

The underlying determinants for R2P interventions? Libya, Darfur, and Myanmar

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Introduction

R2P agreement is an international commitment from all United Nations' members to ensure efficacious prevention against genocide and atrocities.¹ However, countries have a disparate record of invoking R2P by tragically failing to take effective actions, such as in Syria, Yemen, and Myanmar.² This suggests that the determinant of intervention is not only based on the severity of human rights abuses. The project aims to explore and empirically analyze why countries choose to selectively respond to R2P obligations? The research question is: what are the underlying causes for disparate interventions and how do these determinants interact with each other to steer the countries' response types.

This paper integrates key aspects from existing theories into one comprehensive account. The single theory explains R2P intervention outcomes that are otherwise disconnected or treated in isolation. Nations are more compelled to intervene militarily if it has strong realist power capabilities in relation to strengthening their strategic interests, while possessing a significant prospect of success. Economic sanctions and ICC persecution is more likely to occur when the offending country has neutral or potentially jeopardized strategic and economic interests. Finally, when intervention clearly jeopardizes realist strategic interest and liberal economic goals, nations would choose to pay lip service unless threatened by significant constructivist normative pressure.

¹ "What Is R2P?," Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, March 11, 2022, <https://www.globalr2p.org/what-is-r2p/>.

² Gareth Evans, "R2P: The Dream and the Reality," Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, December 3, 2020, <https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/r2p-the-dream-and-the-reality/>.

The theory is evaluated through careful process tracing of three important interventions: Libya, Darfur, and Myanmar. These case studies hosted a set of diverse interventions by China and the US, which provides nuanced opportunities for evaluating the theory. The evidence found are consistent with the theory for how existing theories' determinates are integrated to produce a certain type of outcome.

The article features two primary contributions to debates in IR. First, it contributes to the theoretical debate of whether the responsibility to protect should remain a legitimate doctrine. The realists have continuously dismissed R2P as a strategic tool to impose regime change and hegemonic order.³ On the other hand, liberal and constructivist scholars highlight the sacredness of caring for humanity.⁴ The current binary framing of conversation is too simplistic. A more nuanced map of how several key determinants interact to cause a certain type of R2P response is necessary. Second, by understanding the underlying determinants of the type of intervention taken, the article has implications for developing pragmatic strategies to overcome the selective nature of R2P. When the realist strategic interest, liberal economic goals, and constructivist norms do not align to produce effective and timely response, it highlights the need to devise a procedure to compel states to act when humanitarian concerns alone lack incentives.

Literature review, theory, and hypothesis

The existing literature explains the selective application of R2P based on four types of theories, which are realism, liberalism, the prospect of success, and constructivism. Realist scholars hold that states are self-interested and perpetually compete to gain power.⁵ Hans Morgenthau, Hobbes, and Machiavelli explain that states act in accordance with human nature,

³ Graham Cronogue, "Responsibility to Protect: Syria The Law, Politics, and Future of Humanitarian Intervention Post-Libya," *Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies* 3, no. 1 (2012): 129, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18781527-00301004>.

⁴ Martha Finnemore, "Paradoxes in Humanitarian Intervention," in *Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics*, ed. Richard M. Price, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 197, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511755897.008>.

⁵ Stephen M Walt, "International Relations: One World, Many Theories," in *perspectives on world politics*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 425.

which is inevitably greedy and exploitative.⁶ Under the anarchical international structure, there is no world government to enforce the order. Human nature drives countries to engage in perpetual competition for “power, security, and survival”.⁷ Realism does not endorse universal moral guidelines as principles. Morgenthau argues that moral guidelines are always subordinate to states’ strategic interest.⁸ Gallagher demonstrates that states behave based on their real political strategies in addressing mass atrocities. For example, the US deputy assistant ranked Rwanda, Burundi, and former Yugoslavia’s mass atrocity on the very bottom of priorities, who said “take it off the list... US national interest is not involved... we don’t have a dog in this fight”.⁹ Realism holds that the one and only variable for countries to decide whether to invoke the R2P is based on strategic interest.

The second dominant theory to explain the selective application of R2P interventions is liberalism, which rejects realism’s assumption that war is inevitable and innate in human nature.¹⁰ Moravcsik argues that society informs and constrains government’s actions. The “aggregate of autonomous individuals’ interest and identities” keep the government accountable.¹¹ Following this logic, Mises shows that from a liberal standpoint, individuals in society will prioritize their economic interest over engaging in conflicts abroad. The complex network of globalization and the need for the division of labour cause states to refrain from enduring significant economic consequences caused by R2P.¹²

⁶ Michael Sheehan, *The Balance of Power: History and Theory* (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005), 5.

⁷ Adrian M. Gallagher, “A Clash of Responsibilities: Engaging with Realist Critiques of the R2P,” *Global Responsibility to Protect* 4, no. 3 (2012): 338, <https://doi.org/10.1163/1875984X-00403004>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Gallagher, “A Clash of Responsibilities,” 339.

¹⁰ Ludwig von Mises, *Liberalism: the Classical Tradition* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 6-7.

¹¹ Andrew Moravcsik, “Liberalism and international relations theory,” Centre for European Studies Harvard university, no. 92-6: 9.

¹² Mises, *Liberalism: the Classical Tradition* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005), 7-8.

Constructivist scholars argue that ideology, norms, and culture are the key determinant of countries' R2P responses. Finnemore stresses that nations' interactions are dominated by ideational influences, rather than material power. For example, agreements—such as monetary currency, human rights, and sovereignty—have no inherent material values.¹³ They are given meanings based on endowed identities.¹⁴ Moreover, Wendt rejects realists' claim of self-help and perpetual conflict as a defining feature of international politics, who argued that “anarchy is what states make of it”.¹⁵ Realism holds that states act based on predicting the worst scenario about their counterpart's behaviour. Wendt points out that most decisions are made based on possibility. For example, the U.S. would not be concerned about England possessing nuclear weapons compared to North Korea.¹⁶ This demonstrates the significant influence of norms and discourse in affecting nations' behaviours. Therefore, constructivists would hold that the similarity between domestic and international norms, and the pressure of global social standards are the key determinants of whether to invoke R2P interventions.¹⁷

The prospect of success is also cited as a key determinant influencing R2P. This is known as the “balance of consequences”.¹⁸ Odeyemi argues that a reasonable probability of success is critical to morally justify military interventions. If an intervention worsens the violence, it constitutes as an illegitimate use of force.¹⁹

¹³ Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, “Taking stocks: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 4, no. 1 (June 2001): 392, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.4.1.391>.

