

# **The Non-Politics of the Responsibility to Protect Through a Securitisation Lens**

Written by Thomas Pritchard

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## **The Non-Politics of the Responsibility to Protect Through a Securitisation Lens**

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This essay concerns itself with providing a general framework to understand the effects of the Responsibility to Protects (R2P) language on its ability to be accepted and the action this engenders. The theory with which I am proceeding is that R2P's non-political language facilitates its acceptance for pillar three measures by a given audience but hides the political character at R2P's core. The discussion of the acceptance of R2P measures will be reliant upon the use of securitisation theory. In the following work, I will first discuss my two primary concepts, R2P and securitisation, with a summary of the important literature on the two topics. This is essential as the origins of R2P are crucial to understanding what it aims to deal with, how it wishes to do so, and how it is distinct from humanitarian intervention. It is also essential to discuss the origins, and subsequent revisions, of securitisation theory as this will be a key part for analysing how threats are articulated, and accepted, as requiring the measures from pillar three. The various revisions I will introduce to the original Copenhagen School (CS) framework of securitisation will help to make the proceeding work more empirical and in depth as to the process surrounding R2P, and specifically in the case of Libya.

In the second section, it will be pertinent to fully demonstrate the connections between R2P and securitisation. The best start for this is in the work of Carl Schmitt, who has been used to critique R2P by Jeremy Moses, and has also been posited as an influence on securitisation theory. The logic of Schmitt's Concept of the Political can be seen in R2P and in securitisation theories mechanisms for identifying a threat to be stopped, and a referent object worth saving. After this, I will use the revised framework for securitisation to undertake an analysis of statements surrounding the intervention in Libya in 2011. Throughout this analysis I will use the logic of securitisation, along with its effects, and Schmitt's definition of the political to show how the intervention was first articulated as a moral mission to protect Libya's civilians from any harm befalling them during the conflict. It will then be shown how this narrative had hidden the political intentions of the intervening actors, which became clear when they implemented their security practice to take the side of the rebels against Qadaffi. When abandoning neutrality, the interveners also made it clear that they only viewed Qadaffi as a threat to civilians and, thus, he was the only fully securitised threat of the Libyan intervention. It is then worth discussing what the effects of this process were. This will require addressing the impact on Libya and its civilians, to deem that it in fact only made their bad situation worse. There are also profound effects on the international community, especially in regard to the legacy of R2P and any further attempts to help other civilians at risk of falling victim to one of the four crimes covered by R2P. It is also important at the conclusion of this work to highlight where else the framework I have created could be applied and what follow-up research would be beneficial.

### **The Origins and Content of R2P and Securitisation**

#### *The Responsibility to Protect*

To understand the effects of R2P's language and how this came to the fore in the Libyan intervention of 2011, we must understand how this doctrine came to be and what arguments and ideas have been put forward about it so far. We can trace the origins of R2P to the context produced by various atrocities committed against populations in the 1990s. The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) highlights this in the foreword to

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their foundational report on R2P from 2001. They discuss that, pre-9/11, humanitarian intervention was a topic at the top of the international agenda due to its controversy when employed 'in Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo – and when it has failed to happen, as in Rwanda.'[1]. Some have posited this report as 'the conceptual bedrock for R2P'[2]. That is not to say it was all down to the ICISS, however, as they certainly drew inspiration from the work of Francis Deng *et al* 'Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa'[3]. It was also in the spirit of, then Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Kofi Annan's statement that:

...if humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica...[4]

Co-chairs for the ICISS Gareth Evans and Mohamed Sahnoun further built on these conceptual origins by emphasising that through the reframing of the issue as the "responsibility to protect" we can escape ideas, prevalent in the nineties, that the argument should be about the "right to intervene"[5]. This categorisation for the aim of R2P sets it apart from the previously dominant idea of humanitarian intervention, critiqued by some as 'nonsensical' and 'the hallmark of deceit'[6]. Humanitarian intervention never tackled the issue of sovereignty as it is defined in the UN charter[7]; instead, its debates focused on when the right of sovereignty should be violated for the greater good of the citizenry of a given state. Set very much apart from this was the aim of the ICISS to acknowledge the sovereignty of member states enshrined in the UN charter but to counter this with the claim that sovereignty has taken on a different character and meaning since the creation of the charter. To them,

Sovereignty implies a dual responsibility: externally, to respect the sovereignty of other states, and internally, to respect the dignity and basic rights of all the people within the state.[8]

It is this internal responsibility that forms the base justification for R2P. When a state's population is suffering 'serious harm'[9], due to reasons from state failure to intra-state conflict, and said state is 'unwilling or unable'[10] to do anything to stop this then the 'international responsibility to protect' overrides 'the principle of non-intervention'[11]. It is widely accepted that this responsibility 'flows from already existing legal obligations of States under international law'[12]. It is rightly stated that this responsibility sits in a milieu of 'treaty and customary obligations of States under human rights law' as well as 'humanitarian law and international criminal law'[13].

