponsored mass murders, though his analysis focuses on violence events (mass murders) and covers only 29 events in 25 different countries. Finally, Poe and Tate (1994) study links between conflict and human rights, but do so by addressing the reverse to our current interest, finding a positive effect of civil conflict on the abuse of causally downstream human rights.

We are left, hence, with intuition and anecdote to judge whether and under what conditions promoting human rights helps conflict resolution. For what they are worth, intuition and anecdote, including those based on our own mediation experience, suggest that promotion of human rights might hinder as well as help conflict resolution. We can briefly inventory these diverse insights to motivate two broad and competing views and accompanying hypotheses about how media attention to human rights violations affects conflict.<sup>i</sup>

The first, intuitive view is that human rights promotion in general, and media-based

“naming and shaming” in particular, has a range of pacifying implications for conflict. First, calling attention to human rights conditions and violations in a conflict setting can help inspire conflicting parties privy to such promotion to make improvements in or feel deterred from worsening human rights conditions, changes that often constitute intrinsic lowering of violence but may also defuse and channel political discontents into peaceful interaction. Such changes can, in turn, identify and remedy important root causes of conflict and can help parties to a conflict, as well as mediating groups, to negotiate long-term political stability.

Second, promoting human rights can also contribute indirectly – short of actual improvements in human rights – to a process of interaction within conflict settings that builds peace. Human-rights promotion can, namely, invoke legal and ethical standards and rules that are neutral in polarized political settings, and can protect those on both sides of a conflict within conflict zones who are more likely to use their voice to foster political solutions when human rights are being pushed. Such standards and rules could well facilitate the interaction of conflicting parties to move towards peace.

Third and finally, promoting human rights can help foster confidence in building more complicated peace settlements by encouraging other outside actors to commit economic, political and (neutral) military resources to build a peace process. Here the key agents connecting human-rights promotion to peacemaking are not the conflicting parties themselves but those outside observers able to use a range of means to promote peace among such parties. And those outside actors might be themselves more inclined to intervene in light of the media attention to human rights surrounding conflicts. And this intervention, or perhaps the threat of intervention, can in turn encourage peaceful accommodation in conflict settings.

These various implications add up to beneficence with respect to peacemaking. This pacifying consequence can be expected whether the human-rights promotion is undertaken by media organizations, NGOs, nation-states or international organizations, whether such

promotion involves simple monitoring or naming-and-shaming or actual sanctions or interventions. And although such pacifying effects might apply particularly where media attention to human-rights violations is targeted at a particular kind of party to a conflict, or to a particular aspect of human rights, even more general, untargeted attention to any human-rights problems can be expected to dampen fighting and encourage peace. Combined, hence, we have the basis for a first general hypothesis about the direct implications of media naming and shaming:

*H1: Human rights promotion by international media should help hasten an end to conflicts and dampen the intensity of conflict.*

On the other hand, promoting human rights via naming and shaming or other means may well do more harm than good with respect to conflict. First, such promotion can bog down peace discussions where combatants are already asked to address many contentious issues underlying conflict – as it were raising the transaction costs of bargaining and negotiation towards the establishment or maintenance of peace. Second, human-rights promotion by the media or other organizations can spark intransigence by one or another party, because one or both parties may: sense a loss of control over its future; may fear losing face or credibility in dealing with their own constituency or outside interlocutors; or may fear punishment that human rights improvements would entail (Mendeloff 2004). Third, human rights promotion can delegitimize the process of peace-building and negotiations, particularly the peacemaking efforts of outside (Western) actors, because *ex ante* human rights violations tend to be very one side such that attention to such violations can quickly seem like biased intervention, and because the values and rule-of-law standards within which human rights get championed can seem like imposed Western constructions.

By such logic, the promotion of human rights might well backfire, even if the

beneficent effects emerge in the context of the same conflict settings. It is possible, hence, that the net effect for peacemaking is negative, or perverse. Such a possibility motivates a second hypothesis that directly contrasts the first:

*H2: Human rights promotion by international media should lengthen and intensify rather than shorten and dampen conflicts.*

Of course, a number of other hypotheses about the direct effects of media naming-and-shaming could be articulated in light of the broad logics articulated above. The most obvious is that the offsetting implications of media attention can be expected to cancel one another out, such that such promotion has no significant net effects on war violence. Or, alternatively, human rights promotion could have just no effect on such violence. Such a possibility constitutes the null hypothesis of our study. Our state of knowledge is preliminary enough, and our theoretical priors open enough, that we consider such complexities as an inductive matter. Our analysis is most focused on adjudicating the basic opposition between the Pacifying and the Perversity Hypotheses (H1 and H2, respectively).

## 2. Estimating the effects of media attention to human rights on conflict intensity

There are many obstacles to a systematic study of human rights promotion and conflict. The first of these obstacles involves finding or developing valid and reliable measures of such promotion. With respect to media naming and shaming, for instance, it is difficult to know which media sources, which kinds of reporting on which kinds of activities by which perpetrators and victims are relevant to naming and shaming of human-rights violations. Such measures, further, should capture detail in terms of time and space to allow

judgment of their downstream implications for conflict. Existing data with these characteristics are lacking, with the best and most nuanced data focusing at most on country-year variation – smoothing over intra-year variation that in turn prevents exploration of downstream effects of media naming and shaming for conflict that can be expected to be more fine-grained in time than one year average to the next.