¹⁴ Walt, “4.7 International Relations: One World, Many Theories,” 430.

¹⁵ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” 2022, 395.

¹⁶ Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It,” 404.

¹⁷ Malte Brosig, *The Role of BRICS in Large-Scale Armed Conflict: Building a Multi-Polar World Order* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 43, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-18537-4>.

¹⁸ Christo Odeyemi, “Re-Emerging Powers and the Impasse in the UNSC over R2P Intervention in Syria,” *Strategic Analysis* 40, no. 2 (March 3, 2016): 126, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2015.1136029>.

¹⁹ Christo Odeyemi, “Re-Emerging Powers and the Impasse in the UNSC over R2P Intervention in Syria,” 127.

The existing literature demonstrates that there are two major gaps. First, most of the analyses on R2P, such as from Cronogue, and Odeyemi, have focused on whether countries decide to intervene militarily.^{20 21} This overlooks the rich repertoire of response types. The field needs a more nuanced understanding of why some methods are chosen over others in cases. Secondly, the four theories discussed are independent variables that are most likely to influence whether countries decide to intervene in R2P. These factors have been examined in isolation. The research question aims to explore how the diverse determinants interact with each other and whether some variables hold more weight than others in determining which type of response is adopted. The dependent variables are mediation, intervention from international criminal court, sanctions, and military intervention. The level of coercion and intrusiveness increases from left to right.²² This paper aims to construct a theory that demonstrate how a combination of independent variables leads to a certain response type, which is shown by the following 3 hypotheses.

The first hypothesis is that Nations are more compelled to intervene militarily if it has strong realist power capabilities in relation to strengthening their strategic interests by intervening, while possessing a significant prospect of success. If one or more of these conditions does not match, the response will likely be adjusted to less coercive measures. The strong realist power capabilities are necessary as a nation requires sufficient resources to engage in military operations, which can range from a direct military encounter, arming proxy fighters or imposing

²⁰ Ibid, 127.

²¹ Graham Cronogue, "Responsibility to Protect: Syria The Law, Politics, and Future of Humanitarian Intervention Post-Libya," *Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies* 3, no. 1 (2012), <https://doi.org/10.1163/18781527-00301004>.

²² Serena K. Sharma and Jennifer M. Welsh, eds., *The Responsibility to Prevent: Overcoming the Challenges of Atrocity Prevention* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 104, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198717782.001.0001>.

an arms embargo.²³ Moreover, nations would only exercise its power capabilities—in a military context—if the offending country has weak strategic importance. This is opposite of the traditional rationale to engage in armed conflict, which typically suggests that the stronger the strategic interest—such as preserving national security or protecting key allies—the more likely will nations engage in armed conflict.²⁴ In the R2P context, offending nation’s weak strategic importance is a compelling reason for military intervention. This is caused by the difference between a country’s vital versus secondary interests. Vital interests entail the assurance of security, sovereignty, and core values. These are issues that nations are willing to go to war or “die for”.²⁵ Secondary interests are aspects that require compromise and negotiation, which include the construction of favorable global order and the promotion of values, such as human rights and democracy.²⁶ Since the responsibility to protect does not usually bring tangible core interests, a country will only invoke the doctrine under the condition that it does not jeopardize its core interests. In essence, the intervention must not require significant tradeoffs over benefits. This cost and benefit analysis is especially important when deciding whether to intervene militarily, as it requires a significant level of manpower, resources, and political capital. If there are any core strategic interests affected by the intervention, a nation is far less likely to invoke military responses. Thus, strong power capabilities in relation to the offending nation’s weak strategic importance is an important determinant of R2P’s military intervention. Taking the example of Libya as the first UN sanctioned combat response since the 1991 Gulf war,²⁷ the security council was compelled by the weak strategic importance connected to the Gadd regime.

²³ Brosig, *The Role of BRICS in Large-Scale Armed Conflict*, 51-52.

²⁴ Brosig, *The Role of BRICS in Large-Scale Armed Conflict*, 51-53.

²⁵ P. H. Liotta, “To Die For: National Interests and Strategic Uncertainties,” *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 30, no. 2 (May 10, 2000), 48, <https://doi.org/10.55540/0031-1723.1980>.

²⁶ Liotta, “To Die For: National Interests and Strategic Uncertainties,” *The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters* 30, no. 2 (May 10, 2000), 1.

²⁷ Ramesh Thakur, “Libya and the Responsibility to Protect,” *Security Challenges* 7, no. 4 (2011): 14.

The constant sponsoring of terrorism left the government with few alliances in the world.²⁸ The country's weak strategic importance and UN members' strong capabilities made military intervention a plausible option. Furthermore, a strong prospect of success is necessary to compel military actions, as an intervention only makes sense if it has a significant chance of "making things better than making them worse".²⁹ The R2P military intervention is a high risk, as it encounters the security dilemma that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter".³⁰ Nations are unlikely to intervene militarily in a country with low possibility of success from a pragmatic standpoint.³¹ Thus, the combination of realist power capabilities conditioned to weak strategic importance and the strong prospect of success are key determinants of R2P military intervention. The liberal economic concerns and constructivist variables still influences; however, they are not the dominant factors determining whether nations choose to intervene militarily.

My second hypothesis is that when R2P intervention fails to bring strategic interest or liberal economic advantages to the intervening nation, intervening states are more likely to impose sanctions or prosecution from the ICC. The degree of commitment or effectiveness of the intervention depends on the severity of the impact, which ranges from the intervention having no impact on strategic/economic interest or severely jeopardizing these priorities. The failure of intervention in bringing strategic interest is necessary when considering sanctions, as it can be interpreted as a "precursor to war".³² Historically, sanctions have paved the way for military actions, such as in Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Sierra Leone, and Libya.³³ If

²⁸ Cronogue, "Responsibility to Protect," 141.

