Can International Interventions Build States?
Evidence from the United Nations Development Programme

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October 29, 2022
Research Question: Are international interventions successful at state-building in failed and fragile states?

- “State-building” refers to both mitigating violence and building institutions (Lee, 2022)
Research Question: Are international interventions successful at state-building in failed and fragile states?

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▶ Concept: international intervention → builds state institutions → increases state capacity → decreases violence
Research Question: Are international interventions successful at state-building in failed and fragile states?

- “State-building” refers to both mitigating violence and building institutions (Lee, 2022)

- **Concept**: international intervention $\rightarrow$ builds state institutions $\rightarrow$ increases state capacity $\rightarrow$ decreases violence

- **Findings**: As exemplified by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), international interventions are associated with decreased violence in failed and fragile states
Outline

The Debate

Crucial Case: UNDP

Data and Methods

Results

Discussion

Conclusion and Future Work
State-building efforts usually fail
State-building efforts usually fail: by nature

**The Civilian Target in Sierra Leone and Liberia: Political Power, Military Strategy, and Humanitarian Intervention**

Danny Hoffman

**Humanitarian Assistance and the Duration of Peace after Civil War**

Neil Narang

University of California, Santa Barbara and the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC), Stanford University

**African Solutions to African Challenges: The Role of Legitimacy in Mediating Civil Wars in Africa**

Allard Duursma

**Stopping the Violence but Blocking the Peace: Dilemmas of Foreign-Imposed Nation Building After Ethnic War**

Kevin Russell and Nicholas Sambanis
State-building efforts usually fail: poorly implemented
State-building efforts usually fail: limited to no impact

The UN at the peacemaking–peacebuilding nexus

Kyle Beardsley
Duke University, USA

Peacekeeping and development in fragile states: Micro-level evidence from Liberia

Eric Mvukiyehe
Research Department, World Bank
Cyrus Samii
Politics Department, New York University

Managing Threat, Cost, and Incentive to Kill: The Short- and Long-Term Effects of Intervention in Mass Killings

Jacob D. Kathman¹ and Reed M. Wood²
International interventions can (sometimes) succeed
International interventions can (sometimes) succeed

Managing Mistrust: An Analysis of Cooperation with UN Peacekeeping in Africa

Andrea Ruggeri¹, Theodora-Ismene Gizelis²,³, and Han Dorussen⁴

International Intervention and the Rule of Law after Civil War: Evidence from Liberia

Robert A. Blair
Outline

The Debate

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Missing puzzle piece: UNDP
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Previous qualitative case studies of UNDP do not find it to be effective (Liberia (Autesserre, 2014), Burundi (Campbell, 2018), and Central African Republic (Howard, 2019))
Missing puzzle piece: UNDP

- Previous qualitative case studies of UNDP do not find it to be effective (Liberia (Autesserre, 2014), Burundi (Campbell, 2018), and Central African Republic (Howard, 2019))
- UNDP has never been systematically studied per se, so perhaps these are not representative cases
Previous qualitative case studies of UNDP do not find it to be effective (Liberia (Autesserre, 2014), Burundi (Campbell, 2018), and Central African Republic (Howard, 2019))

UNDP has never been systematically studied per se, so perhaps these are not representative cases

I collected a new dataset to answer these questions on the efficacy of international interventions
Expectations: More work, more success

- **Breadth**: A broader intervention presence, as evidenced by more projects, will be associated with decreased violence.
Expectations: More work, more success

- **Breadth**: A broader intervention presence, as evidenced by more projects, will be associated with decreased violence.
- **Depth**: A deeper intervention presence, as evidenced by more expenditures, will be associated with decreased violence.
Outline

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Conclusion and Future Work
New dataset on UNDP state-building projects
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Outline