Even if such basic measurement issues are overcome, there are further obstacles to identifying the possible implications of any measure of human-rights naming and shaming for conflict intensity. Key among these threats is potential endogeneity bias caused by omitted variables and by reversed causality. The former could well arise given the difficulty of isolating the conflict consequences of human-rights promotion from actual human rights conditions or other sources of both media attention and conflict; the latter can emerge from the fact that the severity and duration of conflict not only reflects, but surely also affects, human-rights promotion. Our empirical analysis, of course, must tackle these and other measurement and inferential challenges.

We try to overcome these challenges by analyzing the relationship between the intensity of wars and media attention to human-rights violations in seven African countries during periods of post-Cold War civil war in those countries: Angola (post-1989 civil war involving government and UNITA), Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Liberia, Nigeria (post-2004 intrastate territorial disputes) and Sierra Leone.<sup>ii</sup> We do so by focusing on how monthly naming and shaming as measured by newly-gathered data on New York Times reporting of human rights violations in these conflict settings influences the monthly intensity of violence as measured by battle-related deaths.

## 2.1 Independent variable: New York Times mentions of human-rights violations

The measure of media naming-and-shaming of human-rights violations comes from a new dataset of our own design that codes extensive information on the reporting of human-rights violations in the New York Times and in periodic United Nations mission reports. The former provides a useful basis for information on media naming and shaming because the New York Times is among the most widely respected and read news outlets in the world, including not only extensive world-news reporting (by its own journalists and from AP, Reuters and other wire services) and high-profile Opinion-Editorial (Op Ed) pieces. Even if it is not the “paper of record” that it claims to be, the New York Times is an intrinsically influential (at least among international political and business audiences) source of news and opinion, and is a useful proxy for other kinds of media coverage – altogether providing information on both naming and shaming of human-rights violations to the extent that such issues get explicit attention in its pages.

To code those pages by focusing on all news and opinion articles that mention any of the conflict-countries that are our cases. The articles are identified using Lexis-Nexus news compiling and searches, but the coding of content with respect to possible mention and discussion of human-rights violations is done by hand. Computer coding we have found to yield both under and over counting given the many word combinations relevant to human-rights violations: a great many kinds of violent acts involving a wide range of perpetrators and victims, not easily reduced to word strings like “human rights” or “civilians”. Our coding methodology includes documenting basic info about the reporting’s date, placement and character (e.g. news versus Op Ed). And the core information involves coding details of any reporting on various categories of human rights violations, focusing on the UN list and definitions of unlawful, non-combatant killing, imprisonment, questioning, torture, rape, etc. Those details include not just whether such violations are mentioned, but which abuses, by which presumed or accused perpetrators, which victims, and which actions if any are

recommended with respect to the abuses. After testing for and adjusting to establish inter-coder reliability, the resulting coding provides a basis for valid, reliable and temporally and cross-conflict comparable information on NYT naming and shaming to the conflict-day.

For the present analysis we focus on the number of mentions of human-rights violations per country-month in our seven cases. We shall call this variable “HR-mentions.” These mentions apply to distinct human-rights violations in a given article, such that some articles will name more than one violation – for instance torture and killing, yielding 2 mentions for a given article. Across the seven conflict countries, there can be many months where there are no articles appearing about a conflict in a country, and in those months when a conflict is reported there may well be no mention of human-rights violations. Hence, in our sample of seven African conflicts the monthly mentions range from 0 to 22 monthly mentions of one or another human-rights violation, averaging a modest and widely dispersed 1.203 mentions (s.d. 2.34) across the sample 867 country-conflict-months.<sup>iii</sup> Table One provides an overview across our seven African conflict cases of such NYT mentions as well as other features of the country. As can be seen in column one, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the conflict-country about which NYT reporting includes the highest average mentions of human rights violations (2 per month), with Cote d’Ivoire the conflict with the lowest such average (0.8 monthly mentions).

[[Table One about here]]

Figure One provides a more detailed snapshot of the over-time variation for two of the cases, Angola and the DRC. Graphed are the monthly Human-rights mentions in the New York Times articles over the life of the conflict period, together with the monthly total number of articles addressing the conflict in the country. As can be seen the monthly Human-

rights mentions are almost always substantially lower than the total number of articles addressing the conflict; but in a few months we can see that the number of mentions is higher than the monthly number of articles – capturing some articles where more than one distinct human-rights abuse gets news or OpEd attention. Most importantly, however, is that we see here very substantial month-to-month variation in the media attention to the conflict and to human-rights violations. Even within a year the variation can be substantial, affirming an important motivation of this paper, that naming and shaming of human-rights violations varies within a given conflict-year and might well have implications that vary likewise.

