Oda Bjørge Bringa

Just Interventions? Conflict Severity and the Level of Agreement in Parliamentary Deployment Votes

A Quantitative Study from 1990-2019

Master's thesis in Political Science
Supervisor: Elisabeth Lio Rosvold
June 2023

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Abstract

Since the end of the Cold War, both the number of military interventions by Western democracies and the number of parliamentary deployment votes have increased. Deployment decisions are some of the most important decisions a democracy can make in peace time, as it puts their own citizens at risk and the consequences both for the intervening and the targeted state might be dire. This thesis looks at the connection between conflict severity and the level of agreement in troop deployments in different national parliaments, to examine whether there is a relationship between a higher number of battle-related deaths and a higher degree of agreement in such decisions. I draw my assumptions from the just war-theory, which is the foundation for many of the Western moral and legal considerations in war and interventions. The hypothesis is that the more deadly a conflict is, the easier it is to build a consensus about troop deployment. This is based on the evolving norms about the importance of preventing severe human rights violations and the moral obligation to protect civilians in other states. In other words, this thesis explores the justification of intervention in light of assumptions that should mean that the traditional principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention can be set aside if the situation makes it necessary.

The research question is approached by combining the Parliamentary Deployment Votes Database and the Battle-related Deaths dataset from UCDP, a combination that does not seem to have been done before. However, the models based on this dataset show no support to the hypothesis that higher numbers of battle-related deaths lead to more agreement in parliamentary deployment decisions. Instead, they show a statistically significant negative effect of battle-related deaths on the level of agreement, which might imply that such decisions are more contested than the less deadly ones. Different reasons for this result are discussed, like how these conflicts can involve a higher risk and therefore more difficult decisions, that the number of battle-related deaths might not be related to the perception of the actual conflict severity, that other interests in fact matter more than humanitarian concerns or that the model needs improvement. This thesis expands on both intervention literature, conflict literature and contributes to the growing literature on parliamentary war powers and different possibilities for further research on this topic are suggested.

Sammendrag

Siden slutten av den kalde krigen har både antall militære intervensjoner utført av vestlige demokratier, samt antallet parlamentariske beslutninger om å sende styrker ut av landet økt. Beslutninger om å sende styrker utenfor egne grenser er noen av de mest alvorlige avgjørelsene demokratier kan foreta seg i fredstid, siden det setter livene til egne borgere i fare og det kan ha alvorlige konsekvenser for både den intervenerende staten og konfliktstaten. Denne masteroppgaven undersøker forholdet mellom alvorlighetsgraden i konflikt og graden av enighet i beslutninger om å sende styrker ut av landet i ulike nasjonale parlamenter, for å se om det er en sammenheng mellom et høyere antall kamprelaterte dødsfall og en høyere grad av parlamentarisk enighet i slike beslutninger. Jeg baserer mine antakelser på rettferdig krig-teorien, som er grunnlaget for mye av den vestlige moralske og juridiske tankegangen om krig og intervensjoner. Min hypotese er at jo mer dødelig en konflikt er, jo enklere er det å bygge konsensus om å sende styrker ut av landet. Dette baseres på utviklingen av normer om viktigheten av å forhindre grove brudd på menneskerettighetene og en moralsk plikt til å beskytte sivile i andre land. Med andre ord undersøker denne oppgaven rettferdiggjørelsen for intervensjon sett i lys av antakelser som tilsier at prinsippene om statssuverenitet og ikke-intervensjon kan tilsidesettes dersom situasjonen nødvendiggjør det.

Forskningsspørsmålet besvares ved å kombinere The Parliamentary Deployment Votes Database og UCDPs Battle-related Deaths-datasett, en kombinasjon som ikke ser ut til å ha vært gjort tidligere. Modellene basert på dette datasettet viser imidlertid ingen støtte til hypotesen om at høyere antall kamprelaterte dødsfall fører til høyere grad av enighet i beslutninger om å bruke styrker utenlands. Tvert imot viser modellene en statistisk signifikant negativ effekt av antall kamp-relaterte dødsfall på graden av enighet, noe som kan tilsi at det er større uenighet i slike beslutninger enn ved mindre dødelige konflikter. Ulike årsaker til resultatet blir diskutert, som at mer alvorlige konflikter kan bety en høyere risiko og dermed beslutninger som er vanskeligere å fatte, at antallet kamprelaterte dødsfall ikke nødvendigvis henger sammen med oppfatningen av hvor alvorlig konflikten faktisk er, at andre interesser veier tyngre enn humanitære vurderinger eller at modellen bør forbedres. Denne oppgaven kan både bidra til intervensjonslitteraturen, konfliktlitteraturen og til den voksende litteraturen om parlamentarisk krigsmakt, og den åpner flere muligheter for videre forskning.

Acknowledgements

This thesis marks the end of many years of study for me. It also marks the end of two fantastic years in Trondheim. It is strange to think about how much has changed from when I arrived here in the autumn of 2021 and until now. Even though it has been challenging at times, it has also been very rewarding and a lot of fun!

First and foremost, I want to thank my supervisor, Elisabeth Lio Rosvold, for invaluable help and support to shape my interests into a finished product. I have really appreciated this opportunity to discuss with and learn from you!

I also want to thank my family and friends for the encouragement and support I needed to get through this semester and this degree. Especially my brother Aslak, who has been a great roommate and provided me with a lot of laughter and entertainment, and my mother, who is always ready to help and listen.

A huge thanks to Pausegjengen at Dragvoll as well, for all the good times both at and outside of school. Such a fantastic and social group is not something to take for granted! And an extra thank you to my new, but very dear friend Patrick Schjølberg, for always being there to cheer me on, academically as well as socially.

I also want to extend my gratitude to Micheline Egge Grung and Nadim Khoury, my former lecturers from Høgskolen i Innlandet. Thank you for believing in me and for giving me such interesting and inspiring opportunities after my graduation there.

This has been a great period of my life, and even though I am sad to say goodbye to Dragvoll, I am looking forward to seeing what comes next!

Needless to say, all mistakes and shortcomings of this thesis are my own.

Oda Bjørge Bringa
Trondheim, June 2023

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1. Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, Western democracies have been involved in many conflicts abroad (Peters & Wagner, 2011). The unipolar moment that started in the 1990s meant that the US and its allies to an increasing degree would get involved abroad in international operations, and with international law on their side. The practice of the doctrines of "humanitarian interventions" and the "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) evolved, and so did the more explicit justification of sending troops abroad to other countries where conflicts or authoritarian regimes threaten the civil population. There has been a change in the norms concerning the right and duty of the international community to prevent and stop mass atrocity crimes and human rights violations, contradicting the traditional principles of state sovereignty and non-interference (Finnemore, 2004, p. 20, 79). This development has both been applauded and criticized. For some, this is a step forward on the path to a better world, where every citizen is safe from harm and threat. For others, this kind of involvement abroad is just another way of pushing Western values and views of liberalism and democracy on other parts of the world or pursuing their own agenda and interests by using humanitarian concerns as an excuse.

The developing interventionism in the 1990s and 2000s raises questions about the decision-making behind the deployment of military forces (Østerud, 2021, p. 187). These decisions are not only internationally contested, but on the national level in the contributing countries as well. In addition to raising questions about the national distribution of power between the executive and legislative branches of government, there is often contestation about the involvement in each conflict itself. There is also an ongoing debate surrounding the effects and effectiveness of interventions, and whether they actually can make a positive difference.

In most democratic countries, parliamentary organs control the military budget, as well as the extent and organization of the defense. However, the degree of parliamentary control over the decisions to use the military varies a lot (Østerud, 2021, p. 187). In some countries, the decision to deploy troops is a prerogative of the executive, and the parliament is not involved in any way. In other countries, there is some kind of democratic control over these decisions, which constrains the executive branch. Such constraints are called parliamentary war powers. These parliamentary powers can vary from informal practices to formal rules, and the differences in parliamentary power between democracies have been found to be caused by the extent of external threats, the constitutional tradition and whether the country previously has experienced military defeat (Peters & Wagner, 2014). As the number of deployments abroad has increased from the end of the Cold War, so has the focus in the public and academic debate about democracy, legitimacy, accountability and parliamentary control. Some scholars claim that there is a trend toward more parliamentarisation of such powers, in the sense that parliaments are increasingly involved in deployment decisions (Ostermann & Wagner, 2023).

The decisions to deploy troops, and thus using force outside of the state's own borders, are probably some of the most important and serious decisions a state can make during peace time. These decisions involve the risk of a state's own citizens getting hurt while participating in missions abroad. Partaking in an intervention into a war or conflict can also have severe consequences for citizens in the country where troops are deployed. This can be both directly, as a victim of the actions themselves, or indirectly, as a result of the instability from for example a forced regime change. Conflict is often called "development in reverse", because the political, social and economic consequences can have a huge negative impact on the society. Deployment decisions can also have important consequences for the relations between the intervening state and the rest of the world, both in terms of their reputation and the potential usefulness as an ally.

This thesis deals with the question about the justification of troop deployment in the context of parliamentary decision-making. My research question is as following: *How does conflict severity influence the level of agreement in votes on deployment in military interventions?* The thesis examines what factors makes a high level of agreement among the members of parliament more likely. Specifically, the level of agreement is tied to conflict severity. The theoretical framework which inspires my main hypothesis is the just war-theory, which is a moral and ethical tradition with centuries old roots. This theory has influenced moral and legal thinking in Western countries for a long time and is still being updated to fit the more modern world and the dilemmas raised by the forms of war and conflict we face today. Based on the criteria of when a war is considered "just", I draw parallels to the moral justification of troop deployment and interventions. According to these criteria, one would assume that there are some types of conflicts where there would be a higher level of agreement between the members of parliament about a troop deployment than in other conflicts, based on the feeling of moral obligation which can help build consensus about a decision.

Few seem to have researched this connection before me, and to my knowledge, this is the first combination that is done of the Parliamentary Deployment Votes Database and the Battle-related Deaths-dataset from UCDP. This thesis can contribute to the effort of uncovering some patterns connected to the characteristics of conflict, in the justification of deployments in the national decision-making processes. The assumption is that states should be more willing to intervene if the intervention is considered «just», according to the long moral and legal tradition in the West. The question is whether this is reflected in the level of parliamentary agreement about these decisions. If this is indeed the case, then the cases where states decide to intervene (deploy troops) should be the ones most in line with the principles of the just war tradition. A high severity conflict, in other words a conflict with a high number of battle related deaths, should therefore result in a high level of parliamentary agreement.

It is also important to remember that interventions can have effects on the conflict dynamics, such as the duration, the intensity/severity and the outcome (Metternich, 2011; Norrevik & Sarwari, 2021). Interventions supporting governments experiencing civil conflicts often have the qualities of what Linebarger and Enterline (2022) call "forever wars". They argue that experiences of both the US and France suggest that third parties who intervene often continue the intervention long after the original justification was made, which makes the decision to deploy troops even more important to justify. Critics thus point out that interventions can have unintended and long-lasting consequences, even though the aim is good (Sousa, 2014). The justification and political reasoning behind these decisions therefore matters, both because of the legitimacy and political reputation of the politicians in their own country and because of the reputation of the state abroad.

The question of what makes interventions more or less likely is debated in the intervention literature. Some argue that humanitarian motives, such as the protection of civilians and the prevention of atrocities against citizens of other countries, are those who matter the most. Others point out the well of empirical evidence suggesting that other interests and contexts are the factors who truly determine whether a state or international organization decides to intervene or not. Even though most people have an instinct about what factors can legitimize and justify the deployment of troops abroad, it is not hard to find examples of interventions motivated by less "acceptable" aims. The controversy surrounding the decision to go into Iraq in 2003 is one example. Drawing on intervention literature, it is interesting to see if the same factors that influence the likelihood of interventions also influence the level of agreement in the deployment decisions in national parliaments. In other words, if humanitarian aims makes interventions more likely, does it also build a broader consensus about troop deployment?

1.1 The Road Ahead

Based on these facts and assumptions, I am interested in taking a closer look at the justifications for deployments, by examining the relationship between the number of battle-related deaths (conflict severity) and how much national consensus there is surrounding the decisions to deploy troops. I have chosen a quantitative approach to answer the research question. I use the Parliamentary Deployment Vote Database (PDVD) from Ostermann and Wagner (2023), which provides data on parliamentary votes on military missions between 1990 and 2019 in 21 countries in the "Global North". This dataset provides information about the missions that were voted on, the region of deployment, the level of agreement between the members of parliament and so forth. I combine this dataset with the Battle-related Deaths dataset (BRD) from UCDP, which provides data on the number of battle-related deaths in a country each year between 1989 and 2021 (Davies et al., 2022).

By examining the connection between severity and the level of agreement, I provide insight into what kinds of conflict are more problematic or less problematic for democracies to intervene in, and possible explanations for why there is a higher level of agreement to intervene in some conflicts. If democracies choose to intervene because of a "right reason", like humanitarian concerns, there should be a high degree of agreement about interventions in conflicts which are particularly bad. There should also be a low degree of agreement about interventions in «less grave» conflicts, because the arguments used for justification (just war) are less applicable in these conflicts. In other words, the conflict characteristics should correspond with the reasoning behind the intervention.

This thesis is situated between, and thus contributes to the intervention and conflict literatures, as well as the evolving literature on parliamentary war powers, which will all be presented in the literature review. The research question is crucial for examining our understanding of intervention as a positive action for helping the "citizens of the world". My findings can also contribute to say something about the necessity of parliamentary control over deployments in international interventions.

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 includes a brief history of interventions and explains the relevance of the research question, both in light of the conflict situation today and of interventions as an “anomaly” in international relations. This chapter also introduces some key concepts and definitions and explains how they are used in this thesis. Chapter 3 examines the just war-tradition as the theoretical framework for the thesis and links this tradition to the assumptions for the moral and legal justification of interventions and troop deployments. Chapter 4 is a literature review, which examines intervention literature, conflict literature and literature on parliamentary war powers and presents the status quo of the extant research. The literature review is concluded by situating the thesis in the literature and explaining where it can contribute to filling the research gap. The assumptions and hypotheses based on theory and literature are presented in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 is a presentation of the method, variables and datasets, as well as the choices made during the process. It also includes a discussion about the model assumptions, and the validity and reliability of the research design. Chapter 7 is a presentation of the regression models, as well as an interpretation of the results and whether or not they are in line with the hypotheses. These results are further examined and discussed in Chapter 8, which also considers the implications and possible explanations of the results, discusses possibilities for further research and ends with a summary and a brief discussion about the contribution of the thesis.

2. A Brief History of Interventions and the Definition of Concepts

I start by contextualizing the topic to explain the relevance of the research question. First, I take a look at the conflict situation today. Then I say something about the international relations-aspect of the topic and explain the tension between the principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention post-Westphalia, and the evolution of interventionism in recent times. I end this section by going through some key definitions and explain how I have chosen to use them in this thesis.

2.1 Conflicts Today

What we usually think of as wars are the interstate wars, in other words wars between states. But in the last few decades, civil wars have been the most predominant form of armed conflict and the number of such conflicts has gone up since the 1970s (Palik et al., 2022). They have turned out to be "exceedingly difficult to resolve" and tend to be very long lasting (Sawyer et al., 2017, p. 1175). Ongoing civil wars have been called one of the largest obstacles for achieving peace and stability in the world, and the economic, social and political costs of civil wars are high – both in a short-term and long-term perspective (Thyne, 2017). One of the characteristics of civil wars that make them so costly, is the long duration many of them have (Thyne, 2017). This has led to what we can call the "accumulation problem"; the fact that new conflicts break out faster than the ongoing conflicts end, which leads to an accumulation of long-lasting conflicts (Aliyev, 2020).

Despite the fact that both the number of state-based armed conflicts and the number of conflicts on the war-intensity level have dropped, there has been an increase in the number of deaths in conflict. 2021 was the deadliest year observed since 2016, and the fifth most deadly year since 1989, which means that the conflicts are fewer, but deadlier (Davies et al., 2022). It has been argued that intrastate conflicts include civilians to an even larger degree than wars between states, both because of the mobilization of the civilian population in support of one of the belligerents and because they get mixed up in the hostilities (Schulzke, 2017, p. 39).