²⁹ Ibid, 133

³⁰ Ibid, 134.

³¹ Ibid, 134.

³² Sharma and Welsh, *The Responsibility to Prevent*, 116.

³³ Sharma and Welsh, *The Responsibility to Prevent*, 116.

the offending nation is strategically important—as an alliance—nations would often adjust their intervention methods to be less robust. Another key determinant on imposing non-military coercive intervention is dependent on the offending nation’s liberal economic importance. When vital economic interest is affected, the decision to impose sanctions becomes increasingly difficult. The determination of economic interest differs based on countries. For strong manufacturing and exporting countries—such as China—emphasizes access to natural resources, trade, and foreign investments. On the other hand, export-oriented countries that rely on selling natural resources, like Russia and Brazil prioritize high commodity prices.³⁴ Overall, intervening countries are more compelled to apply sanctions or ICC interventions when the offending nation has both a weak strategic and economic importance.

The final hypothesis is that if the intervention jeopardizes the intervening country’s realist strategic interest and liberal economic ties, the nation will refrain from carrying out effective mediation by paying lip service—unless threatened by significant normative condemnation.³⁵ The causal mechanism is two folds. First, when states are pressured by normative forces to intervene in R2P, there is a higher chance of mismatch between international and domestic norms. The cost of adopting the international norms increases.³⁶ Thus, it leads states to intervene in R2P more reluctantly and adopt non-coercive measures. For example, in Darfur, China shifted its stance from non-intervention to becoming a critical mediator. This is largely due to the global boycott of the Beijing Olympics, which was called the “genocide Olympics”.³⁷ The extreme normative pressure and aspiration to create the status of a respectful

³⁴ Brosig, *The Role of BRICS in Large-Scale Armed Conflict*, 43.

³⁵ Brosig.

³⁶ Brosig, *The Role of BRICS in Large-Scale Armed Conflict*, 56.

³⁷ Zheng Chen, “China and the Responsibility to Protect,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 25, no. 101 (September 2, 2016): 690, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2016.1160500>.

global power prompted Beijing to engage in mediation while affirming the Darfur government that sanctions would not be applied.³⁸ Thus, when norms and ideological pressure are the key determinants of R2P intervention, the significant mismatch between domestic and international norms compel states to adopt non-coercive responses. The three theories and causal mechanisms proposed will be tested based on empirical case studies, which evaluate the validity of hypotheses.

Research design

Process tracing is an appropriate research method for testing my hypothesis, as it emphasizes testing the validity of the hypothesis by paying explicit attention to the causal mechanism. This helps to uncover how the independent variables interact with each other to produce a certain type of R2P intervention. The advantage of process tracing over the quantitative method is that it has a lower chance of omitting certain causal variables when testing hypotheses. The inductive identification of variables and deductive theory building allow researchers to uncover potential unforeseen causal variables that play a significant role in affecting the dependent variable.³⁹ Thus, it does not have a narrow “degree of freedom” on the range of potential independent variables.⁴⁰ The process tracing method’s limitation is that it cannot include a large number of case study to demonstrate all logically possible causal mechanisms. Although having a large N is desirable, but this is not necessary if the cases selected are critical in testing the theory. A small number of cases is sufficient, as the chosen cases demonstrate more relevant information than others based on its appropriateness for testing

³⁸ Chen, “China and the Responsibility to Protect,” 691.

³⁹ Andrew Bennett and Alexander L George, “Process Tracing in Case Study Research,” *MacArthur Foundation Workshop on Case Study methods*, (October 17-19, 1997), 13.

⁴⁰ Andrew Bennett and Alexander L George, “Process Tracing in Case Study Research,” 13.

the hypothesis.⁴¹ Due to the large number of countries involved in R2P intervention, the investigation will focus on the underlying determinants of China and US responses. The two superpowers have a substantial impact on the effectiveness of R2P responses.

The dependent variables are the types of R2P interventions adopted, which include military intervention, sanction, the international criminal court, and mediation. The presence of military R2P interventions is measured by whether there are centrally organized forces sent by the international community, as opposed to peacekeeping forces from regional organizations such as the African Union. The operation can range from the use of airpower, ground troops, or partner enabling to train other actors to protect victims.⁴² The research will also examine whether the military intervention is defensive or offensive.⁴³ Sanction is measured by whether the state is imposing limitations on cross border transactions, such as restricting trade, capital flow, and freezing assets of political leaders to urge change.⁴⁴ Moreover, R2P intervention by the international criminal court is conceptualized as the investigation of leading perpetrators by the international tribunal. The ICC serves the deterrence purpose and a catalyst to educate states to enhance capacity building to prevent mass atrocity.⁴⁵ The non-coercive intervention type is mediation, which is measured by the presence of a third party to help conflicting parties to reach a consensus in ending violence and building peace.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Andrew Bennett and Alexander L George, "Process Tracing in Case Study Research," 14.

⁴² Serena K. Sharma and Jennifer M. Welsh, eds., *The Responsibility to Prevent: Overcoming the Challenges of Atrocity Prevention* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 174, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198717782.001.0001>.

⁴³ Serena K. Sharma and Jennifer M. Welsh, eds., *The Responsibility to Prevent: Overcoming the Challenges of Atrocity Prevention* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 174, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198717782.001.0001>.

⁴⁴ Serena K. Sharma and Jennifer M. Welsh, eds., *The Responsibility to Prevent: Overcoming the Challenges of Atrocity Prevention*, 112.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 119.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 103.

The independent variables are drawn from 3 branches of theories. Realism argues that under the anarchical international structure, human nature drives countries to engage in perpetual competition for “power, security, and survival”.⁴⁷ It views the power-driven strategic interest as a key causal variable in determining the type of intervention. Strategic interest is conceptualized as the offending country’s salience to the intervening countries, which is measured by their alliance structure, historical bond, and ethnic ties.⁴⁸ The offending countries’ strategic stake to the intervening party also depends on its regional salience. This is not related to the importance of one state, but the importance of influencing the geopolitical region. A region’s strategic stake to the intervening country will be measured by two criteria. First, we will examine the proportion of alliances in a certain region out of its total alliance.⁴⁹ Secondly, the significance of region wide projects carried out by the intervening country is investigated. For example, the US refrained from taking coercive military action in Darfur, as it needed Sudan’s support on its anti-terrorism campaign; it removed Sudan from being recognized as unsupportive of the war on terror in 2004.⁵⁰

The second independent variable follows the liberal theory, which prioritizes the intervening country’s economic stakes in deciding the type of response adopted. The economic ties are measured by the proportion of foreign trade and investment with the offending country out of its total trade, its geographical importance—the presence and size of its natural resource, especially oils—and the degree of arms exchange.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Adrian M. Gallagher, “A Clash of Responsibilities: Engaging with Realist Critiques of the R2P,” *Global Responsibility to Protect* 4, no. 3 (2012): 338, <https://doi.org/10.1163/1875984X-00403004>.