[[Figure One about here]]

## 2.2 Dependent variable: Battle-related deaths

To see those implications requires systematic information about the intensity of violence across our seven African conflicts and with a similar level of temporal detail – daily or monthly information on violence. We find such data in the Uppsala Conflict Data Program’s data on daily battle-related deaths in civil wars involving armed government and rebel groups (UCDP 2012). The information includes estimates of the intensity of violence on wars, allowing us to better judge whether and how such violence might be influenced by media attention to human-rights violations. Alternative measures of the intensity of violence with monthly or daily detail include the ACLED battle deaths measure, but this alternative has narrower temporal and spatial coverage than the UCDP data, and is not qualitatively superior in any event. UCDP also measures related aspects of violence, including rebel-on-rebel violence (“non-state violence”) and violence against civilians (“one-sided violence”). But neither of these is a substitute for what we most want to study, how human-rights

promotion plausibly influences organized violence during civil wars. We do consider in our robustness tests measures of violence that combine UCDP measures of battle-deaths, rebel-on-rebel deaths, and one-sided-violence deaths (more on this below). But our baseline and principal interest is in battle-related deaths.

Across both conflict-countries and time, such battle-deaths vary substantially. This is immediately apparent in column two of Table One above, where we see the average monthly battle-deaths for the lives of the seven conflicts studied here, ranging from 6.1 in the Nigerian conflict to 210.6 in the Angolan civil-war. But these averages obscure the extensive over time variation in the sample, yielding more dispersed patterns for the full sample's 867 conflict-months: ranging from 0 to 6964 monthly deaths in given country, with a mean of 77.5 and standard deviation of 313.32.

Figure Two provides a more detailed snapshot of this over-time variation within one of the cases, the DRC, with the trends in the battle-deaths overlaid upon the patterns of NYT mentions of human-rights violations between 1996 and 2009. What is clearest in the snapshot is the very substantial variation in violent intensity not only from year to year but also month to month. This is further a priori reason to consider the possibility that the within-year monthly variation in media attention might have within-year monthly implications for the intensity of conflicts. The arguments and hypotheses above suggest various possibilities with respect to the pattern of such "implications" that we expect to emerge in the data, including Figure Two's snapshot. But to the naked eye there is not a clear pattern suggesting media attention to human rights violations leading or lagging, causing or reflecting, reducing or raising conflict intensity. This is a graphic reminder of the complexity of the possible relationships under review, here, and the inferential threats to estimating how media attention to human-rights violations might have implications for, rather than simply mirror, the intensity of conflicts. As we shall see below, the relationship here and in the full sample is

one where temporally upstream values of conflict tend to positively correlate with downstream NYT mentions of human-rights violations, while the upstream values of NYT mentions tend to negatively correlate with the downstream conflict measures.

[[Figure Two about here]]

### 2.3 Controls: General media reporting, one-sided violence, rain, and price shocks

Our more controlled estimation of the latter – of how *upstream* NYT human-rights mentions influence *downstream* conflict intensity – requires controlling for measurable factors plausibly affecting both conflict intensity and media naming-and-shaming. Finding reliable and valid measures with such features is difficult given the poor quality of data in our seven conflict cases and the fine-grained time dimension of our study. But we are able to directly control for a few important sources of omitted variable bias, and for the rest rely on monthly and country fixed effects. The most important control concerns ex ante violence against civilians, based on the UCDP measure of “one-sided violence”, a variable we treat as a rough proxy for upstream actual human-rights violations that certainly and plausibly affect media attention to such. On grounds that one-sided violence against civilians is likely to disproportionately (more than other conflict measures) the violation of human rights of civilians, we see this as the best available substitute for what does not exist, reliable monthly data directly measuring human-rights violations. As an empirical matter, a series of lags of one-sided violence strongly and positively influence the upstream NYT mentions of human-rights violations.<sup>iv</sup>

The other substantive controls include monthly NYT articles giving any attention to the country conflict cases (Ruggeri and Burgoon 2013, based on Lexis-Nexis search already

discussed briefly above). This is important to control away for the effects of general attention to conflicts as opposed to actual naming-and-shaming of human-rights violations. We also control for monthly rain patterns (World Bank/CCKI 2013), to control for the effects of seasonally varying conditions relevant to fighting intensity. The last of our substantive controls is a measure of month-on-month changes in food prices, standardized by country, to capture the influence economic shocks on media attention and conflict (World Bank 2012). As can be seen by the final column of Table above, this is only available for five of our seven conflict case-countries. Because these various substantive controls do not exhaust possible sources of omitted variable bias, we also consider in all our baseline models the influence of monthly and country dummies.

#### 2.4. Estimation approach

Our baseline models are negative binomial regression models, because our dependent variable(s) is a highly dispersed count (visible in the summary statistics but also in the reported dispersion statistics below). In all reported specifications, we consider a lagged dependent variable to address the presence of autocorrelation, and also monthly and case-wise fixed effects to address remaining omitted variable bias (as discussed above) and the presence of heteroskedasticity. All baseline models calculate, further, robust standard errors clustered by country. The reported models consider various constellations of lags of *HR mention* and various controls, to paint as clear a picture as possible of how *ex ante* media naming and shaming influence conflict intensity.