It is important, following the discussion of the doctrine's origins, that the three pillars of R2P are clearly delineated so as to clarify what the third pillar measures, which will be my focus, entail. Pillar one entails 'The responsibility of each individual state to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and their incitement.'[14]. The four crimes outlined here are what R2P is concerned with and are the justifications for any R2P intervention. The second pillar concerns 'The responsibility of the international community to encourage and help states to exercise this responsibility'[15]. The third pillar is 'The responsibility of the international community to be prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner in accordance with the United Nations Charter'[16], should the previous two pillars fail and the state in question cannot, or will not, stop the violence. It is when the international community is permitted to use military action to enforce R2P on a given state that this research is concerned with. It is when R2P facilitates military action that the contradiction between what helps states accept such a measure and how this has to be put into practice becomes clear. However, all of these good intentions have not made it uncontroversial, and it is essential to understand and engage the debates surrounding R2P, over fifteen years since its adoption by the UN[17].

One main conflict between scholars over the doctrine of R2P stems from this redefinition of sovereignty as responsibility and not 'as a right'[18]. Broadly divided, the two camps of this argument are between those who focus on 'sovereignty's historically contingent and contested nature'[19]. Whilst on the other hand there are those that posit this as an incompatible view as 'a power which is "accountable" to another, external, body clearly lacks sovereign authority'[20]. However, if my goal is to expose the political character of R2P hidden by its non-political language, this process will not be able to factor sovereignty into the equation. Whether sovereignty is static or not does not affect how the mechanisms of R2P's third pillar operate in practice.

Within the literature that seeks to critique R2P, we do find our first entrance into an idea of R2P being more than just

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a non-political doctrine of human protection. This can be best characterised as charging R2P as an inherently political doctrine. A strong articulation of this idea came from Jeremy Moses. Taking aim at the way in which R2P is usually discussed in 'apolitical terms of civilian protection' he posits that instead this doctrine has a 'deeply political nature'[21]. Important to note for this argument is that the 'political' nature he is referring to is one which draws on the work of Carl Schmitt. Schmitt states, 'The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy'[22]. Other scholars have highlighted that this depoliticization of an inherently political process leads to 'the moralization of politics'[23]. This exposes a possible consequence of R2P's non-political language, as it aims to prevent the worst crimes against humanity; if we strip away its political character in the decision-making process, we are only left with the moral distinction of 'good and evil'[24].

## *Securitisation*

With the important points for R2P elucidated, it is important to clarify this same process with my second key concept, securitisation. Securitisation as a coherent theory emerged with the work of what is now commonly referred to as the Copenhagen School. This school consists of the scholars Ole Wæver, Barry Buzan and Jaap de Wilde, among others, named for most of their writings on this topic emerging from the Conflict and Peace Research Institute in Copenhagen[25]. In 'Security a New Framework for Analysis', these three scholars set about defining what securitisation theory is, and how to define and analyse securitisation in practice. Their definition of security, in international relations, is that it 'is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game', and places an issue above politics or in a 'special kind of politics'[26]. When something is 'securitized' it is shown 'as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures'[27] which justifies a response that goes beyond standard political procedure. They further elaborate that this process 'is what in language theory is called a speech act'[28]. Therefore, in this model when a security actor securitises an issue then 'something is done'[29]. They clarify this speech act as not being 'defined by uttering the word security'[30]. It is only essential there is a 'designation of an existential threat requiring emergency action' and this designation's acceptance 'by a significant audience'[31]. The CS' facilitating conditions further outline how the process runs deeper than simply speaking security. They take a three-fold approach to the conditions, which can help a securitisation take effect, but even all three cannot guarantee successful securitisation. The first condition is that the actor must be 'following the grammar of security', meaning there is a constructed plot, defining an 'existential threat, point of no return and possible way out'[32]. The second is focused on the social 'position of authority' for 'the securitizing actor'[33], this outlines the speaker's relationship to their given audience; it follows the more authority a speaker has with an audience, the higher the chance of a securitisation's acceptance. The final condition relates to the 'features of the alleged threats'; this could increase the chance of a successful securitisation if the speaker can reference objects such as 'tanks' or 'hostile sentiments' that are 'generally held to be threatening'[34].

The CS framework for securitisation is comprehensive, but with scholarly attention there has been some significant contributions and revisions, which should be included. This is aimed towards a coherent securitisation theory that can be applied to the situation around Libya in 2011. The first scholar worth engaging with here is Thierry Balzacq. He broadly takes aim at the 'audience'[35] in securitisation theory. That is, he focuses on securitisations formulation as a 'speech act' and charges this formulation as reducing 'security to a conventional procedure' where '(conditions of success) must fully prevail for the act to go through'[36]. To this end, he reformulates securitisation as 'a strategic (pragmatic) practice', which takes place in a milieu of 'circumstances'[37]. This includes 'the context, the psycho-cultural disposition of the audience', as well as the relative power of 'speaker and listener'[38]. Thus, he seeks to pull securitisation away from being a speech act so that it no longer seeks to find the 'fundamental principles' that underpin all communication, regardless of spatial or temporal variation. There are also others who have taken issue with the speech act aspect of securitisation[39]<sup>[40]</sup> but their conclusions are not as pertinent to my work as Balzacq's. He also engages the type of support that can be given to a securitising actor and divides these into 'formal and moral'[41]. Whilst these are distinct forms of support, they can certainly mutually reinforce one another. We can see moral support coming from certain institutions or the public in a given securitisation case, but the formal support can mandate 'the government to adopt a specific policy'[42] and will usually always come from a formal institution. This reformulation draws in relevant external circumstances and internal logics effecting a securitisation and further develops the role of the listeners in a securitisation, in a way that is not permissible in the CS framework alone.