⁴⁸ Joe Clare and Vesna Danilovic, “The Geopolitics of Major Power Interventions in Civil Wars,” *Political Research Quarterly* 75, no. 1 (March 2022): 21, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1065912920976910>.

⁴⁹ Clare and Danilovic, “The Geopolitics of Major Power Interventions in Civil Wars,” 23-24.

⁵⁰ Pak K. Lee, Gerald Chan, and Lai-Ha Chan, “China in Darfur: Humanitarian Rule-Maker or Rule-Taker?,” *Review of International Studies* 38, no. 2 (April 2012): 438, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210511000040>.

⁵¹ Clare and Danilovic, “The Geopolitics of Major Power Interventions in Civil Wars,” 24.

Moreover, the independent variable drawn from the constructivist theory determines the strength of the normative force in driving states to act. This is measured by the number and intensity of petitions against a nation's inaction. An example of strong normative pressure is demonstrated by the boycott of Beijing's 2008 Olympics—called the “genocide Olympics”—due to the country's inaction in Darfur.⁵² This is catastrophic for China's attempt to construct an equitable and influential public image. This subsequently led China to facilitate mediation with Darfur.⁵³

The final independent variable is the prospect of success for military intervention, which is measured by twofold. Due to the challenge of observing the closed-door diplomacy before warring parties, the research will use the number of mediation efforts and recorded statements during sessions by the conflicting parties to examine the difficulty of resolving the conflict.⁵⁴ Ethno-religious conflicts tend to be built on the complex history of atrocities, which significantly decrease the likelihood of success.⁵⁵ Another measure examined is whether the peacekeeping force has sufficient manpower, fund, and logistical support in comparison to the perpetrators.

The hypothesis will be tested by evaluating three dominant cases of R2P' intervention: Darfur, Libya, and Myanmar. All cases fall within the scope of determining how independent variables effect the type of response taken. Both the Darfur and Libya cases feature multiple observations of within case variations in the independent variables over time and between case variations, in terms of the scale of interventions invoked. During the R2P intervention in Darfur

⁵² Zheng Chen, “China and the Responsibility to Protect,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 25, no. 101 (September 2, 2016): 690, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2016.1160500>.

⁵³ Zheng Chen, “China and the Responsibility to Protect,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 25, no. 101 (September 2, 2016): 690, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2016.1160500>.

⁵⁴ Nicolas Rost and J Michael Greig, “Taking Matters into Their Own Hands: An Analysis of the Determinants of State-Conducted Peacekeeping in Civil Wars,” *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 2 (March 2011): 177, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343310396110>.

⁵⁵ Nicolas Rost and J Michael Greig, “Taking Matters into Their Own Hands: An Analysis of the Determinants of State-Conducted Peacekeeping in Civil Wars,” 175.

from 2003 onward, the UN member states failed to coordinate timely legal, diplomatic, and military R2P intervention. The security council issued a condemnation statement in 2005 but did not pursue substantive political mediation.⁵⁶ The draft resolution aimed to sanction approximately 30 individuals, yet it only passed to sanction four individuals.⁵⁷ Finally, the peace operation was put on the burden of the African Union, which does not have adequate troops, materials, and strategic planning to protect civilians.⁵⁸ All three types of interventions imposed in Darfur were not pragmatically and effectively implemented. It is paramount to evaluate the causal mechanism on why the UN members changed their intervention strategy overtime and failed to put efficacious restraints.

The Darfur case study contrast with the Libya intervention, which led the UN adopted resolution 1970 and 1973 within weeks. This referred Libya to the international criminal court, implemented arms embargo, sanctions, and adopted the no-fly zone. Libya is the first time that the United Nations approved non-consensual military intervention for R2P purpose.⁵⁹ The NATO led intervening coalition rushed into military intervention and even turned down the African Union's several attempts to mediate a ceasefire between conflicting sides by refusing to stop airstrikes.⁶⁰ The documentary record for each case gives nuanced access to resolution documents, statements by politicians, mediation records, and scholarly analysis. The examination

⁵⁶ Cristina G. Badescu and Linnea Bergholm, "The Responsibility To Protect and the Conflict in Darfur: The Big Let-Down," *Security Dialogue* 40, no. 3 (June 2009): 295, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010609336198>.

⁵⁷ "Tools, Tasks, and Tough Thinking: Sanctions and R2P," *Tools, Tasks, and Tough Thinking: Sanctions and R2P* (New York : Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, 2013), <https://s156658.gridserver.com/publications/263>.

⁵⁸ Cristina G. Badescu and Linnea Bergholm, "The Responsibility To Protect and the Conflict in Darfur: The Big Let-Down," 304.

⁵⁹ Jess Gifkins, "R2P in the UN Security Council: Darfur, Libya and Beyond," *Cooperation and Conflict* 51, no. 2 (June 2016): 148–149, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836715613365>.

⁶⁰ Sarah Brockmeier, Oliver Stuenkel, and Marcos Tourinho, "The Impact of the Libya Intervention Debates on Norms of Protection," *Global Society* 30, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 117, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600826.2015.1094029>.

of Darfur and Libya helps to trace a robust causal mechanism for the disparity response to mass atrocity, in terms of the rationale for differing response types within cases and how independent variables led to drastically different scales of interventions.

