

War and Peace: The Role of Domestic Media Coverage in Civil War Duration

Nhaya Vaidya, MAIR '23

Abstract

Media coverage and its impact on conflict duration are topics that have received limited attention in the field of international relations literature. While various factors influence the duration of civil wars, the role of domestic media coverage has been overlooked. As citizens primarily rely on domestic media outlets for news and information, the content they consume can shape their actions and, consequently, the trajectory of a civil war. Additionally, the rise of social media as a primary information source for younger generations has further transformed the media landscape and its potential influence on conflict dynamics, as observed during events such as the Arab Spring. This paper explores the role of media, specifically domestic media sources and their framing of coverage (e.g., peace journalism or war journalism), in shaping conflict duration. It also examines the impact of social media reporting, particularly citizen journalism on platforms like Twitter, by analyzing domestic Tweets during the Arab Spring. By addressing the question of how domestic conflict coverage by the media affects conflict duration in civil wars, this paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of the interplay between media and conflict dynamics.

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Introduction

Civil war duration can be impacted by a variety of factors including third-party intervention, environmental factors, and food access. But one factor that is not addressed in current literature is the impact media coverage could have on civil war duration. Mediums of conflict coverage continue to change as information is disseminated in multiple ways and formats, reaching a wider audience. This can be done in more traditional journalism formats, such as print, and newer forms of journalism such as social media. These methods of information dissemination could impact the duration of a conflict depending on the framing of such information surrounding a conflict.

Not only that, but disinformation and misinformation can be used as weapons during times of conflict, which can possibly stall conflict resolution and extend the duration of the conflict. Disinformation and misinformation campaigns are more recent forms of conflict weapons, hence the lack of research on how it affects conflict duration and resolution. Yet, citizens still rely on journalism and the media to receive information about the news in a domestic and international context. In this paper, I will be focusing on only the domestic coverage of conflict and the internal impacts of the media, rather than international media. The question remains: *How does domestic conflict coverage by the media affect conflict duration in civil wars?*

With this, my argument is based on the notions of peace journalism as defined by Galtung (2003). I hypothesize that having more domestic positive conflict coverage in the form of peace journalism will result in a shorter civil war duration, and more negative domestic conflict in the form of war journalism will result in a shorter civil war duration. Both of these hypotheses can be used to address more traditional media (print) and newer media (social media).

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In addressing my hypothesis regarding traditional media, I will be looking at all civil conflicts between the years 1980 to 2018. I propose testing these arguments using novel datasets on conflict coverage. In creating these datasets, I will first expand on Baden and Teneboim-Weinblatts's (2018) dataset of nearly a million journalism articles and expand this to encapsulate a greater sample for my traditional domestic media coverage. Along with this, I would further categorize the articles to fit into peace journalism, war journalism, fake journalism, neutral, or neither.

In looking at social media, I will be looking at Twitter's coverage of the Arab Spring as this is considered to be the first war started through social media due to the great numbers of mobilization. For Twitter data, I will expand on Bruns et al. (2013) dataset of Tweets relating to the Arab Spring collected from the Twitters Application Programming Interface (API). For my dependent variable, I would look at conflict duration and conflict resolution, from Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCPD) and the Peace Research Institute (PRIO). This dataset will run from 2010 to 2013.

This paper not only contributes to the international relations literature but introduces a new factor that could influence conflict duration: media coverage. Media coverage is often overlooked in conflict research and literature. By introducing this variable, we can see if coverage has any impact on the war's duration. This paper also expands upon the social media literature on the Arab Spring, by taking a more critical lens into the actual type of coverage that could have impacted the war. As this data is looking at citizen journalists, the information disseminated is not by trained journalists, but rather people experiencing the conflict firsthand. In understanding how those direct impacts in the conflict can influence the war through their form

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of journalism and reporting, literature can better understand future conflicts and other sources of social media.

These novel datasets will also be able to be used in future research looking at conflict, not only in conflict duration but also conflict outcome, outliers, and other factors. The novel datasets that are taken, created, and expanded can be used in future IR literature and media literature. The findings will also help better understand conflict duration and more insight into why civil conflicts end the way they do.

Literature Review

When researching civil wars, it is important to look at all the mechanisms that may affect duration to better understand how long the civil war lasted. There is little research into the effects of domestic conflict coverage affecting civil war duration, including when looking at how public perception from media coverage could alter the length of a civil war.