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Following Balzacq's empirical utilisation of the 'intersubjective'[43] nature of securitisation, there were further efforts to build on this. Paul Roe in 2008 took a direct cue from Balzacq and, building on the different forms of support actors can receive, he divided securitisation into a distinct two step-process. Starting with the 'stage of identification', 'where an issue is identified'[44] as an existential threat. Followed by 'the stage of mobilization', which is when 'responses to that issue are thereafter established'[45]. The result of this delineation demonstrates 'the importance of the actual *employment of emergency measures*'[46] for defining what makes up a securitisation. If we adopt this revision and evaluate the measures taken to deal with a threat as part of a securitisations success, it shows us that 'what matters ultimately is the formal support of institutions'[47], as they will be the ones allowing for any implementation of measures.

A final necessary revision of the CS formula of securitisation for this work adds the ability to interrogate the intentions of securitising actors. This requires drawing the philosophical distinction between intentions and motives. Highlighting the work of Elizabeth Anscombe[48], Rita Floyd points to the CS' unwillingness to say anything about what the security actor is choosing to do. That is because they misunderstand 'that intentions are what an actor aims at or chooses to do' but 'motives are what determines an actor's aim or choice'[49]. Carrying on from the work of Roe, Floyd breaks a securitisation down into '(1) the securitising move' and '(2) security practice'[50]. Within this first movement, the actor issues a 'warning' to whoever is seen as the threat and a 'promise' to the referent object the actor wishes to protect[51]. The second movement is much like Roe's mobilisation and accounts for the change in 'behaviour by the relevant agent'[52] in response to the move. She further highlights that, between these two distinct movements, we can observe the intentions of a security actor. If the security practice employed is 'consistent with the threats'[53] the actor identified, then this benefits the referent object and their intentions were clearly what they warned and promised. However, when there is 'a considerable and otherwise inexplicable gap' between the move and practice, then the actor has intended to benefit someone else from this securitisation. This lends great depth to the study of securitisation in practice.

## R2P, Schmitt, Securitisation and their Connection

The best place to start to expose the tension that exists between ideas of securitisation and R2P is with the previously referenced work of Jeremy Moses. As discussed, he highlights the hidden political dynamics operating behind R2P, referencing the work of Carl Schmitt, and shows that R2P maintains 'a universalist, humanitarian stance'[54] in its response to crises. In his work, Schmitt warned of the dangers inherent in approaching a political conflict in this way. He claims that when 'a state fights its political enemy in the name of humanity' this is merely 'a war wherein a particular state seeks to usurp a universal concept against its military opponent'[55]. Moses posits the attempt to maintain a universalist stance inherent to R2P's justifications 'tends toward a denial of the role and effects of power in the resolution of emergency situations'[56]. In an even more rudimentary sense, it uses the non-political language of universalist principles to deny that it is even reliant on a political distinction. Here I refer to the Schmittian concept of the political, wherein, at its core, resides the distinction between political friends and political enemies. And this distinction should never be reduced to, or equated with any other 'sphere', such as the moral distinction of 'good and evil' or the aesthetic distinction of 'ugly and beautiful'[57]. Thus, when the political distinctions are removed from a decision to combat an enemy and replaced with notions that it is a conflict for the sake of humanity, it has the effect of 'denying the enemy the quality of being human', which in turn allows a war to 'be driven to the most extreme inhumanity'[58].

The importance of this for the case of R2P in Libya, however, is that 'there are no wars for humanity as such' and this is merely the 'highly political utilization of the non-political term humanity'[59]. In an extreme case of R2P, the third pillar provides provisions that force may be used to enforce responsibility; so 'this is a doctrine that encapsulates the possibility of combat against an enemy group'[60]. In the case of Libya, it will be shown how the political utilization of R2P's non-political justifications for intervention painted Qadaffi and his regime as the evil outlaws of humanity, whilst in practice it could not escape the political distinction of friend/enemy, as it never hindered or criticised any actions by the rebels. The refusal by the intervening powers to address the atrocities that anti-Qadaffi forces were committing rests on 'the anti-politics of the R2P, which, to function according to its own moral platform, must avoid the impression of 'picking sides''[61]. Whilst the universalist principle of an intervention justified as a threat to humanity allows for the masking of directly political intentions of intervening powers, it also provides clear moralistic

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narratives to the conflict. Whilst, 'these narratives are appealing to a broad global audience, they obscure the complex politics of the civil conflict and the political role of the intervening force'[62]. The invocation of R2P for military intervention has two key effects. It creates a simplistic narrative of good and evil where interveners sit as representatives of humanity simply doing what is right. Secondly, this non-political narrative of intervention hides all the logic of the political that is used to decide who is the real danger to civilians, as the interventionist ignorance of rebel atrocities clearly demonstrates. It leaves all supporters of R2P in Libya unaware 'that the intervention in Libya was deeply and irrevocably political from the very start'[63].