Interventions and peacekeeping missions are not new phenomenon. Both states and international organizations involve themselves in armed conflict for a number of different reasons, both in the interest of themselves or because of humanitarian aims (Sawyer et al., 2017). During the Cold War, both political pressures and stalemates in the UN Security Council made the authorization of new missions difficult, and there were few deployments to internal or interstate conflicts. But after the Cold War the number of peacekeeping missions authorized by the UN skyrocketed, and after 1989 more than five times as many operations have been authorized than in the previous forty years. Because troops are increasingly deployed in stabilization missions and the rules of engagement are “more permissive”, these operations have also become more dangerous, with an increasing number of casualties (Cordell et al., 2021, p. 138).

2.2 Sovereignty, Nonintervention and Legitimacy

From the time after the Peace of Westphalia, the treaties after the Thirty Years’ War, state sovereignty has been a defining principle of the Western order of states. State sovereignty means sovereign jurisdiction within a state’s defined border, and is what separates modern states from “earlier forms of political association” (Heywood, 2015, p. 68f). The state has authority within its own territories, which also includes a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. This is to ensure that its laws are obeyed (Heywood, 2015, p. 69). The principle of external sovereignty is a basic principle of international law, and references a state’s place in the international order, and the independence it has in relation to other states (Heywood, 2015, p. 87). This means that other states have no business interfering with the internal affairs of another state. Even though this is generally seen as a good thing, there is some criticism against this principle. There is no lack of examples of states treating their citizens in horrifying manners, even despite the wide acceptance that states should treat their citizens according to human rights principles (Heywood, 2015, p. 88).

The international system is considered to be anarchical, because it lacks a supreme international authority. This means that in cases of interstate war, civil conflict or human rights violations, it often comes down to alliances of states or international organizations, through its member states, to get involved. Such instances pose a challenge to the principle of sovereignty. This has become more and more accepted, at least in the Western world, because the commitment to human rights is seen as more important than respecting the national sovereignty of the state (Heywood, 2015, p. 88).

Finnemore (2004) argues that military interventions are “an anomaly” in international relations, as they lie “at the boundary between peace and war” in international politics (Finnemore, 2004, p. vii). A basic issue in both society itself and in the international society, is to regulate the use of force between the members, and the fact that states have “restraint in decisions about interventions” is what separates our modern world of sovereign states from Hobbesian anarchy (Finnemore, 2004, p. viii). Because states or international organizations who consider intervening actually have a choice to do so, states debate both internally and between themselves whether or not interventions should happen. This contributes to both the legitimacy and the authority of the rules of use of force in the international society. But the reasons for interventions, and also the patterns, have changed over time (Finnemore, 2004, p. 1-2).

Since the end of the Cold War, there has evolved a “strong trend toward identifying humanitarian considerations as a basis for certain military mandates and actions” (Roberts, 2001, p. 193). Roberts points out that this is the case both in armed civil or international conflicts (like Bosnia or Sierra Leone), when a government is considered tyrannical or brutal (like in Rwanda or Haiti), in the presence of uncontrolled violence (like in Somalia or Albania) or when help is needed to implement peace agreements (like in Kosovo or East Timor) (Roberts, 2001, p. 194). And even though the principle of sovereignty “provides a powerful prohibition” of interventions, many modern thinkers have argued that there exists a “right to humanitarian intervention” (Lyons & Mastanduno, 1995, p. 33, 41). Lyons and Mastanduno calls the provision of humanitarian assistance “the most immediate and dramatic confrontation between a state’s right of sovereignty and the will and authority of the international community” (Lyons & Mastanduno, 1995, p. 3).

Critics, however, argue that there is a lack of doctrine, legitimacy and strategy when it comes to humanitarian interventions. Some extremely severe crises hardly receive attention or military action, and maybe not at all. And sometimes the help comes to little, too late. In some cases matters may be made worse by the presence of foreign troops, or the mandate gets tangled up with other matters, which undermines the reason why the troops are there (Roberts, 2001, p. 194). While international norms have “evolved toward an increasing acceptance of interventions at the expense of state sovereignty”, failed interventions, like in Bosnia and Rwanda, have led many policymakers to doubt how effective they are (Krain, 2005, p. 363).

Both the lack of a supreme international authority and the lack of consistency in applying the "rules" of when to intervene can lead to a lack of legitimacy or rightfulness in the cases where an intervention actually is authorized. This makes it easy to criticize states and international organizations for not applying the rules equally, and to accuse them of having other interests than humanitarian in mind when deciding to intervene. This can have consequences both for the politicians in the national states, being held accountable by the people for making unpopular decisions, and for the relationships between states in the international system.

To sum up, we can see a shift in the way interventions are justified in more modern times. It has generally become more accepted to violate the basic principle of state sovereignty, if the reason is deemed "just".

2.3 Key Concepts and Definitions

As this thesis uses many terms connected to the deployment of military force abroad, I want to end this chapter by describing some of the key concepts and explain how they are used in the context of this thesis.

Interventions, in the broad sense of the term, can be "forcible or non-forcible, direct or indirect, open or clandestine" operations by states or non-state actors, such as international organizations (Sousa, 2014, p. 59). The motive behind the intervention may vary from actor to actor, and from context to context, which I will get back to in the literature review. Even though interventions might not be "lawful" or "unlawful", they break the "conventional pattern of international relations" (Sousa, 2014, p. 59). When it comes to civil conflicts, third-party interventions involve the use of resources to influence the conflict's "trajectory and characteristics" (Linebarger & Enterline, 2022, p. 3). These resources are varied, and can range from troops and weapons, training and providing intelligence, to economic and diplomatic aid (Linebarger & Enterline, 2022).

Intervention in civil conflicts can happen on the side of the government (pro-government), or on the side of the rebels (pro-rebel). Interventions on the side of the rebels are usually even more in violation of norms of state sovereignty than pro-government interventions. Pro-government interventions may be at the invitation of the government itself, or done with the authorization of an international organization (Linebarger & Enterline, 2022). They are also more likely to feature "more significant and public commitments, including the deployment of flagged military personnel" (Linebarger & Enterline, 2022, p. 3).

One approach for interventions, if the goal is only to de-escalate or end the conflict, is to support the strongest side. This way, victory for that side is more likely and comes sooner (Sousa, 2014). A military victory is often seen as the "best outcome", because it is less likely to lead to the recurrence of conflict. In cases where a military victory is not possible, an alternative approach is to support the weaker side, so that negotiations are more likely. But studies suggest that the best way to achieve a lasting peace might be to reach a comprehensive peace agreement through a peace operation (Sousa, 2014). Peacekeeping missions have been authorized by the UN since 1948, but the use of such missions has increased dramatically since the end of the Cold War. Such missions can be deployed to monitor the implementation of peace agreements, but they are more and more often deployed into active conflicts (Beardsley et al., 2019)

Humanitarian catastrophes can have many causes, for example the oppression of civilians by the government, crises caused by internal conflict or that the political institutions of a state break down. Humanitarian intervention is the use of military force to prevent or stop severe human rights violations, without the consent of the state where the intervention happens (Fixdal & Malnes, 2011, p. 360f).

In this thesis, the list of missions which the analysis is based on ranges from unarmed monitoring missions (Georgia), training missions, missions to build police forces, armed peacekeeping missions, humanitarian missions and the protection of civilians, and implementation of peace accords to military intervention to remove a military regime (Haiti). I have chosen to count them all as military missions with some kind of "use of force", as long as the country of deployment has been possible to connect to a specific conflict area (country). This is done according to the presentation of the database (Ostermann & Wagner, 2023). In other words, the deployment decisions deal with the deployment of military troops in missions abroad. This is why the words intervention and (troop) deployment will be used interchangeably in this thesis.

When it comes to conflict characteristics, research has been done on many different parts of the conflict process; from the outbreak and pre-existing conditions in the area, to the conflict dynamics such as duration and intensity/severity, as well as the outcome, the likelihood of conflict recurrence and post-conflict rebuilding. I have chosen to look closer at the conflict severity of civil and interstate conflicts. The terms severity and intensity seem to be used somewhat interchangeably in the literature, and they are both often measured in the number of battle-related deaths each year. Battle-related deaths can be seen as a "clear indication of the extraordinary nature of the period under review (even if the conflict is protracted) and of the intensity of conflict" (Sousa, 2014, p. 60). Palik et al. (2022) also say that the measurement of battle-related deaths is important, because it gives us information about the severity of a conflict. This measurement also gives us the possibility to differentiate between wars and conflicts. To be included in UCDP's definition of armed conflict, there needs to be at least 25 battle-related deaths per year. To reach the threshold of war, there must be at least 1,000 battle-related deaths per year. These numbers do not include indirect deaths resulting from conflict, and the strict rules for documentation means that the threshold for deaths being counted as battle-related is pretty high (Palik et al., 2022).

Parliamentary war powers refer to parliamentary involvement, or democratic constraints on the executive branch, when it comes to deployment decisions. They are an important element in the civilian control over a country's armed forces. Parliamentary war powers can shape the decisions of the executive when it comes to questions about troop deployment, both through formal and informal constraints on such decisions. There is an active debate about whether parliaments are actually effective in participating in deployment decisions, because most wars today do not happen through formal declarations of war (Coticchia & Moro, 2020). There have been many examples of deployment decisions being done very fast and without the involvement of the legislature at all, with the actual voting taking place only after the deployment already had occurred (Coticchia & Moro, 2020). Coticchia and Moro have examined the German and Italian decision-making in military interventions in the time after the Cold War, and their conclusion is that parliaments through formal and informal procedures actually can affect the tendency of the executive to deploy troops abroad, as well as shape the opportunity structure of the executive by adding more hurdles to get over before an intervention. Because they closely monitor how the forces are used once they are deployed, they also affect how the operations are conducted.

When it comes to voting behavior in deployment decisions, there are two ways to parliamentary consensus. The first one is when the operations are in line with international law, has humanitarian objectives or it is about defending national interests. The goal of the intervention therefore has an effect on the level of agreement in parliament. The second way to build consensus is through a negotiated compromise between left- and right-wing parties that takes into account the party preferences on the scope of the operation, or the parties successfully “engage in legislative logrolling” (or quid pro quo) (Haesebrouck et al., 2022, p. 80).

3. Theoretical Framework: The Just War-Tradition

In this section I present the just war-tradition to argue that when democratic states choose to violate the principle of state sovereignty, it is usually based on an assumption that this is the morally right thing to do. This is evident by the fact that interventions are often justified by referencing humanitarian aims, the protection of human rights or the responsibility to protect-doctrine (R2P). Because the just war-tradition is the foundation for so much of the Western views about the moral and legal justification of war, I argue that this tradition is also relevant for the justification of deployments and the morality of interventions. In other words, I draw parallels from the moral justification of war to the moral justification of intervention. According to the just war-tradition, there are certain criteria that can be fulfilled for a war to be deemed “just”. Can these criteria and moral reflections also be applied to interventions, in the way that it makes sense to talk of “just interventions”?

3.1 The Just War-Theory in General

Even though the nature of war and warfare has changed quite a lot throughout history, the debates about the justification of war have existed for a long time. Many of these debates have been about the criteria a war has to meet to be deemed morally justified, both in how it starts and how it is conducted. The just war-tradition is more of a “field of philosophical or ethical reflection”, rather than a doctrine (Heywood, 2015, p. 337). There are many ethical questions connected to war, both about when it is morally correct to go to war (jus ad bellum) and what actions should be allowed during the war (jus in bello). Such ethical questions arise both in the traditional forms of interstate wars and direct self-defense, but they are also relevant in more modern forms of war such as humanitarian interventions or when the enemy is difficult to define, such as in the war on terror (Syse, 2003, p. 9).

When it comes to the question of when war is morally justified (jus ad bellum), there are three main approaches: pacifism, realpolitik and the just war-tradition (Syse, 2003, p. 21). If placed on a continuous line, pacifism would be on the extreme of one side, because from the standpoint of pacifism war will always be immoral and can never be justified. *Realpolitik* (political realism) would be on the extreme end on the other side, as those who subscribe to this view would claim that the use of violence, not least between states, is inevitable and not subject to any moral considerations (Syse, 2003, p. 22, 28). In the middle between these two extremes, we find the just war-tradition. This tradition has its roots in the Middle Ages and can be found in the thoughts of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas about the compatibility between Christian values and warfare (Fixdal & Malnes, 2011, p. 351). During the 19th and 20th centuries, many of the principles of the just war-tradition became part of international law (Fixdal & Malnes, 2011, p. 352).

While the just war-tradition is usually based on situations of self-defense, many also believe that a war can be waged if it is in defense of others, like by aiding allies. But what about instances where one wants to protect citizens in other states by using force within the borders of another state, without their consent? (Frowe, 2011, p. 83). Humanitarian intervention is the use of military force to prevent or stop gross or large-scale violations of human rights, without the consent of the target state. Because such interventions also can lead to suffering and death, this is a morally problematic tool. First of all because a people have the right to self-determination without other states intervening, and secondly because there is always a danger present that a state uses humanitarian intervention as an excuse to secure their own interests. This is why we need to have non-intervention as the primary principle and justify why this principle can be broken in some cases (Fixdal & Malnes, 2011, p. 361). The just war-tradition can help us decide when it is morally correct to set aside this principle, based on some criteria. The intervention should have a just cause, a just authority and a just intention. It should have a reasonable chance of success. It should also be a last resort, it should be a proportional response to the threat it wants to eliminate and it should protect the civilians (Fixdal & Malnes, 2011, p. 361).

3.2 Just War-Theory and Casualties

Even though the conduct of war and conflict has changed a lot in modern times, the nature of war is still horrifying. The just war-theory is not in the past but is still relevant and being updated to fit the world today. Schulzke (2017) claims that just war-theory has “greater legitimacy than ever”, and that both policymakers and members of the military are expected to follow the principles of the just war-theory, and may be punished if they fail to do so. The theory is also used to shape and implement ethics training, new weapons and tactics. And not least, it is the basis for international humanitarian law (Schulzke, 2017, p. 3-4).

One of the most significant aspects of the just war-tradition is the attempt to protect human lives. Just war-thinkers use the theory to try to minimize the human suffering in wars and conflicts, of both soldiers and civilians, by suggesting restrictions on the waging of wars (jus ad bellum), the conduct of war (just in bello) and developing norms for conflict resolution and justice after a war (jus post bellum) (Schulzke, 2017, p. 1). The specific prohibition against intentional attacks on civilians is called the *principle of noncombatant immunity* (PNCI) or the *principle of civilian immunity* (PCI) (Schulzke, 2017, p. 2). These principles, based on the universal right to life, have been influential for the development of the Responsibility to Protect-doctrine (R2P). The R2P-doctrine is based on the assumption that the protection of human life against violent actors is more important than the principle of state sovereignty, and that the purpose of defending of others in such cases can authorize “just” use of force (Schulzke, 2017, p. 4). There is in other words a connection between the just war-tradition and the developing norms of interventionism.

3.3 Justifying Interventions to the Public

That moral thinking influences decisions about going to war or deciding to intervene into conflicts is evident in the public reasoning of the politicians. Politicians and state leaders have to keep in mind multiple things at once when it comes to deploying troops – both the potential costs and chances of succeeding, and the chance of keeping public support and possibly get re-elected. Interventions are full of legal and political issues. While many people feel like there exists a moral obligation to stop the human suffering of citizens in other countries, politicians also have to come up with justifiable reasons for exposing their own soldiers to the risks involved in the deployment (Frowe, 2011, p. 83f). Policymakers in Western democracies have suggested that there exists a moral obligation of third-party states to intervene to stop human suffering and destruction (Balch-Lindsay & Enterline, 2000).

