THE IMPACT OF FOREIGN INTERVENTIONS ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Edited by

ANA MAGDALENA FIGUEROA

The Impact of Foreign Interventions on Democracy and Human Rights

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EDITED BY

ANA MAGDALENA FIGUEROA

Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning in São Paulo, Brazil

United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

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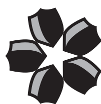

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List of Acronyms

AL	Arab League
ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel–Saharan States
FSI	Fragile States Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNA	Government of National Accord
LNA	Libyan National Army
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NFZ	No-Fly Zone
NTC	National Transitional Council
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PM	Prime Minister
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SADR	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
SC	Security Council
SCR	Security Council Resolution
UE	European Union
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
WMD	Weapon of Mass Destruction

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About the Authors

Bitouloulou Christopher Jivot, Congolese from Congo-Brazzaville, is a PhD student in Public, Comparative and International Law at La Sapienza University in Rome, where he also holds a degree in Political Science and International Relations. He holds a double Master's degree in International Relations, Development and International Cooperation from the Uninorte University of Barranquilla (Colombia) and La Sapienza University of Rome (Italy). He is currently the sub-Saharan Africa director of the journal *Ilgeopolitico.org* and author of various publications and articles in scientific journals. His current research interests include constitutional renewal in French-speaking Black Africa (focusing on the development of phase two of African constitutionalism in the French-speaking area, including the design of an adequate, consensual and peaceful political regime; after the first phase in the early 1990s); political regimes; the parliamentary system; African state theory and, more generally, democratic processes on the continent. Finally, he also focuses on political and constitutional developments in Colombia, Latin America and the Caribbean. In this book, he is the author of Chapter 5: 'France-Africa: Is the Region Lagging in Political Instability and Democratic Aspiration? Assessment after 60 Years of Independence of the French-Speaking Central African States (1960–2020)'.

George M. Bob-Milliar is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History and Political Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, one of the most prestigious public universities in Ghana. He joined the faculty of KNUST in August 2013 and has been involved in research, teaching and mentoring of students at all levels. He is currently serving as the Director of KNUST's Centre for Cultural and African Studies (CeCASt). In 2012, Bob-Milliar received his PhD from the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, the oldest centre for African Studies on the continent. Trained as an interdisciplinary scholar, his research lies at the intersection of history, political science and development studies. He has published in the preeminent journals in his field of specialization. Bob-Milliar has been a visiting fellow at the University of Cambridge, Uganda's Makerere University and the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), as well as a guest lecturer at the Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany, and the University of San Francisco, USA. In 2010, he received the inaugural African Author Prize for the best article published in *African Affairs* by an author based at an African institution, and in 2012 he was awarded a

prize for his contribution to research on African policy issues from the Centre for International Governance Innovation, Canada.

Issau Camacoza is currently the Director of *ilgeopolitico*, an international relations review website, and a Member and Researcher of Centro de Estudos Africanos da Universidade do Porto (Center for African Studies, UP). He holds a PhD in History of International Relations from La Sapienza University of Rome. His interests include theory and methodology of international relations, political science, academia, democratic transitions in Africa, international organizations and diplomacy. He has authored a number of books and articles on those issues. In this book, he authored the Chapter 3, 'Libya: When Foreign Intervention Turns a Stable Nation Into a Failed State'. For more info, please visit https://www.issauagostinho.com/.

Ana Figueroa is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning in São Paulo, Brazil. She received her PhD in International Relations at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, in 2018 and Master's degree in Political Science and International Relations at Chosun University, South Korea. She is an Editor in *Politikon* magazine, International Political Science Students Association, the Director of the Geopolitical Area of North America in *Il Geopolitico* magazine and a Congresswoman at the Legislative Assembly of El Salvador, 2021–2024.

Ndikubwimana Jean-Baptiste (https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5210-5424) is a PhD student of Human Rights at the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Nairobi. He is also an Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Rwanda. He has an MA in Human Rights and Conflict Resolution as well as an MA in development Studies. He served as the Head of the Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Rwanda, and the Secretary of the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA)-Rwanda Chapter. His area of research focuses on human rights and intervention, minority rights, development, governance and peace studies. He published two book chapters (a) 'techniques of Sampling' in African Minds Publishers. and (b) VUP in Rwanda in OSSREA publishers. In this book, he authored chapter two *'Interventionism in Africa: Clandestine Networks and Proxy Wars in DRC and Exploitation of Resources'*.