Lastly, the genocide in Myanmar is a hard case to test hypothesis 3, which aims to establish the independent variable effecting whether an intervening country choose to pay lip service or adopt mediation. This case is distinct from previous ones, as the only substantial action taken is establishing an ICC pre-trial chamber to investigate human rights violation in 2018. The UN members have not invoked any of the four dependent variables laid out, despite the clear evidence of genocide.⁶¹ The investigation of Myanmar seeks to understand why the causal mechanism for determining whether to take intervention is distinct compared to Libya and Darfur? If the evidence reveals that the absence of action is due to insufficient normative pressure while jeopardizing intervening nations' strategic interests, it is strong and credible support for hypothesis 3.

Libya

The anti-Gaddafi revolts erupted amid the Arab Spring in 2011. This led the Gaddafi regime to use force and lethal weapons against peaceful protestors.⁶² Libya's descent into chaos provoked an unexpectedly robust and immediate intervention from the international community—in comparison to equally or more severe violence in Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen.⁶³

⁶⁴ The UN council condemned the Gaddafi regime's unlimited use of lethal weapons against

⁶¹ Jenna B. Russo, "R2P in Syria and Myanmar: Norm Violation and Advancement," *Global Responsibility to Protect* 12, no. 2 (May 8, 2020): 224, <https://doi.org/10.1163/1875984X-01202006>.

⁶² Mohammed Nuruzzaman, "The 'Responsibility to Protect' Doctrine: Revived in Libya, Buried in Syria," *responsibility to protect*, n.d., 62.

⁶³ Aidan Hehir and Robert Murray, eds., *Libya, the Responsibility to Protect and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2013):3, <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137273956>.

⁶⁴ Mohammed Nuruzzaman, "The 'Responsibility to Protect' Doctrine: Revived in Libya, Buried in Syria," *responsibility to protect*, n.d., 63.

peaceful protestors on February 22.⁶⁵ Four days later, the security council passed resolution 1970, which referred the case to ICC, implemented arms embargo, travel bans, and asset freeze against authorities. Subsequently, the council passed resolution 1973 on March 17, which sanctioned establishing no fly zone over Libya. The US, France and UK began military operations two days later.⁶⁶

Resolution 1973 is exceptional, as it is first time that the security council authorized using military force for R2P purpose against the will of an offending nation.⁶⁷ It passed with 10 affirmative votes, while China, Russia, Germany, Brazil and India abstained.⁶⁸ The robustness and speed of triggering military intervention in Libya raises the question: what makes Libya an exception to the norm of timid R2P responses? The findings strongly corroborate with hypothesis 1. The US and China used military intervention to strengthen their realist strategic interest while possessing a significant prospect of success in the operation.

Libya's R2P intervention strengthens strategic interest

To determine whether intervening in Libya strengthen nations' strategic interest, it is first measured by the offending country's salience to intervening countries. Gaddafi's regime pattern of sponsoring terrorism left the country with few allies. The diplomatic pull among the western states and Arab league is weak, which all condemned Gaddafi's mass atrocities. Russia and China also have a minimal link with Libya.⁶⁹ The domestic legitimacy of Gaddafi's regime is also quickly diminishing. He relied on tribal tides for political and military backing. However,

⁶⁵ Hehir and Murray, *Libya the Responsibility to Protect and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention*, 3.

⁶⁶ Hehir and Murray, *Libya the Responsibility to Protect and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention*, 5.

⁶⁷ Alex J. Bellamy, "Libya and the Responsibility to Protect: The Exception and the Norm," *Ethics & International Affairs* 25, no. 3 (2011): 263, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0892679411000219>.

⁶⁸ Hehir and Murray, *Libya, the Responsibility to Protect and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention*, 5.

⁶⁹ Graham Cronogue, "Responsibility to Protect: Syria The Law, Politics, and Future of Humanitarian Intervention Post-Libya," *Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies* 3, no. 1 (2012): 142, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18781527-00301004>.

the Warfalla tribes openly rebelled against the Gaddafi regime after the UN passed resolution 1973. Many tribes switched side to fight for the anti-government rebels.⁷⁰ Alongside the weakening core support, Gaddafi's violent repression deteriorated his legitimacy among the ordinary masses. Gaddafi regime's lack of domestic and international legitimacy makes diplomatic relation with Libya itself insignificant for intervening country. Therefore, military R2P intervention will not jeopardize intervening countries' strategic interests.⁷¹

The Libya intervention actually helps to strengthen China and US' strategic goals due to the importance of influencing the geopolitical region, which is determined by the significance of regional alliances and region wide projects.

Libya R2P intervention advances US' strategic regional interests

Mohammed argues that Libya should not be viewed as a victory for R2P. The intervention only happened because US' national strategic interest aligned with humanitarian concerns.⁷² Obama declared that the responsibility to protect is triggered "when our interest and values are at stake".⁷³ The US shifted from its initial reluctance to intervene, as the Libya R2P response strengthen their strategic interests is twofold.

Taking action in Libya safeguards the Arab Spring across the middle east. During Obama's speech in 2011, he recognized the Arab spring as a "historical opportunity" to realize US' efforts for political and economic reform in the Middle East and North African. It will help achieve the "legitimate aspiration of ordinary people in the region".⁷⁴ If the US fails to intervene

⁷⁰ Ibid, 142.

⁷¹ Ibid, 142.

⁷² Saira Mohamed, "Taking stock of the responsibility to protect," *Stanford journal of international law*, n.d., 321.

⁷³ Mohamed, "Taking stock of the responsibility to protect," 333.

⁷⁴ Yanan Song, "The US Commitment to NATO in the Post-Cold War Period – a Case Study on Libya," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 14, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14794012.2015.1125165>.

in Libya, it would be sending the message to authoritarian regimes are secure as they can repress and murder enough citizens.⁷⁵

The US' strategic interest to maintain the strong alliance with France, Britain, and NATO also made it necessary for US to support the Libya intervention. If Libya's situation continues to deteriorate, this would threaten the stability of European nations due to excessive terrorist and refugee flow. The escalation of allies' security threats equates to reducing US' own security, given that NATO honors the principle of "an attack against one member state is considered an attack against all".⁷⁶ Moreover, Libya is a critical opportunity when European allies were committed to shouldering most of the intervention on their own. This deeply aligns with US' strategic goals; the US' assistance would encourage its allies to commit more in future interventions.⁷⁷

Advancing China's strategic regional interests

A commonly cited weakness for R2P intervention is the political deadlock, which is caused by China and Russia's exercise of their veto power. Bellamy observes that regional organization often play a gatekeeping role, which determines the priorities, framing, and range of responses in R2p interventions.⁷⁸ The League of Arab States (LAS) played a crucial role in shaping China's voting patterns regarding intervention on Libya, as China's strategic interest is strengthened by ensuring that China would not be diplomatically isolated from allies.⁷⁹ Since the

⁷⁵ Song, "The US Commitment to NATO in the Post-Cold War Period – a Case Study on Libya," 89.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 88.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 90.

