

Intention and Intervention versus Influence in the Conceptualisation of External Interventions

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Reference studies of external interventions assume two main ideas, one is that interventions intentions are peace promoting and that other diplomatic initiatives should not be analysed together with this initiatives motivated by the conflict. Both need to be assessed conceptually. A main conceptualisation of external interventions that they are convention breaking activities in the internal affairs of a foreign country targeted at the authority structures of the government with the aim of affecting the balance of power between the government and opposition forces, with a primary objective of reaching peace. But such peaceful intentions are dis-proven by many of the evidences from case studies, particularly from the Cold War period. At the same time the mechanisms used to intervene, and therefore considered relevant to understand the dynamics of conflict, are confined to a set of political/diplomatic, economic, military and humanitarian activities which are framed within the realm of the urgency of an existing conflict. These activities can be analysed in comparison with the realm of influence where states attempt to change events in their countries and others through the mechanisms of what is considered normal diplomatic activity not considered within the scope of studies of external interventions and civil war. But some studies have suggested that many of the underlying causes of conflict may be economic and that different structural conditions, as for instances trade agreements, may significantly alter the likelihood of conflict in a country. Both of this issues will be explored through a review of the existing literature and some evidence from case studies. It is expected to find that there are relevant dimensions to intention and scope of intervention which affect conflict but which implementation may be constrained by data and econometric requirements. It does nevertheless intends to identify some possible guidelines for a revision of coding rules of external interventions.