These models address a number of the most important threats to inferences underlying hypotheses one and two. But there are good reasons to believe that the models do not fully address possible endogeneity (due to measurement error and simultaneity or reverse

causation) and in particular omitted variable bias. The direction of such bias is uncertain but likely to be in the direction of overstating any positive correlation (understating any negative correlation) between *HR mention* and *Battle deaths*. First, upstream conflict intensity can be expected to drive, not just reflect, media attention. This is a pattern that emerges in our dataset, where models of *HR mention* regressed on various constellations of lagged *Battle deaths* reveal the latter to be positively and highly significant predictors of *HR mentions*.<sup>v</sup> Our estimates of how lagged *HR mentions* influence *Battle deaths* can hence be expected to be endogenous in a positive direction (creating a bias in favor of the perversity hypothesis, H1). Secondly, although our models with measures of fixed effects and one-sided violence against civilians should partly address how *HR mentions* partly pick up the effects of *ex ante* human-rights violations, remaining bias in this direction should also be in the positive direction (again biased against Hypothesis One and in favor of Hypothesis Two). With these issues in mind, we can consider the various estimations and robustness and sensitivity tests.

### 3. Findings

Table Two summarizes the main results. The first two models estimate *Battle deaths* as a function of a number of monthly lagged measures of *HR-mentions* in the same model (we consider various constellations, from one to 12-month lags, but we report the one-month through seven-month lags). Model One is a minimalist model of this form, including no substantive controls beyond the lagged dependent variable plus monthly and country dummies. Model Two then introduces three substantive controls with full seven-conflict coverage. These models help identify the general pattern of how upstream HR-mentions influence downstream *Battle deaths*.

The pattern to emerge from these first two models is one of modest negative

relationships between *HR mentions* and *Battle deaths*. The minimal Model One yields significant results for *HR mentions* at five-month and six-month lags, and these results are negative. Controlling for monthly and country-specific fixed effects, we see a modest but broadly negative correlation suggesting a pacifying effect of media attention to human-rights violations. Adding the substantive controls for *ex ante* and monthly violence against civilians, total articles devoted to the country-specific conflicts, and rainfall modestly strengthens portrait – where also the one-month lag of *HR mentions* reaches standard levels of significance. In these models multi-collinearity is not a problem, but considering substantive controls to address possible omitted variable bias, particularly with respect to *ex ante* conflict and human-rights violations, is something that needs to be specified to be upstream from the lags of *HR mentions*.

The remaining models, hence, consider individual lags, focusing by way of illustration on the results for the first, third, and sixth monthly lags of *HR mentions*, respectively. First (models 3-5) with most full-sample controls then (6-8) also controlling for food-price change. The results generally reinforce the portrait offered in the first couple of specifications, with only the third lag yielding no significant results. The one-month and, particularly, the six-month lags are significantly negative, suggesting that, net of substantive and the monthly and country controls, *HR mentions* may reduce the *Battle deaths* in the African conflicts. The other individually estimated lags of *HR mentions* corroborate this pattern (not shown). The last estimations add a final control for monthly *Food-price changes*, which drop the DRC and Liberian cases. Doing so reduces the significance of the one-month lag effect of *HR mentions* but *increases* the significance of the six month lag. Altogether, then, we see some instability in the results with respect to statistical significance across the various specifications. But the pattern emerging is one of a more negative than positive or non-existence effect of *ex ante HR mentions* for conflict intensity.

Gauging the substantive meaning of these effects is difficult from the raw coefficients and significance in Table Two. Figure Three reports the results of counterfactual simulations based on the results from Models Three and Five, respectively – the significant results from the estimations with the most and most targeted controls. They take the other parameters at their means while allowing *HR mentions* to vary the full range of the sample values (0 to 22 monthly mentions in a conflict). That full range of increase in monthly NYT mentions of human-rights violations predicts, in both estimations, a drop of as many as 40 *Battle deaths*. This can be seen as a substantial increase in so far as such a drop would be close to tracing the drop from the sample's 75<sup>th</sup> percentile to its lowest percentile in *Battle deaths*. A more realistic monthly variation, however, is from 0 to 2 or 3 monthly articles mentioning human-rights abuses. Such an increase predicts a much more modest drop in the intensity of the conflicts, on the order of 3-5 monthly battle deaths. Of course, such numbers are very theoretical judgments, in any event. But they give us a sense that the substantive results are modest, though still meaningful in the direction of lowering violence – modest support for the Pacification Hypothesis (H1) and against the Perversity (H2) or null hypotheses.

[[Figure Three about here]]

These results hold in the face of a range of sensitivity and robustness tests. The results are similar should one consider alternative specifications of violence intensity – for instance taking either a combination of battle-related and non-state violence (i.e. among non-state actors) or a combination of battle-related, non-state and one-sided violence (i.e. against civilians). They also are robust to other mixes and specifications of the controls, such as dropping any one of the controls or measuring absolute food-prices, monthly temperature, counts for number of events wherein civilians were killed. More importantly, the results also

hold up to jackknife analysis of step-wise dropping of conflict countries, periods of time, and censoring-out extreme values on *HR mentions* or *Battle deaths*. And alternative estimators yield similar results in a pacification direction, such as left-censored Tobit regression for the baseline dependent variable or Logit for dummies of substantial death-counts, yield similar results where various lags of *HR mentions* correlate more negatively and in any event not positively with *Battle deaths* across lags.