To understand how securitisation fits into this picture of R2P's universalist character, we must understand Schmitt's connection to the theory of securitisation, and from this, build the connection between the two. An early formulation of this connection comes from Michael Williams, who highlights 'the identification of "security" with a logic of existential threat and extreme necessity' within securitisation that reflects the logic of 'existential division, of friendship and enmity'[64] at the core of Schmitt's concept of the political. The logic of the political is a strong current running through R2P's processes, especially the third pillar, despite its masking by universalist principles. To understand how the language of R2P was used to justify an intervention to protect civilians, that turned into regime change, securitisation is essential.

With this theoretical relation between the two aspects elucidated, it is worth addressing the work which has posited an even closer link. That is, the idea that R2P is itself a speech-act. Reflecting the logic of securitisation, it has been said that 'By speaking R2P' it is claimed 'that an existential threat exists', 'emergency measures are required' and 'the issue is elevated above normal politics'[65]. I do not agree with the conclusion drawn from the above formulation by Stamnes, as it is an attempt to reform R2P by only referring to it in cases where 'an urgent and extraordinary response is required'[66]. This does not cut to the root cause of the problems, which I aim to address. To do this, it is better to think of R2P as the pragmatic practice of securitisation that Balzacq has previously formulated. So, when R2P is spoken, as well as the just discussed logic of existential threat and emergency measure justification coming in to play, it also pulls in the context, in which the act is discussed, the audience's psycho-cultural disposition and 'inferences based on non-linguistic world knowledge'[67]. This means when a member state of the UN calls on the other members to respond to a crisis under the R2P umbrella, many of them will think about the turbulent period that gave birth to this doctrine, previously mentioned. These factors, relevant to a successful securitisation, when combined with R2P's claim that it 'is universal'[68] and non-political, will show when it allows interveners to act as arbiters for humanity, the morally motivated civilian protection of R2P can hide the political intentions of actors. This revised formulation of R2P as a pragmatic practice speaks to what Gareth Evans saw as the purpose of R2P's language, which is that it will generate 'an effective, consensual response in extreme, conscience-shocking cases'[69].

There have been those, however, who disagree with the idea that R2P is a rhetorical device to engender international action, and it is more concrete than that. Alex Bellamy, is one such thinker, as he maintains that R2P is a 'policy agenda informed by commitment to normative principles' and this is 'incompatible' with the idea it is also a 'speech act and catalyst for action'[70]. However, one defence for this claim is that 'RtoP-related crises would be dealt with through the UN's normal peace and security mechanisms', so do not 'require "exceptional" measures'[71]. In securitisation theory, however, these exceptional measures are not defined on a purely legal basis. Instead, exceptional measures can range from 'levying taxes' to 'focusing society's energy and resources on a specific task'[72] and beyond, to the breaking of pre-established laws. Raising taxes or focusing a nation's energy and resources on a given task do not require anything outside the normal peace and security mechanisms of a given state, and it would be the same when it came to an R2P related crises dealt with by the UN. As the ICISS stated in their foundational report, 'Military intervention for human protection purposes is an exceptional and extraordinary measure'[73], no matter the context.

With these connections between my two core concepts explicated, it becomes clear how they interact. R2P in practice and theory attempts to appear as non-political, embodying the universalist principles that Schmitt takes issue with; with its reference to 'the international community'[74], as the authority deciding on when R2P applies, and 'universal justice – justice without borders'[75] this becomes clear. However, as Schmitt says, a war for humanity merely 'has an especially intensive political meaning'[76]. Nowhere is this clearer than in R2P's third pillar, where

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military intervention is permitted should 'national authorities'[77] fail to meet their responsibilities. In theory this would simply involve designating the populations being failed by their leaders as friends, and the failing authorities and any other combatants already involved in a conflict with the failing authorities as enemies, as in a civil war they can all present serious danger to civilian populations. The universal character of R2P hides such antagonistic distinctions behind a 'pacifist vocabulary'[78], which avoids any notion that it is an explicitly political decision, which will determine the difference between life and death for some people. Instead, it paints a paternalistic image of 'the international community' stepping in for a failed authority 'to act in its place'[79]. However, if we view R2P as a pragmatic act of securitisation we understand that when a crisis is dealt with under its umbrella it is a call to action for the international community that will use 'artifacts'[80] to influence this audience's acceptance, and will be greatly impacted by the context, in which the audience sees the issue.

This formulation of R2P as a pragmatic act will demonstrate how the non-political language and universalist principles of R2P form part of the context that such statements are situated in. R2P's ability to reduce interventions, like Libya, into moral distinctions, is able to, simultaneously, facilitate far more deadly interventions than if the political decision-making was laid out plainly; as well as making its acceptance by a given audience much more likely. In the case of Libya, R2P was invoked for military intervention with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1973[81]. With securitisation's framework, in the next chapter, I will analyse statements from across the Libyan intervention. The rhetoric that we will see progress moves from only referring to civilian protection to advocating for regime change, and this is heavily supported by the evidence of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) actions and the support for anti-Qaddafi rebels, once they were granted the UN mandate[82]. This will be a clear example of the universalist principles of R2P on human protection, hiding the political decision-making that drives the intervention and leading to unnecessary loss of civilian life and huge infrastructural damage. It will also demonstrate the disconnect between security move and practice, which reveals the political intentions, and the need for formal support of institutions.

