

**The Responsibility to Protect: A Normative Analysis**

**Jessica Porter**

**portej03@student.uwa.edu.au**

**University of Western Australia**

**Department of Political Science and International Relations**

## **The Responsibility to Protect: A Normative Analysis**

### **Abstract:**

*The 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) doctrine, a proposed solution to the tension between the norm of non-interference and the principle of human security, seeks to re-conceptualize the issue of human security as one of responsibilities rather than rights in order to modify the normative framework ('intersubjective understandings') of international relations in response to the twin threats posed by violations of the norms of non-interference and human security. This paper investigates R2P's normative development in relation to its progress through Finnemore and Sikkink's 'norm lifecycle' model and finds that R2P is in the 'cascade' phase of norm evolution. The paper then proceeds to assess the primary 'intrinsic' factors that affect the depth of intersubjective understanding (specificity and durability) and the persuasive and socializing strength (legitimacy) of R2P (domestic salience, international political and structural congruence, and level of normative contestation) in order to address the question of R2P's normative potential.*

## Introduction

The significance of the 'Responsibility to Protect' is widely contested in the academic literature. Views range from heralding the principle as a new norm of international relations to dismissing it as no more than empty rhetoric that (in its adopted form) does little to address the underlying issues regarding humanitarian intervention, namely: political will, operational capacity, and authority. Despite the multitude of references within the literature on R2P that speak to its normative nature, little work has focused on evaluating R2P's normative strength and its potential to influence the interests, identities and behavior of state actors and the subsequent impact on the level of political will. Rather, the majority of the literature has assessed R2P's significance against the backdrop of international actions regarding Darfur, which is tautological as a tool of norm analysis,<sup>1</sup> or has focused on issues, such as consensus, without placing the analysis in a larger norm-based framework. This paper investigates R2P's normative development in relation to its progress through Finnemore and Sikkink's 'norm lifecycle' model and finds that R2P is in the 'cascade' phase of norm evolution. The paper then assesses the primary 'intrinsic' factors that affect the depth of intersubjective understanding (specificity and durability) and the persuasive and socializing strength (legitimacy) of R2P (domestic salience, international political and structural congruence, and level of normative contestation) in order to address the question of R2P's normative potential.

---

<sup>1</sup> J. Legro, 'Which Norms Matter? Revisiting the "Failure" of Internationalism', *International Organization* 51, no. 1 (1997): 33.

## Evaluating Norm Strength

Norms are “intersubjective understandings that constitute actors’ interests and identities, and create expectations as well as prescribe what appropriate behaviour ought to be.”<sup>2</sup> There is strong agreement amongst theorists that norms matter in international relations and that they are causally efficacious.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, there is agreement that the strength of a norm affects its level and manner of influence, and that this strength is affected by factors such as levels of congruence and consensus. “The more settled the norm, and the broader consensus on the moral values that underpin the norm, the more influential it will be on interests, individual actors’ behaviour and the collective practices of like-minded actors.”<sup>4</sup> The difficulty for constructivists is not simply identifying the characteristics of differing levels of norm strength, but additionally, creating a model of analysis that predicts which norms will become ‘settled’ or reach the norm ‘internalization’ stage of development. However, separating factors representing the current strength from those that indicate the potential strength of a norm is complicated by significant levels of overlap. For example, consensus is an indicator of norm strength and also influences the evolution of the norm. Characteristics believed to represent differing stages of norm evolution include levels of persuasion, socialization, institutionalization, habit and the existence of associated actors (norm entrepreneurs, states, and international organizations (IOs)) whereas factors influencing norm strength within a particular stage and the potential for norm transition between stages include, amongst others, the international structural and political congruence of

---

<sup>2</sup> A. Bjorkdahl, ‘Norms in International Relations: Some Conceptual and Methodological Reflections’, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2002): 21.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., A. Klotz, ‘Norms reconstituting Interests: Global Racial Equality and U.S. Sanctions against South Africa’, *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (1995): 451-78.

<sup>4</sup> Bjorkdahl ‘Norms in International Relations’, 22.

the norm, the extent of norm contestation, the specificity and durability of the norm, and the domestic salience of the norm.

One model for evaluating norm strength proposed by Finnemore and Sikkink suggests that norms have a three-stage lifecycle (norm emergence, norm cascade, and norm internalization), the final stage (internalization) encompasses those norms with sufficient strength to become a ‘settled’ or accepted component of the international system. This means that norms that reach the internalization stage will be the most influential on the behavior, interests and identities of international actors. Each stage involves different actors, motives and tools for norm advancement, and progress through the stages depends on the strength/motivation of the actors at each level. Furthermore, there is a tipping point between Stage 1 and 2 where sufficient actors have been persuaded by the norm that the process of socialization begins.

