No Place to Hide

Refugees, Displaced Persons, and the Recruitment of Child Soldiers

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Reports of Taliban recruitment of children as insurgents and possible suicide bombers surfaced in the U.S. media in August 2005.[1] Estimates at the time suggested that the insurgent forces in Afghanistan may have comprised up to 8,000 children.[2] To many in the West, this was a surprising revelation, but it should not have been. Children participated in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,[3] and were used as soldiers by the Taliban against Soviet forces in the 1980s.[4] Many of the current adult insurgents in Afghanistan came from the ranks of these former child soldiers.[5] News of their use in Afghanistan has only added a new strategic security dimension to the growing list of consequences of the rapidly increasing numbers of child soldiers across the globe.[6] No longer does this phenomenon

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1. See, for example, "U.S. Commander: Taliban Recruiting Children," July 23, 2005, http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/asiapcf/07/23/afghan.taliban.ap/.
2. UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Afghanistan: Eight Thousand Children Under Arms Look for a Future," http://www.irinnews.org/webspecials/childsoldiers/Afghanistan031203.asp#top.
3. See "Child Suicide Bombers in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_suicide_bomber; Human Rights Watch, "Erased in a Moment: Suicide Bombing Attacks against Israeli Civilians," http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/isrl-pa/ISRAELPA1002.pdf; and Children and Armed Conflict Unit, Defense for Children International, Palestine Section, "Use of Children in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: Perspective on Child Soldiers," July 2004, http://www.essex.ac.uk/armedcon/story_id/00205.pdf.
4. Center for Defense Information, "Children on the Front Line: Child Soldiers in Afghanistan," October 15, 2001, http://www.cdi.org/friendlyversion/printversion.cfm?documentID?2038.
5. Ibid.
6. In this article we use the United Nations Children's Fund's definition of a child soldier: "any child—boy or girl—under 18 years of age, who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including, but not limited to, cooks, porters, messengers,

simply represent a moral dilemma or a problem whose consequences are geographically confined to belligerent forces in fragile or failed states.

Added to this increased complexity is the growth in the volume of child soldiers. One United Nations source suggests that their number grew from 200,000 to 300,000 between 1988 and 2002;[7] by the latter date, they served in seventy-two government or rebel armed forces in about twenty countries.[8] A rough approximation of 300,000 is now clearly outdated and potentially underestimates the gravity of the problem. Evidence drawn from individual conflicts since 2002 suggests that new wars are often characterized by an extreme use of child soldiers.[9]

This growing use of child soldiers flies in the face of the claim that international norms and laws are exerting an increasing influence on the behavior of state and nonstate actors.[10] Indeed, a plethora of global protocols, agreements, and declarations attempting to protect children from both forced and voluntary recruitment have been flagrantly ignored since the end of the Cold War.[11] The historical taboo against the use of child soldiers thus seems to have decisively broken down, and the problem has become geographically wide-

and anyone accompanying such groups other than family members." See UNICEF, "Fact Sheet: Child Soldiers," http://www.unicef.org/protection/childsoldiers.pdf, p. 4.

7. For the 1988 estimate of 200,000 child soldiers, see "Children in War," in UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children: 1996,* http://www.unicef.org/sowc96/2csoldrs.htm. See also "UN Cites Child Recruiters but Omits Leading Offenders," *Human Rights News,* December 16, 2002, http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/12/childsoldiers1216.htm.

8. See Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSUCS), *Child Soldiers Global Report, 2004,* February 2004, http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=966, pp. 13–17.

9. This claim is based on the figures discussed in detail elsewhere in this article. For examples of such wars, see Jo Becker, "Children as Weapons of War," in Human Rights Watch, ed., *World Report, 2004: Human Rights and Armed Conflict* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2004), pp. 219–244.

10. See, for example, Coral Bell, "Normative Shift," *National Interest,* No. 70 (Winter 2002/03), pp. 44–54; Martha Finnemore, "Constructing Norms of Human Intervention," in Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 158; and Ronald L. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt, and Peter J. Katzenstein, "Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security," in Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics,* p. 45.

11. Currently, the most important formal international conventions and protocols related to recruitment of children in armed conflicts are: "Geneva Convention," Additional Protocol I (relating to international armed conflicts), art. 77(2); Additional Protocol II (relating to non-international armed conflicts), art. 4(3)c; "Convention on the Rights of the Child," art. 38; "Rome Statute for an International Criminal Court," art. 8 (on war crimes), sec. 2(b) (xxvi); Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, art. 4(1) and (2); and the "African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child." For this list, see Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Child Soldiers 1379 Report," November 2002, http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=740, pp. 7, 8.

spread.[12] With the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda as an extreme illustration of the problem,[13] child soldiers have become a principal component of military forces across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and are playing an increasing strategically important role in the Middle East.[14]

It is tempting to assume that this numeric growth is a product of the breakdown of state control: that rebel forces, not states, recruit child soldiers. The evidence drawn from African cases is far more ambiguous. Our data for the Liberian conflict of 1989–96 does indicate an overwhelming proportion of child soldiers among the ranks of rebels and not the state's military, but other conflicts demonstrate a contrary trend toward a larger use of child soldiers by governments. The Liberian conflict of 1999–2003, for example, had a 70:30 split between rebel and government forces.[15] The Sudanese civil war of 1993–2002 had a 64:36 split between rebel and governmental forces, but that majority was reversed to a 24 (rebel) and 76 (government) distribution by 2004.[16] The data we compiled for the Angolan conflict, although not definitive, suggest that children have made up between 24 and 33 percent of the government's forces since the war against the rebels began in 1996.[17] In that case, abduction has

12. P.W. Singer, *Children at War* (New York: Pantheon, 2005), pp. 15, 38.

13. The Ugandan conflict is described in the literature as "a war fought by children on children," where "minors make up almost 90% of the Lord's Resistance Army's soldiers." According to the United Nations, "Since the rebellion began in the 1980s, some 30,000 children have been abducted to work as child soldiers and porters, or to serve as 'wives' of rebels and bear their children." "Uganda: Child Soldiers at Centre of Mounting Humanitarian Crisis," *Ten Stories the World Should Hear More About*, 2004, http://www.un.org/events/tenstories/story.asp?storyID=100. According to UNICEF, "[an estimated] 8,400 children were abducted between June 2002 and May 2003. In July 2003 more than 20,000 child 'night commuters' were estimated to seek safety each night in Gulu, Pader, and Kitgum towns, to reduce the risk of abduction." CSUCS, *Child Soldiers Global Report, 2004*, p. 106.

14. See UNICEF, *Adult Wars, Child Soldiers* (Bangkok: UNICEF, October 2002), http://www.unicef.org/emerg/AdultWarsChildSoldiers.pdf, p. 8.

15. These distributions were calculated on the basis of data found in United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Liberia: What Hope for Peace?" October 1, 1994, http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/print?tbl=RSDCOI&id=3ae6a6bc0; Fiona Callister, "Liberia's Child Soldiers," *Tablet* (London), October 4, 2003, http://www.thetablet.co.uk/cgi-bin/archive_db.cgi?tablet-00789; and Amnesty International, "Liberia: Demand Justice for Child Soldiers," May 17, 2004, http://web.amnesty.org/pages/lbr-170504-action-eng.

16. "Sudan Protests UNICEF Child Soldier Airlift," *CNN.com*, March 7, 2001; Rädda Barnen, child war database, http://www.globalmarch.org/resourcecenter/world/sudan.pdf; and CSUCS, *Child Soldiers Global Report, 2004*.

17. These figures were calculated on the basis of data drawn from CSUCS, "Child Soldiers 1379 Report"; Human Rights Watch, "Forgotten Fighters: Child Soldiers in Angola," Vol. 15, No. 10(A) (April 2003), http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/angola0403/; and CSUCS, *Child Soldiers Global Report, 2004*.

been a major method of recruitment, with both sides estimated to have seized 40,000 children in total by 2003.[18]

Child soldiering does not assume centrality on the West's security agenda, whose top priorities are terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and weapons of mass destruction. Nor is it a preoccupation of scholars in security studies. Yet despite its relatively low profile in both realms, child soldier recruitment is important because it involves the suffering and death of thousands of children every year—many more than are direct victims of terrorism or the use of weapons of mass destruction. Concerns about the immorality of their recruitment and transgression of the rules of war might be regarded as self-evident. But to this consideration can be added several others, including the heightened exposure of naive children to the risks of death or injury in combat; the difficulty of rehabilitating child combatants; and the excessive cruelty inflicted by some child soldiers on their victims. It has long been understood that socialization into violence in youth creates a generation of violent adults, perpetuating a vicious cycle of instability within countries. Now, according to the aforementioned media reports, child soldiering has become intertwined with terrorism, suggesting that the increasing use of child soldiers poses a long-term threat to the health and security of societies far beyond the borders of the war-torn, fragile states in which these civil and ethnic conflicts take place. If their rehabilitation is difficult but necessary for the future stability of societies, then prevention is arguably even more vital and less costly.

While the aggregate global figures on child soldiers are disturbing, they reveal little to policymakers. This may explain why there are few policies in place, national or international, designed to address this problem. In this article we compare explanations regarding the possible causes of the varied ratios of child soldiers across different conflicts in Africa. We move beyond generalities in an effort to understand why apparently similar cases have markedly different child soldier participation rates.

In considering the underlying causes of child soldiering, we examine nineteen cases drawn from African conflicts over the last three decades. Since 1975 Africa has become the epicenter of the problem, providing the largest concentration of both conflicts and child soldiers. By the late 1990s, fourteen out of the forty then ongoing or recently concluded armed conflicts in Africa in-

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18. This number was derived by analyzing the following sources: CSUCS, "Child Soldiers 1379 Report"; Human Rights Watch, "Forgotten Fighters"; and CSUCS, *Child Soldiers Global Report, 2004.*

cluded significant numbers of child soldiers.[19] Estimates suggest that 120,000 children, 40 percent of all child soldiers, were soldiering in Africa at the beginning of the twenty-first century.[20] East Asia and the Pacific ranked a distant second, with approximately 75,000 child soldiers.[21] Furthermore, Africa has experienced the fastest growth in the use of child soldiers in recent years.[22] More disturbing, the average age of the children enlisted in some African countries is declining—from their teenage years to as low as nine or ten.[23] Although a question remains regarding the degree to which African conflicts are representative of child soldiering, there is little doubt that it is the most chronic location for the problem.