Both former German president Horst Köhler and former French president Chirac have been criticized for their remarks about military interventions and the motivations behind them. Köhler had to resign after stating that Germany has to defend its economic interests by using military means, and that military interventions are necessary to secure German economic interests. Chirac also stated his support to the use of force by military means to protect French interests in the Middle East. These motivations were seen as “illegitimate justifications for the use of military power in international relations” (Klosek, 2020, p. 87). This shows that even though such interests can be seen as drivers of military interventions, the public is not especially happy with the morality of these justifications. There seems to be an expectation from the citizens in the intervening democracies that there has to be some kind of moral foundation that motives the intervention, and that national interests are not sufficient in this regard.

However, it is important to remember that much of the debates about political decisions can be difficult to access, and it can be impossible to expose the true intentions of an intervention (Duque et al., 2015). Even though the explicit reasons for deciding to use military force may reference a moral obligation or humanitarian aims, the actual drivers and motivations may be less “passable” in the public eye.

3.4 Just Interventions?

Evidently, the just war-tradition has been very influential on the development of moral and legal thinking in the West for a long time. One key aspect is human security, and to protect individuals from violence. In modern times, where the number of civil conflicts has far surpassed the number of interstate wars, I argue that this logic can be applied to interventions as well. As such, it can be expected that this commitment of protecting civilians, but also combatants, in armed conflict should be reflected in the moral justification of intervention. The principle of sovereignty has been an important part of the international order since the Peace of Westphalia and has traditionally had a lot of respect by democratic states. So why do democracies choose to intervene in conflicts outside its own borders? What can make interventions justified when it so clearly violates this traditionally important principle? And is the human security aspect reflected in the national decision-making process?

4. Literature Review

This section surveys the different literatures of relevance for the research question. I start by examining the intervention literature that concerns the decision to use force outside a states' own borders and the motives for interventions. Then I move on to relevant conflict research, mostly focusing on the measurement and the factors that impact conflict severity. Then I present the growing literature on parliamentary war powers, which includes research on how parliamentary constraints can influence deployment decisions and what factors make parliamentary consensus more likely. I end the section by situating my thesis in the literature, to show where I can fill the research gap and contribute to these different fields of research.

4.1 Intervention Literature

The literature on interventions is often connected to civil wars. Third-party interventions have for a long time been considered one of the most important events in the process of civil wars and they have the ability to impact both the duration and outcome of such conflicts. This is why it is important to understand what factors can explain the probability and timing of interventions, and their possible effects on duration, outcome and potential of promoting peace (Stojek & Chacha, 2015).

Interventions by third parties can both be studied as a dependent and an independent variable, which leads to a "natural demarcation" within the literature (Hannigan, 2019, p. 279). Multiple articles have identified two primary focus areas of intervention literature. The first area is the factors that influence the likelihood of intervention. These can be factors such as the context and conditions under which troops are deployed, like state or conflict characteristics. They can also be related to the motivations of the actors who intervene in civil wars by using military, economic and diplomatic tools (Hannigan, 2019; Klosek, 2019). This research looks at explanations for why interventions happen, and what motivates the intervening parties. The second area is the research on the effects, effectiveness and outcomes of interventions, often related to the duration and severity of civil wars when there is a third party influencing the conflict dynamics (Klosek, 2019).

A third area of research that can be related to intervention literature is the research on peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. This is an area that has gained separate attention because of the connection to international organizations. Research on peace missions can be related to both the likelihood and the effects of intervention. While some look at the question of the motivation for "troop contribution to international missions" (Klosek, 2019, p. 7), the focus of peacekeeping research has mainly been on how effective these operations are (Cordell et al., 2021). This area of research can therefore be separated into the two already mentioned focus areas.

I have chosen to follow this divide as the basis for my literature review. Section 4.1.1 will examine the literature on the likelihood of interventions, in other words literature where intervention is the dependent variable. This is the most relevant for my thesis, as it provides me with information about the possible role of conflict severity and humanitarian motivations in decisions about deployment. Even though these factors are related to the likelihood of intervention, they may also say something about the types of intervention where parliamentary agreement is high. This will be the basis for my assumptions and hypotheses in Chapter 5.

The literature on the effects of interventions, and the question of whether they work or not, does not have direct relevance for the research question and falls outside of the scope of this thesis. The literature review will thus exclude this part of the academic debate about interventions. However, a few things are worth mentioning. The research on the effectiveness of interventions looks at different criteria for success, like their impact on the duration and intensity of the conflict and the eventual outcome. The motivation and goals of the intervener may have large consequences for how their presence impacts the conflict process. The type and strategy of intervention can also play a role, as well as which side in the conflict gets support from a third party. Large peacekeeping missions by the UN seems to be what is most effective on reducing hostilities and reaching a negotiated peace (Carnegie & Mikulaschek, 2020).

In civil conflicts, civilians are the ones who often "bear the brunt of violence", because they are a tactic target for both government forces and rebel groups (Carnegie & Mikulaschek, 2020, p. 810). This is why such interventions can be important to reduce human suffering and protect civilians, according to the just war-tradition. Still, a difficult methodological issue is that it is impossible to observe the contrafactual, in other words what would have happened if the intervention was not carried out. States often send peacekeepers to regions where there are high-casualty conflicts, and this could wrongly be interpreted as interventions leading to more deaths, when there would possibly be even higher death tolls without the intervention. It is also possible that confounding or unobservable factors disturb or make us wrongly interpret the results (Carnegie & Mikulaschek, 2020). Research on effectiveness is of importance for the policymakers and politicians who debate interventions, as they have to keep in mind not only the potential risks and costs for their own state, but for the conflict state as well.

Section 4.1.2 is an overview of the conflict literature related to conflict severity. As with interventions, severity can also be used as both a dependent and independent variable, and conflict literature can contribute with more context and insight in the complexity of conflict dynamics.

4.1.1. The Likelihood of Intervention

There is a heterogeneous response of the international community to civil wars, as all civil wars do not experience the same risk of involvement by third parties (Aydin, 2010). Some conflicts attract interveners, while others fail to do so. The explanations related to what makes intervention more or less likely can be separated into 1) the characteristics of the target state and the conflict, and 2) motivations of the intervening actors. The research on both of these questions shows a divide between the explanations which are more relevant when a third-party state intervenes and when the UN intervenes. I will therefore try to distinguish between the explanations for states and for the UN in both categories of explanations.

An important set of explanations for why interventions happen are related to the characteristics of the civil war state and the conflict. When it comes to the decisions of states, Aydin (2010) explains that both certain characteristics of the state and the context of the conflict influence the timing of interventions. In poor states, the response time is particularly shorter, as the international community seems concerned with the possibility of failing states. States are however reluctant to intervene if the country is rich and oil-producing. At the same time, states actually intervene in intense conflicts and “appear to be concerned with deadly wars” (Aydin, 2010, p. 63). This indicates that both the wealth and resources of the target country (state characteristics), as well as the severity of the conflict (conflict characteristics), impact the likelihood of an intervention happening. It however seems like there is a need to separate between the impact of country and conflict characteristics depending on the kind of state who chooses to intervene. Aydin also claims that dynamic processes, rather than fixed characteristics, seem to influence intervention decisions the most (Aydin, 2010).

Sousa (2014) also points out that it is difficult to be certain whether high intensity conflicts attract interventions, or if it is the interventions that cause the high intensity of the conflict. Some studies show that the bloodier wars are more likely to attract interventions (Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2000, as cited in Sousa, 2014, p. 64). And while the majority of the findings show that there is a should be a connection between military interventions and higher conflict intensity, the causality is less certain. Overall, Sousa rejects the assumptions that interventions promote peace, as this aim may compete with other aims in a “constellation of external and internal actors’ motivations and initiatives” (Sousa, 2014, p. 82). He finds that the intensity of the conflict does not determine interventions (Sousa, 2014).

In regard to *state characteristics* in peacekeeping missions, peacekeepers are usually sent to states with a weak military and a poor economy. This is because it is assumed that they lack the resources to deal with the conflict on their own. Countries with strong governments, strong armies and large economies are more likely to be able to handle the internal dispute by themselves, and they are also relatively unlikely to invite other actors to help with peacekeeping (Stojek & Tir, 2015). Duque et al. (2015) also find that the smaller and poorer the country is, the more likely interventions by the UN Security Council (UNSC) are. This can perhaps be because interventions are more likely to succeed and less likely to cost as much (Duque et al., 2015).

Conflict characteristics also seem to matter for explaining peacekeeping missions. Quantitative studies usually find that peacekeepers from the UN are sent to deal with the most difficult cases, and that they often are sent to conflicts with many casualties or conflicts that have lasted for a long time (Stojek & Tir, 2015). Another study on whether sexual violence in conflicts attract the attention of the UN also concludes that both country characteristics and conflict dynamics motive the UNSC to sanction an intervention (Benson & Gizelis, 2020). Research on the “target conditions of peacekeeping” suggests that the possibility of deployment of peacekeeping missions is more likely to happen in conflicts of high severity and long duration (Cordell et al., 2021, p. 139-140). However, such characteristics are not the only factors explaining why states or international organizations choose to intervene.

When it comes to the *motivations* behind interventions, there are many possible and empirically supported links and motives that can explain why third parties choose to involve themselves in a conflict. Scholars do not seem to be able to rank which ones are the most or least likely to lie behind a decision (Hannigan, 2019). The types of motivations can be divided broadly into national interests and humanitarian concerns. They each correspond to the main schools of political thinking – realism and liberalism. While realists emphasize national and security interests, the protection of a state's own allies and a strategic consideration of possible costs and payoffs in the decisions of states to intervene (Hannigan, 2019), proponents of liberal thinking emphasizes the value of international organizations and cooperation for the protection and security of human life and the spread of democracy and peace (Choi & James, 2016).

The literature on UN interventions has examined whether the motivations behind interventions are "strategical or benevolent", and if their choice of where to send peacekeeping forces is based on their own assessment of how manageable the conflict is (Aydin, 2010, p. 48). Research has showed that the UNSC responds to "humanitarian crises and threats against civilians" (Benson & Gizelis, 2020, p. 171). Stojek and Tir (2015) also conclude that peacekeeping operations by the UN seem to reflect the effort of the global community when it comes to resolving humanitarian crises.

A study done on US interventions specifically finds that the US is likely to engage in military campaigns for humanitarian reasons, rather than based on their own interests. The authors find that American deployments seem to be most consistent with concerns about human rights abuses. This is an important study because of the unique position of the US as a "quasi-hegemon" in the context of military interventions during a period of challenge to the "norm of nonintervention" (Choi & James, 2016, p. 900). However, a weakness with this study is the difficulty of coding actual motivations, compared to the motivations that have explicitly been used, because of secrecy and uncertainty (Choi & James, 2016).

It is also easy to find a lot of research on other motivations than humanitarian concerns, both for states and the UN. Many of these motivations are very in line with the realist focus on national interests and security. Much of this research looks at economic and national interests as drivers of military interventions. Research has shown that trade linkages and natural resources increase the likelihood of a state to involve itself in a civil war (Klosek, 2020). If the target state has oil, and the third-party needs this, then the likelihood of intervention seems to increase (Hannigan, 2019). Klosek (2020) also proposes that a state is more likely to intervene if they need to protect their foreign direct investments (FDI) in the civil war country. This means that corporate/industry interests also can influence the decisions to deploy troops (Klosek, 2020). Regional motivations have also been studied as a driver for intervention by third parties. Others find that if regional interests are threatened by the risk of civil war diffusion, then third-party states are more likely to intervene (Kathman, 2011).

Researchers on the UN have also been interested in trade ties between the permanent members of the UNSC and the civil war state (Cordell et al., 2021), the links to local actors or whether they have “a vested interest in the conflict dynamics” (Benson & Gizelis, 2020, p. 173). Research has shown that economic interests in a conflict country makes it more likely that peacekeeping missions are sent there (Stojek & Tir, 2015). Other researchers, like Duque et al., have examined whether UN military interventions can be explained by geographic factors. Their results indicate that interventions are more likely if the country is located geographically closer to the three permanent members of the UNSC (France, UK and the US). This geographical factor is however not present for interventions that are not military in character, which means that practical considerations could be an important part of the decision to intervene militarily (Duque et al., 2015).

According to Clare and Danilovic (2022), interventions by major powers in civil wars are not motivated by humanitarian concerns. Major powers are those who most frequently intervene militarily in civil wars. They find that the main motivation is the major powers’ “drive to establish, consolidate, or expand influence in different geopolitical regions” (Clare & Danilovic, 2022, p. 20). The likelihood of intervention by a major power depends on the strategical relevance of the region and the geopolitical location of the civil conflict. The authors point out that despite official justifications for intervention like humanitarian concerns, what actually drive interventions are strategic interests and geopolitical considerations (Clare & Danilovic, 2022).

However, Stojek and Tir conclude that previous findings show that peacekeeping operations can't be dismissed as "simple ´for show´ demonstrations" of how effective the UN can be, but that they seem to both reflect the effort of the global community when it comes to resolving humanitarian crises and the efforts of powerful states to advance their interests (Stojek & Tir, 2015, p. 356).

In conclusion, there are a vast number of reasons why a third-party or the UN may be motivated to intervene. They can both be motivated by their own interests, or the "greater good" such as humanitarian aims and the prevention of human suffering. Hannigan claims that the large number of possible motivations can lead to the "construction of ad hoc, context-dependent theories" instead of "a set of overarching claims about how the decision to intervene is made" (Hannigan, 2019, p. 282). And it is important to remember that when it comes to motivations, it can be difficult to uncover the true drivers of an intervention and that multiple motivation may come into play at the same time.

Not only do the conflict characteristics, the characteristics of the conflict state and the motivations of the intervening state matter for the likelihood of interventions. Researchers have also looked at strategy and resources as explanations for the likelihood of intervention. Aydin expects a different strategy in choosing interventions from the UN and states. For the UN, some of the most important factors that drive peace operations are the level of hostility and the duration of the conflict, the previous failed attempts at settlements and the likelihood of a successful outcome (Aydin, 2010). The number of ongoing peacekeeping efforts are also a strong negative predictor of whether or not the UN chooses to authorize a new mission (Cordell et al., 2021).

For intervening states, the strategy is more based on what resources they have and what political risks and potential consequences they may face at home (Aydin, 2010). States tend to consider what other third parties have done to judge whether intervention is "worth it". An example of this is when other parties have intervened, and the civil war still continues. This makes other states more reluctant to go in (Aydin, 2010). There is also evidence that peacekeepers are less likely to be sent to a civil war if a major power has intervened. But if this major power is a mediator in the conflict, or if an international organization has previously intervened, then there is actually more likelihood that peacekeeping will occur than a unilateral intervention. This evidence shows that past involvement in a conflict creates a sense of responsibility for how it turns out (Stojek & Tir, 2015).

4.1.2 Research on Conflict Severity

Severity has been treated in research as both a conflict characteristic that makes intervention more or less likely, and as a conflict dynamic that for example may be impacted by the presence of an intervening third-party. It is important to understand when and why states choose military intervention into ongoing conflicts, because their choice to intervene may increase the duration and severity of the conflict (Shirkey, 2016).

A widely referenced article on the severity of civil wars is written by Bethany Lacina (2006). She examines the question of why some civil wars are so much more deadly than others by looking at combat deaths in internal conflicts between 1946 and 2002. Measuring the size or severity of a conflict is not easy, as many factors could be relevant in determining how devastating a civil conflict is compared to another. There can be both direct and indirect losses on a human, social, political and economic level. Lacina suggests comparing the severity of civil conflicts based on battle-related deaths, meaning the number of combatants and civilians killed because of violence in a military setting. This is not necessarily the best way to determine what wars have the largest humanitarian cost, but it is a "reasonable measure of the scale of combat" (Lacina, 2006, p. 278).