⁷⁸ Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, "The New Politics of Protection? Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and the Responsibility to Protect," *International Affairs* 87, no. 4 (July 2011): 826, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2346.2011.01006.x>.

⁷⁹ Courtney J. Fung, "Global South Solidarity? China, Regional Organisations and Intervention in the Libyan and Syrian Civil Wars," *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1078230>.

Anti-Gaddafi protest started in 2011, the LAS suspended Libya's membership. The AU declared robust reprimands. Being seen friendly with the Gaddafi's regime risks being a "black sheep to these regional entities".⁸⁰ China's concern of being portrayed as pro-Gaddafi—by regional organization—escalated after Gaddafi's speech, who expressed "When Tiananmen Square happened. Tanks were sent into deal with them... People in front of tanks were crushed. The unity of China is more important than those people in Tiananmen Square".⁸¹ The parallel drawn between Chinese and Libyan regime made it necessary for China to take a strong stance against Libya, as it has been unanimously ousted by regional organizations.⁸² Thus, China voted affirmatively on resolution 1970 in four days after Gaddafi's speech. It also implicitly allowed military intervention by abstaining on resolution 1973.

Another determinant for China's support to safeguard the commercial interest in Middle east and Africa. The CCP understands that its legitimacy primarily depends on steady economic growth. Hence, the slogan emphasized by CCP is "bread is more impotent than ballot" or "good governance is better than bad democracy".⁸³

Realist power capabilities reflected in strong prospect of success

Another key determinant for triggering robust military intervention in Libya is the significant prospect of success. Gaddafi's regime military capacity is kept weak purposively, as he feared a coup. In contrast, the opposing rebels are well trained and equipped.⁸⁴ Libya is a logistically feasible target. The relatively limited population are concentrated in one area. Since the rebels

⁸⁰ Fung, "Global South Solidarity? China, Regional Organisations and Intervention in the Libyan and Syrian Civil Wars," 38.

⁸¹ Ibid, 38.

⁸² Ibid, 39.

⁸³ Degang Sun and Yahia Zoubir, "China's Response to the Revolts in the Arab World: A Case of Pragmatic Diplomacy," *Mediterranean Politics* 19, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2013.809257>.

⁸⁴ Cronogue, "Responsibility to Protect," 142.

already conquered some locations, the military intervention will only span across the limited territory.⁸⁵ NATO's military capacity is also far superior to Libya. For example, Libya spent 1 billion on its military per year. This is only 2% of the United Kingdom's defense budget. Experts estimate that British military alone could have been capable to overtake the Gaddafi regime.⁸⁶ Another source of feasibility came from the intervention's mission was very low cost to the US. The total cost for the US intervention was 1 billion dollars. This is extremely feasible given that 550 billion dollars were spent on its military budget before involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq war.⁸⁷

Discussion

The evidence gathered supports hypothesis 1. The need to ensure strong alliance with NATO members and the necessity to provide support for Arab Spring makes the Libya R2P intervention strategically beneficial for the US. China's abstention strengthened its alliance with the league of Arab nations and secured the economic interests in MENA. In addition to strengthening intervening nations' strategic interest, the strong prospect of success is evident in Libya. The presence and integration of these two independent variables make the choice of military intervention highly feasible.

Darfur

The crisis in Darfur is a critical test for the international community. In 2003, the Sudan liberation army (SLA) and justice and equality movement (JEM) forces rebelled against the government, which is motivated by decades of political and economic marginalization. The government responded by deploying the Janjaweed militias, which engaged in "killings,

⁸⁵ Cronogue, "Responsibility to Protect," 143-144.

⁸⁶ Song, "The US Commitment to NATO in the Post-Cold War Period – a Case Study on Libya,"98.

⁸⁷ Song, "The US Commitment to NATO in the Post-Cold War Period – a Case Study on Libya,"94.

abduction, forced expulsion, systemic sexual violence and deliberate destruction of important cultural religious sites".⁸⁸ The Darfur case is unique, as an extensive array of R2P tools have been used, including diplomatic mediation, sanctions, and international criminal court.^{89 90} However, all the interventions deployed have been weak and tardily.⁹¹

In 2004, resolution 1556 mandated Sudan to disarm the Janjaweed and persecute individuals' violation of international humanitarian law within 30 days or be imposed with sanctions.⁹² Due to the Sudan government's non-compliance after 30 days, the US advocated for sanctions against Sudan. With the uncertainty of China and EU's veto, the resolution was significantly weakened by only sanctioning 4 figures out of 17 individuals accused of serious international human rights violation.⁹³ One year later, resolution 1593 referred Sudan to the ICC. Khartoum refused to hand over the indicted for trial. When Bashir was called for arrest, China and Russia vehemently opposed the arrest warrant.⁹⁴ Although there were AU led peacekeeping and UN mission in Sudan deployed, these interventions were primarily led by regional organizations rather than the international community. The forces were underfunded and strategically inapt to carry out effective interventions.⁹⁵ Thus, the repetition of ineffective interventions makes Darfur "a unanimous failure" in R2P history.⁹⁶

⁸⁸ Paul D. Williams and Alex J. Bellamy, "The Responsibility To Protect and the Crisis in Darfur," *Security Dialogue* 36, no. 1 (March 2005): 30, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010605051922>.

⁸⁹ David Lanz, "Why Darfur? The Responsibility to Protect as a Rallying Cry for Transnational Advocacy Groups," *Global Responsibility to Protect* 3, no. 2 (2011): 230, <https://doi.org/10.1163/187598411X575685>.

⁹⁰ James Traub, "The Failed Response to the Atrocities in Darfur," *Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect*, 2010: 1.