## **The Case of Libya**

To demonstrate what the effects of this theory are in practice, it is worth looking at the events around Libya in 2011 in some detail. The crisis began in what is now commonly referred to as the Arab Spring, where a 'wave of political protest'[83] swept across countries such as Egypt, Bahrain, Syria, Tunisia and eventually Libya. It was February 15<sup>th</sup> when rebellion broke out in Libya, and Benghazi was under opposition control within five days[84]. This represented a significant challenge to Libya's long-time dictator Muammar Qaddafi, who had been in power since a 'bloodless coup' put him in power in 1969[85]. His response to the popular protests against him was 'military repression' and this led to his forces regaining control over the majority of the country and surrounding Benghazi by early March 2011[86]. It was in this context, with Benghazi surrounded and Qaddafi's revenge immanent, that the UNSC moved with 'alacrity' to pass resolutions 1970 and 1973 on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February and the 17<sup>th</sup> of March respectively[87]. It is at this point that I will now textually analyse the resolution put forward by the UNSC permitting military force, along with relevant debates from the national parliaments of intervening powers, and international responses to the intervention to highlight the utility of securitisation in elucidating the hidden political character of R2P.

The best place to start with this analysis is UNSCR 1973, which permitted the intervention by military means into Libya. The resolution's earliest and clearest articulation of the language of R2P relates to the Libyan authorities and conflicting parties first and second pillar responsibilities. 'Reiterating the responsibility of the Libyan authorities to protect the Libyan population and reaffirming that parties to armed conflicts bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians'[88] Following this, they also consider that the current 'systematic attacks' taking place 'against the civilian population may amount to crimes against humanity'[89]. Then, in discussing the protection of civilians, we can see the resolution encouraging states to enact their third pillar responsibilities:

Authorizes Member States that have notified the Secretary-General, acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, and acting in cooperation with the Secretary-General, to take all necessary measures, notwithstanding paragraph 9 of resolution 1970 (2011), to protect civilians [90].

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This statement may tactically refrain from directly referring to the international community's responsibility to step in for the failing Libyan authorities. This is because it is a rational calculation by pro-intervention members of the UNSC 'in order for the Chinese and Russians to allow the vote for intervention to pass the Security Council'[91]. The key connection between both statements that infer the language of responsibility, despite referring to different pillars of R2P, is the protection of civilians. With the addition in the resolution that Qaddafi's actions at the time could constitute crimes against humanity, it is possible to see how the intervention devolved into regime change, as from the outset Qaddafi is highlighted as opposed to the shared values of humanity. Therefore, we have a direct reference to the Libyan authorities' responsibility to protect its population, Qaddafi's actions already pushing him into the position of an outlaw of humanity, and the allowance of all necessary measures from intervening powers to protect civilians. So, for R2P to be consistent on its own terms it must not appear to pick sides and this will make acceptance of the action much easier in formal institutions. I will now use a debate in the United Kingdom (UK) from the day after this resolution was passed to demonstrate the effectiveness this had.

To open a debate on UNSCR 1973, David Cameron, then Prime Minister of the UK, stated 'Now that the UN Security Council has reached its decision, there is a responsibility on its members to respond'[92]. This reference to the UK's responsibility to act to protect Libyan civilians shows the Prime Minister's attempts to use the language of R2P to encourage formal support from parliament for this intervention. As the referent object of Libya's civilians, confirmed in UNSCR 1973, is under threat, and it is not merely a choice by council members to respond but their 'responsibility' to do so. Unquestionably, this securitisation of threats to civilians in Libya had its intended effect. As the leader of the opposition at the time, Edward Miliband echoed the words of the Prime Minister when expressing his support for the intervention:

...the military action that is being embarked upon has broad support, a legal base and recognises our responsibility to protect the Libyan people[93].

Due to the government composition at the time, which was a coalition between Liberal Democrats and the Conservative party, with the Labour party's support, excluding a few rebellious MP's, it led to 557 MP's supporting the intervention and only 13 opposing[94]. The utility of R2P's language for gaining formal parliamentary support did not end in the UK. It was on March 19<sup>th</sup> that the Danish Parliament unanimously passed their governments proposal to contribute to the operation[95]. This unanimous decision was a first in support for Danish military action post-World War II[96]. One posited reason for this high level of support is the 'legitimacy of a UN Security Council Resolution'[97], which has been shown to have been firmly grounded in the non-political language of R2P. With its articulation in UNSCR 1973, and ability to garner formal support in home parliaments for those willing to intervene, this identification of Libyan civilians as the referent object, and the dangers of the emerging conflict as the threat to them is the initial securitising move.

However, after this early swell of optimism and support, the narrative had to change. The threat to Benghazi, a rebel stronghold and key target of Qaddafi, was all but eliminated by March 19<sup>th</sup> due to air strikes, crippling the regime's military capability[98]. Qaddafi and his forces faced overwhelming odds, as NATO bombardments maintained levels of pressure and provided the rebels with a large asymmetric advantage. Little less than a month later, on April 15<sup>th</sup>, the 'main countries involved'[99], France, Britain and the United States, leaders published a letter, which began to reveal a discrepancy between the initial securitising move and the security practice. In this letter they state that 'it is impossible to imagine a future for Libya with Qadhafi in power'[100] followed by the promise that 'so long as Qadhafi is in power, NATO and its coalition partners must maintain their operations so that civilians remain protected'[101]. They conclude that for Libya to transition in to an open and free society, 'Colonel Qadhafi must go and go for good'[102]. It is this letter that embodies the disconnect between what UNSCR 1973 outlined, and what was actually carried out. In the 18<sup>th</sup> March debate in Parliament, David Cameron had stated he would 'ensure that anyone responsible for abuses in Libya will be held to account'[103].