When it comes to what determines conflict severity, she examines the possible explanations for the variation in the number of battle-related deaths in different civil wars. She bases her hypotheses on the literature of conflict onset and draws parallels from this to her research question. What she finds is that the determinants of conflict severity are not the same as the determinants for the onset of conflict. She looks at state strength, regime type and the role of ethnicity and religion. She finds that the total number of battle deaths increases as a function of conflict time. What she finds to be a relevant factor for explaining severity is the availability of foreign aid and intervention, which is a strong predictor that a civil war will be severe. She also finds that democracy, rather than economic development or the strength of the state military, is most strongly associated with fewer deaths. Democratic regimes are associated with smaller conflicts and have less than half the battle deaths as nondemocracies. And while religious heterogeneity does not explain severity, ethnic homogeneity surprisingly may lead to more deadly conflicts (Lacina, 2006). Balcells and Kalyvas (2014) also use battle-related deaths as part of their measure on conflict severity or lethality. They reference the fact that literature on "battlefield deaths" to a large degree has focused on the impact of regime type, polarization or poverty (Balcells & Kalyvas, 2014).

Heger and Salehyan (2007) have found that stronger rebel groups are positively correlated with a higher number of battle-related deaths. That is because this leads to "more intense battles" with the government, and that stronger rebels lead to more conventional military tactics (Heger & Salehyan, 2007, p. 396).. They do not however find a significant effect of GDP per capita on conflict severity. But as expected, longer conflicts lead to a higher number of deaths. Foreign interventions are "associated with a higher number of deaths", while balanced rebel/government interventions have "the greatest effect" (Heger & Salehyan, 2007, p. 396).

While much of the empirical literature on severity and interventions suggests that third-party military and economic intervention tends to both increase the duration and the level of hostility in a conflict and make it harder to terminate the conflict, policymakers often act as they have the opposite expectation (Regan & Aydin, 2006). Third parties can have different goals of interventions. While the goal "on average" is to end the conflict as soon as possible, third parties as strategic actors can also have less benevolent reasons to intervene, and thus have incentives to increase the duration of civil wars. This can be because they want to use the civil war to distract or loot the resources of rival states, or of the state experiencing the civil war (Balch-Lindsay & Enterline, 2000). Duration is linked to severity, as an earlier end to the war is linked to "less death and destruction". However, rapid termination of civil wars through intervention has been critiqued for being artificial stalemates that in the long run lead to more death and destruction (Balch-Lindsay & Enterline, 2000).

Sousa (2014) mentions that most previous quantitative studies have focused on conflict duration. However, he concludes that it is true that conflict duration can be considered a measure of intensity over time, so he bases his article about intensity on literature and expected mechanisms connected to duration. Studies on duration show a positive association between military and economic interventions and duration. But this result can possibly be explained by a subset of cases where the motivation of the actors is based on their own agenda, which can lead to longer conflicts. Sousa's conclusion, based on a case study of Somalia from 1991 to 2010, is that different types of interventions affect conflict intensity differently, and interventions of the same type but with different objectives have different results (Sousa, 2014).

Beardsley, Cunningham and White (2019) have examined the relationship about third-party involvement and the severity of civil conflict (Beardsley et al., 2019). Their article studies the specific effect of mediation on violence, as studies have found that peacekeeping operations reduce the number of battle-related deaths. Mediation and peacekeeping work independently, but these actions also reinforce each other. The authors argue that mediation can reduce violence in two ways; both by facilitating negotiated settlements and by creating "lulls" where negotiations can occur. By analyzing intrastate conflicts in Africa from 1989 to 2008, they conclude that mediation leads to a "dramatic decline in battlefield casualties" and that peacekeeping also reduces battlefield casualties (Beardsley et al., 2019, p. 1684).

Beardsley et al. identify two drivers for the severity of violence in conflict; 1) the failure of the parties to bargain, which leads to the use of lethal force as a signal of resolve and diminishing the threat of the other party, and 2) that the severity of conflicts is higher when there are less external constraints, which means that there is a lack of punishment on the use of violence. Third-party involvement can reduce the severity by making bargaining easier, and by imposing constraints on violence, thus solving the problem of these two drivers. They also point out that many of the conflicts that gain attention from the international community are very bloody, and that the high level of violence can affect the ability of other parties to do something to reduce the harm. However, their analysis suggests that civil wars on average would be even more violent without these international efforts. Effectiveness is not only about the outcome, but also the severity and scope of the violence (Beardsley et al., 2019).

This part of the literature review has shown that many different factors have been found to impact the level of severity, and that the impact of intervention on severity specifically is dependent on the type of involvement and motivation of the intervening actor. In total, the literature seems to argue that while the duration of a conflict may increase because of interventions, the international community can make a difference in conflicts with a high number of casualties.

4.2. Parliamentary War Powers and the Parliamentary Peace Theory

Finally, I examine the literature on parliamentary war powers – the institutional constraints through parliamentary participation in deployment and employment of force. This literature has recently emerged and is rapidly growing (Coticchia & Moro, 2020), especially after the end of the Cold War and the bipolar era, because the military activism of the West raised new questions about parliamentary control over the use of force abroad (Coticchia & Vignoli, 2020). This literature seems to be both varied in focus and approach. Many of the articles are qualitative and case-based, where the focus is on one or a few countries in handling a specific case or in a specific period of time. At the same time, Ostermann and Wagner (2023) suggest that the lack of medium and large-n comparative analyses is caused by a lack of such datasets. This is part of the reason why they decided to make the Parliamentary Deployment Votes Database (PDVD), which the models and analysis of this thesis are based on.

“Democratic politics” is a factor that seems to influence state decisions about military interventions. Opposition and contestation are necessary for democratic constraints on government actions, and political parties are key actors in challenging the policy of the government (Ostermann & Wagner, 2023, p. 2). A recent part of the academic debate focuses on if and how parliaments matter in shaping interventions. When it comes to the explanations for force deployment, many scholars have emphasized the role of public opinion, the preferences of political parties or “strategic culture” (Coticchia & Moro, 2020). But these accounts have tended to minimize the role of national institutional processes and procedures when it comes to decisions about interventions. This is where the literature on parliamentary war powers comes in, with an increasing focus on how parliaments shape the decision-making. The challenge is that there is a lack of empirical evidence about how parliaments are involved in the deployment and monitoring of troops, and the fact that some of these sources of parliamentary influence are informal makes it even more difficult to research (Coticchia & Moro, 2020).

On the continuum of parliamentary participation, from complete exclusion of the legislative to parliamentary veto power, democracies have found many different solutions to balancing legitimacy and efficiency. There is a large variation between different democratic countries in how the power is split between the executive and the legislative. “Parliamentary involvement” in deployment decisions means different things in different countries. In some countries it means that the parliament must be informed prior to the decision, in others after the decision is made. In some countries, the decision must have formal approval from the parliament from the very beginning, or the approval is needed only after a duration of the operation (Ruys et al., 2019). They can range from complete exclusion of the legislative, in other words no constraints on the executive, to parliamentary veto power. They can be formal rules or informal practices. *Bundestag* in Germany is seen as the "world champion in parliamentary control of military missions" (Coticchia & Moro, 2020, p. 487). This variation at the domestic level could explain why some democracies are more "war-prone" than others, so democracies should not be treated as a homogenous group (Dieterich et al., 2015; Mello, 2012).

Peters and Wagner (2014) have examined the explanations for the variation between democracies in how much power the parliament has. They find three sources that explain parliamentary strength or weakness. The first one is the exposure to external threats, as a higher threat level usually means less parliamentary powers. The second one is constitutional tradition, as parliamentary vetoes exist almost exclusively in countries without connection to the British tradition. The third one is whether severe military failures have happened in the past, seeing as Japan and Germany have strong parliaments. They also find that institutions for parliamentary control are relatively stable and rarely change (Peters & Wagner, 2014).

There has been a rise in military deployments by liberal democracies since the end of the Cold War, and democracies have to an increasing degree contributed to missions of peacekeeping and peace-enforcement or to combat terrorism/piracy (Peters & Wagner, 2011). There has also been suggested that there is a trend towards increasing parliamentary control over the deployment of troops, already since the 1990s. This can be seen in the frequency of the executive seeking approval from or consultations with the parliament. Ruys et al. (2019) suggest that the controversy around the decision to intervene in Iraq in 2003 may have been a catalyst in this trend, because it raised questions around the interaction between the executive and legislative branches. However, Peters and Wagner (2011) disagree that there is a trend towards parliamentarisation. They instead find a trend towards even more differentiation, and also claim that parliamentary powers in some countries have been weakened as a result of a more internationalized security policy (Peters & Wagner, 2011).

A study on Belgian military interventions has examined the factors that can explain the level of agreement in parliamentary deployment votes, looking at why some military deployments are strongly contested in the national parliaments and some not at all. Haesebrouck et al. (2022) present a comprehensive and updated literature review on both party-political preferences, political compromises and political consensus in military deployment decisions. Their summary of the literature is that two factors are expected to influence whether there is a parliamentary consensus over deployment or not. The first one is the context of the operation, where operations with a legal basis in international law and the objective of the operation is humanitarian or the defense of national interests are expected to not be contested. The second one is the domestic political situation, where a compromise between parties to the left and right or between government and opposition parties is expected to secure a broad consensus (Haesebrouck et al., 2022).

Ruys et al. (2019) have examined the role of international law in the decision-making about deployment, and say that evidence suggests that both parliaments and the public opinion are becoming more focused on the international legal aspects of the missions. From a democratic point of view, this trend is positive, because it increases the legitimacy and accountability of the government’s actions. (Ruys et al., 2019).

Much of the literature tied to parliamentary war powers look at party-political preferences. Whether a political party supports a military intervention seems to depend on whether they are a part of the ruling coalition or not, and what political ideology the party subscribes to (Ostermann & Wagner, 2023). Parties to the right are in general more supportive of the use of force than parties to the left. The type of operation is also of importance, as left-leaning governments are more likely to contribute if the goals of the operations are “inclusive”, such as peacekeeping operations or humanitarian interventions. Right-leaning governments are more likely to contribute to strategic operations where national interests need protection. Studies have also found a curvilinear pattern between party politics and support for interventions, with lower support among parties at the two extremes of the political spectrum (Haesebrouck et al., 2022).

Research also suggests that there is a link between populism and distrust towards elites, and their view of foreign policy and international affairs, which affects their standpoint toward military interventions (Böller, 2022). Despite the assumption that radical right-wing parties oppose humanitarian interventions, Böller has been able to find support for the UNAMID and UNMISS missions in Sudan among the AfD, a populist radical right-party in Germany. Members of parliament belonging to AfD actually referenced the protection of civilians and the provision of humanitarian relief in their legitimization of these missions. At the same time, their support of humanitarian missions often contained some sort of anti-immigration stance, as interventions were seen as a tool to avoid migrants coming to Europe (Böller, 2022).

Some researchers also ask whether there exists something like a "parliamentary peace". This theory is based on the Kantian democratic peace theory, but with a more nuanced look at the link between the citizens' preferences and if or to what degree these preferences are translated into political decisions. Dieterich, Hummel and Marschall (2015) have examined whether parliaments are effective in limiting the scope of the executive security policy in cases where public opinion opposes military action, by looking at the decision-making in 25 European democracies in relation to the 2003 Iraq War. Their results show that the tendency is that countries with strong parliamentary war powers were "significantly less involved" in the Iraq intervention (Dieterich et al., 2015, p. 89). At the same time, in countries with "incomplete democratization of military security policy-making" , there is an empirical correlation with a "more belligerent foreign policy behavior of governments" (Dieterich et al., 2015, p. 100). Parliamentary war powers can therefore be seen as one possible explanation for the peacefulness of democracies.

However, others argue that these results might not be related to parliamentary involvement, but instead to constitutional restrictions (Lagassé & Mello, 2018). Wagner (2018) has also found "modest evidence" for a parliamentary peace (Wagner, 2018, p. 22). His results however suggests that this peace depends on the context and the character of the military operation, as the parliamentary constraints can be weakened if the mission is related to alliance politics (Wagner, 2018).

4.3 Filling the Research Gap

The literature review has presented the status quo on the research on interventions and severity, as well as the research frontier on parliamentary war powers. This section has therefore been a review of the different areas of research that my thesis will be able to contribute to. The literature on interventions mostly focuses on what makes intervention likely and whether interventions work. The conflict research on severity looks at the factors that determine the severity of conflict, and how interventions shape this conflict dynamic. The parliamentary war power literature focuses on the role of parliaments in democracies, the variation between countries, what factors influence the level of agreement and whether there exists a parliamentary peace. However, there seems to be a research gap to fill when it comes to the connection of parliamentary war powers in deployment decisions with conflict characteristics and dynamics, such as severity.

This thesis can help shed some light on the explicit justification of intervention, versus the actual practice. It can also contribute to the debate on what factors determine the likelihood of intervention, by examining the agreement level in deployment decisions. There is a lot of research on why states choose to intervene, but not a lot is known about whether this is reflected in the national decision-making process and the level of agreement between the members of parliament. Aydin (2010) remarks in her article that there is a complex relationship between intervention and civil war dynamics, and that the empirical literature so far has mostly focused on how third parties influence the conflict processes. There is less focus on the possibility that the decision-making of states is based on “what they observe inside the conflict”, and Aydin states that “researchers will benefit from exploring a two-way relationship” (Aydin, 2010, p. 64). This thesis can contribute to this as well.

5. Assumptions and Hypotheses

The theoretical framework and empirical evidence from the literature review provide the foundation for what I expect to find when examining the relationship between conflict severity and the level of agreement in parliamentary deployment decisions. In the following, I present my expected hypotheses.

The just war-tradition as my theoretical framework has provided me with expectations for the moral justification of interventions, as it leads to the assumption that the protection of human life should constitute an important part of the decision to deploy troops. The states in the dataset are democracies with parliamentary constraints, and I argue that there is an expectation that these democracies both have a respect of state sovereignty and a hesitance to put their own soldiers at risk. This should make the threshold high for intervening in other states' affairs and thus some level of severity should be required to make it morally just to intervene.

My main hypothesis is based on the moral justification assumed to lie behind the decision to deploy troops. It is also based on some of the findings from the literature review, as some researchers have found a higher likelihood of intervention in conflicts with a higher number of battle-related deaths, for states as well as the UN, and that both of these types of actors seem concerned with the humanitarian aspect of conflicts (Aydin, 2010; Benson & Gizelis, 2020; Cordell et al., 2021; Stojek & Tir, 2015).

H1: The more severe the conflict is, the higher the level of agreement in deployment decisions

However, determining the true purpose of an intervention only based on the explicit justification can be difficult. Even though humanitarian concerns are explicitly referenced, the actual reasons for intervention might be completely different and the actual motivations may never be uncovered.

The literature review on intervention and conflict research has presented me with empirical evidence, both in favor and against my main hypothesis, of what actually matters when states or international organizations decide to intervene. I have chosen to include some of these as control variables in my regression analysis, as they can provide information on other factors that we can assume will also influence the voting pattern in parliaments. It will also be interesting to examine whether the same factors that make interventions more likely also influence the level of political agreement in deployment decisions.

Economy seems to be a matter of importance either way. Research has found that interventions are more likely in poor countries, because of the perceived lack of ability and resources to handle conflict situations on their own (Stojek & Tir, 2015). But at the same time, economic interests in the target state also make interventions more likely. This means that the GDP per capita either can show a higher or lower degree of agreement in deployment decisions, depending on what motivates the intervening actor. In line with the just war-theory however, the second hypothesis is that:

H2: The poorer the country in conflict is, the more likely intervention is – and thus the higher the level of agreement should be

Another proxy for regional interests can be the presence of oil in the target country, as it is expected that states are more likely to intervene in civil war countries with oil reserves (Aydin, 2010; Hannigan, 2019).

H3: The higher the oil rents percentage of GDP, the higher the level of agreement

I also control for institutional influences that can affect how the members of parliament vote (Ostermann & Wagner, 2023). Alliances can impact the will to and possibilities for participation, and the requirements of alliances can also help overcome obstacles placed on the executive by the parliament (Coticchia & Moro, 2020). Past research has indicated that especially the preferences of the five permanent members of the Security Council are influential when it comes to mandate renewal (Cordell et al., 2021). Cordell et al. thinks that this, by inference, should mean that it should be influential on the initial authorization as well. Smaller countries lack “pivot power” or leverage when it comes to influencing the decisions or troop provision (Cordell et al., 2021, p. 141).