The literature on the use of child soldiers is fairly sparse, and a heavy preponderance of it is written by members of the think tank and civil-society communities rather than by academics. Although he offers no formal tests, P.W. Singer in *Children at War* provides several possible explanations for the growth in the number of child soldiers that have currency among activists and scholars working on the issue, including high poverty levels, rising orphan rates, and technological innovation in—and the global sale of—smaller and lighter arms.[24] These arguments point to structural features that may indeed contribute to this global growth in the number of child soldiers. But their focus on

19. Eleven countries in East Asia and the Pacific had child soldier participants. Laura Barnitz, *Child Soldiers: Youth Who Participate in Armed Conflict,* 2d ed. (Washington, D.C.: Youth Advocate Program International, 1999), pp. 2–3.
20. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "The Use of Children as Soldiers in Africa: A Country Analysis of Child Recruitment and Participation in Armed Conflict," August 2000, http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/chilsold.htm; Afua Twum-Danso, *Africa's Young Soldiers: The Co-option of Childhood,* Monograph, No. 82, Institute for Security Studies, April 2003, http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/Monographs/No82/Content.html, p. 8.
21. See UNICEF, *Adult Wars, Child Soldiers.*
22. Evidence to support this claim is extensive. Reportedly, child soldier numbers in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, increased dramatically during 2002 and 2003. See Becker, "Children as Weapons of War," p. 219. Observers also claim that there was a massive increase in recruitment in the Ivory Coast in 2003. See Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Child Soldier Use, 2004: A Briefing for the 4th UN Security Council, Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict," 2003, http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/childsoldiers0104/index.htm.
23. See Jo Becker and Tony Tate, *Stolen Children: Abduction and Recruitment in Northern Uganda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2003), http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda0303/uganda0403.pdf, p. 7. The authors report that in Uganda the age of children being abducted had fallen from the 13–15 range to as low as 9 or 10. When child soldiers were demobilized at the conclusion of hostilities in Mozambique, 4,678 of all officially demobilized children (or 18 percent) were younger than 13 when recruited; 6,829 (27 percent) were 14–15 years old; and 13,982 (55 percent), were 16–17 years old. "Africa: After the Wars," http://www.cbc.ca/afterthewars/childsoldier.html.
24. Singer, *Children at War,* pp. 38, 55.

world trends is not helpful in explaining the significant variation in child soldier rates across countries.

The alternative explanation we offer in this article argues that the degree to which children are protected in refugee camps is the primary determinant of child soldier recruitment rates. It has the potential virtue of being able to explicate variation across both time and space. Furthermore, rejecting a focus on structural factors that cannot be addressed in the short term (such as poverty levels and orphan rates) suggests a greater utility for policymakers. In principle, domestic governments in the countries marked by conflict that are responsible for the care of internally displaced persons (IDPs), foreign governments that host refugees, and multilateral organizations attempting to protect both can institute policies that offer children in camps greater protection, and thus can reduce the rate of child soldier recruitment. While no small task, it is a logistically less challenging one than alleviating national poverty levels. Of course, for our argument to be true, this alternative explanation has to have an empirical viability that is demonstrably lacking in the other, hitherto dominant, explanations.

In the remainder of this article, we first identify existing explanations for the use of child soldiers. Then we introduce our argument. As a third step, we outline some of the methodological problems associated with the study of child soldiers. In the fourth section, we offer a series of tests to evaluate the utility of each explanation. We plot simple regression lines of each independent variable (poverty, orphan rates, access to camps) against child soldier recruitment rates for a sample of African conflicts. Then we test these explanations by conducting a multiple regression. Our intent is to evaluate which, if any, of the formulations can best explain the variance in child soldier participation rates in a number of cases for which we have reliable data with specific reported figures. Finally, we provide a third form of evaluation—case studies of two Liberian conflicts—as a critical test of our argument. We conclude by assessing the theoretical and policy implications of our findings.

Previous Research and Existing Explanations for Child Soldiering

Despite UN efforts to encourage research to identify the root causes of the participation of child soldiers in armed conflicts, little attention has focused on the sources of the disparities in child soldier participation rates.[25] Leading interna-

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25. Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed

tional humanitarian organizations, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Human Rights Watch, Save the Children Sweden (Rädda Barnen), and the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers (CSUCS), have responded to such encouragement with a wave of reports. But much of the evidence compiled by these and other international organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) has been anecdotal (drawn from a limited number of interviews with former child soldiers) or has concentrated on individual country studies. Still, as mentioned, the literature does offer three explanations considered to have the most currency, focusing on poverty, orphan rates, and small arms development and transfers.

POVERTY RATES AND CHILD SOLDIER RATES

According to a number of academics, activists, and intergovernmental organizations, poverty is a key factor in explaining the phenomenon of child soldier participation. Among this number are Guy Goodwin-Gill and Ilene Cohn, who are generally regarded as having written the first comprehensive book on the issue.[26] The linkage makes intuitive sense. Rich countries, for example, generally do not employ child soldiers in battle, and many former child soldiers when interviewed gave poverty as a reason for their recruitment. Many studies rely primarily on such interviews and therefore often cite the relationship between child soldiers and poverty.[27]

Why should poverty be a causal factor? One explanation is that armed conflicts generally lead to food shortages (and, in extreme cases, famine) because they destroy countries' productive capacities and infrastructure.[28] Although some groups may benefit financially, most suffer and poverty rates increase. A corollary to this argument is that a lack of food or the destruction of productive resources often forces families to volunteer their children to either

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Conflict, "Child Soldiers," http://www.un.org/special-rep/children-armed-conflict/English/ChildSoldiers.html.

26. Guy Goodwin-Gill and Ilene Cohn, *Child Soldiers: The Role of Children in Armed Conflict* (New York: Clarendon, 1994), pp. 23, 31, 38. See also, for example, Twum-Danso, *Africa's Young Soldiers.*

27. See, for example, Barnitz, *Child Soldiers,* p. 23; Twum-Danso, *Africa's Young Soldiers,* pp. 8, 10; Graça Machel, "Impact of Armed Conflict on Children," August 26, 1996, http://www.unicef.org/graca/, p. 11; Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Child Soldier Use, 2003: A Briefing for the 4th UN Security Council, Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict," January 2004, http://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/childsoldiers0104/childsoldiers.pdf, p. 2; and Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Child Soldiers Global Report, 2001,* http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900SID/LGEL-5CSHGX?OpenDocument.

28. For this argument, see Shannon McManimon, "Use of Children as Soldiers," *Foreign Policy in Focus,* Vol. 4, No. 27 (November 1999), http://www.fpif.org/briefs/vol4/v4n27child_body.html.

rebel or governmental forces as potential combatants. Because both sides characteristically participate in looting of civilian populations, these children may have the opportunity to reap the benefits for themselves and their families. Armed factions are often so motivated by greed that they will avoid direct confrontations so that they can concentrate on the lucrative process of looting undefended and unarmed victims.[29] Whether these children volunteer or are coerced, they therefore assume the role of breadwinners.

This generalized argument lacks systematic explanatory power. Singer claims, for example, that even when today's rich countries were poor, they did not extensively use child soldiers.[30] And as one Quaker United Nations Office report succinctly stated, "Poverty is often cited as *the* cause of child soldiering. This is too simplistic. There are many more poor children who do *not* become child soldiers than do, even in war zones. What *is* true is that children who are not living in poverty rarely become child soldiers."[31] Furthermore, although many experts agree that poverty plays some role, they do not address the issue of how variations in poverty rates influence child soldier participation rates. If these claims are true, then there must be other factors that explain the large-scale use of child soldiers.

ORPHAN RATES AND CHILD PARTICIPATION RATES
Much of the relevant literature addresses the significance of the vulnerability to recruitment of children who come from what Afua Twum-Danso calls a "disrupted family background," comparable to Laura Barnitz's focus on "the loss of parents and family" and "weakened bonds with family members."[32] Human Rights Watch explicitly notes, "Orphans and refugees are particularly vulnerable to recruitment."[33] UNICEF likewise points to this possible factor.[34]

The logic of this argument is fairly transparent: being orphaned makes po-

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29. In the Liberian civil war, for instance, factions avoided fighting as much as possible, so that simulated attacks could facilitate looting. See Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War* (London: Hurst, 1999), p. 145.
30. Singer, *Children at War,* pp. 9–15.
31. Quaker United Nations Office, "Child Soldiers: Why Adolescents Volunteer," oral statement by Friends World Committee for Consultation (the Quakers) to the sixtieth session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, April 7, 2004, http://www.geneva.quno.info/pdf/CHR60ChildSoldiersoral.pdf (emphasis in original).
32. Both Twum-Danso and Barnitz derive the significance of orphans as a determinant of child soldier rates from Rachel Brett and Margaret McCallin, *Children: The Invisible Soldiers* (Växjö, Sweden: Rädda Barnen, 1996).
33. Human Rights Watch, "Stop the Use of Child Soldiers! U.S. Congress Condemns the Use of Children," http://hrw.org/campaigns/crp/congress.htm.
34. See, for example, UNICEF, *Adult Wars, Child Soldiers.*

tential child recruits especially susceptible to either incentives or threats. Without parental guidance or care, they are far more likely to join government or rebel forces, either lured by the promise of food, protection, or glory, or coerced by the threat of punishment or death.[35] As Singer suggests, "Children, particularly those orphaned or disconnected from civil society, may volunteer to join any group if they believe that this is the only way to guarantee regular meals, clothing, or medical attention."[36]

The NGO literature is replete with anecdotal stories of gullible or frightened orphans being induced or coerced by belligerent forces to join their ranks.[37] According to one report, "Children when interviewed made references to the situation of orphans in armed forces or groups. They spoke of orphans being taken in or finding their way to an armed group, in search of protection and a sense of belonging."[38]

Such observations, however, create an incomplete picture, because they fail to acknowledge another type of anecdotal story: that repeated elsewhere about parents shot dead for refusing to hand their children over to governmental or rebel forces. The image of an orphaned child being lulled or coerced into joining a rebel army is a powerful one. But for the orphan argument to have explanatory power, a systematic relationship between the ratio of orphans and the ratio of child soldiers as belligerents must be evident.

GLOBALIZATION OF SMALL ARMS AND CHILD SOLDIER RATES

Experts have focused on the global spread of small arms as a cause of increased child soldier rates for two reasons. First, the general issue of small arms transfers has been a primary focus of a large NGO lobby, backed by some recent major studies.[39] Second, the relationship between child soldiering and

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35. See Goodwin-Gill and Cohn, *Child Soldiers,* pp. 23, 31, 38; Twum-Danso, *Africa's Young Soldiers;* and Barnitz, *Child Soldiers,* pp. 2–3.
36. Singer, *Children at War,* p. 62.
37. For examples of narratives describing the recruitment of orphans that illustrate this point, see Human Rights Watch, "Easy Prey: Child Soldiers in Liberia," 1994, http://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/c/crd/liberia949.pdf, pp. 15–19; and UNICEF, *Adult Wars, Child Soldiers.*
38. UNICEF, *Adult Wars, Child Soldiers,* p. 30.
39. Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, *Preventing Deadly Conflict: Small Arms Survey, 2002* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 203–231; Keith Krause, "Multilateral Diplomacy, Norm Building, and UN Conferences: The Case of Small Arms and Light Weapons," *Global Governance,* Vol. 8, No. 2 (April–June 2002), pp. 247–263; and Thomas Jackson, Nicholas Marsh, Taylor Owen, and Anne Thurin, *Who Takes the Bullet? The Impact of Small Arms Violence,* Understanding the Issues series, No. 3 (Oslo: Norwegian Church Aid, 2005). For more background on the small arms issue, including the United Nations 2001 Program of Action, see http://www.iansa.org, http://www.smallarmssurvey.org, and http://www.nisat.org.

small arms has received a lot of attention as a result of Singer's book and promotional efforts. Singer argues that a combination of three factors explains the rise of child soldiers: the flood of arms into the international arms market after the end of the Cold War; technological improvements that have made small arms lighter and easier for children to use; and a shift in the predominant form of intrastate conflicts, which have become more brutal and criminalized.[40] In the words of Shannon McManimon of the American Friends Service Committee, "Th[e] use of children in war is greatly facilitated by an estimated 500 million small arms and assault weapons worldwide. These weapons are very inexpensive—an AK-47 and two clips of ammunition can be bought for $12 on the Mozambican border. They are also durable, small, lightweight, easy to maintain, and simple enough for a 10-year-old to handle."[41]

The small arms argument, however, suffers from four problems. First, one could argue that the globalization of small arms coupled with their technological innovation may in large part explain the third element on Singer's list—criminalized violence. The brutality of the violence is unquestionable. The 1990s was the first decade of the twentieth century where deaths in intrastate wars outnumbered those from interstate wars. Gangs masquerading as armies in fragile states gained easy access to arms, and thus the opportunity to assert themselves. How they could have done so without the innovation and globalization of cheap small arms would be difficult to imagine. A new form of violence therefore seems almost inevitable in this context: a shift from the superficially "clinical" methods of targeted bombings in interstate wars to the intense ground combat, practice of looting, and increased propensity for ethnic cleansing evident in intrastate wars. Criminalized violence is therefore not independent of the other processes described by Singer, but a product of them.