Coverage of Conflict

In looking at conflict coverage, a large part of the literature focuses on the framing narrative of the media. How does the media choose to cover a civil conflict and what do those implications mean? Yet, there isn't as much literature on how this framing could impact the public's perception or the duration of a conflict, civil or otherwise.

There are patterns of the media focusing on the violence of a conflict, specifically focusing on violence during major escalations (Baden & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2018). Journalists are restricted in what they can write due to government threats and fears of safety from parties involved in the conflict (Hussain, 2020). This can skew the framing narrative and the coverage of conflict from outside sources (Hussain, 2020). Yet "de-escalatory coverage is inversely proportional to the intensity of a conflict in terms of its perceived threats to national security"

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when looking at Pakistan (Hussain, 2020). This study opens the door to future research on how escalatory or de-escalatory coverage can impact public opinion and conflict duration due to the framing of the coverage. While these findings are important to understand media coverage in relation to violence, there is still no literature on how the coverage of conflict affects conflict duration.

The CNN effect is also said to play a role in a conflict, as “media coverage can encourage direct action by external policymakers aimed at achieving conflict resolution (Hawkins 2011). On the reverse, when looking at underreported incidents and conflicts the media chooses not to cover, fewer resources would go to help (Hawkins 2011). I will expand on this literature, choosing to look at the effect the media had on more of the local conflict level, rather than an international policy level. But, the CNN effect isn’t necessarily proven due to a lack of evidence to support the claim large news networks can influence the outcome of events (Gilboa, 2005). When looking at the Cyprus conflict, the media played a role in the peace-building process (Savrum & Miller, 2015). The framing narrative newspapers chose focused on negative headlines regarding reconciliation proposals and resolution plans (Savrum & Miller, 2015). This opens the door to seeing how much the public considered these headlines, or if they agree with the publication themselves. For example, certain people only watch Fox News or CNN and support the network regardless of the content. This conflicting literature proposes a problem when understanding if the media does play a role in promoting outcome changes. While we see that the media played a role in the narrative of the peace-building process and internationally reported media, it does not address conflict duration or local media coverage.

Public Perception of Conflict

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The research shows how the media can change the framing narrative surrounding conflict, but what about the public's perception or even the parties involved in the conflict? When looking at the relationship between political violence and media messages in Northern Ireland it was found violent acts are correlated with blame in mass media, and vice versa (Armoudian & Milne 2021). While blame can influence violence, it depends on the publication and the audience of the publication (Armoudian & Milne, 2021). In audience targeting the outcomes could differ depending on who is receiving the information on the conflict, or if the information is reaching people at all. If the information is going solely to local people, how would they react depending on the narrative fed to them?

The public's perception of a conflict can be affected by the media. When looking at conflict in Nigeria, it noted peace journalism is a strategy toward peace (Okocha & Terhile, 2022). Peace journalism is a form of reporting that doesn't only report on the violence of the conflict but covers all aspects of the conflict. Yet, the notion of peace journalism is restrained due to a lack of readership and the safety of reporters. Instead, the media focuses on more violence and can make the violence worse, as seen in Rwanda with some media sources reporting against the Tutsi (Okocha & Terhile, 2022). Depending on the framing of the narrative, the public perception could be changed, therefore possibly changing the outcome of the conflict. Research finds journalism contributes to the peaceful settlement of conflicts, but not in an actively engaging way (Hantzich, 2004). Hantzich (2004) claims "that peace journalism unacceptably diverts political responsibilities from politicians and policymakers to journalists." I disagree with this notion, as peace journalism is more of a way of reporting rather than taking on political responsibilities that stay in the hands of politicians and policymakers. Not only that, I note

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Hantzich (2004) was written before social media was widely accessible, and how information distributed today is vastly different than in the past.

Misleading Information

Misinformation and disinformation have been used in wars for decades, but it has evolved into something new more recently, as more people have access to information. Misinformation campaigns are aimed at deception, and we have seen Russia implement these campaigns toward Ukraine along with propaganda (Bojor & Cirdei, 2022). Russia aimed to control the flow of information, and if others are doing the same this could affect the duration and possibly the winner of the conflict depending on the information being spread. However, some citizens can sort out the truth from the lies, depending on the proximity to the conflict events (Silverman & Kaltenhalter, 2021). I question how many lies would have to be spread for this to not be the case.