Even though this research is about the authorization of peacekeeping missions in the UN, these factors could influence whether a country has a high or low level of agreement on a national level, when it comes to decisions to deploy troops. Membership in the Security

Council could both increase the willingness and the possibility to deploy troops or contribute in other ways, and the feeling of having to follow the lead of the UN on the matter.

H4: Membership in an alliance makes a higher degree of agreement more likely

H5: Membership in the UNSC makes a higher degree of agreement more likely

6. Research Design

In this chapter I present the method and research design, and the two main datasets that the analysis is based on. I introduce the dependent variable, as well as the main independent variable and control variables. I explain how they are operationalized and present descriptive statistics. As the main dataset has required quite a lot of modifications, the approach and the choices of which observations to include and not include will be commented on and justified throughout the chapter. Following that is a discussion of the model assumptions, as well as the reliability, validity and generalizability of the design.

6.1 Method

To answer my research question of *how conflict severity influences the level of agreement in votes on deployment in military interventions*, I have chosen a quantitative approach. This is the best way to test my assumptions across a large number of cases. I will evaluate my hypotheses using a large-N dataset, which is essentially based on two different datasets. A lot of the research on parliamentary war powers are case studies of different countries, and there has been a lack of large, quantitative studies (Ostermann & Wagner, 2023). The Parliamentary Deployment Votes Database (PDVD) is Ostermann et al.'s contribution to filling this gap and providing information on support/opposition to deployments in 21 different democracies. I want to take advantage of this contribution and combine it with information on conflict severity, thus contributing to expanding the knowledge on parliamentary deployment decisions. PDVD is the dataset that provides me with my dependent variable, and some of the control variables.

I use a multiple linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between my dependent and my independent variables. My model is based on Ordinary Least Squares (OLS), with variables from my literature review and hypotheses. The goal for this analysis is to get as good as possible explanations for what influences the variance in the level of parliamentary agreement (Skog, 2021, p. 258f). To be able to trust the estimates from this analysis, some assumptions must be met (Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2017, p.134). I will get back to how my model is doing on these tests later in this chapter. As there are more than one observation (vote) per date per country, it is not a panel. But as I will get back to later in this chapter, I have clustered together the votes that have happened on the same date in the same country, as they are presumed not to be independent of each other.

6.2 Data

6.2.1 Dependent Variable

My dependent variable, in other words what I want to explain, is the level of agreement among the members of parliament in votes about intervention. I have chosen to use the variable "Support Intervention" as the measure of agreement. This variable represents the share of votes in favor of a military mission, and "*is equal to Share_yes_votes_parl if support_sponsored_vote =1 and equal to Share_no_votes_parl if support_sponsored_vote = 0*" (Ostermann et al., 2021). This means that the higher the value of the Support Intervention-variable is, the higher the level of agreement. However, this variable does not take into account the share of abstentions, only the votes for and against the military mission. To make the coefficients easier to interpret, I have chosen to multiply it by 100, so the variable shows a number between 0 and 100 instead of between 0 and 1[1].

The dependent variable comes from Version 3 of the Parliamentary Deployment Votes Database (PDVD), which includes data on decisions about deployment of armed forces in 21 countries with parliamentary involvement in such decisions for the period 1990 to 2019 (Ostermann et al., 2021). The database comes with two datasets; one dataset with information about 1022 deployment votes and one dataset with information about how 301 different parties in these countries have voted. I have chosen to use the first dataset (on the parliamentary level), without the specific party-political voting behavior. This dataset, called PDVD-votes, provides information on the degree of support/contestation about deployment decisions in the national parliaments, and thus information about the "internal politics of liberal democracies' interventionism" (Ostermann & Wagner, 2023, p. 2).

The 21 countries in the dataset are chosen because they are liberal democracies in the Global

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[1] Alternatively, the dependent variable could be dichotomized so I could run a logistic regression, for example divided by over and under 50 percent agreement. This would however require a theoretical divide, perhaps based on the procedure of required agreement which may be different in each country. This would also mean that I could risk losing information about the nuances.

North, which is interesting because of their role in military interventions after the Cold War[2]. The authors specify two criteria they used for selecting countries to include in the database; that they wanted to cover "the main regions and sub-regions of the Global North" and that they wanted variance related to the factors identified to influence decisions about the use of force, like military capabilities, (non)-membership in a military alliance and the political system (Ostermann & Wagner, 2023, p. 2). The list of these countries is included in the appendix (10.1).

Half of the votes in this dataset are from Western European countries, and almost 30 % are from post-communist Eastern or Southeastern countries in Europe (Ostermann & Wagner, 2023, p. 4). The average level of support varies a lot from country to country. In Croatia and Spain, the average support of a deployment decision is over 95 %, while in Japan, Australia, the US, Canada and Turkey, these decisions are much more contested (Ostermann & Wagner, 2023, p. 7).

The Parliamentary Deployment Vote Database includes a list of missions, which I used for deciding which missions to include and exclude in my own analysis. It was important to be able to link the deployment votes to specific countries, and thus to the conflict severity in the corresponding country from the BRD-dataset. This is why missions related to the "war on terror", anti-piracy, humanitarian aid in natural disasters, as well as other missions where the country of deployment was unspecified, were excluded from the dataset I ended up using. This was based on a qualitative consideration that had to be done in each case, but I attempted to include as many missions as possible. As I only wanted to include the deployment of troops into active conflict zones, the few missions in Albania, Cyprus and in the Balkans in the 2000s were excluded as well. The list of missions which my analysis is based on is included in the appendix (10.2).

The parliamentary votes-dataset included both votes done on single missions, as well as multiple missions in one vote. Multiple missions in the same vote means the same level of agreement in different missions. This was accounted for by clustering the observations based on the voting country and date of vote in the regression. For instances where the troops were deployed to multiple countries, such as RCA/Chad, a separate observation was added for each of the two countries. I also excluded the few withdrawal votes in the PDVD, as it must be presumed that votes for pulling out troops have a different consideration and mechanism for agreement than the votes for the deployment of troops.

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[2] Much of the theory and literature is based on Western democracies, while the dataset contains information about countries in the "Global North", which also includes Australia, Japan and South Korea. While a discussion about the degree of overlap between these two categories can be had, I have chosen not to pursue this further, as there is reason to believe that the moral and legal considerations have had an influence on all the democracies in the Global North.

6.2.2 Independent Variable

My main independent variable is the severity of the conflict where deployment/intervention would have happened, and I measure this in the number of battle-related deaths. The variable lists the number of battle deaths per country per year and goes from 0 to 72 006 (using the best estimate-variable). To make the coefficients easier to interpret, I have chosen to divide it by 1000, so that each unit change means "per thousand battle-related deaths".

Using battle-related deaths to measure conflict severity is supported by much of the literature presented in section 4.1.2. The independent variable comes from the dyadic version of the Battle-related Deaths dataset (BRD) by UCDP (version 22.1) (Davies et al., 2022; Pettersson, 2022a). The dataset is based on UCDP's definition of armed conflict, as:

> *a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory over which the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, has resulted in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year*. (Pettersson, 2022a, p. 4)

Battle-related deaths are deaths caused by the warring parties in an "incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory" and which can be directly related to combat, such as fighting in the battlefield, guerilla activities, bombardments of military bases, cities, etc. Both military and civilian fatalities are counted. It is important to remember that battle-related deaths (direct deaths) are not the same as war-related deaths (direct and indirect deaths). As such, there is a high threshold for coding something as a battle-related death. Indirect consequences are not taken into account. The estimate of the number of battle-related deaths will not necessarily represent the severity perfectly. The rule of estimation is moderation, and all deaths have to be verified to be included in the dataset. Because of the uncertainty of reports from conflict areas, there are three estimates per year. They are the best (most reliable) estimate, the lowest estimate and the highest estimate (Pettersson, 2022a). I have chosen to base the main models on the best estimate, as this is the most reliable one. I have conducted robustness checks with the high and low estimates of battle-related deaths.

I could alternatively have used the One-sided Violence (OSV) dataset from UCDP as a measure of the severity of conflicts. Both datasets have been used as a measurement of conflict severity/intensity in previous literature. While BRD gives us information about fatalities that can be directly tied to combat, OSV provides information about "intentional attacks on civilians by governments or formally organized armed groups" (Pettersson, 2022b). But the BRD has a location-variable that can be used, and OSV does not. This fact, plus the support of using battle-related deaths as a measurement from many of the articles on severity, made me choose the BRD-dataset.

I have chosen to connect the data on deployments and severity on a country level, not on a conflict level. While this is less precise, the job of connecting them on a conflict level would be way too comprehensive for this thesis. I therefore leave this up to future research. The names of the countries where troops are deployed are the same as their name in the BRD-dataset. For deployments to a border conflict, the "country of deployment" includes both of the involved countries, for example "Eritrea, Ethiopia" instead of "Eritrea" and "Ethiopia" by themselves. This is because the BRD-dataset uses these combined names for border conflicts, and this ensured that the vote was connected with the correct conflict severity-measurement. Sahel had to be constructed as a group, as this mission is deployed in a large area and with five participating countries in the region. I chose to name the country of deployment "Sahel" and summed up the battle-related deaths from the related countries (Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad and Mauritania) into this group.

6.2.3 Control Variables

My control variables include factors that can also influence the deployment decisions. Some variables are linked to the intervening country, others are linked to the country of deployment. The reasoning behind the inclusion of these variables was presented in Chapter 5.

GDP per capita – I include a control variable to see whether agreement varies with the level of wealth in the target country. I found this variable in the World Development Indicator DataBank (World Bank, 2023). I chose to use the variable called GDP per capita (in constant

2015 US$), to make sure that the size of the country will not affect the score. For the countries with two or more countries in the location name, I added the value of each of the countries together and divided by the number of countries. This was done for Eritrea/Ethiopia, India/Pakistan, Iraq/Kuwait, and the five countries related to Sahel (Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad and Mauritania). Alternatively, I could have chosen to include only the country where most of the intervention happened, or the poorest of the countries. By adding and dividing the values of the different countries, the average value of the GDP per capita is less precise, but I avoid the selection bias I would have encountered if I chose the alternative approach. For the values missing from one of the countries, I used the value from the other country for that year. I have chosen to log transform this variable, because of skewness. A square term of this variable is included in Model 3, as there is a slight curvilinear relationship between GDP per capita and the level of parliamentary agreement.

Oil rents (as percentage of GDP) is also included as a control variable, and comes from the World Development Indicator DataBank as well (World Bank, 2023). I had to do the same with this variable as with the GDP-variable; for the conflicts with two or more countries in the location name, meaning Eritrea/Ethiopia, India/Pakistan, Iraq/Kuwait and Sahel, the values were added up and divided by the number of countries. The square term of this variable is included in Model 3, as there is also here a slight curvilinear effect.

Membership in an alliance can affect the will and possibility of contributing, and thus also the level of agreement among parliament members. This variable is already included in the PDVD-dataset, and is dummy coded 1 if the country voting is a member of a military alliance, like NATO or bilateral defense agreements, and 0 if they are not (Ostermann et al., 2021).

Membership in UNSC as a control variable can also contribute to shedding light on institutional influences on parliamentary agreement. As the alliance-variable above, this one is also included in the PDVD-dataset, and is dummy coded 1 if the country is a member of the UN Security Council at the time of the vote, and 0 if it is not (Ostermann et al., 2021).

Extension vote – this control variable indicates whether the parliamentary vote concerns a new mission or an extension of an already ongoing mission. It could be assumed that this influences the level of agreement, for example that the level of agreement is higher when troops are already deployed in a conflict. This is also included in the PDVD-dataset and is coded as 1 if the vote concerns an extension and 0 if it is not.

Region (area of deployment) is included as a control variable as part of the robustness check. There is a lack of theoretical foundation for this control variable, but there is a possibility that the geographical (and geopolitical) context matters for the level of agreement. This variable is already in the original PDVD, and I have based my categories on the authors' assessment. They have split the locations into six different regional groups: Afghanistan, Africa, Asia (other than Afghanistan), Balkans, Caribbean and the Middle East.

There are many other possible control variables from the literature, both connected to the intervening state and the state where the intervention happens, depending on the research area. As my review of the literature showed, many different explanations have been explored for increasing or decreasing the likelihood of intervention, like the strength of the government and army (military capabilities), trade ties or FDI, earlier involvement in the conflict area, either by a state, a great power or an international organization. In the end, it often comes down to a low cost/high reward-consideration. This would be difficult to find a proxy for. The factors taken into consideration for deciding to intervene may differ between states and international organizations. As my thesis is based on the deployment decisions of different democracies with parliamentary constraints, I have chosen the control variables I have found the most relevant for these instances.

Descriptive Statistics (N = 1110)

	Mean/Prop.	SD	Min.	Max.	Median
Support for intervention	84.04	14.33	9.33	100.00	87.77
Battle-related deaths per 1000	3.20	8.29	.00	72.01	.14
Membership in Alliance (dichotomous)	.90	.30	.00	1.00	1.00
Membership in UNSC (dichotomous)	.15	.35	.00	1.00	.00
Extension vote (dichotomous)	.79	.41	.00	1.00	1.00
Logged GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD)	7.57	1.30	5.41	10.59	7.71
Oil rents percentage of GDP	6.94	16.21	.00	65.16	.01

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of dependent and independent variables

6.3 Model Assumptions

A source to bias and inefficiency is when alternative explanations are not tested, for example because they are unknown to us. If an omitted variable correlates with the independent variable and has an effect on the dependent variable, our lack of control will lead to biased estimates (and interpretations) about the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Variables that are not taken into account, but still influence the relationship we try to explain are called confounding factors. They make it seem like there is a causal relationship between two variables, even though the correlation is only spurious. This is why I have to consider whether any other factors can influence the level of agreement, and thus make it seem like there is a causal relationship between my independent and dependent variables, even though there is none. I have included relevant control variables based on the literature review to try to eliminate the possibility of omitted variables, and I present possibilities for further research and improvements of the models by adding other possible explaining variables in Chapter 8.

According to Skog, the most important assumptions for linear regression are 1) that the relationship between the variables is linear, 2) that the residuals are homoscedastic, normally distributed and independent of each other (not autocorrelated) and 3) that the independent variable and the independent variable are uncorrelated with each other (Skog, 2021, p. 236). However, even with smaller violations of these assumptions, the OLS-estimator should be relatively robust to the degree that the results can be trusted (Midtbø, 2012, p. 105).

The first assumption is primarily a theoretical question about including all relevant variables and not include any variables without a theoretical or logical foundation (Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2017, p. 135). I have made two models – Model 2 is a "simple" multiple regression model without square terms, and Model 3 includes square terms for both GDP per capita and oil rents percentage of GDP. I have tested both models with *linktest*, to see whether they suffer from a misspecification problem. Both models pass this test, as *_hat* is significant and *_hatsq* is not significant. Neither of the models pass the Ramsey RESET test, which also tests for specification errors. The null hypothesis is that there are no specification errors, so the significant result may indicate that the model is not correctly specified. However, in large samples the null hypothesis can often be rejected even if the Ramsey RESET test indicates curvilinearity (Ringdal & Wiborg, 2017, p. 127).

The second assumption is connected to the residuals. I have included a cluster by group ID, so the votes are clustered on the country and date of vote. This is especially relevant for the observations where multiple missions are voted on in the same decision, so the agreement level in many cases has the same value for multiple missions on the same date. These observations are not independent of each other, which also makes the residuals not independent of each other. Clustering thus adjusts the standard errors and makes them robust. This means that while the standard errors are not independent of each other, the clustering relaxes the assumption of independence. Robust standard errors can also relax the assumption of normal distribution. Robust standard errors can therefore be more trustworthy (Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2017, p. 235). This does however make it not possible to run tests on heteroscedasticity on the residuals in Stata.

It is also important that there is an absence of multicollinearity, in other words perfect correlations between variables (Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2017, p. 146). The first model passes the *VIF-test* and does not have a problem with multicollinearity. Because of the introduction of squared terms in the second model, this naturally leads to multicollinearity. But this is acceptable, as the second model is better because of these new variables (Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2017, p. 147).