Altogether, the descriptive and econometric results suggest modest support for the Pacification Hypothesis One, where NYT naming and shaming of human-rights violations appear to reduce rather than raise the intensity of conflict violence. We put somewhat more stock in such a conclusion given the direction of the results in light of the possible remaining endogeneity and omitted-variable bias. As discussed above, either source of bias that may well remain in the reported or other specifications we attempted can be expected to overstate any positive correlation between *HR mentions* and *Battle deaths* in the conflict cases. The tenor of the evidence pointing in the opposite direction can, in light of such a direction of bias, imply that our estimates understate the negative, pacification effects of media attention for violence.

#### 4. Conclusion

These patterns underscore our view that media attention to human rights violations under many conditions fosters less intense violence of conflicts. This view has emerged against the backdrop of our recognition that attention to human rights violations in the context of civil contexts can have both pacifying and perverse effects on such conflicts. On the one hand, focusing on human rights may foster stability and cooperation by defusing political discontent and stimulating peaceful interaction. On the other hand, highlighting abuse and

violation of rights in the media may deter combatants and/or governments from striking a peace deal in the prospect of future legal prosecution. So even though the protection of human rights is widely considered to be an essential aspect of a just world, it may stand in the way of creating a peaceful one. Our empirical analysis shows modest support for the former of these views. In the net, “naming and shaming” by international media appears to modestly lower conflict intensity, measured as battle deaths. These results may be underestimating the pacifying effects of media-based naming and shaming.

Although such findings are theoretically and empirically important, further research is necessary to draw stronger and more nuanced inferences on the relationship between human rights promotion and conflict. A major limitation in our analysis is that data on media reports is limited in terms of depth and content. Future research on this topic could benefit from better information in order to capture variation in different regions, kinds of conflicts, time periods, different cases of human rights violations, and “targets” of naming and shaming. Such detail might reveal more about how human rights promotion can facilitate rather than undermine conflict resolution. In the meantime, our exploration of the best, new, temporally fine-grained data suggests a finding of clear interest to students and practitioners of conflict. With respect to recent civil conflicts and for at least one important kind of human-rights promotion – the naming and shaming activity of media coverage of human rights abuses – outside human rights promotion appears to promote more than complicate peacemaking.

## References

- Balch-Lindsay, D., and Enterline, A.J. (2000). Killing time: the world politics of civil war duration, 1820-1992. *International Studies Quarterly*, 44, 615-642.
- Box-Steffensmeier, J. M., and Jones, B.S. (1997). Time is of the essence: Event history models in political science. *American Journal of Political Science*, 41, 1414–61.

- Box-Steffensmeier, J.M., and Jones, B.S. (2004). *Event History Modeling*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cingranelli, D.L., and Richards, D.L. (2010). The Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Dataset. Accessed April 1, 2011. <http://http://ciri.binghamton.edu/>.
- Cleves, M.A. et al. (2008). *An Introduction to Survival Analysis Using Stata* (College Station: Stata Press).
- Collier, P., Hoeffler, A., and Soderbom, M. (2004). On the duration of civil wars. *Journal of Peace Research* 41 (3): 256-76.
- Conrad, C.R., and Moore, W.H. (2010). What stops the torture? *American Journal of Political Science*, 54, 459-476.
- Cox, D.R. (1972). Regression models and life-tables (with discussion). *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series B*, 34, 187-220.
- Cunningham, D.E., Gleditsch, K.S. and Salehyan, I. (2009). It takes two: A dyadic analysis of civil war duration and outcome. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(4): 570-597.
- DeRouen, K.R., and Sobek, D. (2004). The dynamics of civil war duration and outcome. *Journal of Peace Research* 41, 303-320.
- Doyle, M. and Sambanis, N. (2000). International peacebuilding: A theoretical and quantitative analysis. *American Political Science Review*, 94, 779-801.
- Elbadawi, I. (2000). External interventions and the duration of civil war. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* 2433.
- Fearon, J.D., and Laitin, D.D. (2003). Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war. *American Political Science Review*, 97, 75-90.
- Fearon, J.D. (2004). Why do some civil wars last so much longer than others? *Journal of Peace Research* 41, 275-301.
- Fortna, V.P. (2004). Does peacekeeping keep peace? International intervention and the duration of peace after civil war. *International Studies Quarterly* 48(2): 269-92.
- Fortna, V.P. (2005). Interstate peacekeeping: Causal mechanisms and empirical effects. *World Politics* 56(4): 481-519.
- Franklin, J.C. (2008). Shame on you: The impact of human rights criticism on political repression in Latin America. *International Studies Quarterly* 52, 187-211.
- Frieden, G. et al. (2009). *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, Institutions*. New York: WW Norton.
- Gleditsch, N.P. et al. (2002). Armed conflict 1946-2001: A new dataset. *Journal of Peace Research* 39, 615-637.
- Goemans, H. (2000). *War and Punishment: The Causes of War Termination and the First World War*. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press.
- Goertz, G. and Diehl, P.F. (1993). Enduring rivalries: Theoretical constructs and empirical patterns. *International Studies Quarterly* 37, 147-171.
- Hafner-Burton, E.M., and Tsutsui, K. (2005). Human rights in a globalizing world: The paradox of empty promises. *American Journal of Sociology* 110, 1373-1411.
- Hafner-Burton, E.M. and Tsutsui, K. (2007). Justice lost! The failure of international human rights law to matter where needed most. *Journal of Peace Research* 44, 407-425.
- Hafner-Burton, E.M. (2008). Sticks and stones: Naming and shaming the human rights enforcement problem. *International Organization* 62, 689-716.
- Hafner-Burton, E.M., and Ron, J. (2009). Seeing double: Human rights impact through qualitative and quantitative Eyes. *World Politics* 61, 360-401.
- Kaufman, C. (1996). Possible and impossible solutions to ethnic conflict. *International Security* 20, 136-75.
- Krain, M. (2012). J'Accuse! Does naming and shaming perpetrators reduce the severity of genocides or politicides? *International Studies Quarterly*.