Civil War Outcome

Regarding civil war outcome, there is little research that looks at the mechanism between media influence on public perception and civil war outcome. Yet, this notion is important to understand if the outcome of the war, or the resolution is changed due to these influences. As certain conflict journalism can increase violence, political alternatives to violence can increase the chances of a faster settlement in civil wars (Cunningham et al., 2009). I propose looking at whether reporting could influence political alternatives to violence, therefore possibly resulting in a faster settlement.

When looking at the civil war outcome in the Arab Spring, we know social media played large by spreading information and rallying people together. It also created a role in political debates, especially within young urban groups (Howard et al., 2011). Not only that but an

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increase in conversations about the revolution often occurred before any major events (Howard et al. 2011).

Theory

Conflict reporting can be considered an alternative to violence, which could lead to a faster civil war settlement. But, there are different forms of conflict reporting, such as war journalism and peace journalism (Galtung, 2003). War journalism is when reporters focus on the negative aspects of the conflict, such as violence and deaths, and there are patterns of media focusing on violence during major escalations (Galtung, 2003; Baden & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2018). Peace journalism is a reporting method that covers all aspects of a conflict including peace, rather than just focusing on the violence of a conflict (Galtung, 2003). It is a strategy of reporting that is more people and solution-oriented, rather than war and violence-oriented (Galtung, 2003). These reporting strategies can change the narrative the public is consuming, and in turn, if public perception is altered, so could the duration of the conflict. Media publications can have an agenda when it comes to reporting, which can include wanting to profit from the conflict. It is commonly stated “If it bleeds, it leads,” which can push media outlets to only focus on the violence of the conflict, as they know violence results in more profits for the publication. If war and conflict coverage is the main agenda of the parties, “war journalism demoni[z]es the enemy and patroni[z]es the victims... [and] it conceals or ignores peace initiatives” (Ibrahim et al. 2013). However, as previously noted, peace journalism is constrained due to the safety of reporters and negative government interference (Hussain, 2020). A more peace-oriented view doesn't necessarily mean having a skewed bias, but rather covering all aspects of the conflict equally.

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The question is as to how conflict coverage can affect the length of the civil war, as research shows the CNN effect can play a role in a conflict and the peace-building process, although not always proven (Hawkins 2011; Gilboa, 2005; Savrum & Miller, 2015). The international media coverage surrounding Syria acted as pressure on public officials to act, but not in a positive way, and even had negative costs when focusing heavily on the crisis, as international leaders felt pressured to act (Doucet, 2018). The way conflict is covered can affect the narrative the people are receiving, both locally and internationally (Armoudian & Milne 2021; Okocha & Terhile, 2022, Hantizch 2004). In this case, I will be considering only local domestic narratives or media rather than international coverage, as there is little research into a local level of conflict coverage. Local coverage will consist of coverage of the country, which I also considered to be domestic conflict coverage. I argue that depending on the type of conflict coverage the length of a civil war will be altered, which brings me to my first set of hypotheses.

H1a: *An increase in negative (war journalism/fake journalism) conflict coverage by domestic media sources will lengthen the duration of a civil war.*

H1b: *An increase in equal (peace journalism) conflict coverage by domestic media outlets will shorten the duration of a civil war.*

These notions also come from the suggestion that public perception will be altered due to conflict coverage, as war news invokes feelings and emotions (Ibrahim et al., 2013). Given citizens are receiving war information from these media outlets, this would be the only information they are receiving about the war, other than word of mouth or firsthand experience. Similarly, if the information they are receiving isn't true this could also invoke certain emotions,

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more likely to be negative. If the narrative portrayed is only regarding negative information about the war, the citizens could think the conflict is going nowhere and citizens could even consider joining the war or wanting more violence to ensure to end of the war.

In looking at more equal conflict coverage, or peace journalism, this suggests a more rounded narrative surrounding the conflict. With more information circulating about the conflict, not just about the violent aspects, but about peace talks, citizen concerns, etc. this can alter the narrative surrounding the conflict. If more information about peace is circulated, this could push citizens into wanting to support a quicker outcome to the war (Armoudian & Milne 2021). Also, if the citizens are receiving equal information, they may be more inclined to not participate in the violence or be more inclined to support an end to the civil war.

Social media plays a large role in conflicts today and can alter the course of a conflict. When looking at social media coverage, I will only be looking at the Arab Spring as during the Arab Spring social media was used to mobilize groups of people and spread information faster and more efficiently than prior methods (Bruns et al. 2013). These efforts could be seen throughout the world but were more effective for people directly impacting the conflict. In this sense, this would be citizen journalism, conflict coverage by the people experiencing the conflict, rather than reporters. These are people who experience the conflict firsthand and report on their experience, not the press, and are not professionally trained. If more negative media is spreading, this can result in more action by the citizens to participate in the violence, rather if more equal coverage is given, more citizen power could be put towards more peaceful actions.