The Debate

Crucial Case: UNDP

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Results

Discussion

Conclusion and Future Work
### Results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Count</th>
<th>Event Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| L Project Count | $-0.40^{***}$  
  (0.08) |
| L Project Expenses | $-0.80^{***}$  
  (0.2) |
| Lagged DV | Yes  
  Yes |
| Grid FE | Yes  
  Yes |
| Year FE | Yes  
  Yes |
| $R^2$ | 0.90  
  0.90 |
| Adj. $R^2$ | 0.89  
  0.90 |
| Num. obs. | 1,890  
  1,890 |

$^{***} p < 0.001; ~^{**} p < 0.01; ~^{*} p < 0.05$; expenses in millions USD
Outline

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Conclusion and Future Work
Discussion: *Depth* and *Breadth* mitigate violence

- **Support** for both *Breadth* and *Depth* hypotheses
Discussion: Depth and Breadth mitigate violence

- **Support** for both Breadth and Depth hypotheses
  - More state-building projects $\rightarrow$ fewer violent events
Discussion: *Depth* and *Breadth* mitigate violence

- **Support** for both *Breadth* and *Depth* hypotheses
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  - Larger state-building expenditures $\rightarrow$ fewer violent events
Discussion: *Depth* and *Breadth* mitigate violence

- **Support** for both *Breadth* and *Depth* hypotheses
  - More state-building projects $\rightarrow$ fewer violent events
  - Larger state-building expenditures $\rightarrow$ fewer violent events
- Arguably small effect size
Outline

The Debate

Crucial Case: UNDP

Data and Methods

Results

Discussion

Conclusion and Future Work
Conclusion and Future Work

- Using a new dataset on UNDP's state-building projects, I sought to arbitrate the scholarly debate on whether international interventions can effectively build states.
Conclusion and Future Work

- Using a new dataset on UNDP’s state-building projects, I sought to arbitrate the scholarly debate on whether international interventions can effectively build states.
- Found greater breadth and depth of projects associated with successful state-building.
- Future Work:
  - Other countries/organizations
  - Broader definition of state-building
  - Experiment for testing mechanism
  - Gives hope that international interventions can effectively mitigate violence and build states.
Conclusion and Future Work

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► Future Work:
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Thank you!

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### Full Regression Results: Breadth

Table 1: Project breadth and violence: regression on matched data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dependent variable:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-state (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged State-building Count</td>
<td>-0.22*** (0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged Non-state Violence</td>
<td>0.45*** (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged State Violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged All Violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grid FE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year FE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.14 (4.10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Observations         | 1,890       | 1,890     | 1,890 |
| R²                   | 0.81        | 0.91      | 0.90  |
| Adjusted R²          | 0.79        | 0.90      | 0.89  |
| Residual Std. Error (df = 1670) | 12.07       | 12.31     | 21.32 |
| F Statistic (df = 219; 1670) | 33.23***    | 77.29***  | 69.03*** |

**Note:** *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Full Regression Results: Depth

Table 2: Regression Results, UNDP State-building Expenditures with Matching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-state</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent variable:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged State-building Expenditure</td>
<td>-0.5***</td>
<td>-0.3***</td>
<td>-0.8***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.1)</td>
<td>(0.1)</td>
<td>(0.2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged Non-state Violence</td>
<td>0.5***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.03)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged State Violence</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.3***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagged All Violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.4***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.02)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grid FE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year FE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>-2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4.1)</td>
<td>(4.2)</td>
<td>(7.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>1,890</td>
<td>1,890</td>
<td>1,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual Std. Error (df = 1670)</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Statistic (df = 219; 1670)</td>
<td>33.1***</td>
<td>77.3***</td>
<td>68.7***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Summary Statistics of Matched Panel

**Independent Variables:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dependent Variables:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1091</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-state</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NB: data at grid-cell year level.*
Balance Pre- and Post-Matching

**Pre-matching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fatalities</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Non-state</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dist. to Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>0.986</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>0.993</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Post-matching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fatalities</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Non-state</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Dist. to Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>8.46</td>
<td>8.48</td>
<td>0.990</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>0.993</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>