- Kuperman, A. (2001). *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda*. Washington: Brooking Institution.
- Lebovic, J.H. and Voeten, E. (2006). The Politics of shame: The condemnation of country human rights practices in the UNCHR. *International Studies Quarterly* 50, 861-888.
- MacCulloch, R. (2004). The impact of income on the taste for revolt. *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (4): 830-48.
- Manikkalingam, R. (2008). Promoting peace and protecting rights: How are human rights good and bad for resolving conflict? *Essex Human Rights Review* 5(1): 1-12.
- Mendeloff, D. (2004). Truth-Seeking, truth-telling, and postconflict peacebuilding: Curb the enthusiasm? *International Studies Review* 6(3): 355–380.
- Murdie, A., and Bhasin, T. (2011). Aiding and abetting: Human rights INGOs and domestic protest. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55(2): 163-191.
- Olson, M. (1993). Dictatorship, democracy, and development. *American Political Science Review* 87(3): 567-576.
- Oneal, J.R. and Russett, B. (2001). *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence and International Organization*. New York: Norton.
- Poe, S.C. and Tate, C.N. (1994). Repression of human rights to personal integrity in the 1980s: A global analysis. *American Political Science Review* 88, 853-872.
- Ramos, H., Ron, J., and Thoms, O. (2007). Shaping the Northern media's human rights coverage, 1986-2000. *Journal of Peace Research* 44(4): 385-406.
- Regan, P. (2002). Intervention and durations of conflicts. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.
- Roberts, A. (1993). Humanitarian war: Military intervention and human rights. *International Affairs* 69, 429-449.
- Long, S., and Xu, J. (2011). Predicted values with confidence intervals for regression models, [www.indiana.edu/~jlsoc/spost.htm](http://www.indiana.edu/~jlsoc/spost.htm) (Accessed 1 February 2011).
- Seybolt, T. (2009). Harmonizing humanitarian aid: Adaptive change in a complex system. *International Studies Quarterly* 53, 1027-1050.
- Snyder, J., and Mansfield, E. (2000). *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict*. New York: Norton Books.
- Sovey, A.J., and Green, D.P. (2011). Instrumental variables estimation in political science: A reader's guide. *American Journal of Political Science* 55(1): 188-200.
- Thoms, O.N.T. and Ron, J. (2007). Do human rights violations cause internal conflict? *Human Rights Quarterly* 29: 674-705.
- UCDP. (2012). *UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset v.5-2012*, Uppsala Conflict Data Program, [www.ucdp.uu.se](http://www.ucdp.uu.se), Uppsala University", and, when applicable, the UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset Codebook.
- Voeten, E., and Merdzanovic, A. (2009). United Nations General Assembly voting data, <http://hdl.handle.net/1902.1/12379> UNF:3:Hpf6qOkDdzzvXF9m66yLTg== V1
- Walter, B.F. (2006). Building reputation: Why governments fight some separatists but not others. *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (2): 313-30.
- Wang, T.Y. et al. (1993). Inequality and political violence revisited. *American Political Science Review* 87, 977-994.
- Wooldridge, J.M. (2002). *Econometric Analysis of Cross Section and Panel Data* (Cambridge: MIT Press).
- World Bank. (2012). Data on monthly precipitation. Climate Change Knowledge Portal <http://data.worldbank.org/developers/climate-data-api> . Downloaded March 2013.

Table One:  
National monthly means of *HR mentions*, *Battle deaths* and other covariates

	NYT mentions of human- rights violations per month	Battle- related deaths per month	Civilians killed per month	Reporting on conflict per month	Rain pattern per month	Food-price change per month
Angola (1988- 2000)	0.8	210.6	8.1	5.5	82.6	0.175
Burundi (1994- 2006)	0.9	53.5	46.7	3.6	103.9	0.011
Cote d'Ivoire (2002- 2007)	0.5	14.0	9.8	4.5	112.1	0.002
DRC (1996-2010)	2.0	103.7	385.4	6.2	127.5	
Liberia (2005-2011)	0.7	17.7	99.8	4.9	201.7	
Nigeria (2005- 2011)	1.8	6.1	2.7	4.6	98.4	0.009
Sierra Leone (1992- 2003)	1.7	83.7	69.5	3.9	206.9	0.016