H2a: *An increase in negative (war journalism/fake journalism) domestic social media coverage by citizens on civil war conflict lengthens the duration of civil war.*

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H2b: *An increase in equal (peace journalism) domestic social media coverage by citizens on civil war conflict shortens the duration of civil war.*

In answering these hypotheses, I will be controlling the type of civil war conflict along with the regime type, using UCDP/PRIO data and Polity5. Along with regime time, I will look at the freedom of the press and the citizens with Freedom House data. With this data, I would control government control and interference over media publications and social media as this interferes with the type of information that gets published and created. I will also gather information on government-run publications and government-run social media accounts in controlling for possible bias surrounding conflict information.

Other external factors could impact conflict reporting and break the news cycle, such as major natural disasters, occurring during the conflict. I will further control for literacy rates, education rates, and internet access with World Bank data. People would have to read the news and social media, so if literacy rates are low, this can impact how many people can consume news if it is in print or online. If so, more information would be spread by word of mouth. Also, I would look at how many people were on Twitter during the time of the conflict.

While there is research into the narratives the media crafts during conflict time, none look at the direct effects that the media has on civil war conflict or duration. More research needs to be conducted into looking at the effects the media, a third party, has in impacting civil war, through spreading information. Along with that, how the citizen's form of journalism through social media can impact the outcome of a civil war.

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Research Design

Conflict duration is an important factor in understanding civil wars, and further understanding the role the media plays in covering that conflict can help better understand the duration. In answering my question: How does domestic conflict coverage by the media affect conflict duration in civil wars? I propose a set of two analyses that answer the question by looking at both domestic print sources and domestic social media. The goal is to understand how media coverage, both by professional journalists and citizen journalists, can impact the length of a civil war depending on the framing of the coverage. I focus on two sets of hypotheses addressing these questions, along with a variety of control variables to explain the relationship between conflict coverage and conflict duration.

My dataset will run from 1980 – 2018 due to the current data accessible, with the possibility of extending the time frame as more data is published. For my dependent variable of conflict duration, I will use UCDP data and PRIO data from Uppsala to determine the years of the conflict. This dataset spans from 1975 to 2021 containing civil war (one-sided) conflicts. With this data, I will pull media content from these time frames when the conflict occurs. In answering my first set of hypotheses, I plan on building off the data from Baden and Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2018), who have pulled nearly 900,000 news texts from 66 news media sources. They have data from both domestic and international media, however, I will just be pulling their domestic sources of media coverage for their six conflicts and building upon this for all civil conflicts. Baden and Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2018) also look at whether the coverage was focused on violence and peace, and I would use this information in looking for a link between coverage and duration while building upon my framing research.

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To expand this data, I will gather a novel dataset of publications using LexusNexis and code variables in determining the type of coverage for my independent variables. I will code these articles based on the overall framing of the article. If the article has more words associated with violence and destruction, with an overall negative framing, the article will be categorized as war journalism. If the framing of the article not only looks at war coverage but also citizen needs, peace possibilities, and impacts of the conflict, this will be considered as peace journalism. For coverage that is false information, either purposefully or not, this will be coded as false journalism. For coverage that fits in neither, I would have that in no coverage/doesn't fit. These would be stories not related to the conflict at all, but still considered to be domestic media coverage at the time of the conflict. For articles that would be considered both war and peace journalism, as in information about the conflict but not necessarily fitting into one specific category will be considered both. Neutral coverage, as in just stating facts about the conflict, will also be in this category of neutral/both coverages. I will only look at domestic publications (publications based in that country aimed towards local coverage), during the time of the civil conflict.

In classifying these variables, I base this on Galtung's (2003) definitions of war and peace journalism. With the article data, I will code the variables as: 0 = No Coverage/Doesn't Fit; 1 = False Journalism (Misinformation/Disinformation), 2 = War Journalism, 3 = Both/Neutral, and 4 = Peace Journalism. Each article will receive a code. If the article was published during the conflict but doesn't relate to the conflict (i.e. an article about food or marriage) it would be coded 0. If the article was covering more violence and only taking on a violent framing, it would be categorized as war journalism or 1. If the article was covering a more equal take to the coverage and is covering all aspects by being more people and

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solution-oriented it would be categorized as peace journalism. For other articles that still cover the conflict but are not necessarily only war-oriented or solution-oriented, I will categorize the article as both war and peace journalism, also known as neutral coverage.