A month down the line, he and the other main proponents of this intervention had equated Qaddafi as the sole threat to civilians in this conflict. That is not to say that Qaddafi did not pose a threat to his people, he did, but there are some who say he may have even been less dangerous to them than the rebels were[104].<sup>[105]</sup> There were no systematic attacks and bloodbaths in cities Qaddafi's forces recaptured from the rebels, such as Zawiyah and

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Ajdabiya[106], before intervention. With the extensive reprisal killings rebels carried out against migrant workers, based on their status as migrants, and therefore potentially former mercenaries[107], after Qaddafi was defeated, it becomes clear that the rebels were a threat to civilians. So, the moralisation of these three leaders over evil Qaddafi can only be seen as a ploy to maintain legitimacy and support for their inherently political decision to see the rebels as 'friends'. The UN Human Rights Council would conclude during their inquiry in 2012, 'the anti-Qadhafi forces, the *thumar*, had committed serious violations, including war crimes and breaches of international human rights law'[108]. The focus here to paint Qaddafi as the sole threat to civilians in Libya is the kind of disconnect between securitising move and security practice highlighted as key to revealing 'whether a securitisation was *consistent* on its own terms'[109], and in this case we can see it was not sincere. The reduction of the conflict, in this letter, to an evil Qaddafi versus an entirely good opposition, demonstrates the logic of the simplistic narrative, which allowed for such rapid acceptance in the home parliaments of interventionists. The moralisation also obscures the intensive political meaning behind such statements, as the choice to act as a '*de facto* air force'[110] for the rebels was certainly not a moral choice. However, this did not interest these leaders who had seen a chance to oust a destabilising fixture of North African political life, and formerly brief Western ally[111], which was their intention, irrespective of the ambiguity of their motive.

The full securitisation, including the securitising move and the practice, put in place by NATO, of Qaddafi as sole threat becomes undeniable when we see the response of certain UNSC members and the action NATO carried out. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of June 2011 at a meeting of the Security Council, the representative for South Africa, who had voted in favour of both UNSCR 1970 and 1973[112], Mr Mashabane commented on their view of the implementation of UNSCR 1973. He stated that after 100 days of NATO operations, 'the situation has deteriorated, with more loss of civilian life and massive destruction of infrastructure'[113]. Following this, he asserted when South Africa voted for resolution 1973 'Our intention was never regime change; nor was it the targeting of individuals'. The objection to the targeting of individuals speaks to incidents such as the NATO bombing of Qaddafi's villa in Tripoli, which killed Qaddafi's youngest son and three grandchildren, who all had virtually nothing to do with the country's governance[114]. Mashabane concluded with reference to the African Union's ad hoc High-Level Committee on Libya that met the day before, which 'reiterated the African Union's demand for an immediate pause in the fighting and the NATO-led bombings to provide a respite to the civilian population'[115].

Examples of official discontent from UNSC members show how the NATO course of action equating protection of civilians with the removal of Qaddafi by force was not wholly accepted as correct. South Africa was very supportive at first when the intervention was clearly painted as a non-political and benevolent rescue operation for Libya's civilians. However, they saw that NATO had gone beyond the resolutions and the irrevocably political character became clear in the insincere security practice, which had been facilitated by the moralistic securitising moves.

## Future Consequences

The use of R2P in Libya represents an extreme case for the use of R2P. As an intervention, it is an 'exception' when it comes 'to authorising non-consensual, coercive military force'[116] in the name of R2P, as this has only ever been done in the less prominent case of Cote d'Ivoire at a similar time[117]. Therefore, as my theory applies to R2P's use of the third pillar, where force is authorised, this is the most essential case to demonstrate the damaging effects of non-political and universalist justifications for protecting civilians. As is shown in the previous chapter, the revisions of securitisation allow for a thorough analysis of the impact of R2P's justifications. In the case of Libya, we saw the initial support of formal institutions, the home parliaments of interventionists and the UNSC, was predicated on R2P's universalist claims that the international community bears responsibility to civilians across the world. However, when analysing the practice implemented off the back of this securitising move, it became clear it was inconsistent on its own terms. The clear intention of the leading intervention powers to remove Qaddafi and his regime no matter the cost incurred by their support for the rebels, demonstrated the disconnect between their security practice and move; simultaneously revealing that the moralistic language of R2P's universalist principles had hidden 'the politics that persist at the heart of the R2P'[118]. Beyond the impact this had on international support for the intervention, as it dragged on and its political nature was revealed, there are much broader consequences, both for the international community and the people of Libya since Qaddafi's 'brutal death' at the hand of rebels on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011[119].