Marketa Jerabek is currently a Research Fellow at the Research Group in International Politics and Economics at the University of Sao Paulo. She holds a joint PhD in International Relations from the University of Sao Paulo and King's College London, an MSc in International Relations and a BA in Political Economics from Universität Luzern. Her research interests are quantitative applied social sciences, globalization, democracy and international political economy.

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Prologue

Since the 1970s, the fields of Human Rights, Development and Democracy have been challenged by the increasing presence of transnational non-state actors and the activity of powerful states beyond their own borders.

This debate cannot be understood without revisiting the past. The first major efforts to construct and popularize a universalist framing of human rights, dating back to the French Revolution, paved the way for colonial and imperial justifications for intervening in foreign states. Liberalist Internationalism, as it was later known, was the doctrine that saw it as a responsibility to encourage and impose liberal policies in foreign states. The goal was a world order that promoted peace, individual rights and the rule of law, achieved through domestic policies of free trade and liberal economic and political practices.

The reality could not have been further from this image. As recent scholarship has shown, the consequences of these supposedly well-intentioned interventions were often devastating. Mike Davis' *Late Victorian Holocausts* demonstrates with undeniable clarity the relationship between the classic liberal-utilitarian policies of the British Raj and the starvation of millions of Indians. It was the intervention of Lord Lytton, Viceroy of India, who tackled the Madras Famine of 1876–1878 and declared that reducing the price of grain and granting relief to starving peasants would create bad habits that threatened liberal values. The better option, delegated to Sir Richard Temple, was to force starving populations to travel vast distances only to work and die in labour camps. Liberal trade and its infrastructure raised the price of much-needed staples for locals and dictated the price of the grain that was being transported away via British railway systems, making them dangerously vulnerable to global market fluctuations.

This kind of interventionism gave way under the contradictions of Western Europe's scramble to salvage something of its former prestige – and budgetary efficiency – following WWII. The Allied victory had been won in the name of freedom, sovereignty and self-determination, leaving many of the colonial-African soldiers who had fought on their side wondering when they would get their own. For around two decades following the end of WWII, multiple former colonies declared independence, while global and regional bodies institutionalized the concept of non-intervention as a pillar of global shared values. Reflecting these debates, in late 1965, the United Nations General Assembly published The UN Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States, condemning any form of intervention, be it direct or subversive, military or economic, in the internal and external affairs of any State.

Despite these advances, the same period saw a rise in interventions that were arguably both economic and subversive. Guided by a political anti-communism that served the rising global power of the United States and the anti-capitalism of its contender, the Soviet Union, this kind of interventionism involved the financing, military training and armament of rebel groups and authoritarian regimes of the Global South. Particularly severe situations, like the US involvement in Vietnam or Latin America, triggered a global solidarity movement that increasingly wielded the language of human rights and democracy to fight back against claims that intervention was necessary to protect them. Both concepts were scrutinized and expanded in scope to defend countries' right to shape their own developmental trajectories. By the late 1970s, US foreign policy had turned its back on the Southern Cone Latin American military regimes that they themselves had helped to install; declassified documents have in recent decades evidenced how the covert training and financing of military intelligence and operations contributed to the systematic torture, rape and disappearance of tens of thousands of citizens across the region.

The 1990s saw a new iteration of Liberal Internationalism, most clearly through the revitalized mandate of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Here, the question was humanitarianism, through which military intervention and assistance has been used to defend against major potential and ongoing human rights violations. Underlying all of this was the argument that the failure to protect, i.e. non-interventionism, could in some cases be a greater threat to humanity than any intervention itself.

As countries of the Global North now face their own social, political and economic turmoil in the long recovery from COVID-19, funding for humanitarian assistance is falling. In its place, the pressing matters of vaccine equality, climate change and resource scarcity. At the time of writing, the 2021 G7 Summit has only recently taken place in my home country of England and has committed to collectively donating 870 million vaccines by the end of 2021. And yet, damaging international patenting laws and persistent economic sanctions on particular states continue to limit their ability to cope with the pandemic. Cuba, a country that continues to contend with a range of sanctions from the United States, is meanwhile attempting to develop vaccines that will be sold affordably to the world's most impoverished nations.