Second, the lightness of small arms led Singer to suggest that small children can handle these weapons "as easily and effectively as adults."[42] But this may not always be true. Singer quotes an unnamed former child soldier who has been trained to avoid injury from the recoil of a submachine gun. But the recoil is often still powerful enough to limit such a weapon's effectiveness in the hands of children. A gun hanging from the neck of a child is clearly intimidating, but that does not necessarily ensure that a child can employ the weapon as intended.

Third, Singer contradicts his own argument that small arms are of central

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40. Singer, *Children at War,* p. 38.
41. McManimon, "Use of Children as Soldiers."
42. Singer, *Children at War,* p. 47.

explanatory importance by focusing on the use of children in auxiliary roles such as logistics or as spies and sex slaves.[43] Additionally, he discusses their propensity to be sacrificed by military commanders as "cannon fodder."[44] They are often sent into battle unarmed as a diversionary tactic because of shortages of weapons or ammunition, which Singer identifies as so essential to their growth in numbers in the first place.

Finally, a lack of data means that operationalizing small arms sales for the purpose of a quantitative test designed to establish a causal linkage is extremely difficult. We located official statistics on arms sales to individual countries, but they provide only a partial picture, given the extensive volume of the illicit arms trade market. Figures on this trade are difficult to obtain and notoriously unreliable; they fail to take into account indirect transfers through neighboring countries by rebel force purchases, and tend to omit long-term transfers resulting from past proxy wars.

These explanations—poverty, orphan rates, and small arms—also share three problems. First, proponents have often interwoven them as three of several causal factors, creating a surfeit of explanations, a lack of specificity, and difficulties with regard to operationalization.[45] Second, many of these approaches are hard to operationalize systematically across cases. Supporters of these arguments generally offer anecdotal evidence rather than any viable test of their claims across space or time.[46] Some policy reports, such as one pub-

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43. Ibid., p. 16.
44. For a discussion of how children played this role in the first Liberian conflict, see Human Rights Watch, "Easy Prey," pp. 32–34.
45. For example, in *Child Soldiers,* Goodwin-Gill and Cohn mention a variety of explanations that are hard to operationalize. On page 31, for instance, they define the militarization of daily life as the "presence of heavily armed policemen or soldiers patrolling the streets, military personnel occupying high government posts, military censorship of social life, armed guards in schools and public buildings, armed checkpoints along the roads, and curfews." Comparably, the link between children's experiences of physical violence and their desire to take up arms is characterized as a "desire for revenge, conviction to continue the struggles of lost loved ones, the need to substitute an annihilated family or social structure, and the desire to take control over events that shape one's circumstances" (p. 32). In reference to "structural violence," the authors focus on broad social and economic injustices. They link these injustices to a child's motivation to obtain food (pp. 32–33). All of these terms are difficult to operationalize. For other comparable examples, see Barnitz, *Child Soldiers;* Carolyn Nordstrom, *Girls and War Zones: Troubling Questions* (Uppsala, Sweden: Life and Peace Institute, May 1997); and Twum-Danso, *Africa's Young Soldiers.*
46. For examples based on anecdotal evidence, see UNICEF, "Impact of Armed Conflict on Children"; UNICEF, *Adult Wars, Child Soldiers;* Twum-Danso, *Africa's Young Soldiers;* Barnitz, *Child Soldiers;* and Goodwin-Gill and Cohn, *Child Soldiers.* The UNICEF report is based entirely on the interviews of sixty-nine former and current child soldiers. Both Twum-Danso and Barnitz identify several possible causal factors, but neither qualitatively nor quantitatively tests them. Based on the statements of children, the UNICEF study *Adult Wars, Child Soldiers,* for example, suggests that fear plays a potential role in the recruitment process. It does not, however, develop or test the argument.

lished by the CSUS, are broad-based and draw from evidence across multiple countries.[47] Many others, however, are individual country reports.[48] These studies are characteristically unsystematic regarding methodology, data collection, and analysis across cases; they are also descriptive in character and inferential in their conclusions. Data drawn from individual cases are characteristically used to infer many of the kinds of explanations noted above. Although inferential and inductive approaches are legitimate means of inquiry, we argue that they are the basis for developing contingent generalizations and hypotheses, not where the process should end.[49] Third, and perhaps most problematic from a policy perspective, these arguments all focus on broad structural factors as explanations—ones that have little utility for policymakers. Finding ways to alter poverty levels, orphan rates, or the global arms market in the short term is a huge challenge. All three are therefore prescriptions for ineffectiveness in the short term, if not inaction.[50]

An Alternative Explanation: Access to Refugee and IDP Camps

The key factor in explaining child soldier recruitment rates is the degree of access to refugee/IDP camps gained by the belligerent parties (both government and rebel forces) in conflicts.[51] The prospect of escaping from poverty may lure potential child recruits; high orphan rates may make these recruits more vulnerable to either incentives or threats; but it is the degree of vulnerability of children in refugee/IDP camps that ultimately explains their participation rates. They gather in such camps in great numbers. According to a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report, children constitute 57 percent of the inhabitants of refugee camps in the UNHCR-mandated

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47. See "Child Soldiers: An Overview," in CSUCS, *Child Soldiers Global Report, 2001.*
48. For examples, see Becker and Tate, *Stolen Children;* Human Rights Watch, "Forgotten Fighters"; Human Rights Watch, "How to Fight, How to Kill: Child Soldiers in Liberia," Vol. 16, No. 2(A) (February 2004), http://hrw.org/reports/2004/liberia0204/liberia0204.pdf; Human Rights Watch, "Easy Prey"; and Alfred B. Zack-Williams, "Child Soldiers in the Civil War in Sierra Leone," *Review of African Political Economy,* Vol. 28, No. 87 (March 2001), pp. 73–82.
49. For a general discussion of the comparative utility of general and contingent theories, see, for example, Alexander George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), appendix.
50. Later in this article, we offer systematic tests of the hypotheses about poverty and orphans. But we cannot do the same for the light arms argument given the lack of suitable data. Nonetheless, recognizing the importance of the argument, it is one we intend to return to in future research if possible.
51. We observe that the relevant literature suggests that camps for IDPs really started appearing on a widespread basis in these conflicts in the late 1990s, whereas refugee camps were widespread many years earlier.

facilities in Africa.[52] Whether orphans or not, children conveniently amassed in large groups are often so vulnerable that they are too tempting a target for armed forces seeking recruits in the absence of a sufficient deterrent. We therefore argue that child soldiers will constitute a larger percentage of belligerent forces where camps are relatively vulnerable to infiltration or raids. Protection from access by belligerents is therefore crucial. A lack of it provides an incentive that will likely increase the probability of successful raids by armed factions seeking recruits.

Of all the possible explanations for the recruitment of child soldiers, no other systematically or empirically examines the potential importance of the access of belligerents to either refugee or IDP camps. Barnitz does mention that "children who are in refugee camps or in orphanages are particularly vulnerable to joining armed organizations when conflict erupts."[53] But she does not address the issue of raids by belligerents as factors. Goodwin-Gill and Cohn also suggest in passing that refugee children are vulnerable to political exploitation and are possibly being primed to use guns.[54] But, again, they do not focus on assaults on camps designed to recruit children.

While the existing literature on refugees does include a discussion about their possible militarization, whether voluntarily or through forced conscription, it does not concentrate on the issue of children.[55] And although some studies do mention the need to protect refugee/IDP camps, they do so only with regard to the delivery of aid.[56] Little has been written on whether children in these camps are an especially vulnerable group, prone to joining armed organizations when conflict erupts.[57]

IDP and refugee camps, if unprotected, form an important resource pool for child soldiers—whether conscripted or voluntary. The image of children plucked off the street or out of the fields may have some relevance. But it is an

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52. See United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Refugee Children in Africa: Trends and Patterns in the Refugee Population in Africa below the Age of 18 Years, 2000," June 2001, http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/statistics/opendoc.pdf?tbl=STATISTICS&id =3b9378e42d.

53. Barnitz, *Child Soldiers*, p. 4.

54. Goodwin-Gill and Cohn, *Child Soldiers*, p. 32.

55. See, for example, Stephen John Stedman and Fred Tanner, "Refugees as Resources in War," in Stedman and Tanner, eds., *Refugee Manipulation: War, Politics, and the Abuse of Human Suffering* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 2003), pp. 1–15.

56. For an example of a study on food aid delivery that does emphasize the importance of protection, see Bill Frelick, "Assistance without Protection: Feed the Hungry, Clothe the Naked, and Watch Them Die," in *Worldwide Refugee Information*, 1997, http://www.iconet.org/IFA/ifa_ assistance.htm; and Fiona Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2002).

57. One of the few examples is Barnitz, *Child Soldiers*, p. 4.

inefficient way for belligerents, already shorn of sufficient manpower, to recruit soldiers and is unlikely to account for relatively high participation rates. For government and rebel forces, rounding children up at unprotected refugee or IDP camps presents a far more attractive source of fresh recruits.[58]

Historically, such camps are supposed to be protected under international laws and protocols.[59] They are supposed to be off limits to belligerents and generally assumed to be under the protection of a legitimate judicial authority, whether a sovereign government, a regional entity, or an international organization. But protection is often, in practice, uneven or nonexistent. Reaching a refugee or IDP camp does not ensure either personal security against outside forces or relief from hunger. Often it is little more than a place for those in danger to congregate, particularly children.[60]

The practical result is that a high-risk pool of potential recruits is created. As one UNICEF official reported to us in interviews, "Recruitment in refugee camps is relatively widespread. It is an area one ought to research a little bit more because we always have the sense that displaced children, whether they are refugees or internally displaced, particularly I would say displaced children, are more at risk of recruitment as they are more at risk of other human rights violations. . . . As such, it can be imagined that young boys and young girls who are in the age of fighting are at risk of being recruited in that context. . . . IDP camps are wonderful places where people are regrouped and propaganda can be conducted quite easily. . . . I think there's clear factual anecdotal evidence when you go in refugee camps that it's happening."[61] As an official from Save the Children pointedly suggested, "There is a recruitment that happens directly in refugee camps too. There is usually no fence or a wall surrounding camps, and people can slip in."[62]

Armed factions, therefore, infiltrate camps and often become indistinct from the civilian population so that they can recruit the camps' occupants. They enlist or seize inhabitants (including children) through the use of coercion or propaganda—a phenomenon referred to as "refugee manipulation and militarization"—from within the camps.[63] According to the UNHCR, about 15 percent of refugee crises "foment refugee militarization."[64] In other instances,

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58. CSUCS, *Child Soldiers Global Report, 2004,* pp. 31, 33.
59. Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?* p. 28.
60. Children constitute 57 percent of all inhabitants of UNHCR-mandated refugee camps. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Refugee Children in Africa."
61. Confidential interview, UNICEF official, New York, April 6, 2005.
62. Confidential interview, Save the Children official, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, March 25, 2005.
63. Stedman and Tanner, "Refugees as Resources in War," p. 4.
64. Ibid., p. 3.

however, the lack of physical protection of camps incites insurgencies and attacks by both rebels and government militias. So, we anticipate that the larger the number of instances of camp militarization or outside incursions, the higher the number (and thus ratio) of child soldiers.