⁹¹ Traub, "The Failed Response to the Atrocities in Darfur," 1.

⁹² Traub, "The Failed Response to the Atrocities in Darfur," 10.

⁹³ Traub, "The Failed Response to the Atrocities in Darfur," 11.

⁹⁴ Traub, "The Failed Response to the Atrocities in Darfur," 21-22.

⁹⁵ Traub, "The Failed Response to the Atrocities in Darfur," 15.

⁹⁶ Lanz, "Why Darfur?", 230.

The findings corroborate with hypothesis 2. When R2P intervention fails to bring strategic interest or liberal economic advantages to the intervening nation, intervening states are more likely to impose sanctions or prosecution from the ICC. The degree of commitment or effectiveness of the intervention depends on the severity of the impact, which ranges from the intervention having no impact on strategic/economic interests or severely jeopardizing these priorities.

R2P intervention jeopardizing US' strategic interest

The US failed to act resolutely in Darfur because intervention significantly jeopardized its strategic interest in three aspects. The counterterrorism support provided by the Sudanese regime to the war on terror contributed to the US' non-interventionist policy.⁹⁷ In early 1990s, Sudan became a safe camp for terrorist groups, which housed Al-Qaeda and other fundamentalist groups. By late 1999, the Sudanese government was concerned by a potentially more severe US attack than the cruise missile strike in 1998. Sudan condemned the 9/11 attack and began sharing intelligence on Al-Qaeda's operation.⁹⁸ Khartoum provided US security with hundreds of files on foreign Islamist and raided terrorist training camps.⁹⁹ Sudan used its salience for the war on terror as a "diplomatic leverage" against US' intent on imposing sanctions for Darfur's mass atrocity in 2004. The Sudanese government highlighted its critical contribution to the war on terror. It emphasized the significance of alleged coup by Islamists, which would turn Sudan back to a "safe haven for terrorists".¹⁰⁰ Sudan's vital strategic importance led the US to remove Sudan

⁹⁷ Eyal Mayroz, "Ever Again? The United States, Genocide Suppression, and the Crisis in Darfur," *Journal of Genocide Research* 10, no. 3 (September 2008): 362, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520802305735>.

⁹⁸ Asteris Huliaras, "Evangelists, Oil Companies, and Terrorists: The Bush Administration's Policy towards Sudan," *Orbis* 50, no. 4 (September 2006): 711, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2006.07.010>.

⁹⁹ Huliaras, "Evangelists, Oil Companies, and Terrorists: The Bush Administration's Policy towards Sudan," 711, 718.

¹⁰⁰ Huliaras, "Evangelists, Oil Companies, and Terrorists: The Bush Administration's Policy towards Sudan," 711, 718.

from its list of uncooperative countries in fighting the war on terror during May 2004, despite the ongoing Darfur genocide—that is carried out by the government. Thus, the strategic value of Sudanese cooperation was significant enough to overcome incentives to intervene effectively for R2P purposes.¹⁰¹

Another reason that R2P intervention jeopardizes the United States' strategic interest due to the fear of ending the north south peace agreement, which is crucial for the stability in the broader horn of African region.¹⁰² The comprehensive peace agreement in 2005 aimed to end Sudan's decades-long civil war. The intention was not only to achieve stability but mark the democratization of Sudan.¹⁰³ Thus, the Sudanese regime used the CPA as leverage against robust US' intervention in Darfur.¹⁰⁴

Jeopardize China's liberal economic interest

China shielded the Sudan government from R2P intervention, as taking actions significantly jeopardizes Chinese liberal economic interest. China attempted to use non-intervention in states' domestic affairs as a guise for the first three years. However, a coalition of 150 human rights organizations launched the save Darfur campaign to boycott the Olympics game in 2007.¹⁰⁵ The 'Genocide Olympics' was a major threat to the positive public image that China strived to build for years.¹⁰⁶ This pressured China to comply with some weak diplomatic mediation with the Sudan government to end the atrocity in Darfur.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ Mayroz, "Ever Again?", 362.

¹⁰² Lanz, "Why Darfur?", 235.

¹⁰³ Lovise Aalen, "Making Unity Unattractive: The Conflicting Aims of Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement," *Civil Wars* 15, no. 2 (June 2013): 173, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2013.817852>.

¹⁰⁴ Mayroz, "Ever Again?", 365.

¹⁰⁵ Olimat Muhamad, "China and the Darfur Crisis," *Canada Social Science* 10, no. 6 (2014): 125

¹⁰⁶ Chen, "China and the Responsibility to Protect," September 2, 2016, 690.

¹⁰⁷ Olimat Muhamad, "China and the Darfur Crisis," *Canada Social Science* 10, no. 6 (2014): 125

Nevertheless, China strongly opposed sanctions on Darfur. Chinese special envoy to Darfur asserted that China's stance is no different from the west. He said "you can describe China's role in resolving the Darfur issue as unique, since we speak and act in a manner our African friends understand and accept."¹⁰⁸ He rationalized arms sales to Sudan by claiming that China has no determination over how the weapon is used. He also highlighted that China was only one among several countries that sold weapons to Sudan, like Iran, Russia and Belarus.¹⁰⁹

China's oil interest was identified as the main catalyst for protecting the Sudanese government from punitive measures by international communities.¹¹⁰ Between 1996-2001, China invested 8 billion in Sudan's oil sector, which is known as "China's Safari" or "oil for blood".¹¹¹ The Sino-African trade volume increased from 126 to 198 billion from 2010-2012.¹¹² Sudan is the third largest Saharan African oil exporting country since 2009, which exported 60% of oil to China.¹¹³

Discussion

The contrast between the robustness and speed of R2P intervention in Libya and Darfur demonstrates support for hypotheses 1 and 2. The immediate response in Libya occurred because the intervention was strategically beneficial and an easy target for success. However, if the US intervened in Darfur, it jeopardizes their strategic interest to achieve success in the war on terror and uphold the north south agreement. Thus, the US refused to lead an effective R2P intervention in Darfur. China also vehemently vetoed R2P actions to preserve its liberal economic interests. The Darfur case study demonstrates that although a range of R2P tools can

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 126.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 126.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 122.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 127.