Table Two:  
Conflict intensity and Human-rights naming-and-shaming in Africa

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Battle deaths $t-1$	0.002*** (0.000)	0.002*** (0.000)	0.002*** (0.001)	0.001** (0.001)	0.000* (0.000)	0.001* (0.001)	0.002** (0.001)	0.000 (0.000)
HR mentions $t-1$	-0.016 (0.059)	-0.178*** (0.046)	-0.130** (0.057)			-0.118 (0.074)		
HR mentions $t-2$	0.040 (0.060)	0.008 (0.056)						
HR mentions $t-3$	0.089 (0.064)	0.107* (0.064)		0.006 (0.066)			-0.168 (0.119)	
HR mentions $t-4$	0.030 (0.060)	0.054 (0.093)						
HR mentions $t-5$	-0.101** (0.049)	-0.092*** (0.033)						
HR mentions $t-6$	-0.123** (0.052)	-0.155*** (0.054)			-0.141*** (0.029)			-0.178** (0.081)
HR mentions $t-7$	0.189 (0.158)	0.139 (0.169)						
Civilian deaths $t-1$		0.0003 (0.000)	0.0003 (0.000)	0.0002 (0.000)	0.0003** (0.000)	-1.104*** (0.336)	0.001* (0.001)	0.002** (0.001)
Total conflict news $t-1$		0.062 (0.042)	0.073 (0.063)	0.028 (0.038)	0.000 (0.037)	0.033 (0.048)	0.102 (0.093)	0.056 (0.062)
Rain-fall $t-1$		-0.002 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)
Food-price change $t-1$						0.546 (0.477)	-1.158 (1.378)	-1.357 (1.229)
Monthly dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Country dummies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Constant	4.832*** (0.252)	4.755*** (0.274)	5.355*** (0.386)	5.456*** (0.365)	6.122*** (0.270)	5.654*** (0.558)	4.816*** (0.682)	6.005*** (0.374)
Log alpha	1.776*** (0.366)	1.751*** (0.358)	1.829*** (0.349)	1.837*** (0.349)	1.856*** (0.360)	1.489*** (0.414)	1.473*** (0.390)	1.469*** (0.408)
Log pseudolikelihood	-3001	-2993	-3094	-3067	-3030	-1959	-1926	-1907
Observations	832	832	862	856	847	495	491	485

DV: *Battle deaths*: Total monthly battle-related deaths (UCDP 2012)

Negative binomial regression coefficients with robust standard errors (in parentheses) clustered by country. Monthly and country dummies included but not shown.

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Figure One:  
Reporting on Conflict and on Human-rights Violations