Methodology: Data Samples and the Dependent Variable

The volume of conflicts and number of child soldiers in Africa suggest that it is a legitimate place from which to build a subsequent comparative analysis with Asian, Latin American, and Middle Eastern cases. We confine our data analysis to cases involving intrastate conflicts in Africa between 1975 and 2002.[65] These years were chosen because of data availability, relevant materials being unavailable prior to 1975. We have chosen to examine only intrastate conflicts because according to one UNICEF report, "The conflicts that involve child soldiers are usually relatively small, internal struggles. Rather than fighting in international wars, children serve in civil wars, which have bitter religious or ethnic enmities and create social pressures to fight."[66]

CASE SELECTION PROCESS
Using the Armed Conflict Database compiled by Håvard Strand and several of his colleagues, we were able to determine that there were 129 intrastate conflict episodes listed involving thirty-three African countries between 1975 and 2002.[67] Not all of the episodes were confined to domestic actors.[68] Some

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65. Among our cases, we included some conflicts that commenced before 1975, provided that they concluded during or after 1975 and that suitable data were available. Conflicts that ended prior to 1975 were omitted due to a lack of suitable data.

66. Model United Nations of the University of Chicago, "Reintegration of Child Soldiers," 2003, http://munuc.org/munucxvi/2003pdf/UNICEF_A.pdf, p. 5.

67. By "conflict episode," we mean a unit or observation defined as "a conflict, a sub-conflict, or a subset of either over a period of time." See Håvard Strand, Lars W. Wilhelmsen, and Nils Petter Gleditsch, in collaboration with Peter Wallensteen, Margarita Sollenberg, Mikael Eriksson, Halvard Buhaug, and Jan Ketilrod, "Armed Conflict Dataset Codebook," ver. 1.1 (September 2002), http://www.prio.no/cwp/armedconflict/old/v1_10/Codebook_v1_1.pdf. In adopting their approach, each conflict in their dataset "is likely to include several observations." "Armed conflict" is defined as "a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least twenty five battle-related deaths" (p. 2). A "sub-conflict" must satisfy one or more of the following criteria: (1) ten continuous years with fewer than twenty-five battle-related deaths per year; (2) a change in the conflict type from internal conflict to internationalized internal conflict or vice versa; and (3) a complete change in the belligerents in a conflict (p. 3).

68. An "internal conflict" in Strand et al.'s dataset is defined as "being within a country between a government and one or more opposition groups, with no interference from other countries." Ibid., p. 8.

also included neighboring countries or international actors, albeit generally indirectly—what Strand et al. define as an "internationalized internal conflict."[69] But in all episodes, the primary belligerents were domestic actors.[70]

We then grouped these conflict episodes into clusters. If 2 or more different episodes in the same country occurred concurrently or in adjacent years, we merged them into one cluster.[71] Using this method, we identified 55 intrastate conflicts in which child soldiers potentially participated.[72] We split 3 of them into two parts each because some child soldier data were obtained for these different time periods but not for the entire period.[73] We also added 1 conflict to our sample that was not in the Strand et al. database, but was mentioned in other sources and had data on child soldier participation.[74] In the end, we arrived at a sample of 59 intrastate conflicts.[75]

Further research revealed that child soldiers were reported as present or absent in 40 of our 59 conflicts. Of those, 12 had confirmed reporting of child soldier numbers, enabling us to calculate positive child soldier ratios.[76] In 12 others, substantial use of child soldiers was reported, but reliable estimates were unavailable. Another 9 conflicts provided evidence of the minor use of child soldiers, but these also offered no reliable estimates.[77] For 7 conflicts, re-

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69. Strand et al. define an "internationalized internal conflict" as one in which both sides in the conflict receive support from other governments. Ibid.
70. Between 1975 and 2002, however, there were only 8 international interstate conflicts in Africa.
71. This way of clustering results (by merging episodes with different actors) was necessitated by the nature of the data available on child soldiers. The data do not differentiate between various factions fighting at the same time or between two separate episodes in adjacent years.
72. From this point in the article, we refer to intrastate conflict as a cluster of episodes of what Strand et al., "Armed Conflict Dataset Cookbook," call internal and internationalized internal conflicts.
73. The three conflicts were Angola (1975–2002), South Africa (1966–93), and Sudan (1983–2002).
74. This conflict took place in Burundi (1993–94). For the reference on ethnic violence during these years, see "Burundi Civil War," http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/burundi.htm.
75. We also had to alter the dates of one conflict in our sample. Although Strand et al. list the Liberian conflict as resuming in 2000, the literature on civil wars in Liberia dates the second conflict from as early as 1997. See, for example, "Liberia—Second Civil War—1997–2003," http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/liberia-1997.htm. The same source, however, reports on the first instances of violence emerging in 1999 in the form of insurgencies. Strand et al.'s dataset includes conflicts up to 2002, but the Liberian conflict continued into 2003. We therefore list the duration of this conflict as 1999 to 2003.
76. The number of children being recruited was estimated from a series of reports with figures compiled by different operating field organizations including CSUCS, Human Rights Watch, Save the Children, and UNICEF.
77. We code "minor use" as involving no evidence of systematic attempts to recruit children, no large-scale usage of them in conflict or as auxiliaries, and no competition to engage them by the government and rebel factions. The occasional report of a child in or near combat does not constitute the basis for inclusion as a case.

Table 1. Child Soldiers: Countries, Conflicts, and Percentages, 1975–2002

Country and Conflict	Number of Combatants	Number of Child Soldiers	Ratio of Child Soldiers
Angola (1975–95)	194,000	8,000	4%
Burundi (1993–94)	50,000	5,000	10%
Uganda (1994–2002)	74,000	16,000	22%
Rwanda (1990–94)	70,000	17,500	25%
Sierra Leone (1991–2000)	45,000	10,000	25%
Angola (1996–2002)	72,500	20,000	28%
Democratic Republic of Congo (1996–2001)	72,000	20,000	28%
Mozambique (1976–92)	92 881	25,498	28%
Liberia (1989–96)	60,000	17,500	29%
Burundi (1995–99)	45,000	14,000	31%
Sudan (1993–2002)	40,000	15,700	39%
Liberia (2000–02)	40,000	21,000	53%

ports had confirmed that there was no use of child soldiers.[78] For the remaining 19 cases, there was no indication of any data on child soldier participation.

The conflicts where we know that child soldiers were used (even if we could not generate reliable estimates) varied in duration. Four of the conflicts lasted one year; 6 lasted two years; and 23 lasted three years or more. The conflicts where no children were involved also varied in duration. Three lasted one year; 1 lasted three years; and the remainder lasted for five, six, and eight years each. So there seemed to be little relationship between duration and the use of child soldiers in cases where we were definitive about their use.[79]

Table 1 provides further key information on the 12 cases where we could identify reliable estimates on child soldier recruitment. It includes the duration of the conflict, the total number of combatants, the number of child soldiers in each conflict, and the ratio of child soldiers in each case. We calculated the ratio by dividing the number of children recruited by all armed factions (including governmental forces) in each intrastate conflict by the number of all combatants participating in the conflict at some stage. The data revealed that in all 12 cases, both government and rebel forces engaged in child recruitment,

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78. These seven conflicts were concentrated in five countries, with Niger being the location for three of them, and Mali and Senegal two each.
79. Although less reliable, the duration of a conflict may also serve as a proxy for the age distribution of a population as a possible explanation of child soldier rates. In principle, the percentage of child soldiers may rise as a war progresses because as adults die in conflict, children constitute a higher percentage of the population. We found no evidence to support this claim.

with approximately the same distribution of numbers, except (as previously mentioned) in Uganda, where rebel forces recruited disproportionately more children, and Mozambique, where the obverse was the case.[80]

The column in Table 1 listing the ratios of child soldiers demonstrates the variation in our dependent variable, bearing in mind that the percentage was zero in 7 additional cases. We are keenly aware that to perform any quantitative analysis requires a large number of observations. In this instance, we can report on 19 cases of child soldiers and are cognizant of the limited sophistication of our tests, given the number of cases we use. Nonetheless, we have made exhaustive efforts to locate reliable evidence on which to base our calculations.[81]

Testing Explanations for Child Soldier Ratios

In this section we perform a series of tests of the poverty, orphan rates, and our alternative refugee/IDP camp protection arguments. Our first test examines the graphical relationship between child soldier rates and poverty, orphan rates, and access to camps.

POVERTY AND CHILD SOLDIER RECRUITMENT

Our data suggest that substantial poverty rates say little about whether a country is likely to have child soldier participants in armed conflicts. We use the percentage of population estimated below the poverty line as the measure of national poverty, defined by the World Bank as the minimum standard required by an individual to fulfill his or her basic food and nonfood needs.[82] We

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80. If the governmental forces were excluded from the calculation of child soldier ratios for the Ugandan conflict (1994–2002), the ratio would be 71 percent instead of the 22 percent that we have estimated. Lisa Sekaggya, program coordinator for social protection at Save the Children in Uganda, estimates that the child soldier figure for oppositional forces is 90 percent. See Sekaggya, "Ugandan Children Born in Captivity and Their Human Rights," paper presented at "Conference on War Babies," Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, November 13, 2004.

81. As a result of the limited number of cases tested, we make no definitive claims on the basis of the analysis presented here. The findings are meant to be suggestive and, in the spirit of the comments made in some authoritative studies, we believe that quantitative analysis based on a limited *N,* if genuinely exhaustive and recognized as a plausibility probe, is better than none at all. For a defense of the use of regression analysis, even when one has a relatively limited *N,* see Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Barbara Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003).

82. World Bank Group, *Poverty Manual,* August 8, 2005, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/

obtained the data on poverty for the years as close to the middle of the duration of a conflict as possible, believing that to be the fairest reflection of the changing conditions during the conflict.[83] The evidence we have generated questions whether poverty rates explain the enormous variations in child soldier rates.[84]

In Figure 1 we plotted a simple regression line between poverty and child soldier rates. For the relationship between the two to exist, the cases would approximate the slope from bottom left to top right, with a corresponding increase in poverty rates and child soldier ratios. None is evident according to these data; the results suggest no systematic relationship between the two. Arguably, we could have used more sophisticated measures of poverty, such as a threshold measurement. But even this would imply only that poverty is a necessary rather than sufficient condition for child soldiering to occur on a statistically significant basis.

ORPHAN RATES

To evaluate the relationship between orphans and child soldiers' participation in conflicts, we adopted a measure of child orphans from a Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS report on orphan estimates.[85] We again obtained the percentages of orphans relative to all children in the 0–14 age group for one


PGLP/Resources/povertymanual_ch3.pdf, chap. 3, p. 42. Poverty can be measured in several ways. Alternative methods are listed at the World Bank's *PovertyNet*, http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/mission/up1.htm; and the Human Development indicators, http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/pdf/hdr03_HDI.pdf. We have chosen percentage of population below the poverty line because this measure allows us to focus on income and consumption levels as indicators of the degree of economic need.