With this, I will be looking at conflict year as my unit of analysis to see how reporting changes throughout the conflict. I do note that more talks about peace do occur as the war ends and I will control for that variable as well. In analyzing this research, I plan on using a survival model due to the categorial variables and as I am looking at the duration survival of a civil conflict. These findings will allow us to see how coverage shifts throughout the conflict, if at all, and when there is more coverage surrounding violence and more coverage surrounding peace. We have seen previously how the media focuses more on violence during conflict but when do they focus more on peace? (Galtung, 2003; Baden & Tenenboim-Weinblatt, 2018)

In answering my second set of hypotheses regarding social media, I will look at specifically Twitter and the content circulating during the Arab Spring. In gathering this data, I will build off the Bruns et al. (2013) dataset of Tweets relating to the Arab Spring collected from the Twitters Application Programming Interface (API). They note a lack of data missing, which I too note as this is not a comprehensive list of the data, but rather what is available through API. When expanding upon this data I will further gather data from API as Bruns et al. (2013) focused primarily on content about Egypt and the civil war in Libya. When collecting the data, I will take a similar approach to data gathering as Bruns et al. (2013) and focus on hashtags and keywords relating to the conflict, such as mentions of the conflict, violence, and Tweets on key dates of the wars. In coding these variables, I will use the same scale as above: 0 = No Coverage/Doesn't Fit; 1 = Misinformation/Disinformation, 2 = War Journalism, 3 = Both/Neutral, and 4 = Peace Journalism. But these would all be classified as citizen journalism rather than professional

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journalism. Tweets would have to be directly related to the ongoing conflict and from a domestic citizen. To determine this, I would look at where the Tweet was posted as it would have to originate in the country the conflict is occurring in. In this sense I am looking at the mobilization of people on social media and how that translates into the outcome of the coverage (Bruns et al. 2013).

Each tweet will receive a code. If the tweet was published during the conflict but doesn't relate to the conflict (i.e. funny tweets, pictures not relating to conflict) it would be coded 0. If the tweet was more aimed towards violence and only took on a violent framing, it would be categorized as war journalism or 2. If the tweet was a more equal take to the coverage and is covering all aspects by being more people and solution-oriented it would be categorized as peace journalism or 4. For other tweets that still cover the conflict but are not necessarily only war-oriented or solution-oriented, I will categorize the article as both war and peace journalism, also known as neutral coverage, or 3. And for Tweets either published by bots or a real account spreading fake information, this will be coded at 1, as false journalism.

I will also look at a variety of control variables in my research. Firstly, I will control the type of civil war conflict using UCPD/PRIO data, which runs from 1970 to 2021. I do this as the framing could differ between the types of civil wars and certain civil wars are known to have lasted longer than others.

The amount of press freedom a state has would also affect the type of conflict coverage that is allowed to be circulated and published. In controlling for this, I will look at Freedom House Data for press freedoms which begins in 1979 reporting press freedoms. Despite the gap in the data, these press freedoms will still be important in controlling more recent conflicts, especially with social media. Regime type will be controlled with Polity Data from the Polity5

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Dataset on a 21-point scale in seeing how authoritarian or democratic a regime is. I consider 6 and higher to be a democracy. Current Polity5 Data runs from 1800 – 2018 with an expected update in 2024.

Authoritarian regimes tend to restrict press freedoms more than democratic regimes, which can play a role in what is circulated to the public. Regarding press freedoms I would also like to look at how many journalists were jailed or killed in the country at the time, using data from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). However, their data only runs from 1992 to 2022, which is a gap in the data. This data will be in the numbers of journalists and media workers killed as well as the numbers of journalists imprisoned. I will look at the location they were killed or imprisoned to see how it correlates to the current conflicts. In this case, I will be looking at both local and foreign journalists, as the treatment of journalists by a country, regardless of background, is still important to understand even though I am looking at only domestic coverage.

When controlling variables relating to media coverage, I consider events that would break the news cycle or coverage of the conflict. For this reason, I will control natural disasters that occur during the time of the conflict, as these events would expect to garner media attention. However, this does depend on the location of the natural disaster relative to the site of the main civil conflict. I will use natural disaster data from the EM-DAT The International Disaster Database from the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), to control for the possible relationship between natural disasters breaking the news cycle. EM-DAT runs from 1900 to the present and includes data by disaster type, country of origin, and source of information, along with how many people were killed, injured, and affected. I will code this by

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how many disasters occurred during the conflict and by how severe they were and by how many people were affected.