¹¹² Ibid, 127.

¹¹³ Ibid, 128.

be applied, their robustness depends on whether the actions have neutral or jeopardizing effects on intervening countries.

Myanmar

The violence committed against Rohingya in Myanmar is a “textbook example of ethnic cleansing”.¹¹⁴ The crisis started escalating in 2012. When Rohingya military troops Arakan Salvation Army (ARSA) attacked the security posts in 2017. Myanmar’s military retaliated by killing, raping, and militating thousands of Rohingya people.¹¹⁵ More than 700,000 Rohingya fled due to clearance operation, becoming the world’s largest refugee camp in Bangladesh.¹¹⁶

However, effective actions from the UN security council have been absent in both the 2012 and 2017 clashes. The two relatively substantial responses include the 2017 resolution, which called for the end of the military operation against Rohingya and permitting easy access to humanitarian assistance.¹¹⁷ Another response is initiating a preliminary investigation to gather evidence for charging Myanmar. Since Myanmar is not a part of the Rome statute, the court possesses no jurisdiction over crimes committed there.¹¹⁸

The Myanmar case corroborates hypothesis 3. Under the absence of constructivist normative pressure, major powers will respond by paying lip service—when their realist strategic interest and liberal economic ties are jeopardized by intervention.

Intervention jeopardizes China’s realist strategic and liberal economic interests

¹¹⁴ Russo, “R2P in Syria and Myanmar,” Graduate Center City University of New York, 2020: 221.

¹¹⁵ Martin Mennecke and Ellen E. Stensrud, “The Failure of the International Community to Apply R2P and Atrocity Prevention in Myanmar,” *Global Responsibility to Protect* 13, no. 2–3 (May 28, 2021): 117–18, <https://doi.org/10.1163/1875-984X-13020013>.

¹¹⁶ Mennecke and Stensrud, “The Failure of the International Community to Apply R2P and Atrocity Prevention in Myanmar,” 119.

¹¹⁷ “Timeline: China-Myanmar Relations,” The Irrawaddy, January 14, 2020, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/timeline-china-myanmar-relations.html>.

¹¹⁸ Russo, “R2P in Syria and Myanmar,” Graduate Center City University of New York, 2020: 223.

Although the US and UK called for an international response to Myanmar, but China vehemently protected Myanmar from robust R2P intervention.¹¹⁹ In 2020, China celebrated its 70 years of diplomatic relations with Myanmar by paying formal visits.¹²⁰ China is the largest trading partner for Myanmar and completely control its energy sector. China intends to dominate up to 85% of the strategically crucial seaport in Myanmar, which is critical for realizing the one belt one road initiative to link up economies throughout Asia and beyond.¹²¹ Moreover, China agree with the Myanmar government's stance that the Rohingya pose terrorist threats. This parallels China's treatment of Uyghurs domestically.¹²²

Discussion

Till today, there is hardly any R2P interventions in Myanmar to protect the Rohingya people from ethnic cleansing. The findings support hypothesis 3. When nations' realist strategic interests and liberal economic goals are jeopardized by intervening, the degree of constructivist normative pressure determines whether any non-coercive intervention would be taken. In Darfur, China was willing to take limited actions solely due to the global boycott of the Beijing Olympics. This is detrimental to the international image that China strived to achieve for decades.¹²³ It would be unbearably costly for Beijing to support Khartoum after the long awaited 2008 Olympics.¹²⁴ The shift in Beijing's R2P strategy in Darfur was motivated by the aspiration to protect "its status as a responsible great power" in the world. This is critical for both Beijing's

¹¹⁹ Glal Asiye Gn Gnes , Taylan Seyirci, and Fatih Fuat Tuncer, "Humanitarian Crisis in Myanmar: Another Failure for 'Responsibility to Protect,'" *Wiley*, 2021, 6, <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.2778>.

¹²⁰ Gnes Seyirci, and Tuncer, "Humanitarian Crisis in Myanmar: Another Failure for 'Responsibility to Protect,'" 6.

¹²¹ "Timeline: China-Myanmar Relations," *The Irrawaddy*, January 14, 2020, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/timeline-china-myanmar-relations.html>.

¹²² Gnes Seyirci, and Tuncer, "Humanitarian Crisis in Myanmar: Another Failure for 'Responsibility to Protect,'" 6.

¹²³ Chen, "China and the Responsibility to Protect," September 2, 2016, 39.

¹²⁴ Chen, "China and the Responsibility to Protect," September 2, 2016, 46.

international and domestic legitimacy.¹²⁵ However, there has been extremely limited constructivist normative pressure to boycott China's response in Myanmar. This results in only paying lip service to the importance of R2P.

Conclusion

The research shows that the three dominant theories—realism, liberalism, and constructivism—tightly interact with each other in determining the type of R2P intervention imposed. First, the robust military intervention in Libya demonstrates that states are incentivized to use force if it helps to strengthen their realist strategic interests, while possessing a high prospect of success. The importance of regional alliances and securing ideological/economic interest in Africa makes the R2P intervention strategically beneficial for both US and China. The significant chance of success also lowers the risk and cost of military intervention. Second, the timid and ineffective sanction and ICC persecution in Darfur occurred because it jeopardized both superpowers' realist strategic interests and liberal economic goals. The limited intervention still took place due to the extreme level of constructivist normative pressure. Third, the Myanmar case shows that under the absence of normative condemnation, states will only pay lip service when R2P jeopardize their interests.

These findings impact the literature by advancing a more nuanced understanding of nations' selective application of R2P. The binary debate of whether R2P intervention occurs or not is too simplistic. This paper explored the robustness of the type of intervention chosen, how diverse determinants interact with each other, and whether some variables hold more weight than others in determining the outcome. For future research, it is important to evaluate the factors that strengthen the effectiveness of each type of R2P intervention. For example, what are the key

¹²⁵ Chen, "China and the Responsibility to Protect," September 2, 2016, 47.

determinants that make diplomatic mediation successful—as in the case of Kenya—compared to Darfur? Since R2P intervention is often driven by the integration of realist, liberal and constructivist motivations, we should investigate strategies to ensure nations uphold their R2P commitment when the three main motivations fail to incentivize actions.

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