Missing values can also be a source of skewness in results. In my model, I have 1110 observations, of the total of 1315 observations in the finished dataset. Most of them are related to missing information about the GDP and oil rents in the conflict years. This equals 15,59 percent missing and should not constitute a problem. As many of the missing values are connected to the same countries, this could lead to biased results. Both Yemen and East Timor are included in the list of missions but are excluded from the regression model because of missing values.

6.4 Reliability and Validity

In scientific research, we often separate between systematic and non-systematic (random) measurement errors. Random measurement errors do not follow a pattern, and do not constitute a big problem, because there is usually a lack of correlation between the error and other variables. Systematic measurement errors are a bigger problem, because they follow a pattern and can make us draw wrong conclusions about causal relationships. This is why we often consider the validity and the reliability of our research. Validity is the assessment of whether our measurements actually measure what we try to explain, and reliability reflects whether different measurements of the same phenomenon would give the same results (King et al., 2021, p. 24). Our measurements should also correspond to other measurements of the same concept.

The choice of using battle-related deaths as a measurement of severity is theoretically justified as a valid measurement, and there is a high threshold for deaths being included, which means that we can trust the numbers from UCDP. The measurement of the level of agreement comes from a formula based on yes-votes, no-votes and abstentions. One aspect of uncertainty is however tied to the measurement of agreement where multiple missions were voted on in the same round, as this leads to the same level of agreement for all missions. The clustering presented earlier is used to take this into account. Otherwise, the measurements of the different variables are very straightforward and standardized. They should both be easy to use to get the same results with the same data, and easy to replicate for future measurements. Thus, the reliability and the internal validity is assessed to be relatively good.

The fact that this dataset includes information on the voting behavior in 21 different democratic countries makes it a good source for my thesis. My hypothesis is based on the fact that democracies both should have respect for the sovereignty of other states, and a high threshold for sending their own soldiers into dangerous areas. The fact that deployment decisions are some of the most important decisions a state can make in times of peace makes it interesting to know whether this is reflected in the decision-making process. The PDVD is a good start for examining this. However, this only provides me with information about these countries, and not on other democracies who are not included in the database. As the literature review showed, democracies are not a homogeneous group and should not be researched as such (Dieterich et al., 2015), which makes it reasonable to look specifically at countries with parliamentary war powers. However, there does exist other countries with parliamentary constraints who are not included in this database, like Sweden (Bringa, 2021). They can be said to be comparable because of some level of similarity in the structure of national decision-making, and the results could be generalized to apply to them as well. This is important to remember when it comes to the external validity (generalizability) of the research.

It might also be possible that the hypotheses based on the literature apply to states in general, but not specifically to democracies with parliamentary constraints on deployment decisions. A reasonable assumption is that politicians in countries where the parliament and the people can monitor the missions and hold the responsible politicians accountable, have a higher threshold for going to “unjust” interventions. Based on this sample of only a few democracies with parliamentary war powers, the hypotheses can only be disproved for countries with such constraints, and not those without. The sample is also broader than most of the literature, as it includes both civil wars and interstate conflicts. It includes both NATO- and UN-missions as well as other unilateral, bilateral or multilateral interventions. This could be a weakness, as it may get rid of some of the nuances in the decision-making process. But it could also be a strength, as it is more generalizable in terms of understanding when it is agreed upon to use force abroad.

7. Results

In this chapter I present the statistical analysis and discuss the interpretation and implications of the results in light of the assumptions and hypotheses introduced in Chapter 5. I end the chapter with a consideration of the models' robustness, in order to increase the possibility of causal inference based on the models.

VARIABLES Dep var: Support intervention	(1)	(2)	(3)
Battle-related deaths per 1000	-0.377***	-0.345***	-0.356***
	(0.118)	(0.122)	(0.123)
Membership Alliance (dichotomous)		-5.741***	-5.801***
		(1.765)	(1.709)
Membership UNSC (dichotomous)		2.839	2.767
		(2.017)	(2.004)
Logged GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD)		0.501	8.210***
		(0.339)	(2.687)
Square term logged GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD)			-0.484***
			(0.157)
Oil rents percentage of GDP		-0.184***	0.099
		(0.033)	(0.115)
Square term oil rents percentage of GDP			-0.006***
			(0.002)
Extension vote (dichotomous)		-0.761	-0.362
		(1.429)	(1.425)
Constant	85.251***	87.971***	57.776***
	(0.968)	(2.888)	(10.807)
Observations	1,110	1,110	1,110
R-squared	0.048	0.107	0.119

Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Table 2: Bivariate (1) and multivariate (2 and 3) linear regression models

In the table above, the linear regression models are presented. The first one is a bivariate regression model with only the dependent (level of agreement) and main independent variable (battle-related deaths) included. According to this model, the effect of conflict severity on the level of agreement is negative and statistically significant. This means that this model does not support the main hypothesis. However, no other variables are controlled for. This model is therefore of limited importance for the analysis.

The second model ("Model 2") is the "simplest" version of the multilinear regression, without square terms among the control variables. The third and final model ("Model 3") in the table is the version of the multilinear regression where square terms are included for both oil rents percentage and GDP per capita. The R-squared informs us about how much of the variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the model (Skog, 2021, p. 224). In other words, this is the explanatory power of the model. While the R-squared of Model 2 is 10,7 percent, the R-squared of Model 3 is 11,9 percent. This increase is natural, as more independent variables are added. This tells us that 11,9 percent of the variation in the level of agreement can be explained by Model 3. In the following, I present the coefficients and p-values of the independent and control variables, as well as discuss some possible explanations for these results.

The coefficient for battle-related deaths, my main independent variable, is negative and statistically significant. In Model 3, the level of agreement decreases with 0.356 on a scale from 0 to 100 per thousand battle-related deaths. This indicates that in my models, the level of agreement is actually lower the higher the number of deaths gets. This is the complete opposite from the expectation in my main hypothesis (H1). The figure below shows the predictive margins for the effect of battle-related deaths on the support for intervention. It shows a clear decrease of support for the intervention with increasing numbers of battle-related deaths. The predictive margins plot also show that the model can predict the level of agreement relatively well when the number of deaths is low, but that there is more uncertainty of the agreement the higher the number of deaths is. This effect is the same in all three of the models. These results imply that parliament members are less likely to agree to an intervention in conflicts of high severity. This does not necessarily mean that humanitarian considerations are not part of the debate. Conflicts with a high number of battle-related casualties, and thus a higher level of conflict severity, can also mean that the dangers to the lives of the potentially deployed troops are larger. The lower level of agreement might mean that the considerations between costs and potential success, as well as the potential risks to their own citizens lives, make these decisions hard. The possibility of success, or even making a positive impact, might also make parliament members hesitant to commit troops to such interventions. However, these results may also imply that other motivations matter more than humanitarian concerns in the national decision-making. The discussion about the implication of these results will continue in Chapter 8. The fact that the uncertainty is relatively high in the most severe conflicts is probably caused by the fact that very few observations have such large numbers of deaths.

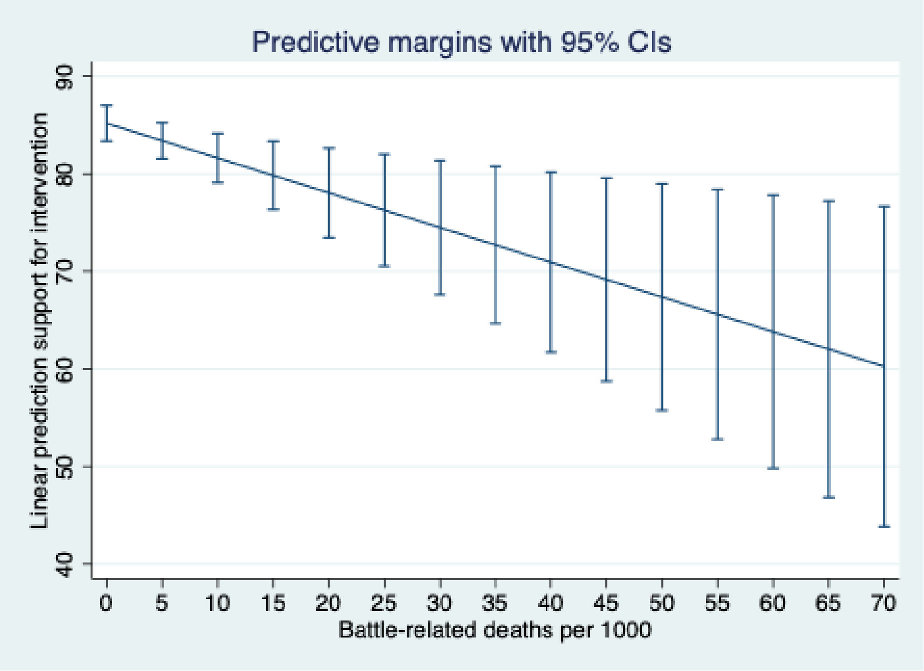

Figure 1: Predictive margins for battle-related deaths per 1000 and support for intervention

The coefficient for alliance membership shows that the relationship between being in a military alliance and the level of agreement is also negative. This variable is dichotomous, which means that membership leads to 5.801 units less agreement (on a scale from 0 to 100) in deployment decisions in Model 3. This coefficient is statistically significant. As I expected alliance membership to result in a higher level of agreement, this result is also opposite of the hypothesis (H4). This is interesting, because it leads us to reexamine the effect of institutional influence on the attitudes in the parliament. The fact that membership in a military alliance leads to less agreement might be because deployment debates in these situations are more politicized. It is possible that the expectation of “showing up and contributing” as an ally leads to more focus among politicians who disagree with the alliance in the first place, and that they are more willing to contest the decisions. It might also be influenced by the fact that some alliance-based interventions lack a UN-mandate, which can lead to less popular interventions, like the NATO-intervention in Kosovo in 1999. It might also seem more important to oppose deployment decisions as a member of parliament when the expectation is that the intervention is happening anyway, and the question is just whether national resources should be used to participate.

Moving on to the next institutional influence-factor, the coefficient for the UNSC-membership shows a positive relationship between being in the UNSC at the time of the vote and the level of agreement. As this is also a dichotomous variable, Model 3 shows that membership in the UNSC leads to higher agreement. This result is in line with my hypothesis about a positive relationship (H5), but as this coefficient is not statistically significant, we cannot draw any conclusions from it.

For GDP per capita, my hypothesis based on the just war-tradition was that poorer countries have a higher chance of intervention and that the level of agreement thus should be higher, the lower the GDP per capita is (H2). I also pointed out that this variable could go in either direction, as the literature shows that the economic interests of the intervening countries can influence the decision to intervene. If a higher GDP per capita means that intervening countries have more economic interests in these conflict countries, this could lead to a higher level of agreement for deployment in richer countries. Model 2 shows a negative but not statistically significant coefficient for the log transformed GDP per capita. Model 3 introduces a square term for GPD per capita, and this coefficient is statistically significant. This implies a curvilinear relationship between GDP per capita and the level of agreement. When plotting the margins, the predictions show that the agreement level is predicted to be higher for rich countries, unless they are "very" rich because then it decreases again. It seems interesting that the agreement should increase up to a certain point. It might mean that countries with the highest number of GDP per capita either seem able to handle conflict situations on their own, or that that there is an unwillingness among parliament members to get involved in their internal affairs. This result does in other words not support the hypothesis (H2).

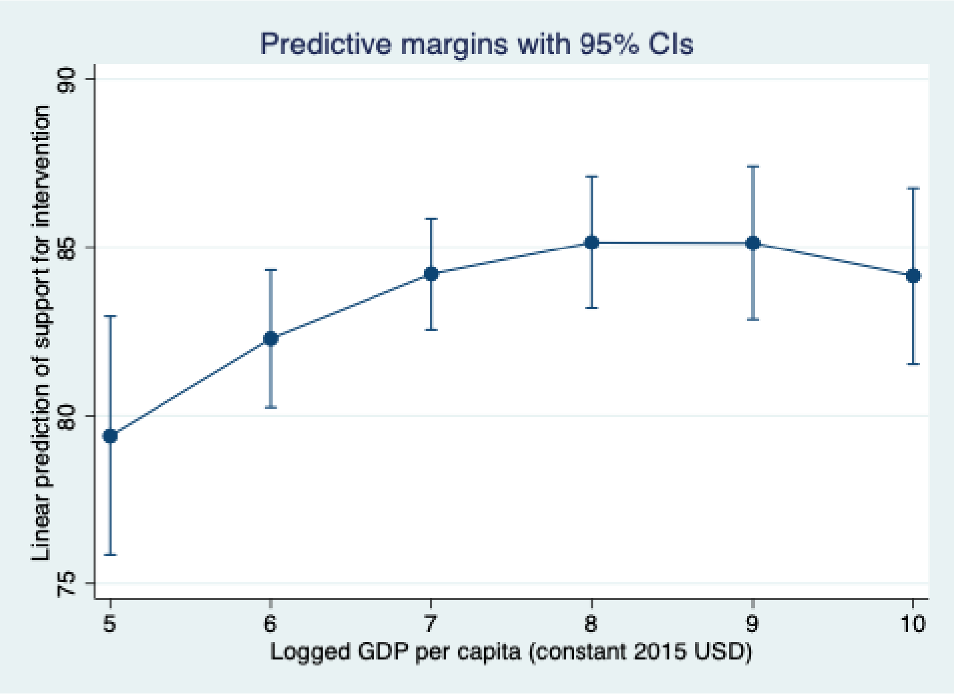

Figure 2: Predictive margins for logged GDP per capita and support for intervention

For the presence of oil in the target countries, my hypothesis was also that there should be a positive relationship between higher oil rents and higher levels of agreement. This was based on the literature saying that more oil-rich countries have a higher likelihood of intervention. However, Model 2 shows a negative effect of oil rents percentage of GDP on the level of agreement and does therefore not support the hypothesis (H3). Per unit increase in the independent variable, the level of agreement decreases by .184 units. This coefficient is statistically significant. This result could imply that it is more politically “sensitive” to go into oil-rich countries. Especially in recent times, this has been criticized as a motive hidden behind humanitarian justifications, like the accusation that the US intervened in Iraq because they were after their oil (Stojek & Tir, 2015).

Model 3 introduces a square term for oil rents percentage of GDP as well, and this coefficient is statistically significant. Also here, the model implies a slight curvilinear relationship between oil rents and the level of agreement. The predictions in the margins plot show that the agreement level goes very slightly up, until a point around 10 percent, and then decreases. However, the difference among the countries with the lowest oil rents percentage is not very large.

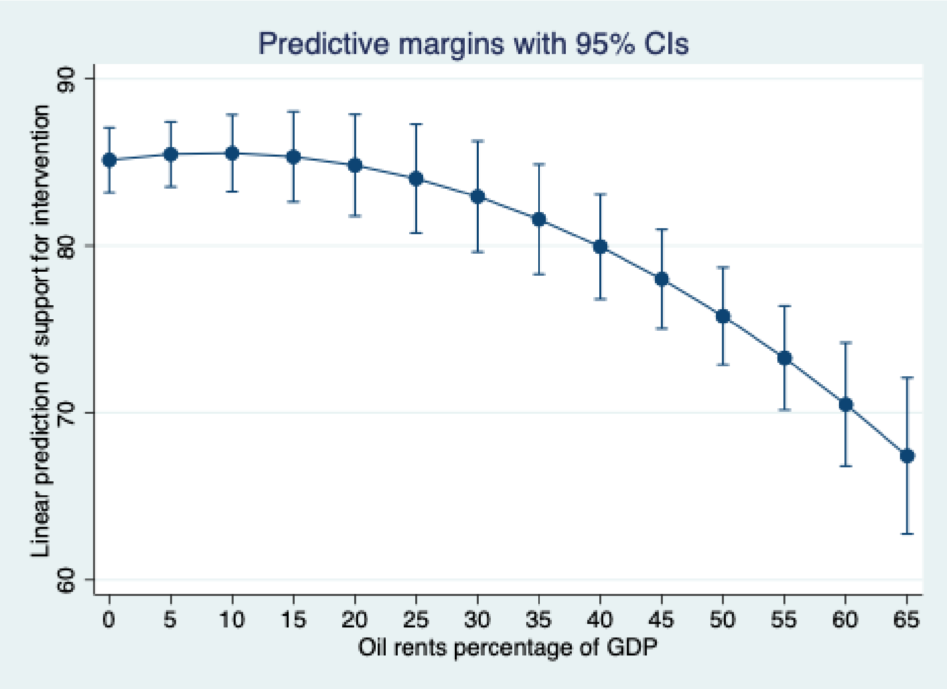

Figure 3: Predictive margins for oil rents percentage of GDP and support for intervention

And finally, the coefficient for the variable extension vote is also negative, which implies that according to the models there is actually a higher level of agreement in first time-decisions than in votes over the extension of an ongoing mission. This is also the opposite of my expectation. Maybe this implies that when resources are already being used on a mission, and the possibility of success is unclear, there is more room for disagreement about how the resources are spent. However, this coefficient is not statistically significant, and we cannot draw any conclusions about this effect.