We sit today at the intersection of military, economic, social, political and humanitarian (non)interventionisms, and as academics must navigate the complex relationships between the motivations, justifications, forms and consequences they entail.

It is both fascinating and encouraging that the social and political sciences are able to evaluate these processes in such clear terms. In the field of history, human rights and solidarity activists of the mid-twentieth century are too easily dismissed as voices of ideology and conspiracy. For them, the fact that economic or humanitarian intervention could be bad for human rights and democracy would be laughably obvious.

This collection of works places scientific evidence and evaluation at the centre of the debate. Access to a much broader and more transparent range of empirical

resources means it is no longer necessary to rely on state officials' claims as to the motivations for intervention. While discourse will often suggest, in line with current-day normative doctrines, humanitarian and security-based motivations, there is no question that these are interwoven with the underlying strategic and economic interests of intervening nations.

Claims to the superiority of Western, liberal, democracy are no longer at the forefront of justifications for intervention. Rather, it has been human rights. Built on the notion that non-intervention can sometimes be worse than intervention, the concept of the responsibility to protect (R2P) has deemed military-humanitarian interventions to be necessary in situations where genocide, ethnic cleansing and other war crimes become a threat. Often, such interventions seek the approval of the UN and the agreement of local governments, who might not have the resources for addressing the issue themselves. Yet this is dangerously subjective. The decision to intervene in such instances requires a moral judgement to nominate the legitimate state and the offending rebel group, which can often become embroiled in the economic or resource-based interests of the intervening nation. A prime example here would be Russia's military interventions in Syria: while legitimizing its actions with the invitation of the Syrian government and the principles of R2P regarding Syrian sovereignty, the country is adamant that intervention by other powers on the grounds of human rights protection would threaten the principles of non-intervention.

The multiple ways in which intervention can be administered is just as problematic. Today, institutionalized norms mean that overt and direct military interventions rarely take place on the part of individual major powers. Rather, they are carried out through regional organizations such as NATO or the EU, but also other ad-hoc coalitions between countries with shared interests. Indirectly, intervention can also take place through economic means, such as sanctions, blockades or embargoes, as well as diplomatic persuasion and encouragement. The more sinister use of subversive intervention is even harder to capture. Florian Zollman's *Media, Propaganda and the Politics of Intervention* provides a solid and convincing attempt, demonstrating how Western powers tend to apply one ethical standard of reporting for their friends, and another for their enemies, with clear intentions to legitimize and justify military interventions.

We might also include humanitarian aid and assistance as intervention, which, alongside conditional financing from states, foreign actors and global organizations, indirectly interfere in the domestic affairs of a nation by controlling the way in which a country or domestic group manages its economic activities. Contested to this day, for example, is the role that a series of IMF loans to Latin America imposed Washington Consensus ideals at the cost of social and economic developmental equality.

The problem becomes even more nebulous in the transnationalised, digital age in which new players enter the scene. It is clear that we must consider and re-evaluate the definition of foreign interventionism in light of the rising economic might of states such as China.

Similarly, do we consider the actions of those major transnational companies, who, through lobbying and bribery can sway a country's developmental

trajectory? Often already disadvantaged, countries like Bangladesh have relaxed labour laws, trade restrictions and taxation policies in ways that benefit foreign companies and endanger the human rights of their own citizens. The Rana Plaza incident of 2013 springs to mind. And what of the SCL Group, who claims to have successfully influenced Indonesia's 1999 election and promoted peaceful, democratic values in the process?

None of the above is to say that there have never been any positive outcomes of foreign intervention, only that they are frustratingly hard to come by. What this volume demonstrates is that the human rights and democracy-based implications of foreign intervention rest heavily on the combination of intentions and mode of delivery; at best, sadly, findings seem to propose that it is rarely a question of whether or not intervention has been detrimental, but *how* detrimental.

This volume is a testament to the merit of transdisciplinarity. It examines the relationship between intervention, human rights and democracy through five distinct perspectives. Chapter 1 takes on the highly impressive task of measuring the short- and long-term impacts of direct military intervention on a range of measures of democracy from 1970 to 2005. Furthermore, the chapter's methodological framework differentiates four major motivations for intervention: security interests, economic and resource interests, strategic interests and humanitarian protection.