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To understand the broader impacts of this intervention on the international community, it is worth quickly summarising the views certain nations held during and after the intervention. The biggest impact of the process I have just outlined internationally occurred in the foreign policy stance of the BRICS group (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)[120]. China and Russia both followed a similar pattern to South Africa in their relation to the Libyan intervention. After the vote on UNSCR 1973, Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said his country 'was a consistent and firm advocate of the protection of the civilian population', which is why they did not oppose the resolution. Similarly, China's Ambassador Li Baodong stated, despite their abstention, they 'support the Security Council's adoption of appropriate and necessary action' to stabilize Libya and 'to halt acts of violence against civilians'[121]. However, these constructive abstentions would turn to dissent: only two months after the passing of UNSCR 1973 both of these ambassadors' voiced concerns. Discussing NATO's narrative around their actions in May 2011, Churkin said 'The statement by a representative of the coalition with regard to resolution 1973 (2011) is not in line with the reality'[122]. Baodong also echoed the scepticism of Churkin, stating 'There must be no attempt at regime change or involvement in civil war by any party under the guise of protecting civilians'[123]. Whilst there are still those that believe the Libyan intervention was constructive for the people of Libya[124],<sup>[125], [126]</sup> this perspective is not shared by the BRICS countries. For example, Russia and China have vetoed resolutions from the Security Council regarding Syria, even ones merely hinting 'at possible consequences for the Syrian government for its repression'[127]. Churkin stated that Syria cannot be separated from 'the Libyan experience', and that 'the international community is alarmed' that NATO's actions in Libya could be 'a model for the future actions of NATO in implementing the responsibility to protect'[128]. It can be seen that there is a direct link to the dishonest securitising moves of the interventionists around Libya and the current paralysis the UNSC faces over the crisis in Syria, which arose in very similar circumstance to Libya. Whilst Russia may be allied more closely with the Syrian regime than they were with Qaddafi, this failure still gives them, at the very least, more credible grounds for opposition to UNSC action.

It is key to state that my analysis of the events surrounding Libya, the use of universalist principles to moralise a conflict and obfuscate political intentions is not just limited to favouring Eastern non-interventionist states over Western states, more interested in upholding international human rights laws. In 2008, 'Russian authorities invoked R2P norms' to justify 'military intervention into neighbouring Georgia'[129]. This was based on the claim that 'the invasion aimed at preventing a genocide in South Ossetia'[130]. This attempt to justify their intervention in R2P terms failed because there was no evidence of any such genocide and a lack of support from China that Russia would have to rely on[131]. However, despite its failure, this attempt by Russia emphasises the point that it is not only Western states who could hide clearly political intentions behind non-political language. Certainly, with rising tensions between China and Russia roughly on one side and the European Union and the US on the other[132],<sup>[133]</sup> the need to interrogate the intentions of both sides is imperative. Whether they claim to act on moral grounds or if they wish to engage in an intervention through R2P and its universalist principles, the framework I have provided here can be utilised to investigate their true political intentions, studying the disconnect between their securitising moves and security practice, and the utility of non-political language to allow such measures acceptance.

To return to the case of Libya is to find as equally profound consequences for the civilians, who should have been the priority of all action in 2011, and the political stability of their country. UNSCR 2009 established the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)[134] in September 2011. Despite promising early signs, with July 2012 seeing 'the first democratic elections' in Libya 'since its independence in 1951'[135], Libya by 2014 'had descended into uncontrolled violence' and began 'a civil war that can rightly be called multi-factional'[136]. This multi-factional war emerged between the former allies who had opposed Qaddafi. Despite internal splits in the two sides, it was broadly between a secular leaning faction, with a government in Tobruk, supported by House of Representatives, and General Khalifa Haftar in the country, with external support coming from Egypt and United Arab Emirates[137]. They were opposed by a broadly Islamic faction, based in Tripoli, with the new General National Congress, and more Islamist militias supporting them internally, and Turkey, Qatar and Sudan providing external support[138]. Thus, just a couple of years after the NATO intervention had set about to protect the people of Libya and provide them the freedom to choose their own destiny, the country became the site of struggle for regional powers looking to capitalise on the chaos left behind by the interveners.

A legacy of Qaddafi's 42-year rule was a total lack of any institutional depth within government and very little

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experience 'with parliamentary and executive procedures'[139]. With the involvement of regional powers backing the opposing governments in the east and west of the country, 'Their own bitter rivalry exacerbated internal struggles and tore the country apart'[140]. With the first elections since 2012 scheduled for 24 December 2021[141], on the back of a ceasefire in October 2020[142], there is some hope of peace taking root. However, to judge the NATO led intervention on its key objective from 2011, to protect civilians, will lead to the conclusion that this intervention failed. Even if the 'war crimes and crimes against humanity' committed by the Thuwar, and the fact these violations continued after the fall of Qaddafi 'in a climate of impunity'[143] is not considered, then the years of instability and protracted conflict left behind by the intervention is a damning indictment. The reality of this intervention in Libya is that its one-sided support for the anti-Qaddafi rebels facilitated them committing their own violations of human rights throughout the conflict, and also allowed them to continue this after Qaddafi's fall. With the rise of a multiplicity of militias during the conflict and the proliferation of Qaddafi's arsenals, such as 15,000 surface-to-air missiles, still unaccounted for in February 2012, but evidence showing some had been obtained by Boko Haram in Niger[144], it's hard to argue this intervention was in any way a success. There is no metric available to deem that the lives of those saved from Qaddafi in Benghazi were worth the lives of the Tawerghans, migrant workers and the many who died after 'the light footprint'[145] mission of UNSMIL could not stop the chaos of regional rivalries and intrastate conflict.