7.1 Robustness

Robustness tests are a strategy of causal inference to ensure a higher level of certainty about the effects (Gerring, 2020). I have tested the models for robustness in different ways, by switching out or adding variables. The fact that most of the models show the coefficients going in the same directions as the main model (Model 3), implies that the results to a certain degree are robust and that inferences can be drawn from them. The models from these robustness checks are included in the appendix (10.3).

Switching out the independent variable battle-related deaths, to the high estimate (per 1000 deaths) or low estimate (per 1000 deaths) led to no change from Model 3.

The work that I did by attempting to improve the model by introducing square terms can also count as a form of robustness check. In this step I made four models – one with no square terms (Model 2), one with only a square term for GDP per capita, one with only a square term for oil rents and one with both square terms (Model 3). I examined the direction of the coefficients and the p-value for each of the four models. All of the coefficients kept the direction they had in Model 2 and 3, and the statistically significant coefficients stayed significant, while the statistically non-significant coefficients stayed non-significant. This implies that the model's estimates are relatively robust.

I also tried controlling for the year of the vote, both by using year as a categorical and as a continuous variable, to see whether there are some explaining factors that do not have to do with time, as time is kept constant. There was no change in coefficients or the statistical significance from Model 3, which is a good sign. I could potentially have tried to introduce a lag for year on the independent variable, because the model does not have a way of knowing whether the vote or the largest part of the number of deaths comes first in time. A deadly year could mean more agreement in the votes the following year. This could potentially lead to the wrong assumptions about causality, if the model does not take into account what comes first. As this dataset contains observations for the same voting country on the same dates, it cannot be treated as panel data. Introducing a lagged independent variable was therefore deemed beyond the scope of this thesis. In addition, this could potentially lead to a two year gap between deaths and the vote, if the majority of deaths happened early in year 1, and the vote was held in the end of year 2. And as we have to assume that there is some sort of urgency in such deployment decisions, this lag could potentially also give me wrong results.

I tried running the regression with a control variable for region as a robustness check, both with the Middle East (as the largest group) as a reference category. The only change was that the coefficient for oil rents became not statistically significant. I also tried running the regression with the voting country as a control variable. I first used Germany as a reference group, as they are known for having the strongest parliament (Coticchia & Moro, 2020). Then I tried it with Italy as the reference category, as they were the largest group in the observations. These both have the same three consequences; the military alliance-variable becomes positive and statistically significant, the square term for GDP becomes not statistically significant and the extension vote-variable becomes positive, but still not statistically significant. This implies that it could be interesting to run a regression with fixed effects, as this would eliminate the variation between the voting countries and only look at the variation within them. But seeing as there are some voting countries with very few observations, the variation in the independent variable within countries is potentially not large enough to run a regression with fixed effect.

8. Discussion

The purpose of this thesis is to answer the research question: *how does conflict severity influence the level of agreement in votes on deployment in military interventions?* In this chapter I discuss what the results from the empirical analysis can imply regarding the research question. I discuss some possible mechanisms influencing the level of parliamentary agreement, as well as implications for the legitimacy of deployment decisions. I consider different limits to the study, as well as suggest some possibilities for further research. I conclude with a summary of my thesis as well as my contribution to this area of research.

The models presented in Chapter 7 do not support either the main hypothesis or the other assumptions based on the theory and literature. The main assumption of this thesis is that a higher number of battle-related deaths should lead to a higher level of parliamentary agreement. Based on the models, the results show that conflict severity has a statistically significant negative effect on the level of parliamentary agreement. In other words, a larger number of battle-related deaths seems to lead to a lower degree of agreement in the national decision-making process. But as the predictive margins plot (Figure 1) shows, the uncertainty is relatively high for the deadliest conflicts. The results for being a member of the UNSC, as well as extension votes, were not statistically significant. However, the results for membership in a military alliance and both the square terms for GDP per capita and oil rents percentage of GDP were statistically significant, which could mean that the factors influencing parliamentary voting behavior are more nuanced than first assumed. There could potentially be other mechanisms behind what builds parliamentary consensus that are not easily observed. The public and political debate, as well as the perception of both the severity and the likelihood of succeeding, may have an impact on whether members of parliament choose to disagree with a deployment decision.

According to the models the assumptions based on the just war-theory are not confirmed, and there does not seem to be a reflection of such humanitarian considerations in the national decision-making process. However, when the coefficients go the opposite way of our expectations, this could either be because of errors with the model and the estimates, or that the reality is different from our expectations. It is also important to remember that interventions are heterogeneous, as are the conflicts they try to influence (Aydin, 2010). The lack of support for the main hypothesis might be because the dataset does not include any variable for the content of the debate or the public perception of the conflict, which would be a difficult job to operationalize and measure to include in the model. Humanitarian concerns should not be that easily dismissed, as they are still reflected in explicit justification of interventions (Stojek & Tir, 2015, p. 356).

At the same time, the fact that such decisions are contested does still not mean that humanitarian considerations are not taken into account. There may be other reasons why the parliamentary decisions are contested, or interventions are hard to build consensus around, even though the conflict severity is high. There might be a discrepancy between the number of battle-related deaths and the perception of the actual conflict severity, which impacts the feeling of responsibility to intervene. And as discussed in Chapter 7, the risks in such conflicts may seem too high and the possibilities to succeed may seem too low when the conflict severity is high. These difficult considerations may be reflected in the parliamentary voting behavior, and actually cause a lower level of agreement. It is not only the violation of the principle of nonintervention that has to be justified. Politicians also have to justify sending their own citizens into dangerous conflict areas. This is in line with the emphasis that Aydin (2010) puts on strategy and political risks that politicians may face at home.

The just war-tradition presents different criteria for justifying war, and some of these criteria can be modified for interventions. Fixdal and Malnes (2011, p. 361) suggest that humanitarian interventions should have a just cause and intention, as well as protecting civilians. These criteria point in the direction of the main hypothesis. However, they also point out that interventions should have a reasonable chance of success and be a last resort. These criteria might actually imply a larger disagreement in deployment decisions, as it is not possible to answer whether they are fulfilled or not before choosing to intervene. The first three criteria suggest that urgent actions should be taken, while the last resort-criteria suggests the opposite.

However, there is also a possibility that the ones who believe humanitarian concerns are an important justification are being too “optimistic” about motivations behind intervention. Even though this is often used as an explicit reason for intervention, and the public expects the use of force to be based on moral reasoning (Klosek, 2020), other reasons might have more impact.

In other words, interests that are not related to the morality of the interventions, may have more to say for the level of agreement in the parliament. These interests may be more in line with the realist school of thought, which emphasizes national and security interests. The curvilinear relationship between the GDP per capita and the agreement level suggests that economic interests can have an impact. This is in line with the intervention literature that examines interventions in light of economic factors, like Klosek (2020). Aydin (2010) also points out the importance of strategy, and choosing easily manageable conflicts with potentially low costs, especially for countries with less resources. States could potentially also choose to deploy troops to gain a good reputation internationally, and not because of their moral duty to do so. And of course, other kinds of connections and proximity between countries could also matter, as the recent discussions around the Ukraine war have shown. The literature review presented some of the possible motivations based on realist thought, and even more exist. And also, the true motivations behind political decisions may take a long time to uncover, if they ever are (Duque et al., 2015).

The research on parliamentary war powers has provided insight about what mechanisms or motives may contribute to building parliamentary consensus in deployment decisions. These motives are missions in line with international law, missions with a humanitarian purpose, as well as national interests (such as security and economic interests) (Haesebrouck et al., 2022). Unfortunately, these mechanisms are difficult to distinguish from each other. It is probably not possible to control for these mechanisms separately, as they all go in the same direction. While the motivations are completely different (self-interest vs humanitarian concerns), they all seem to both increase the likelihood of intervention and the possibility for building a parliamentary consensus. They probably also influence each other as well, as the presence of human suffering may contribute with a plausible justification even if other concerns in reality play the biggest part in the consideration.

It is also important to keep in mind that some interventions are more contested than others, not necessarily based on the severity, but on the perception of the situation from both the public and the politicians. The Gulf War was especially contested in some countries, which makes the early 1990s look like it has a high degree of contestation. Support rose in the period after, with a larger number of “more consensual humanitarian and peacekeeping deployments” (Ostermann & Wagner, 2023, p. 7). Then the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999 lacked a UN mandate, which made it highly contested as well. The Iraq War in 2003, as well as many of the votes on the intervention in Afghanistan, have also been very contested in many of the participating states (Ostermann & Wagner, 2023).

There is also a trend of diminishing interventionism in Italy, because of an economic crisis and a reshaping of the political system caused by popular discontent. Recently, Italy has reduced the personnel deployed abroad, and not contributed to international missions like they usually have (Coticchia & Moro, 2020). And as the move from a unipolar to a multipolar world progresses, we may see a change in the norms surrounding interventions. Going from a world dominated by the US and its allies to a world with shifting power balance, pressure on economies and on democracies, the reluctancy to intervene may become more and more evident in the parliamentary debates. It is therefore possible that we will observe a change in the level of parliamentary agreement in the future.

It is important to remember that while battle-related deaths can be a good measure of severity, it does not take into account how dire the situation seems to the public. Both civilian deaths not related to combat, as well as indirect consequences, such as poverty, poor public health and child mortality rates, can also have severe impact on the civilian population (Lacina, 2006). It may be possible that this fact impacts the results of the analysis, as the number of battle-related deaths is not necessarily reflected in the political or public debate.

A consistent legal and moral basis for military action is important, as the lack of this can call into question the legitimacy of both international institutions and national decision-making. Many events, like Sierra Leone, Chechnya, East Timor and Kosovo, have shown that the international community has a limited ability to respond to humanitarian crises in an adequate way (Bruderlein, 2001, p. 221). Even though the international humanitarian law stands strong, many civilians throughout the world experience violence and brutality. In many cases no action is taken, and in others the actions has been “limited, selective, and subject to utilitarian calculations” (Bruderlein, 2001, p. 221). In other words, lack of action and the different response to humanitarian crises and conflicts can impact the legitimacy of interventions and of international and national institutions. This shows that the basis for the justification of interventions should be sound and applied similarly in comparable situations. If not, these decisions are easy to criticize from those who believe that sovereignty and nonintervention should be the primary principles, and that the West should stop intervening in the internal affairs of countries abroad. This may make it more difficult to get interventions authorized in the Security Council in the future, or to reach the necessary level of agreement in the national deployment decisions.

8.1 Possibilities for Further Research

Future research could explore the effect of the different types of missions and their aims, to see whether the mandate or explicit motive of the mission influences the level of agreement (Wagner, 2018). This could also help uncover some of the mechanisms at work behind contestation and consensus building. It would also be interesting to explore the variation in the strength of parliamentary powers between the intervening countries, for example by dividing the involvement of the parliament in such decisions into categories – from informal procedures for informing the parliament to formal parliamentary veto rights. Further research could also divide the missions into solicited versus unsolicited interventions, in other words separate the missions where the intervener is invited in and the missions where they show up uninvited. This could say something about how problematic such troop deployments are, in terms of violating the principle of sovereignty. Future research could also try to include a variable with information about whether the troops actually were deployed or not. This probably depends on each country's procedures and rules for parliamentary involvement in such decisions.

Further research could benefit from the many possibilities that the combination the PDV Database with UCDP-datasets opens up for. It would also be possible to disaggregate the data further, as UCDP-datasets include a conflict-ID. This means that even though it would take a lot of time, the data could be merged on a conflict-level and not only the country-level. This could contribute to an even more nuanced understanding of the connection between severity and the level of agreement, as the battle-related deaths would be connected on an even more specific level. Conflict duration is another part of the conflict dynamics that would be interesting to examine as an influence on the parliamentary agreement level. The Parliamentary Deployment Votes Database also includes a dataset on political parties, which could be combined to give even more information about the voting behavior of specific parties, and whether party-political preferences are related to conflict dynamics. The possibilities for expanding the dataset presented in this thesis are many and depend on the area of interest. As the literature review shows, there are many ongoing academic debates about the motivations and factors that make intervention more likely as well as a debate about the role of the parliament in foreign policy, where useful contributions can be made.

8.2 Conclusion

To my knowledge, this is the first time that the link between national decision-making and battle-related deaths has been made. To answer the research question of whether conflict severity influences the level of agreement in parliamentary deployment decisions, this thesis has combined two datasets that have not yet been combined before – The Parliamentary Deployment Votes Database and the Battle-related Deaths dataset from UCDP, which has been used as a measure of conflict severity in past studies. This led to regression models for examining the agreement level in 21 democracies in the Global North after the end of the Cold War, from 1990 to 2019. The thesis contributes to the effort to uncover some patterns in the justification of deployment on a national level, both when it comes to conflict and state characteristics as well as the motivations behind troop deployment that make agreement more or less likely. It can therefore be a contribution both to the parts of the debate in intervention literature concerning the likelihood and motivations for interventions, as well as expanding the literature on parliamentary war powers by also including conflict characteristics as a possible explanation for the level of agreement.

The main hypothesis was based on the just war-tradition, which has been influential on the Western moral and legal basis for considerations surrounding war and interventions, as well as the evolving norm of humanitarian concern as a legitimate reason to set aside the traditional principles of state sovereignty and nonintervention from the period after the Peace of Westphalia. This moral basis, combined with the increasing trend of military action by Western democracies and the possible trend of increasing parliamentary involvement in such decisions, led to the assumption that more severe conflicts should be easier to agree on deployments in.

However, the models do not support the assumption that intervening democracies have a higher level of agreement for deployment in conflicts where there is a higher number of battle-related deaths. According to the models, the effect of severity on agreement is actually negative, which means that the deployment decisions in more severe conflicts actually are more contested. Different reasons for this result have been discussed, like how these conflicts can involve a higher risk and thus more difficult decisions, or that the number of battle-related deaths might not be related to the perception of the severity. But the results might also imply that democracies, who we assume are looking for moral justifications for deploying troops, are not that concerned with the morality of these decisions. There is plausible reason to believe that other interests and concerns based in *Realpolitik* are what truly matter, in line with the realist view. Strategy based on considerations about low costs, low risks and high rewards might also be difficult to include in a model, even though they also matter (Aydin, 2010).

Even though the models do not support the main hypothesis, the debate about parliamentary consensus and contestation is interesting and relevant for the democratic control of armed forces. Examining it from a just war-viewpoint makes sense, given the importance of this tradition for the moral and legal thinking in Western and liberal democracies. Especially because these are the countries who have contributed to the evolution of interventionism since the 1990s. Research on the justification of deployment in national decision-making processes can have implications for how these debates should be presented in front of the parliament and for the parliament’s role in these decisions. The fact that many of the coefficients in the model go in the opposite direction of the expectations is also interesting and a good starting point for further analysis of the connection between conflicts dynamics and deployment decisions.