83. Poverty data were unavailable for Liberia (1989–95), Lesotho (1998), and Mali (1994). Mali was excluded from our sample; in Lesotho, however, the poverty measure available was for the year after the conflict concluded and is included in the sample. Furthermore, we address the absence of data on poverty in the middle of the nine-year conflict in Uganda by calculating the average figure between the poverty rate at the outset and at the end of the conflict. We believe that this average represents a balanced characterization of the degree of poverty during the conflict. In the case of Angola (1975–95), data regarding the percentage of the population living below the poverty line were available only for rural areas. According to the Institute for Security Studies' population and social indicators database, http://www.iss.org.za/AF/profiles/angola/Table_Population.html#Anchor-43556, the urban population of Angola was 17.8 percent in 1975 and 32.3 percent in 1997. The average of these numbers (25 percent) represents the urban population during the conflict of 1975–95. Given that the rural population of Angola made up 75 percent of the country's population during the conflict, we incorporated only the rural value of poverty as a proxy for poverty measurement in this case. Although this risks skewing the data, we justify including Angola because information on our other cases suggests that differences in the poverty rates between rural and urban settings are generally nominal at the midpoint of any conflict.

84. For our compiled data on poverty, please refer to appendix 2.

85. UNAIDS and UNICEF, *Children on the Brink, 2002: A Joint Report on Orphan Estimates and Pro-*

Figure 1. The Relationship between Poverty and Child Soldier Rates, 1975–2003.
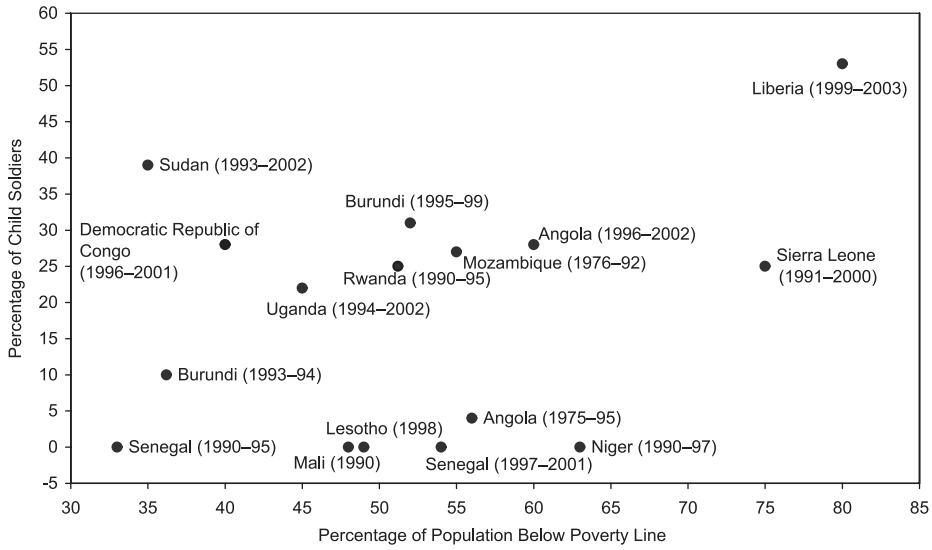
year at the midpoint of each conflict,[86] bearing in mind an inevitable rise in the number of mortalities as a result of armed violence during the course of the conflict and an associated increase in the number of orphans in a country.[87] Figure 2 shows the lack of proximity to the imaginary trend line. There seems to be little discernable relationship between orphan rates and child soldier participation rates.

### degree of access to refugee/idp camps

We argue that the larger the number of instances of camp militarization or outside incursions, the higher the number (and thus ratio) of child soldiers. In testing this argument, we operationalized the independent variable of ac-

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gram Strategies, July 2002, http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/pub_children_on_the_brink_en.pdf.
86. The percentage of orphans to all children in the zero-to-14 age group was obtained for 18 cases (with the exception of Mali) in our sample. The data on orphans are presented in appendix 3.
87. The midpoint was used to estimate orphan rates for three cases: Angola (1975–95), Angola (1996–2002), and Mozambique (1976–92). In three cases we estimated orphan rates for years before the midpoint: Senegal (1997–2001), Niger (1990–97), and the Central African Republic (2001–02). One case—Mali (1994)—was excluded because the orphans figure was reported for the year of 1995, just one year after the conflict ceased.

Figure 2. The Relationship between Orphan and Child Soldier Rates, 1975–2003
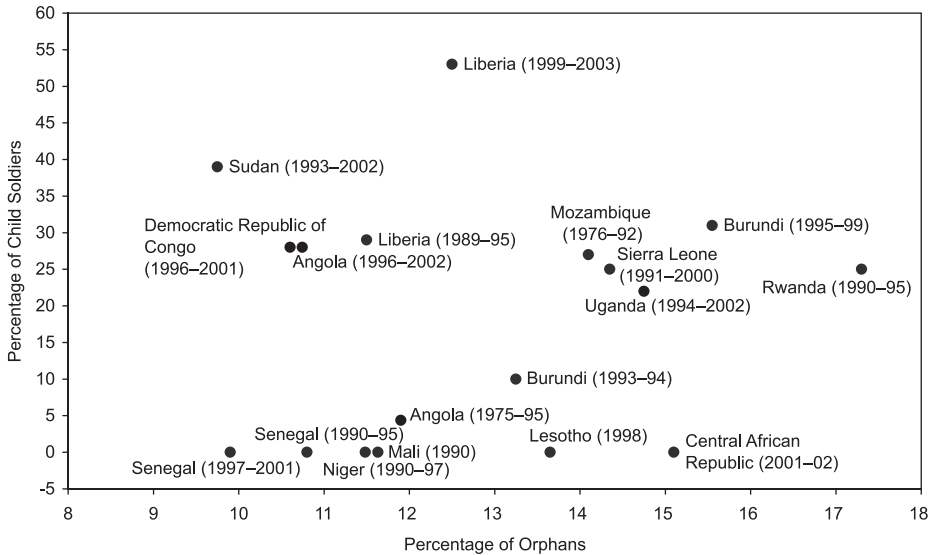
cess as a ratio. The numerator was calculated by adding together instances of refugee/IDP camp militarization and of attacks on such camps during the conflict years of a case. By an "instance," we mean occurrence of camp attack or camp militarization event(s) during a given year by parties to the conflict in question. In the case of refugee camps, we count these instances in any foreign country that was confirmed as a destination of refugees from the conflict. Those involving IDPs were traced for the conflict country only.[88] The denominator is the number of years the conflict lasted in a particular case.

Our approach leaves unaddressed the question of whether there are key distinctions between refugee and IDP camps: access to the former, for example, being contingent on the additional factor of either a host government's collusion or its inability to halt assaults by government or rebel forces. Regardless, the effect is the same: a lack of protection for refugee camps.[89]

To assess the degree of access to refugee and IDP camps, as well as camp

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88. Our method does not account for the number of militarized camps or attacks in any given year or for the population of camps. Unfortunately, detailed data of this kind is currently unavailable, although one of our goals in the future project is to develop such a database.
89. Whether such a distinction is significant, however, is a subsidiary hypothesis worthy of investigation as part of our ongoing research program.

Figure 3. The Relationship between Access to Refugee/IDP Camps and Child Soldier Rates, 1975–2003
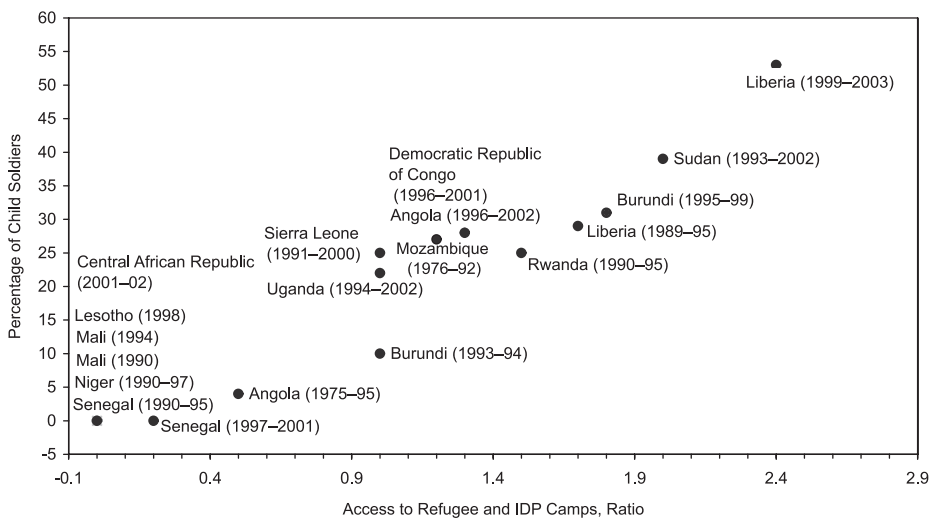
militarization, we employed the qualitative information provided by relevant organizations, as well as reports, papers, and news articles. The major source for our calculations of the access variable is a data set compiled by Sarah Lischer for the years from 1987 to 1998.[90] For the years after 1998, we relied on data from the yearly reports of the United States Committee for Refugees as our main source of the information. The data on IDP camps came primarily from the Global IDP Database country reports.[91]

Figure 3 adds support to the proposition that access to refugee/IDP camps and child soldier rates are correlated. With relatively limited variations, the figure shows a rise in access rates consistent with the rise in child soldier rates.

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90. For reference, see Sarah Kenyon Lischer, "Refugee Involvement in Political Violence: Quantitative Evidence from 1987–1998," Working Paper, No. 26 (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, June 2000), http://www.jha.ac/articles/u026.pdf. Lischer also provided us with the dataset on which we based our calculations.
91. Appendix 4 lists all instances of camp militarization and attacks in each case. The data on refugee militarization or attacks against them for the years prior to 1988 were unavailable, reducing the data points in our two historical cases of Mozambique (1976–92) to five years from twelve and of Angola (1975–95) to eight years from thirteen. We nonetheless include these cases in our sample. The values for the access variable in our 19 cases, when compared with child soldier rates, are outlined in appendix 5.

The clustering and location of the cases along an imaginary slope in Figure 3 appears far tighter than in Figures 1 and 2. This suggests, at least as a "first cut," a possibly stronger causal relationship between camp protection from access by belligerents and child recruitment rates.

MULTIPLE REGRESSION TEST

To evaluate the relationship between access to camps and child soldier rates, we performed a multiple regression test on nineteen observations for which the data on the third independent variable (access) and the dependent variable (child soldier ratios) were available, excluding three cases where the data on poverty were unavailable.[92] In conducting a multiple regression test, we assessed the impact of our three independent variables—poverty, orphan rates, and access to refugee/IDP camps—on the dependent variable.[93] The general model to be estimated is written as:

$$Y = \alpha + \sum\nolimits_{k=1}^{K} \beta_k X_k + \varepsilon,$$

where K is the number of our independent variables. Our model is specified as follows:

$$CS = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Poverty} + \beta_2 \text{Orphans} + \beta_3 \text{Access} + \varepsilon,$$

where CS stands for child soldier ratios.

The coefficients of correlation between our independent variables are presented in Table 2. They suggest that none of the independent variables is significantly correlated with any other one.[94] Therefore, collinearity is not a problem.[95]

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92. With three missing values for the poverty variable, we were able to calculate results for 16 out of 19 observations. We therefore recognize that the statistical reliability of the test might be limited due to the relatively small number of observations for which data were available, and we hope to address the issue of a large N in further research.