Taking a closer look at a single case study, Chapter 2 tackles interventionism in the context of post–Cold War globalization. More specifically, it addresses the commonly overlooked – and perhaps intimidating – question of 'interventions which link informal shadow elites, multinational companies, [and] private military companies in collaboration with official states to exploit natural resources'. The case study is the Democratic Republic of Congo, which allows for a close examination of the particular methods of interventionism that have arisen since the 1990s and allowed intervening countries to incite conflict and systematically exploit natural resources under the banner of humanitarian intervention.

Another case study finds that as well as the exploitation of natural resources, interventionism in the name of human rights and democracy can also significantly destabilize a country. Chapter 3 looks at Libya. Today the recipient of an internationally supported political stabilization plan, this is a country that is still hoping to see the back of the harmful effects of interventions. In 2011 began an eight-month NATO-led mission that left the country in shatters; the chapter demonstrates how basic security, government services, national income and budget deficits worsened, as the country became more violent, fractionalized and less democratic.

Taking a longer historical period into consideration, Chapter 4 provides a comparative analysis between the democratic transitions of West and Central French-African countries. Recognizing their shared experiences of French colonialism and persistent post-independence 'umbilical cords', the author asks whether any of these countries gained anything from the promise of democracy. The answer is sadly no. The colonial interventionism that lasted until, in most cases, the early 1960s established a system of centralized, predatory power. The

decades that followed independence did little besides replace that form of rule with a native leader. It was not until the 1990s that France declared it would no longer support relations with Africa's non-democratic nations. Thus while interventionism called for the systems that it had worked so hard to install and maintain to be removed, three decades have demonstrated that little has changed for the state of human rights and democracy in these regions.

Chapter 5 brings the volume to a close and looks ahead by questioning the delivery methods of interventionism, shining light in particular on the forms of intervention stemming from a relatively new player, China. Comparing the longer-standing trend of US military interventions in Latin America with the more recent 'soft power' economic and business interventions of China, the chapter examines consequences for multiple variables of democratic institutions through the case studies of Nicaragua, Cuba and Brazil. While economic intervention carried out through trade and markets has some adverse effects on democracy, these are not as adverse as those carried out through military means.

All of this brings us back to the fundamental questions of this volume: How do we identify and define the most subversive forms of intervention? How do we conceptualize foreign intervention in a day and age in which non-state actors play such an extensive role in transnational affairs? How, methodologically, do we fully capture and evaluate the short- and long-term consequences of foreign intervention? Can foreign intervention still be considered a sensible mechanism for promoting human rights? And, what happens when what it leaves behind is worse than what it found?

Dr Anna Isabella Grimaldi
King's College London

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Introduction

The 1990s ushered in the 'third wave of democratisation' (Huntington 1991), where authoritarian regimes had to re-structure their political system to embrace a much more liberal, inclusive and participatory politicking. The checks on the government machinery and inclusiveness were what will prevent tyranny, guarantee human rights and bring about development. While the dominant theory in the literature cites the fall of the Soviet Union as the reason for this wave, the importance of the domestic factors, emphasis on calls and protests of the indigenous citizens themselves for democracy cannot be under-emphasized.

But the transition to democracy was not enough, as the need for institutionalization became the burden of many African states (Gazibo 2019). Foreign interventions in African states have then been meant to supplement domestic efforts in consolidating democracy. At best, democracy is the only system of government the human rights of citizens can be guaranteed (Peksen 2012). Thus, foreign influence on the continent has been justified from the perspective that it is needed to ensure the smooth running of democratic systems so citizens' human rights and freedoms will be protected (Gegout 2017).

Foreign interventions typically take political, economic and military forms. It ranges from economic sanctions and embargoes to deploying military troops to even the empowerment of civil service organizations that monitor political conditions and help increase citizen awareness. As many commentators (e.g. Gegout 2017; Schmidt 2013) have noted, the need for foreign interventions is premised on two broad reasons: a response to instability stemming out of the responsibility to protect and the war on terrorism.