Furthermore, I would control literacy rates by looking at World Bank data, measured in percentages of a country. This data is measured as the total percentage of adults, people ages 15 and above. The data runs from 1970 to 2021, but are missing country data, which I note as a gap in my research. For citizens to be able to consume print media, they most likely would have to be able to read the publication. I am not looking into radio or television broadcasts, so listening to the content will not be considered in this research but is noted.

World Bank Data will also be used to control levels of education in a country as it is often related to literacy rates. I will be looking at primary and secondary education measured in percentages. In more modern education, this could help explain social media literacy. Regarding access to social media and in this case Twitter, I will control individuals using the internet using World Bank, measured in percentage of the population. The World Bank data runs from 1960 to 2021.

Along with this, I will look at the number of users on Twitter during the time of the Arab Spring and how those numbers would have changed during the duration of the conflict. In doing so I would pull from several sources such as Statista and Pew Research to create my own dataset. I do note a lack of accurate information here, so creating my own dataset will be useful.

Some possible problems can arise during the research. The first is underreporting and a sheer lack of data. Underreporting of the conflict by the media could mean that the information surrounding the conflict was spread by word-of-mouth through citizens or first-hand-information. There is also the problem of media stories not being digitized and not being available to access, which is a gap in the data. Similarly, if a publication no longer exists those records would be more challenging if not impossible to pull. As well as if the government

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or third party forced the publication to get rid of the records. Government-controlled media can also pose a problem depending on the impact those publications had on the conflict.

Regarding social media, there can be a lack of information with people having deleted tweets or their accounts over time, or if there was a government ban on social media in the country. In looking at bots, it can be challenging to determine whether an account is really a bot or not, and if those accounts were previously removed. As noted by Bruns et al. (2013) when they pulled data from API, Tweets were missing from certain days. The algorithm for pulling information off Twitter could have changed which poses a challenge to replicating data and further research. As time goes on, the way API is run could also be changed along with its access.

Despite the possible challenges of the research, it is still important to determine if there is a relationship between media coverage and civil conflict duration. By looking at a variety of media sources and social media, I can come closer to coming up with an answer to that question.

Conclusion

As previously noted, this topic of media coverage affecting civil conflict duration has not been studied before. Rather it has just been information about media coverage, not how it influences conflict duration. Understanding how media coverage is related to civil conflict duration if at all, fills a gap within the international relations literature.

These novel datasets can be used in future papers looking at the relationship between media and civil conflict or can be used to build on other literature looking at social media and media coverage, not just civil conflict. With these findings we will also be able to better understand the gathering of people to act during civil conflicts and what influences them to do

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so. We know that certain civil wars are more violent than others, but does that translate into the gathering of people and media coverage? This can be looked at in future research. Similarly, this research can be used to understand civil conflict outcomes in an extension to looking at civil conflict duration. Would the outcome be more peaceful or not depending on media coverage of the conflict, and does the media have a bigger impact on peace talks than previously considered? Having a print dataset can better understand how online media is changing and having an influence today.

Social media is a growing part of political science literature in understanding its impacts on spreading information and mobilizing people. The data, however, can be lost, but taking a sample of the data before it becomes lost can help for future research studies. Understanding the impact of social media in wars and conflict, not only impacts media research but also understanding how technology plays a role. This study can also be expanded to international social media and other platforms such as Facebook and Youtube.

In conclusion, there is a gap in the literature on how domestic media coverage affects civil conflict duration. There is a need in both political science and beyond to research this puzzle and see if there is a correlation. With the growing distrust in the media, these findings can be used to better understand conflict coverage and civil war duration, if there is a relationship. Looking through the lens of media framing allows us to see if public perception is altered in any way due to this. Traditional journalism ethics tend to strive toward the truth, but other influences, such as the government or monetary causes, can alter the narrative being presented to the public. Rather when looking at social media and citizen journalists, these narratives are being presented directly to the public by those experiencing or directly affected by the conflict. News coverage and conflicts are changing daily with the increased use of technology and can be tied together.

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We know that civil wars are getting longer and more violent, and seeing how the domestic media could have a role in this would further civil war research. This study bridges a gap between media studies and political science by looking at the relationship between domestic conflict coverage and conflict duration.

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