93. In contrast to bivariate correlations, multiple regression coefficients capture the marginal effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable that is unique to the respective independent variable in the model. Hence, for example, the coefficient on the access variable expresses the rate of change in the child soldiers' variable, which could not have been associated with poverty or orphans. In this way, the multiple regression model controls for the effects of poverty and orphans.

94. If the independent variables are mutually correlated, it becomes harder to distinguish their individual effects on the dependent variable. Such cases usually result in lower precision of the coefficient estimates and hence higher standard errors.

95. R. Carter Hill, William E. Griffiths, and George G. Judge, *Undergraduate Econometrics*, 2d ed. (New York: Wiley, 2001), p. 190.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Coefficients for Independent Variables

Independent Variable	Poverty	Orphans	Access
Poverty	—	—	—
Orphans	0.194	—	—
Access	0.212	0.108	—

*Correlation is significant at the 0.1 level.
**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.
***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The regression results, summarized in Table 3, demonstrate that only access is significantly related to child soldier ratios. The coefficient value predicts that every single unit increase in access is matched with a 20-unit increase in child soldiers. Standard errors are reported in brackets under their respective coefficient estimates.[96] The coefficient values on poverty and orphans are insignificant, implying that there is no statistically significant association between poverty and child soldiers or between orphans and child soldiers.

Despite our best efforts, we could not obtain accurate numbers of child soldiers for 21 conflicts in which we know child soldiers participated. It is extremely difficult to obtain these data about African countries embroiled in war. In some cases, it is a hard task to glean information on our independent variables from different sources in the absence of a comprehensive database. We acknowledge cases of several unevenly spread data points observed for one country over time, with the result that we could not utilize panel data analysis because individual cross sections would not each be measured at the same point in time. Nevertheless, the results do provide some intuitive guidance. The findings of this test further reinforce our contention that access to refugee/ IDP camps is the key determinant of child soldier rates.

Illustrative Case Studies: Liberia, 1989–96 and 1999–2003

Social science is replete with debates about the utility of quantitative and qualitative methods. Few disagree that they are best when used in tandem. In this

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96. Standard errors indicate the distance from the sample regression coefficients within which the true coefficient value is also likely to lie. The smaller the standard errors, the higher the accuracy of the estimated coefficient value based on the sample data. If the standard errors are small enough, relative to the coefficient value, then the coefficient is termed "significant" (i.e., estimated with a sufficient precision).

Table 3. Multiple Regression Results

Independent Variable	Coefficient Estimates
Poverty	0.156
	(0.081)
Orphans	−0.472
	(0.497)
Access	20.536**
	(1.406)

NOTES: N=16, R^2=0.976, adjusted R^2=0.953
dependent variable: child soldier ratios
Assumptions of multiple regression are assessed in appendix 6.
Nonstandardized coefficients reported.
*Coefficient is significant at the 0.1 level.
**Coefficient is significant at the 0.05 level.
***Coefficient is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

article, we do so as a third test of our argument regarding the power of access to camps in explaining child soldier rates.

The utility of case studies varies; they can be used, for example, as heuristic devices, plausibility probes, or crucial tests.[97] In this instance, we have chosen two Liberian cases because they constitute crucial tests. Indeed, the 1999–2003 case is important because it offers the highest ratio of child soldiers recorded in our 19 cases. If an explanation focusing on the denial of access for government and rebel forces to camps were not clearly sustainable in such a case, then it would seriously weaken our argument. Being able to sustain it, in contrast, reinforces our claims—given that Liberia is typically poor and representative of orphan rates, yet has such variance in proportionate and absolute terms over the course of two proximate conflicts. By focusing on the relative amount of

97. Among the historically most important work on the use of case studies is C. Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science,* Vol. 7: *Strategies of Inquiry* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975). See also Mattei Dogan and Dominique Pelassy, *How to Compare Nations: Strategies in Comparative Politics,* 2d ed. (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 1990); Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1970); Alexander George, "Case Study and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison," in P. Gordon Lauren, ed., *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1979), pp. 43–68; George and Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy,* pp. 88–97; and King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry.*

protection given to refugees and IDPs, we seek to build on our finding that the degree of access to refugee/IDP camps is crucial.

Comparing the two Liberian cases allows us to employ a most similar research design. We can hold many variables constant because factors such as culture, ethnicity, and poverty rates remained largely unchanged; even orphan rates altered only marginally between the two periods. We do recognize the possibility of a cumulative effect in comparing two cases involving the same country in a limited period. But we believe that employing this method will help to isolate the key distinguishing variables in the two cases, build greater nuance to our claims, and reinforce our argument. However truncated the analysis, distinctions in the degree of camp protection between the two periods should be evident if our claims are to be sustained.

LIBERIA, 1989–96: THE IMPORTANCE OF A SECURITY ZONE
The civil war began in 1989 with rebel leader Charles Taylor's invasion of Liberia from neighboring Ivory Coast.[98] Taylor's National Democratic Party of Liberia (NPFL) forces were intent on deposing the existing regime (the People's Redemption Council), led by Samuel Doe and his National Democratic Party of Liberia. The NPFL rebels terrorized both border and refugee communities in neighboring countries and overran government forces.[99] They then carried out a series of executions and gross human rights abuses.[100] By 1990 the NPFL had captured, and subsequently executed, Doe.

These events did not end the conflict.[101] The war lasted until 1996, and the intervening years were marked by attacks on border communities within Liberia, notably by the NPFL, and the fragmentation of control.[102] From 1990 onward, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOMOG) deployed Nigerian-led peacekeeping mission troops, which established order only in and around the capital of Monrovia.[103] The force initially consisted of

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98. For armed conflicts events data, see http://www.onwar.com/aced/nation/lay/liberia/fliberia1989.htm.
99. UNHCR, "Liberia: What Hope for Peace?"
100. For examples of human rights abuses by various rebel parties in Liberia, see Human Rights Watch, "Liberia: A Human Rights Disaster: Violations of the Laws of War by All Parties to the Conflict," October 26, 1990, http://www.hrw.org/reports/1990/liberia/.
101. "Liberia's Uneasy Peace," *NewsHour,* April 5, 2006, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/africa/liberia/post1980_timeline.html.
102. UNHCR, "Liberia: What Hope for Peace?"
103. Norwegian Refugee Council, "Profile of Internal Displacement: Liberia," Global IDP Database, updated August 25, 2005, http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/liberia/mediacentre/press/doc/Liberia%20-August%202005.pdf, p. 5.

2,700 soldiers. Nonetheless, the conflict continued elsewhere, "characterized by brutal ethnic killings and massive abuses against the civilian popula-tion."[104] To protect Monrovia, the ECOMOG forces were increased by 3,000 men (including two battalions of Senegalese troops), and a limited offensive military capability enhanced their capacity as they shifted their mission from traditional peacekeeping to one of sustaining law and order.[105] First, they pushed belligerent forces out of the capital. Then they enlarged their area of operations. In the words of Colin Scott, "As the NPFL rebellion drove people across international borders or toward the security in Monrovia, ECOMOG de-ployed outward to create a security zone, protecting the bulk of the internally displaced."[106]

A shaky cease-fire agreement followed. In Monrovia, writes the Norwegian Refugee Council, "protection was effectively ensured by the presence of ECOMOG forces" for most of the war.[107] Only Monrovia and the surrounding security zone, however, constituted an effective safe haven—albeit that the ECOMOG-controlled zone was effectively under siege for long periods.[108] Control of the rest of Liberia was divided between Taylor's forces and a num-ber of factions that proliferated over the years and battled over the country's rich natural resources.[109] Fighting was sustained in these areas despite the presence of regional peacekeepers and a United Nations military observer mis-sion.[110] As a result, thousands of people were trapped inside conflict zones with no access to humanitarian organizations.[111] The results were predictable: "Lacking physical security, Liberian displaced persons and refugees in shelters were vulnerable to physical abuse," notes Human Rights Watch, "and fell prey to torture and massacre. The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), the NPFL, the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO), and the Liberian Peace Council engaged in human rights abuses and massacres of displaced persons and refugees in camps or shelters. For example, in June 1993, at Harbel refugee

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104. Human Rights Watch, "How to Fight, How to Kill," p. 7. For details of some of the worst atrocities, see Human Rights Watch, "Easy Prey," pp. 7–10.
105. "ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping," in Herbert Howe, *Ambiguous Order: Military Forces in African States* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2001), pp. 139–140.
106. Colin Scott, "Liberia: A Nation Displaced," in Roberta Cohen and Francis M. Deng, ed., *The Forsaken People: Case Studies of the Internally Displaced* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1998), p. 114.
107. Norwegian Refugee Council, "Profile of Internal Displacement: Liberia," p. 36.
108. "ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping," pp. 143–144.
109. Human Rights Watch, "How to Fight, How to Kill," p. 6.
110. Ibid., p. 15.
111. Ibid., p. 6.

camp outside Monrovia, the AFL rebels seized and slaughtered nearly 600 persons, wounding 500 and capturing and abducting 200."[112]

According to our figures, independently confirmed by another source, 59 percent of Liberia's population of 2.6 million was displaced as they headed for refugee and IDP camps.[113] By the end of 1994, the total number of Liberian refugees in neighboring countries exceeded 800,000. Of these, more than 500,000 were estimated to be located in Guinea, 318,000 in the Ivory Coast, 20,000 in Ghana, 6,000 in Sierra Leone, and 4,000 in Nigeria.[114]

The refugees were not guaranteed safety, however, and had to rely on host government protection. In 1990, for example, Liberian rebels invaded Sierra Leone, reportedly attacking Liberian refugees. Veronica Nmoma describes the chaos that followed: "On crossing the border into Sierra Leone, the rebel forces terrified and terrorized local inhabitants, looting and occupying towns in the east and northeast. Aside from uprooting hundreds of thousands of Sierra Leonean nationals, the incursion disrupted the relief program for about 125,000 Liberian refugees."[115] Refugees had been targets of armed violence from local populations in the Ivory Coast and Guinea since 1991.[116] NPLF forces reportedly attacked Liberian refugees in camps located inside the Ivory Coast as part of a campaign that was conducted until 1994 by militias designed to recruit refugees to fight in Liberia.[117] The ULIMO rebels did the same inside Guinea.[118] By the end of 1994, the incursions had reportedly uprooted 200,000 civilians.[119]

Estimates suggest that by 1996 "there were approximately 750,000 IDPs in Liberia. Of these, 300,000–500,000 were located in shelters in and around Monrovia."[120] The rest were distributed in IDP camps throughout the country. This population movement had a significant impact on the country's demographics. As Scott suggested at the time, "In essence, Liberia has undergone

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112. Veronica Nmoma, "The Civil War and the Refugee Crisis in Liberia," *Journal of Conflict Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring 1997), pp. 101–125, at p. 110.
113. Scott, "Liberia," p. 113.
114. "Liberia," in *Human Rights Watch World Report*, 1995, http://www.hrw.org/reports/1995/WR95/AFRICA-05.htm.
115. Nmoma, "The Civil War and the Refugee Crisis in Libya," p. 111.
116. Lischer, "Refugee Involvement in Political Violence," p. 14. For further details, see "Remarks by Tarty Teh, spokesman for United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) before the African Subcommittee of the House Foreign Relations Committee on the Current Situation in Liberia," November 19, 1992, http://members.aol.com/Liberia99/UlimoSpeech.html.
117. Lischer, "Refugee Involvement in Political Violence," p. 24.
118. Ibid., p. 24
119. Human Rights Watch, "Liberia: A Human Rights Disaster."
120. Ibid., p. 15.