It is understandable for foreign powers to be concerned about terrorism because of its global repercussions, especially after the September 11 attack on the United States. France's justification for intervening in Mali is that they are there to halt the advancing terrorist groups and support the Malian government to re-take northern Mali. Together with their interventions in Chad from a positive outlook, this move projects a strong counterterrorism policy. Still, critics have raised concerns about how France, like other international blocks, continuously empower authoritarian rulers in these countries and shield them from the global pressures to push for further democratic ideals. Their interventions then become counter-productive to the democracy, subsequentially leading to its continuous retrogression.

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In Africa, foreign interventions have been justified on the premise of fighting instability and correcting retrogressing democracies. So, these interventions are generally deployed to supplement and boost the political and military capacity of the recipient state to fight off rebels and maintain state monopoly over its jurisdiction. The problem here is how such interventions do not seek to address the root causes of such instability but tries to mitigate the excesses of it. Thus, we see the continuous dependency on external support to maintain stability and how these states plunge into chaos after this support ceases. For example, the internal conflicts that gripped Cote D′ Ivoire in 2002 necessitated French support to help mitigate it when the mission from the ECOWAS stalled. A year later, when they had achieved considerable stability, France decided to pull out their troops. As a result, the country fell back into chaos, which explains the continuous French presence in the country.

Another dimension of supplementary foreign intervention is how the tool of repression used by recipient states to maintain stability often escalates into serious human right abuses in the name of suppressing anti-government insurgencies and eliminating opposition. The embittered factions, out of the need for survival, then strategize and hit back stronger. Democracy goes into the mud here, and most often than not, the civilian population becomes collateral damage and experiences gross human right abuses, including rape, recruitment of child soldiers and deaths. After the decade of prolonged instability in Liberia, the evidence from the United Nations proved that peacekeepers in conjunction with local forces also committed abuses against civilians or suspected rebels on occasion. After the ECOWAS oversaw the highly flawed elections that brought Charles Taylor to office as Head of State in 1997, the peacekeepers also provided economic and arms support to factions opposed to Charles Taylor, thereby contributing to the proliferation of rebel groups.

Away from the arguments on instability, the responsibility to protect begs the question of who or what they want to save; do they seek to defend indigenous citizens or they instead seek to protect their parochial interests in these weaker states? In the classic example of Libya, NATO agreed to intervene because of allegations against the repressive nature of Gaddafi's regime. This was done in the light to protect the human rights of Libyans and restore democratic order. But we cannot play ignorant to the ulterior interests of such interventions. While countries like France, the United States and Italy were interested in Libya's oil resources, Turkey, a regional player, was also interested in the maritime trade routes. So, amidst the chaotic competing interests in Libya, a vast political vacuum has been created. About a decade after the intervention, Libya is nowhere near a stable democracy. Neither is the human rights of its citizens guaranteed.

To conclude, there is a mixed assessment of the impact of foreign interventions on democracy. In some parts of Africa (Ghana, for instance), these interventions have kept the government on its toes and promoted democracy and human rights. But these interventions worked primarily because the locals had internalized

democratic ideals and have provided enough domestic support. It is safe to say at this point that in countries where authoritarianism has been rampant, democracy and human rights did not change for the better even amidst foreign intervention.

Dr George M. Bob-Milliar
Department of History & Political Studies
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
PMB, UP KNUST, Kumasi-Ghana

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Chapter 1

Evaluating the Record of Different Military Interventions on Democracy – A Short- and Long-Term Analysis

*Marketa Jerabek**

Abstract

This chapter falls into line with the study about the possible incentives of interventions and their impact on democratic institutions to emphasize the need to differentiate between different military interventions and their effects on democratic institutions in the target states. The chapter theoretically builds on the Selectorate Theory (Mesquita et al. 2003) and also dialogues with liberal (Hoffmann 1997) and realist perspectives (Choi 2016) on foreign policy related to the liberal world order, human rights, economic and security interests.

Keywords: Military interventions; democracy; incentives; democratic institutions; target states; selectorate

1.1 Introduction

Major wars are becoming uncommon (Pickering and Kisangani 2009), and the efficacy of economic sanctions, mainly applied in the 1990s, is questioned given their consequences on vulnerable groups as, for example, in Iraq, Yugoslavia and Haiti (Weiss 1999). These developments gave way to an increase in foreign military interventions in international politics (Pickering and Kisangani 2009).