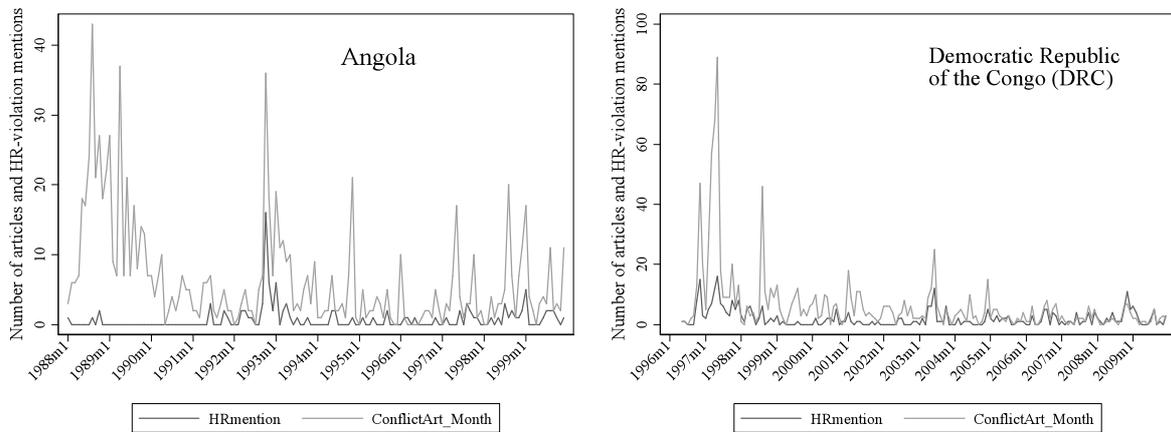


Figure Two:  
Reporting on Human-rights Violations and Battle Deaths in the DRC

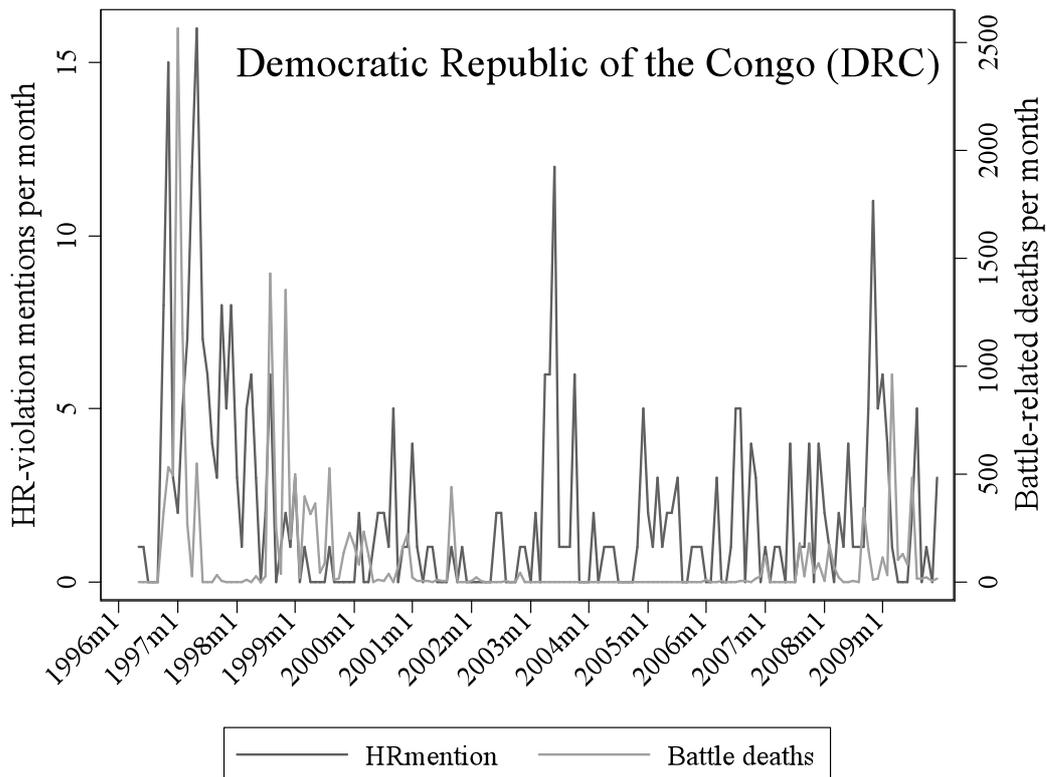
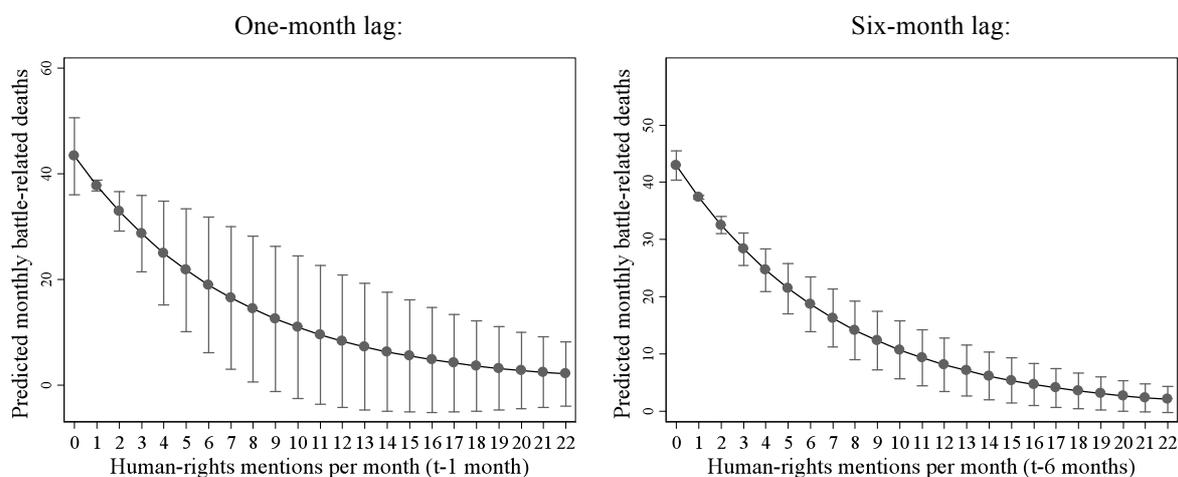


Figure Three:  
 Predicted Battle Deaths as Function of Reporting on Human-rights Violations



Appendix Table One: Summary statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Battle-related deaths in civil war (monthly)	867	77.50	313.32	0	6964
Non-state plus battle deaths	867	92.64	325.45	0	6964
One-sided violence	867	112.56	681.91	0	14880
All war-related deaths	867	205.20	785.14	0	15203
Human-rights violation mentions	867	1.20	2.34	0	22
Conflict-related articles	867	4.84	8.29	0	89
Rainfall	867	138.78	112.53	0.32	519.26
Change in food prices	497	0.05	0.13	-1	0.9

<sup>i</sup> The following arguments about how human-rights promotion can defuse or exacerbate conflict draw on Manikkalingam 2008, which provides fuller discussion of anecdotal evidence supporting those arguments.

<sup>ii</sup> The conflict periods vary across the cases: Angola (post-1989 civil war involving government and UNITA), Burundi (post-1993-election ethnic conflict), Cote d'Ivoire (post-2001 MPCl rebellion), DRC (post-1996 civil war), Liberia (post-1989 civil war), Nigeria (post-2004 intrastate territorial disputes) and Sierra Leone (post-1991 civil war).

<sup>iii</sup> See Appendix Table One for the summary statistics of this and all other variables used in the analysis.

<sup>iv</sup> In these models (not shown but available upon request) we regress NYT *HR-mentions* on seven monthly lags of one-sided violence, plus monthly and country dummies. Six of the seven lags are positively signed, four significantly so. The one negative exception is no where near standard significance. And the joint-significance of the lags is extremely high (Chi-square of 5924.4).

<sup>v</sup> In these extra models (not shown but available upon request) we regress NYT *HR-mentions* on seven monthly lags of *Battle deaths*, plus monthly and country dummies. Four of the seven lags are positively signed, the first three highly significantly so. The negatively signed lags are no where near standard significance. And the joint-significance of the lags is high (Chi-square of 58.5).