three types of population change: areas like Lofa and Grand Gedeh have been effectively deserted; areas like Bong and Nimba have been heavily depopulated; and havens like Montserrado have been substantially swollen."[121]

In sum, protected areas became overburdened as unprotected areas emptied. Displaced people, seeking to escape the ongoing fighting, swelled the "greater Monrovia" security zone, estimated to contain more than a million people.[122] ECOMOG's presence, in this regard, was crucial: "Although ECOMOG never had explicit humanitarian objectives," a Human Rights Watch report states, "it did reduce hostilities and atrocities, and by establishing order in greater Monrovia it set up a safe haven for thousands of displaced Liberians."[123]

As the war progressed, however, even the IDPs located in Monrovia were no longer well protected. Despite the presence of ECOMOG troops, they could not spare the capital from the "engulfed violence and horror" in the final stages of the conflict.[124] By that time, approximately 46 percent of the estimated 780,000 inhabitants of Monrovia had to abandon their homes. Of these, 30 percent moved into shelters—completely dependent on the international community for their basic needs and protection.[125] Elsewhere, tens of thousands of people fled to the central Liberian town of Gbarnga in search of safety.[126]

Children were left vulnerable to the war's ravages and, seemingly, none were spared from its horror. The child population can be divided between those who were victims as civilians and those who were victims and perpetrators as child soldiers. A plethora of reports were assembled by Human Rights Watch, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Quakers, and CSUCS with accounts of the stories of the abduction and forced recruitment of children caught in unprotected zones.[127]

Taylor's NPFL became infamous for the abduction and use of boys in war

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121. Scott, "Liberia," p. 114.
122. Ibid., p. 114.
123. Ibid., p. 105.
124. Norwegian Refugee Council, "Profile of Internal Displacement: Liberia," p. 10. See also Scott, "Liberia," p. 108.
125. Norwegian Refugee Council, "Profile of Internal Displacement: Liberia," p. 15.
126. Ibid., p. 15.
127. For selection of stories, see Human Rights Watch, "Easy Prey," pp. 29, 76; UNICEF, *Adult Wars, Child Soldiers*, pp. 23–31; Yvonne E. Keairns, *The Voices of Girl Child Soldiers*, October 2002, http://www.geneva.quno.info/pdf/QUNO%20Child%20soldiers%20report.pdf. See also the narratives regarding children compiled on the CSUCS website at http://www.child-soldiers.org/childsoldiers/voices-of-young-soldiers.

dating from the start of conflict in 1989. According to one Human Rights Watch report, many children were told, "You join us or we'll kill your family."[128] Another noted that many of these children had been forcibly recruited from Nimba County after soldiers had killed their parents.[129] From this pool, they formed the infamous Small Boys Unit of the NPFL.[130] Some reports claimed that children were also assigned to a special bodyguard unit designed to protect NPFL ministers.[131] But still others were used elsewhere as cannon fodder on the front lines.[132] Children also formed an integral part of other Liberian armed factions, such as ULIMO.[133]

One UNHCR report made clear the authors' views on the role of children in the conflict at the time: "The civil war in Liberia has been a children's war. All factions except the AFL have used many thousands of soldiers under the age of 18, including some as young as eight or nine. . . . It is indeed true that many children have witnessed their families being killed with the utmost brutality. However, in many instances children have been forcibly recruited and compelled to take part in atrocities."[134]

In the early years of the war, ECOMOG forces were able to protect children in Monrovia and the surrounding security zone from these factions. But a number of reports suggest that this was not the case outside the security zone. As Scott described at the time, in these areas, "children have been co-opted or coerced into the armed factions, where they have been subjected to violence both as victims and as forced perpetrators."[135] By 1996, children inside Monrovia and the security belt were no longer protected, as they became the targets of an increasing number of factions. In one notable example, armed men looking for recruits raided a shelter run jointly by a local agency and UNHCR where 95 children were living.[136]

As the war drew to a close and the ECOMOG forces withdrew their protection, the inhabitants of Monrovia were as vulnerable as those IDPs and refugees elsewhere, in an environment of unmitigated violence. In total, about

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128. Human Rights Watch, "Easy Prey," p. 26.
129. Human Rights Watch, "Liberia: A Human Rights Disaster."
130. Howe, *Ambiguous Order.*
131. Human Rights Watch, "Easy Prey," pp. 22–23.
132. According to Human Rights Watch, "During the Octopus operation in 1992, children were used by NPFL as cannon fodder. They were in the first wave of troops, and the older fighters were behind them." Human Rights Watch, "Easy Prey," p. 25.
133. Ibid., p. 24.
134. UNHCR, "Liberia: What Hope for Peace?"
135. Scott, "Liberia," p. 114.
136. Norwegian Refugee Council, "Profile of Internal Displacement: Liberia," pp. 12–13.

17,500 children were engaged as child soldiers in the seven-year armed conflict, constituting approximately 29 percent of all combatants.[137] Only the presence of ECOMOG soldiers, in a country where child soldiers were readily recruited, had kept the figure down to this (albeit significant) level.

LIBERIA, 1999–2003: NO PLACE TO HIDE

Charles Taylor ruled for three years before the armed faction of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), operating from Guinea, launched attacks on his regime. This conflict lasted until early in 2003, when the rebels were joined by another opposition faction based in the Ivory Coast, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL).[138] A negotiated cease-fire resulted in Taylor's departure from office, and a subsequent deployment of regional and later international peacekeepers brought an end to major hostilities.[139]

In contrast to the 1989–96 conflict, the international community's universal antipathy toward Taylor's human rights record in the aftermath of the 1997 elections, coupled with a belief that his regime was backing armed insurgencies in neighboring countries, resulted in UN Security Council sanctions being tightened on his regime in March 2001. These measures were designed to curb arms trafficking to the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone. Two months later, further sanctions followed, including travel restrictions on senior government officials and a ban on diamond and timber exports.[140]

Distrust of President Taylor was so great that local journalists accused him of manufacturing a humanitarian crisis: "There are growing suspicions . . . that the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe is being stage-managed, in an attempt to force the United Nations to lift the arms embargo and sanctions imposed on

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137. The data were obtained from different organizations and sources. See, for example, Human Rights Watch, "Easy Prey"; UNICEF, "The Progress of Nations, 2000," http://www.unicef.org/pon00/; CSUCS, *Child Soldiers: Global Report, 2001*; UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children, 1996*; and Human Rights Watch, "How to Fight, How to Kill."

138. The literature is unclear as to whether the MODEL split from LURD in early 2003 or whether it was operating as LURD's "integrated force." For instance, in "How to Fight, How to Kill," Human Rights Watch reported that MODEL split from LURD. But Jean-Hervé Jézéquel argues that MODEL joined the LURD in 2003. See Jézéquel, "Liberia: Orchestrated Chaos," in Fabrice Weissman, ed., *In the Shadow of "Just Wars": Violence, Politics, and Humanitarian Action* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004), p. 162. Other sources allowed for both possibilities. See, for example, "Movement for Democracy in Liberia," *GlobalSecurity.org* database, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/model.htm.

139. Human Rights Watch, "How to Fight, How to Kill," p. 8.

140. Norwegian Refugee Council, "Profile of Internal Displacement: Liberia," p. 7.

Liberia. The LURD is also suspected of being in complicity with Taylor in creating a sense of chaos."[141]

This time, the international community refused to send troops to quell the growing disorder. In their absence, IDP protection fell under the jurisdiction of Liberia's ministry of justice, while the government's refugee agency (LRRRC) was supposed to oversee the management of camps and coordination of relief. Both, however, lacked the expertise and resources to discharge their respective functions, suffering from limited technical, financial, and logistical incapacities.[142] The government's inability to protect the people was consistently reported, linked (for example) to the practices of sexual exploitation of girls in refugee and IDP camps.[143] Donor antipathy forced NGOs to scale down their activities and to reduce the level of support they had been providing to IDPs and other vulnerable populations.[144] Meanwhile, a lack of resources and access to the critical locations of the conflict hampered international humanitarian operations.[145] The consequences were predictable for IDP camp inhabitants: "[a] total lack of protection from increasingly widespread human rights abuses carried out not only by Liberian security forces but by LURD combatants as well."[146] "As a result," notes the Norwegian Refugee Council, "growing numbers of IDPs continue[d] to concentrate in camps around Monrovia."[147]

Liberian security forces, furthermore, often denied aid agencies the right to attend the registration of IDPs.[148] By 2002 the Liberian government had restricted aid agencies to the greater Monrovia area, while blocking IDPs from entering the capital, thus denying the agencies any contact with the vast majority of displaced persons. The Norwegian Refugee Council writes, "In the absence of any protection, the plight of these IDPs, and of refugees (mostly those located in camps in Guinea) was a desperate one, with numerous reports of

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141. "ALJA Calls for Lifting of State of Emergency in Liberia," press statement, *Perspective,* February 19, 2002, http://www.theperspective.org/stateofemergency.html.
142. United Nations, "Consolidated Inter-agency Appeal, 2002: Liberia Internet," November 26, 2001, http://www.reliefweb.int/appeals/2002/files/lib02.pdf, cited in ibid., p. 106.
143. Norwegian Refugee Council, "Profile of Internal Displacement: Liberia," p. 78.
144. Ibid., p. 115.
145. Ibid., p. 7.
146. Amnesty International, "Liberian Civilians Face Human Rights Abuses At Home and Across Borders," October 2002, http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/engAFR340202002 ?OpenDocument&of=COUNTRIES\LIBERIA?OpenDocument&of=COUNTRIES\LIBERIA, cited in ibid., p. 60.
147. Norwegian Refugee Council, "Profile of Internal Displacement: Liberia," p. 37.
148. Ibid., p. 47.

substantial raids being carried out against them by both government and rebel forces."[149]

Meanwhile, Liberian authorities attempted to close the country's borders, trapping prospective refugees between the cities and the borders and leaving them exposed to forced recruitment.[150] Although hundreds of thousands of Liberians managed to escape during the conflict, others could not and were trapped between governmental and rebel forces "around a country in ruins."[151] Indeed, British and French intervention in Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast, respectively, "drove the most intractable combatants [from those countries] into Liberia," bringing additional instability and greater insecurity for the displaced population of Liberia.[152] Both IDPs and refugees therefore lived in terror and consistently, though unsuccessfully, moved to avoid raids.[153] UN attempts to encourage self-protection in IDP camps proved no panacea,[154] as "most displaced were crammed into camps that afford[ed] little security or managed to settle in the sordid suburbs of the capital."[155] One report at that

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149. One report noted, "Since the upsurge of fighting in 2000, perhaps the most pressing concern about IDPs from the north of the country has been their total lack of protection from increasingly widespread human rights abuses carried out not only by Liberian security forces but by LURD combatants as well." Ibid., p. 7.