*Dr Marketa Jerabek holds a joint PhD in International Relations from King's College London (KCL) and the University of Sao Paulo (USP). Her research interests are globalization, democracy, human rights, international political economy and comparative political economy. She is a research fellow in the international economics and politics group at IRI (International Relations Institute)-USP, contact: marketa.jerabek@gmail.com

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Foreign military interventions can have different characteristics and possible motivations. They may be directed to protect socio-ethnic factions or minorities of the target country, pursue rebels or terrorist forces across borders, protect economic or resource interests, ensure change in terms of regional power balances, stability or ideological issues, relieve suffering and save lives, obtain territory or delineation of frontiers or protect its own military and diplomatic interests (Pearson and Baumann 1993). The different purposes are not exclusive, given that an intervening country or countries in multilateral interventions may pursue different objectives at the same time when deciding to intervene, as it is the case in Iraq or the Democratic Republic of Congo, where a social protective intervention comes along with the pursuit of terrorists, protection of economic or resource interests, and with a strategic and humanitarian intervention (based on the dataset by Pickering and Kisangani (2009) and Pearson and Baumann (1993)).

Given the increased role of foreign military interventions in international politics, there is a need to understand their economic, social and political effects in the target countries. Most of the systematic and quantitative research in this regard focused on the record of United States superpower military interventions (Easterly, Satyanath, and Berger 2008; Hermann and Kegley 1998; Meernik 1996) or on the question if it matters whether a democratic or non-democratic country intervenes in the target state (Bueno de Mesquita and Downs 2006). The question about possible differences in the effects of military interventions by the political regime of the intervener country has been developed by Bueno de Mesquita and Downs (2006) who argue that intervener countries, whether democratic or authoritarian, have little interest in promoting democracy in the target country because autocratic leaders will be more willing to agree to implement policies of interests by the intervener country. Democratic leaders are accountable to their domestic constituencies, and the policy priorities of the citizens in the target state are rarely identical which is why democratic intervening countries may not be interested in establishing democratic institutions or enhancing existing democratic institutions in the target state. This argument is confirmed by Easterly, Satyanath, and Berger (2008) who empirically tested whether United States and Soviet Union interventions during the Cold War generated statistically significant different outcomes in terms of the level of democracy in the target states.

The authors conclude that both the United States and Soviet Union interventions had equally detrimental effects on subsequent democratic outcomes. A similar conclusion is provided by Peksen (2012) that the involvement of intergovernmental organizations or a liberal democracy in a foreign military intervention is unlikely to make a big difference when it comes to the intervention's effect on human rights. Neutral and supportive interventions generally increase the likelihood of extrajudicial killing, disappearances, torture or political imprisonment. Furthermore, the issue of endogeneity, the reciprocal causation, is often not tackled methodologically. The argument about reverse causality arises since target states of interventions are characterized by lower qualities of democratic institutions and human rights abuses, which may be the one of the causes for foreign military intervention. Additionally, many target states experience different political and socio-economic instabilities that may provoke foreign military interference (Peksen 2012).

An additional shortcoming in the literature on foreign military interventions is the lack of differentiation between different possible motivations towards external military interferences as suggested initially in this chapter, as the objectives of military interventions may differ and, therefore, lead to different outcomes when it comes to democratic institutions or human rights. In this regard, there is a need for cautious and serious analysis to avoid incomplete and simplistic conclusions (Bove, Gleditsch, and Sekeris 2016). On the (partial) motivation to engage in military interventions in countries with ongoing civil wars, Bove, Gleditsch, and Sekeris (2016) developed a formal model on the relationship of potential third-party interveners to the conflict country including variation in their costs of conflict and benefits of intervention.

They show theoretically and empirically that supply and demand in terms of oil and economic factors tend to raise the incentives for external military involvement. Thus, their article sheds some light on economic and strategic conditions that influence the likelihood of third-party interventions. Another empirical research focused on the motivations for military interventions is elaborated by Choi and James (2016) who analyzed 164 countries for the years 1981–2005. The authors provide robust evidence that the United States is likely to engage in military interferences in target states for humanitarian reasons with a focus on human rights protection, then for its own security interests such as the promotion of democracy or terrorism.

