

Abstract

The current international system with its emphasis on state sovereignty was designed to restrain interference in domestic affairs by other states. However, this notion has been repeatedly challenged throughout the past 70 years by states intervening with military instruments in internal armed conflicts. Possible motives that led states to jeopardize the lives of their soldiers and convinced them to bear the costs of interventions have engendered a rich debate in the studies of International Relations and Peace and Conflict Studies. In this dissertation, two arguments based on the logic of the realist theory of international relations are brought forward to augment our understanding of factors contributing to military interventionism. First, it is shown that economic linkages between states transcend the debate on trade and include the effects of foreign direct investment on their willingness to intervene by force. Corporate investment is shown to significantly raise the willingness of states to intervene when existing FDI is endangered by the dynamics unfolding during internal armed conflicts. Second, great powers are apt to harness other states to alter the conflict dynamics in civil wars. Applying the principal-agent framework in combination with the logic of arms trade allows identifying unequal power relationships between states. The statistical analysis shows that states which are supplied by great powers like the United States and Russia have a higher probability of intervening in a civil war. Two cases studies illuminate the principal-agent relationship by investigating a particular category of proxy interventionism in which an arms recipient intervenes with combat troops in a civil war, whereas the great power only applies indirect military instruments.