

The debate over possible selective involvement of the United Nations Security Council in armed conflicts is currently re-emerging both in the academic discussions and in the sphere of practical politics. This thesis aims at explaining the possible reasoning behind this selectivity – often exemplified by the contrasting participation of the United Nations in the crises of Libya and Syria – through a qualitative case study focusing on African intrastate wars. Two possible factors, influencing the Council’s decision making, are based on classical theories of International Relations – while realism stresses the interests of the five permanent members of the Council, constructivism puts an emphasis on the normative goals of the organization, therefore on the role of the crisis’ severity. The impact of these variables is subsequently assessed within the civil wars in Algeria, Burundi, Djibouti and Guinea-Bissau, with an attempt to depict the relationship between the discussed explanatory factors and the eventual activity of the Security Council.