This chapter falls into line with the study about the possible incentives of interventions and their impact on democratic institutions to emphasize the need to differentiate between different military interventions and their effects on democratic institutions in the target states. The chapter theoretically builds on the Selectorate Theory (Mesquita et al. 2003) and also dialogues with liberal (Hoffmann 1997) and realist perspectives (Choi 2016) on foreign policy related to the liberal world order, human rights, economic and security interests. Claims about the motivations and incentives for a military involvement abroad should be based on serious data and methodological rigor, and one should avoid simplifying circumstances (Bove, Gleditsch, and Sekeris 2016). Additionally, the incentives for a military intervention may be diverse and may depend on various factors. But given the immense consequences of interventions on citizens and governments, incentives in interventions should be given more scholarly attention as discussed in Bueno de Mesquita and Downs (2006) in terms of the Selectorate Theory about political survival (Mesquita et al. 2003).

The main objective of this chapter is to empirically test whether different military interventions have similar effects on the level of democracy or whether the type of foreign military intervention is irrelevant when it comes to their record on the level of democracy. Moreover, I look at immediate effects as well as the effects after 5 years. Given that foreign military interventions are rare events, I include all countries in the dataset that experienced military intervention(s) or not. The number sums up to 146 countries, and the timeframe of analysis is 1970–2005. The potential interests or motives for military interventions analyzed in the present study are: (1) pursuit of rebels or terrorists (security interests), (2) economic and resource interests, (3) strategic interests and (4) humanitarian protection. To enable more systematic analyses by using quantitative methods of analysis on the effects of foreign military interventions, Pickering and Kisangani (2009) updated the dataset

on international military interventions around the globe developed by Pearson and Baumann (1993) from which the relevant data are extracted for the analysis. The results suggest that possible motivations for military interventions matter for the effect on democracy. Economic interests seem to have robust negative effects on democracy in the short and long run, and humanitarian interests have robust positive effects on democracy, in the short and long run. Strategic interests tend to produce positive results, especially in the short run, while the record is more ambiguous in the long run. Military interventions motivated by security interests likewise indicate rather cloudy records regarding democracy.

1.2 Theoretical Considerations and Hypotheses

Military interventions are defined as the movement of regular troops or forces of the intervening country into the territory of a target state, or forceful military actions with already stationed troops. Random of accidental border violations or the involvement of colonial powers in their colonies are not part of the definition of military interventions (Pearson and Baumann 1993). For more detailed information, see Pearson and Baumann (1993).

The most comprehensive analytical framework on interventions and its capability to facilitate the process of democratization is provided in Bueno de Mesquita and Downs (2006). Nevertheless, the deeper understanding of the effects of interventions has still potential for advancement. Based on Mesquita et al.'s (2003) Selectorate Theory, the institutional context in which a political leader operates plays a major role in the determination of policy choices. Agents, both in autocratic and democratic regimes, that are involved in foreign policies, in this case in interventions, are interested in the maximization of their political survival in their domestic constituencies. While in democracies leaders focus on interventions that are tied to the provision of public goods, leaders in authoritarian regimes are more likely to concentrate on the acquisition of resources that can be converted in private goods. Although the selectorate of the target country is not part of the intervener country's selectorate, the agents of the intervener country have an interest in gaining some benefits from the intervention in order to satisfy their domestic selectorates, since reelection depends on delivering policy benefits to core domestic constituents. While democracies generally have a large selectorate and a large winning coalition, autocracies or less democratic regimes have a smaller selectorate and smaller winning coalitions than do democracies. The commonality of both political regimes is, however, that in both cases, the political leaders have to satisfy their domestic selectors. The main question that arises from this is whether the creation of a democracy in another country will increase the chances of the domestic leaders to be reelected or satisfy the selectors in general. Although the domestic selectorate may be in favor of the establishment or the improvement of democratic institutions abroad and give the domestic leaders credit for that (Bueno de Mesquita and Downs 2006), the main interest of the domestic selectorate is to see a direct positive effect in their domestic constituencies. Thus, even in democratic intervening countries, most of the government's foreign strategy will have an instrumental character. This means that the main issues that the domestic leaders will focus on are security, trade and access to resources (Bueno de Mesquita and Downs 2006).