One of the strengths of this research design is that it provides an opportunity to examine the level of parliamentary agreement in democracies in the Global North, which should be relatively overlapping with the types of countries where we would expect to find the most influence by the just war-tradition. As this thesis is situated between intervention literature, conflict research and the growing literature on parliamentary war powers, it has interesting implications for all these research areas. However, there are also some limits to this research design, as this thesis is based on the available data and the limited time to construct the dataset. I have tried to include as many control variables as seems reasonable, considering the literature and the amount of time to recode variables to fit the dataset. Still, possible explanations can have been left out, like the ones mentioned in the previous discussion. The possibilities of including other variables like the ones mentioned in section 8.1 may help rectify this.

The full picture of what determines the level of agreement or contestation in parliamentary deployment decisions is complex and can depend on multiple different factors, both from conflict to conflict and at the same time. This thesis has contributed to the exploration of the possible connection between conflict severity and the level of agreement. Even though the results do not support the hypothesis that moral justification of interventions have a positive effect on the level of agreement, the results are interesting and opens possibilities for further research, as presented in section 8.1.

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10. Appendix

10.1 List of voting countries and deployment countries/regions

	Voting countries	No. of votes
1	Australia	2
2	Belgium	4
3	Canada	8
4	Croatia	100
5	Czech Republic	77
6	Denmark	45
7	Finland	14
8	France	18
9	Germany	139
10	Ireland	2
11	Italy	491
12	Japan	6
13	Lithuania	45
14	the Netherlands	9
15	South Korea	54
16	Romania	11
17	Slovakia	29
18	Spain	22
19	Turkey	12
20	United Kingdom	6
21	United States of America	16
		1110

	Conflict countries/regions	No. of votes
1	Afghanistan	233
2	Angola	2
3	Azerbaijan	1
4	Bosnia-Herzegovina	118
5	Central African Republic	32
6	Chad	20
7	Croatia	1
8	DR Congo (Zaire)	5
9	Eritrea, Ethiopia	10
10	Georgia	19
11	Haiti	10
12	India, Pakistan	16
13	Iraq	105
14	Iraq, Kuwait	14
15	Israel	96
16	Ivory Coast	4
17	Lebanon	83
18	Liberia	8
19	Libya	14
20	Mali	67
21	Morocco	25
22	Mozambique	2
23	North Macedonia	18
24	Rwanda	1
25	Sahel*	1
26	Serbia (Yugoslavia)**	93
27	Sierra Leone	3
28	Somalia	21
29	South Sudan	17
30	Sudan	52
31	Syria	18
32	Uganda	1
		1110

* = Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso

** = Kosovo

Table 3: List of countries

10.2 List of missions

	Mission name	Country of deployment	Region
1	Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
2	AFISMA (Mali)	Mali	Africa
3	Allied Harmony (North Macedonia)	North Macedonia	Balkans
4	Amber Fox (North Macedonia)	North Macedonia	Balkans
5	anti-Daesh (Iraq)	Iraq	Middle East
6	anti-Daesh (Iraq/Kuweit)	Iraq	Middle East
7	anti-Daesh (Iraq/Syria)	Iraq	Middle East
8	anti-Daesh (Syria)	Syria	Middle East
9	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Balkans
10	Darfur (Sudan)	Sudan	Africa
11	Eagle Eye (Kosovo)	Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Balkans
12	Eagle Eye (Kosovo) & OSCE mission (Kosovo)	Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Balkans
13	Eagle Eye (Kosovo) & sanctions	Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Balkans
14	Enduring Freedom	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
15	Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan)	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
16	Enduring Freedom (constructors, engineers - Afghanistan)	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
17	Essential Harvest (North Macedonia)	North Macedonia	Balkans
18	EUBAM Rafah (Israel/Gaza)	Israel	Middle East
19	EUFOR Althea (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Balkans
20	EUFOR Artemis (DRC)	DR Congo (Zaire)	Africa
21	EUFOR Chad/RCA	Central African Republic + Chad	Africa
22	EUFOR Concordia (North Macedonia)	North Macedonia	Balkans
23	EUMAM RCA (CAR)	Central African Republic	Africa
24	EUMM Georgia (Georgia)	Georgia	Asia (other than Afghanistan)
25	EUPM (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Balkans
26	EUPOL (Afghanistan)	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
27	EUTM (Mali)	Mali	Africa
28	EUTM (Somalia)	Somalia	Africa
29	Gulf War	Iraq, Kuwait	Middle East
30	Gulf War (air transport)	Iraq, Kuwait	Middle East
31	Harmattan (FRN Libya)	Libya	Africa
32	IFOR (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Balkans
33	Integrated Police Training Mission Kunduz (Afghanistan)	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
34	INTERFET (East Timor)*	East Timor	Asia (other than Afghanistan)
35	IPTF (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Balkans
36	IPTF (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Balkans
37	Iraq (GMY training of Kurdish forces)	Iraq	Middle East
38	Iraq (Turkish intervention)	Iraq	Middle East
39	Iraq SSR reform	Iraq	Middle East
40	Iraq- US intervention, accompanying Turkish forces into Northern Iraq	Iraq	Middle East
41	Iraq War	Iraq	Middle East
42	Iraq War (constructor, engineers, medical)	Iraq	Middle East
43	Iraq War (constructor, engineers, medical, extension, end of mission)	Iraq	Middle East
44	Iraq War (constructor, engineers, medical, Extension, Reduction Plan)	Iraq	Middle East
45	ISAF (Afghanistan)	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
46	ISAF/EUPOL (Afghanistan)	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
47	KFOR (Kosovo)	Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Balkans
48	Kosovo	Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Balkans
49	Kosovo OSCE mission	Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Balkans
50	Mali	Mali	Africa
51	MINURCAT (Chad/RCA)	Central African Republic + Chad	Africa
52	MINURSO (Western Sahara)	Morocco	Africa
53	MINUSCA (CAR)	Central African Republic	Africa
54	MINUSMA (Mali)	Mali	Africa

55	MINUSTAH (Haiti)	Haiti	Carribean
56	MONUSCO (DRC)	DR Congo (Zaire)	Africa
57	NATO (Kosovo)	Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Balkans
58	NATO Mission Iraq (NMI)	Iraq	Middle East
59	Northern Watch (post-Gulf War)	Iraq	Middle East
60	OSCE observer mission (Nagorno-Karabakh)	Azerbaijan	Asia (other than Afghanistan)
61	Provide Comfort (post-Gulf War)	Iraq	Middle East
62	Provide Comfort II (post-Gulf War)	Iraq	Middle East
63	Resolute Support Mission (Afghanistan)	Afghanistan	Afghanistan
64	Sahel (French Opération Barkhane)	Sahel	Africa
65	Sangaris (French mission Central African Republic)	Central African Republic	Africa
66	SFOR (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Balkans
67	Sharp Guard, Deny Flight (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Balkans
68	Somalia	Somalia	Africa
69	Syria C-weapons destruction	Syria	Middle East
70	TIPH (Hebron)	Israel	Middle East
71	UMMIK (Kosovo)	Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Balkans
72	UNAMID (Sudan/Darfur)	Sudan	Africa
73	UNAMSIL (Sierra Leone)	Sierra Leone	Africa
74	UNAVEM II (Angola)	Angola	Africa
75	UNAVEM III (Angola)	Angola	Africa
76	UNDOF (Golan Heights)	Israel	Middle East
77	UNDOF (Israel)	Israel	Middle East
78	Unified Protector (Libya)	Libya	Africa
79	UNIFIL (Lebanon)	Lebanon	Middle East
80	UNITAF (Somalia)	Somalia	Africa
81	United Nations Standby Arrangement System (UNSAS)	Bosnia-Herzegovina	multiple
82	United States Security Coordinator (USSC, Palestine)	Israel	Middle East
83	UN-led operation (North and East Africa)	Sudan	Africa
84	UNMEE (Ethiopia/Eritrea)	Eritrea, Ethiopia	Africa
85	UNMIBH (Bosnia)	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Balkans
86	UNMIK (Kosovo)	Serbia (Yugoslavia)	Balkans
87	UNMIL (Liberia)	Liberia	Africa
88	UNMIS (Sudan)	Sudan	Africa
89	UNMISET (East Timor)*	East Timor	Asia (other than Afghanistan)
90	UNMISS (South Sudan)	South Sudan	Africa
91	UNMOGIP (India/Pakistan)	India, Pakistan	Asia (other than Afghanistan)
92	UNOCI (Ivory Coast)	Ivory Coast	Africa
93	UNOMOZ (Mozambique)	Mozambique	Africa
94	UNOMUR (Uganda & Rwanda)	Uganda + Rwanda	Africa
95	UNOSOM (Somalia)	Somalia	Africa
96	UNOSOM II (Somalia)	Somalia	Africa
97	UNPROFOR (Bosnia and Herzegovina/ Croatia)	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Balkans
98	UNSCOM (post-Gulf War)	Iraq	Middle East
99	UNSMIS (Syria)	Syria	Middle East
100	UNTAET (East Timor)*	East Timor	Asia (other than Afghanistan)
101	Uphold Democracy (Haiti)	Haiti	Carribean
102	WEU Policing Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina)	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Balkans
103	Yemeni civil war*	Yemen (North Yemen)	Asia (other than Afghanistan)

*Not in the regression analysis, because of missing values

Table 4: List of missions

10.3 Robustness checks

VARIABLES Dep var: Support Intervention	(1) BRD high	(2) BRD low	(3) Squared oil rents	(4) Squared GDP per capita
BRD high estimate per 1000	-0.318***			
	(0.109)			
BRD low estimate per 1000		-0.371***		
		(0.128)		
BRD best estimate per 1000			-0.362***	-0.340***
			(0.122)	(0.123)
Membership in Alliance (dichotomous)	-5.817***	-5.797***	-5.800***	-5.748***
	(1.702)	(1.712)	(1.716)	(1.753)
Membership in UNSC (dichotomous)	2.762	2.755	2.762	2.837
	(2.000)	(2.004)	(2.009)	(2.010)
Logged GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD	7.990***	8.288***	0.471	9.633***
	(2.717)	(2.677)	(0.339)	(2.634)
Square term logged GDP per capita (2015 USD)	-0.473***	-0.488***		-0.571***
	(0.159)	(0.157)		(0.154)
Oil rents percentage of GDP	0.106	0.102	0.146	-0.207***
	(0.116)	(0.115)	(0.113)	(0.034)
Square term oil rents percentage of GDP	-0.006***	-0.006***	-0.006***	
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	
Extension vote (dichotomous)	-0.243	-0.388	-0.297	-0.792
	(1.431)	(1.423)	(1.427)	(1.423)
Constant	58.741***	57.438***	87.595***	52.738***
	(10.950)	(10.762)	(2.857)	(10.629)
Observations	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110
R-squared	0.117	0.120	0.116	0.112

Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Table 5: Robustness checks for main independent variable and square terms

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)
Dep var: Support Intervention	Year categorical	Year continuous
Battle-related deaths per 1000	-0.327**	-0.371***
	(0.132)	(0.124)
Membership Alliance (dichotomous)	-6.894***	-6.379***
	(1.842)	(1.760)
Membership UNSC (dichotomous(	4.103*	2.841
	(2.276)	(1.984)
Logged GDP per capita (2015 USD)	5.934**	8.057***
	(2.691)	(2.692)
Square term GDP per capita (2015 USD)	-0.360**	-0.478***
	(0.156)	(0.158)
Oil rents percentage of GDP	0.200*	0.102
	(0.109)	(0.113)
Square term oil rents percentage of GDP	-0.008***	-0.006***
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Extension vote (dichotomous)	-0.837	-0.674
	(1.460)	(1.430)
Year continuous		0.109
		(0.122)
Year 1991	6.521	
	(8.324)	
Year 1993	0.238	
	(4.616)	
Year 1994	10.673**	
	(5.253)	
Year 1995	6.566	
	(6.234)	
Year 1996	4.975	
	(7.009)	
Year 1997	10.297	
	(9.039)	
Year 1998	14.414**	
	(6.213)	
Year 1999	13.160**	
	(5.489)	
Year 2000	15.843**	
	(6.346)	
Year 2001	20.387***	
	(4.338)	
Year 2002	13.151***	
	(4.298)	
Year 2003	11.448***	
	(4.272)	
Year 2004	13.227***	
	(4.518)	
Year 2005	19.392***	
	(4.096)	
Year 2006	17.060***	
	(4.584)	
Year 2007	8.572	
	(5.211)	
Year 2008	7.754	
	(5.069)	
Year 2009	11.680*	
	(6.055)	
Year 2010	17.569***	
	(4.612)	
Year 2011	20.970***	
	(4.193)	
Year 2012	14.205***	
	(4.294)	
Year 2013	11.611**	
	(5.499)	
Year 2014	8.926**	
	(4.430)	
Year 2015	7.850	
	(5.069)	
Year 2016	11.943***	
	(4.591)	
Year 2017	15.905***	
	(4.951)	
Year 2018	14.117***	
	(4.539)	
Year 2019	20.590***	
	(5.149)	
Constant	55.879***	-160.613
	(11.794)	(242.942)
Observations	1,110	1,110
R-squared	0.209	0.121

Clustered robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Table 6: Robustness checks for year

VARIABLES Dep var: Support Intervention	(1) Region (Middle East as ref)	(2) Country (GMY as ref)	(3) Country (ITA as ref)
Battle-related deaths per 1000	-0.267**	-0.280***	-0.280***
	(0.131)	(0.071)	(0.071)
Membership Alliance (dichotomous)	-6.374***	5.216***	5.216***
	(1.566)	(1.699)	(1.699)
Membership UNSC (dichotomous)	2.712	0.452	0.452
	(1.979)	(1.977)	(1.977)
Logged GDP per capita (constant 2015 USD)	20.173***	4.529**	4.529**
	(3.923)	(2.304)	(2.304)
Square term GDP per capita (2015 USD)	-1.040***	-0.241*	-0.241*
	(0.233)	(0.137)	(0.137)
Oil rents percentage of GDP	-0.092	0.125	0.125
	(0.123)	(0.096)	(0.096)
Square term oil rents percentage of GDP	-0.002	-0.005***	-0.005***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Extension vote (dichotomous)	-1.667	0.680	0.680
	(1.401)	(1.190)	(1.190)
AUL		-7.412	-4.932
		(10.464)	(10.539)
BEL		5.861	8.341
		(4.913)	(5.093)
CAN		-15.987***	-13.507**
		(5.533)	(5.717)
CRO		14.188***	16.667***
		(1.339)	(2.022)
CZE		-9.562***	-7.083**
		(2.666)	(3.026)
DEN		8.157***	10.636***
		(1.764)	(2.183)
FIN		12.941***	15.420***
		(2.611)	(2.974)
FRN		8.187*	10.667**
		(4.308)	(4.444)
GMY			2.480
			(1.834)
IRE		-4.419	-1.939
		(6.324)	(6.490)
ITA		-2.480	
		(1.834)	
JPN		-16.916***	-14.437***
		(3.515)	(3.633)
LIT		8.008***	10.487***
		(2.671)	(3.075)
NTH		-36.609***	-34.129***
		(8.788)	(8.880)
ROK		4.302**	6.782***
		(2.188)	(2.618)
ROM		8.956	11.436*
		(6.716)	(6.851)
SLO		10.114***	12.593***
		(1.757)	(2.281)
SPN		11.574***	14.054***
		(1.730)	(2.245)
TUR		-23.728***	-21.249***
		(2.511)	(2.826)
UKG		2.117	4.597
		(5.642)	(5.715)
USA		-3.837	-1.357
		(7.036)	(7.049)
Afghanistan	11.577***		
	(2.660)		
Africa	9.832***		
	(2.203)		
Asia (other than	7.072***		
	(2.452)		
Balkans	1.811		
	(1.623)		
Caribbean	12.647***		
	(2.958)		
Constant	-4.310	59.836***	57.357***
	(16.309)	(9.499)	(9.303)
Observations	1,110	1,110	1,110
R-squared	0.152	0.360	0.360

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10

Table 7: Robustness checks for region of deployment and voting country

NTNU

Norwegian University of
Science and Technology