150. Jézéquel, "Liberia," pp. 162–163.

151. Ibid.

152. Ibid.

153. The situation in Gbarpolu County, for example, had deteriorated by December 2001, as fighting forced IDPs in a camp located in Bopolu to move south and northeast. Many sought shelter at Sawmill in Bomi County. But this camp was attacked in January 2002, forcing IDPs to flee again. Likewise, in February 2002, incursions at Klay Junction forced IDPs to move toward Monrovia and Sinje in Grand Cape Mount County. Ibid., p. 25. But armed activities in Cape Mount and Bomi Counties in May 2002 resulted in a high military presence in the Sinje camps, causing panic among both refugees and IDPs living there. Ibid., p. 36. By then, the Sinje camps were home to approximately 11,000 Sierra Leonean refugees and a comparable number of IDPs. Ibid., p. 74. This pattern was repeated elsewhere: fighting in Bong County in April 2002 prompted IDPs to seek refuge near the central town of Gbarnga. Many of them sought refuge from the violence in the four camps established in the county. But the following month, the civilians were forced to flee once again when local fighting broke out and three IDP camps were forced to close. About 75,000 IDPs resided in six IDP camps in Bong County and 7,000 in a camp in Buchanan. During the fighting in June and July, many of these camps and surrounding communities were attacked by both government and rebel forces. The camps were looted, and many of the shelters were burned. Consequently, the majority of IDPs fled these camps. By the year 2002, villages and IDP camps in Lofa and Bong Counties were emptied, as their populations fled to IDP camps closer to Monrovia. Ibid., pp. 7, 25.

154. For details regarding this effort, see Norwegian Refugee Council, "Profile of Internal Displacement: Liberia."

155. Jézéquel, "Liberia," pp. 162–163.

time, furthermore, claimed that "government forces conducted conscription raids within neighborhoods in Monrovia."[156]

The pattern of vulnerability, violence, and conscription was therefore one repeated throughout Liberia and beyond its borders, dating from the early days of the war. Neither in Monrovia nor in rural areas could IDPs or refugees find safety. The LURD's movements and governmental retreat forced the population of villages and IDP camps to flee, either in anticipation of attacks or in response to them.[157]

All factions made the recruitment of children in newly captured territory a central pillar from the outset of the war.[158] According to Human Rights Watch, "Both of the opposition groups as well as government forces which include militias and paramilitary groups widely used children when civil war resumed in 2000. In some cases, the majority of military units were made up primarily of boys and girls under the age of eighteen. Their use and abuse was a deliberate policy on the part of the highest levels of leadership in all three groups."[159] When denied protection in the refugee and IDP camps, many of the children who had fought in the previous conflict were easily rerecruited when fighting resumed in 2000, because "according to participants, forced recruitment has been a standard practice in Liberia's recent history."[160]

The initial stage of the war centered primarily in the gold- and diamond-rich area close to the borders of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea—from where children were recruited.[161] For example, Guinea-based LURD recruited children among Liberians living in refugee camps there.[162] MODEL, operating from a base in the Ivory Coast, recruited children from refugee camps in that country.[163] Taylor's militia groups also included numerous child combatants from the Revolutionary United Front, which he had supported since its inception in 1991.

IDP children were just as vulnerable. Without protection, the forced recruitment of children became relatively easier to implement as the plight of IDPs became increasingly desperate. The massive movement of IDPs described earlier left a large pool of children unaccompanied and unprotected in IDP

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156. Human Rights Watch, "How to Fight, How to Kill," p. 8.
157. Jézéquel, "Liberia," p. 169.
158. Human Rights Watch, "How to Fight, How to Kill," p. 9.
159. Ibid., p. 1.
160. Norwegian Refugee Council, "Profile of Internal Displacement: Liberia," p. 46.
161. Ibid., p. 6.
162. Human Rights Watch, "How to Fight, How to Kill," p. 17.
163. Ibid., p. 17.

camps—and therefore highly vulnerable to recruitment. As one report suggested, "Many families have become separated during their flight from Lofa country and there are large numbers of unaccompanied women and children in IDP camps."[164] Elsewhere it noted, "The virtual collapse of most of the family structures and the limited capacity of families to provide adequate care has exacerbated the situation of children, both in IDP camps and in war-affected communities. . . . SCF [Save the Children Fund] has documented over 6,000 cases of child separation as [a] result of new displacements in Lofa County. . . . At present, there are an estimated 20,000 separated children in Liberia and neighboring countries."[165]

Two former child soldiers attested to witnessing both the government and LURD forces abducting children from two of the largest IDP camps (the Ricks and Wilson Center camps).[166] Plumkor camp was also infamous for forcible child recruitment.[167] This time, however, Monrovia was not spared. Children were regularly taken by government forces in their raids on the IDP camps near Monrovia in 2002 and 2003. As a result, parents learned to keep their children inside when the government forces visited the camp to avoid their being taken away to fight.[168]

Both LURD and MODEL stepped up their recruitment of adults and children as they advanced toward Monrovia and Buchanan in the first half of 2003. Government forces responded by doing the same. All sides looked to large camps for their child recruits. According to a CSUCS report, "By mid-2003, an estimated one in ten of children in the Montserrado camps were being recruited into government forces."[169] Montserrado County had a cluster of five large camps composed of more than 50 percent of the Liberian IDP population of about 100,000.[170] More children became involved as combatants in the attacks on Monrovia between June and August 2003.[171]

We estimate that 21,000 children were soldiers in the Liberian war between 2000 and 2003, constituting 53 percent of all combatants. This represented a 24

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164. Norwegian Refugee Council, "Profile of Internal Displacement: Liberia," p. 43.
165. Ibid., p. 67.
166. Human Rights Watch, "How to Fight, How to Kill," p. 10
167. Ibid., p. 11.
168. Ibid., p. 15.
169. CSUCS, *Child Soldiers Global Report, 2004*, p. 77.
170. The Jartondo camp (17,000 IDPs), Wilson Center camp (25,700 IDPs), and Ricks camp (12,894 IDPs) alone sheltered 25 percent of all Liberian IDPs and 56 percent of all IDPs settled in the region. See Norwegian Refugee Council, "Profile of Internal Displacement: Liberia."
171. Human Rights Watch, "How to Fight, How to Kill," p. 9.

percent increase from the 1989–96 Liberian conflict in terms of the proportion of child soldiers to all belligerents, as well as approximately a 20 percent increase in absolute terms of the total number of children involved in comparison to the previous conflict. In essence, as adults were killed or fled, both sides became more reliant on children—and took advantage of their greater availability in the absence of international or domestic soldiers to protect them.

A SUPERFICIAL COMPARISON

The rates of child soldier involvement in Liberia's two wars are very high by historical standards, at 29 percent and 53 percent respectively. Yet the degree of protection provided to children in the two conflicts varied significantly. In the first war, IDPs had the option of heading for Monrovia and the protection of ECOMOG forces. Although the capacity to protect them became increasingly strained in the final stage of the war, hundreds of thousands of IDP children benefited from their presence for the vast majority of the conflict. Liberians also had the option of fleeing abroad to safer havens. These countries did not destabilize sufficiently to warrant external intervention until after 1999.

No such domestic protection existed during the second war. Nor was fleeing abroad any longer an option, given both border closures and political instability in neighboring Guinea, Sierra Leone, and the Ivory Coast. The international community did not offer refugee assistance in either case. Liberians representing all factions in the conflict clearly had a predilection for the use of children in war. That predilection was unhindered and unmitigated by any opposition, and resulted in an escalation of numbers beyond those of the first conflict. UN efforts to encourage camp self-protection proved a fruitless option for IDPs and refugees who were geographically concentrated, subject to constant terror, unarmed, and largely unfed. This resulted in the increase of child recruits in both absolute and relative terms.

This comparison of two cases thus supports our general argument. The pressure to use child soldiers may have arguably increased in the context of two wars so proximate in time. But it was not the demand for children that was the key factor; it was the supply of children that distinguished the two cases. Children were available in far greater numbers in the second conflict as unprotected IDPs and refugees had nowhere to seek safety.

Conclusion

In recent years, the issue of child soldiers has attracted greater public attention in Europe and the United States as a result of press reports and its linkage to

broader geostrategic concerns. Systematic study of the issue, however, has lagged behind public concern. The available literature has largely been the product of the work of activists rather than academics. The value of scholarly work may therefore be that it contributes to a more systematic formulation of the arguments and a more rigorous comparison of their explanatory power. Doing so in this case has assisted the process of comparative data compilation and suggests an alternative explanation that offers policymakers viable potential options in the short term. Poverty, orphan rates, and global small arms transfers are very hard to influence in the short term. Refugee and IDP camps, however, can be protected in the interim, given the appropriate level of political commitment and material resources. Certainly, if academic and policy work is to benefit by discovering and addressing the issue of the conditions under which child soldiers participate in intrastate conflict, then the efforts of the two must be synthesized.

In this article, we have examined and tested two prevailing explanations for the variance in child soldier participation rates against our own explanation. Poverty in war is often offered as the primary reason for the advent of child soldiers. Our results suggest that although poverty may remain a necessary condition by possibly having a threshold effect, it does not offer an effective causal explanation for child soldier rates. Even the threshold claim is weak, because while richer countries may not use child soldiers in intrastate conflict, child soldiers do not serve in all intrastate conflicts in poor countries.

A large pool of orphans is another factor often discussed as a cause for relatively high child soldier rates. Yet, again, our work suggests that there is a relatively weak relationship between the rates of orphans and the ratios of child soldiers. Orphans may be vulnerable, but this is does not mean that they are inevitably employed by belligerents in war.

In contrast, our evidence suggests a relatively robust relationship between the capacity for access to refugee and IDP camps and the rate of child soldier participants. Presumably, children (whether orphans or not) are not as susceptible if well protected in camps. But large numbers of children congregated together in easily identifiable locations, if left unprotected, make an easy target as recruits for belligerents. Here, there is a potential parallel between the issue of child soldiers and that of food aid; belligerents often steal aid intended for camp refugees. A debate therefore rages about whether force should be used to ensure that food reaches the intended recipients. Likewise, there is seemingly little point in gathering children together in camps if they are not protected from preying governmental and nongovernmental armed groups. Indeed, doing so may further imperil their lives. The implications, at least potentially,

seem evident. As former Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon noted in an interview with the authors of this article, children have now often started to avoid unprotected IDP or refugee camps for fear of being recruited as child soldiers.[172]

African conflicts may differ from other cases, although there is no obvious reason why that would be the case. Other continents have fragile or failed states disrupted by intrastate wars. But Africa has hosted the largest number of conflicts, with the largest volume of child participants, and its central importance therefore cannot be ignored.

Findings for Africa may be generalizeable and therefore provide the basis for further research on the number of positive cases with reportable figures in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Ideally, we would like to expand our database to include these cases and supplement this work with more case studies to further evaluate our core findings. We would, of course, prefer to have better data in which the measure of access is more graduated and sophisticated rather than an ordinal one. In addition, we would like to gather comprehensive, reliable data on refugee protection.[173]

Nonetheless, we conclude this article in the belief that this preliminary work provides helpful insights concerning both the utility of different explanations and the need to protect refugee and IDP camps, while serving as a useful foundation for further research. Our principal finding is that access to these camps (and the level of their protection) is the greatest determinant of child soldier rates, and if those rates are to fall, then children need to be both fed and protected. How to do so effectively therefore becomes a central logistical and military conundrum.

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172. Kenneth Bacon, director of Refugees International, interview with authors, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, September 23, 2004.
173. Our intended research goals include creating a database that contains accurate figures on child soldiers by year (rather than cumulative estimates by conflict); disaggregating child soldiers by different factions as well as obtaining greater details regarding individual attacks; and more data about access to refugee/IDP camps between 1975 and 1995.