Overall, this use of Schmitt's concept of the political and a revised securitisation theory is crucial to understanding the problems that existed in the Libyan intervention from its first articulation to use force in UNSCR 1973. It also has the potential to explain the fundamental flaws in other interventions, or third-party involvements in intrastate conflicts, that are justified through non-political language. As 'this allegedly nonpolitical... system serves existing or newly emerging friend-and-enemy groupings and cannot escape the logic of the political'[146]. When this understanding that political decisions cannot be escaped, only hidden, by language is clear, then securitisation offers a practical way to analyse this. Through securitisations revisions the way this non-political language, embodying universalist principles, effects the acceptance of a securitisation by formal institutions can be seen. This non-political language, draws on the disposition of the audience and the artifacts embedded in R2P's language of genocide prevention, making international actors fear the same despondency that affected the UNSC during the 90s and led to many deaths. At the same time, when noting the securitising moves that lead to a given security practice, we can observe the way in which this non-political language also hides the friend-enemy distinction whilst facilitating acceptance.

## Conclusion

With this research, I have provided a broad framework for analysing certain types of interventions. More narrowly, this framework explicates the logic that underpinned the R2P justified intervention into Libya in 2011 to show how it was flawed from the outset, and this became evidenced in the way it proceeded. At first, it was necessary to introduce the crucial aspects of what proponents of R2P claimed set this doctrine apart from the controversial ideas of humanitarian intervention. The reframing of the issue to acknowledge the sovereignty of UN member states, whilst defining sovereignty as entailing responsibilities to one's own population. For establishing my critique of R2P in this research, the work of Jeremy Moses was a foundational part. His use of Schmitt to expose the inherently political character of R2P, and how this was hidden by non-political language and led to unnecessary death in Libya, is a key driver of this analysis. Before proceeding further, it was necessary to establish what the literature had already dealt with in regard to securitisation. Whilst the CS framework is a strong place to start for any securitisation, the contributions of other academics to debates surrounding this theory are crucial for an empirical utilisation. The revisions of Balzacq, Roe and Floyd were all the most pertinent to this work, and inclusion of more revisions would only serve to complicate the analysis. Balzacq's revisions help to understand that the audience will use their knowledge of the world and their understanding of the context of an issue to choose their response to it. Roe contributed that when we consider the implementation of security measures in response to an articulated threat, it is the formal support of institutions that matter. Thus, as key audience to focus on in the case of Libya poses the UNSC, who were the only formal institution able to grant permission for the intervention. The revisions by Floyd, which posit that a disconnect between securitising moves and security practice betray the intentions of a given security actor, worked well with the previous revisions. As a final addition to the process in Libya, once we know who the important support comes from and the way that audience will decide on the issue, Floyd allows for us to see how we can evaluate the intervention on its own terms.

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With a general framework for securitisation created, it was important to demonstrate how this contributes more to our understanding of R2P in theory, before the focus on the case of Libya. The connection between the two theories to Schmitt is important for this. Through the work of Moses, we can see the embodiment of the universalist justifications for war that Schmitt opposed for driving conflicts to extreme inhumanity. Likewise, through Williams, we see the friend-enemy distinction that is at the heart of R2P, although hidden by language, is also the logic underpinning a securitisation of a referent object and threat to that object. With this connection, and the key revisions to securitisation, it is possible to see R2P as a pragmatic act type of securitisation. This means, the context and artifacts the audience use to decide whether R2P justifies military response to a threat will be the non-political and moralistic language, which R2P articulates threats in, and this facilitates acceptance. So, what is essential in R2P's acceptance as a securitisation is what Schmitt posits would drive it to be a dishonest and dehumanising conflict.

When it came to analysing the security pronouncements around Libya, it conformed to the process and theory I had previously outlined. Beginning with UNSCR 1973, the intervention was predicated on non-political language, and it leaned into the universalist principles that would lead to Qaddafi's dehumanisation. This resolution had a strong focus on protecting civilians and even referred to punishing all those responsible for harming civilians, which was reinforced by statements from the home parliaments of interveners. Once the security practice was initiated, the actions that interveners carried out showed the intervention had a political character, which was hidden by R2P's non-political vocabulary when first articulated. This was the intention of interveners to initiate regime change, which was not permitted in UNSCR 1973 and did not conform to accepted definitions of an R2P mission. The backlash from certain members of the international community demonstrated how the full securitisation of Qaddafi as the only threat to civilians was inconsistent in relation to the securitising move, which they had supported at first. This was further exemplified as the anti-Qaddafi rebels committed their own litany of atrocities, which the NATO coalition overlooked, which can only be done politically, certainly not morally.

The final part of this research confronted the ability to generalise this framework and the implications of the intervention. Internationally, this intervention can be seen as a direct cause for UNSC inaction over Syria. The framework I have built up for this intervention can also have applicability beyond R2P. Although it is best suited for R2P, as this is a clear example of non-political language justifying political military interventions, any intervention or third-party involvement in a conflict in another state that is predicated on non-political or universalist justifications will undergo the same logic. Whilst the terrible situation Libya was left in after the interveners were gone and Qaddafi was dead demonstrates that nothing good came out of the process, I have highlighted that this intervention went through. Due to word constraints, I am unable to fully explicate how this process can apply to interventions based on similar logics, but not directly referring to R2P, and if possible, I believe this would be a fruitful avenue for further research.

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