**Table 1.** *Stages of Norms*

	<i>Stage 1 Norm Emergence</i>	<i>Stage 2 Norm Cascade</i>	<i>Stage 3 Internalization</i>
<i>Actors</i>	Norm entrepreneurs with organizational platforms	States, international organizations, networks	Law, professions, bureaucracy
<i>Motives</i>	Altruism, empathy, ideational commitment	Legitimacy, reputation, esteem	Conformity
<i>Dominant Mechanisms</i>	Persuasion	Socialization, institutionalization, demonstration	Habit, institutionalization

(M. Finnemore and K. Sikkink, ‘International Norm Dynamics and Political Change’, *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (Autumn 1998): 898)

The norm lifecycle model addresses the issue of identifying the processes involved in norm transition from idea to accepted practice. However, it fails to address two issues; firstly, the intrinsic qualities of the norm that affect a) its likely adoption by a ‘critical mass’ of states and their ability to socialize the norm, and b) its potential for institutionalization, and secondly the relationship of the proposed norm to existing norms, that is, the potential for norm contestation.

Legro’s study on the influence of norms regarding restrictions on warfare in the interwar and WWII period proposes an alternative structure for gauging the strength of a norm based on its specificity, durability and concordance.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, Legro fails to identify the interrelationships between these three factors. The concordance factor is simply a reinterpretation of the consensus/congruence factors discussed above (Stage 2). However the durability and specificity factors, whilst related to the institutionalization factor, add a new dimension for analysis that includes intrinsic elements of the norm (the ease of understanding or simplicity of the norm) as well as technical factors such as the length of a norm’s existence and its ability to withstand challenges. Yet, even if we add Legro’s factors to Finnemore and Sikkink’s model we still fail to get the full picture, that is, although we can identify factors that will denote the strength of a norm and the manner of its transition, the only factor within this model that relates to the intrinsic qualities of the norm is its specificity. Although norm entrepreneurs may persuade a critical mass of states to adopt a new norm and thus push it into the norm cascade stage, their ability to achieve this, and the success of the cascade phase, also depends on factors relating to the intrinsic quality of the norm, such as: international structural

---

<sup>5</sup> Legro, ‘Which Norms Matter?’, 34.

and political congruence, and domestic salience. Furthermore, existing norms may impede normative strength, as new norms require their reinterpretation or disposal. Thus, what is needed is a model that identifies the stages of norm evolution and also factors affecting the probable success of the mechanisms through which norms evolve in strength.

**Table 2.**

<i>Dominant Mechanisms of Norm Advancement</i>	<i>Necessary Actors/Agents</i>	<i>Factors Affecting the Success of Ideational Transmission Mechanisms</i>
Persuasion	Norm Entrepreneurs with Organizations Platforms	Domestic Salience; International Political and Structural Congruence (adjacency claims)
Socialization	International Organizations and Networks and/or 'Critical Mass' of States	International Political and Structural Congruence; Domestic Salience; Specificity; Durability; Norm Contestation
Institutionalization	'Critical Mass' of States; International Organizations	International Political and Structural Congruence; Low-level Norm Contestation; Specificity

(Adapted from Finnemore and Sikkink's 'Stages of Norms' table above)

Based on Table 2, I will investigate the current and probable future normative strength of R2P as follows: analysis of current stage of R2P based on the existence of actors/agents and the level of persuasion, socialization and institutionalization representative of differing stages of the norm lifecycle; analysis of the factors influencing the likelihood of R2P transitioning between the stages and the strength of R2P in its current stage.

## **R2P in the ‘Norm Life Cycle’**

### ***Norm Entrepreneurs and Persuasion***

The principle of the Responsibility to Protect was established by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) whose mandate was:

*...to build a broader understanding of the problem of reconciling intervention for human protection purposes and sovereignty...to try to develop a global political consensus on how to move from polemics...towards action.*<sup>6</sup>

The ICISS was established by the Canadian Government in response to the continuing failure of the international community to respond appropriately and effectively to the human security issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; due to a lack of appropriate guidelines and capacities and especially to the lack of an agreed understanding of what constitutes an appropriate response. Polemics prevented a formalized response to arising situations and subsequent unauthorized, but morally accepted, ad hoc military responses to human security crises. Situations arose in the 1990s that highlighted the lack of consensus that threatened to undermine the rule-based order of international relations, and showed the need for formalized strategies and capacities in order to meet the goal of human security.

A short history of R2P’s emergence is as follows. In his 1999 and 2000 General Assembly reports, then Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged the international society of states to resolve the divide between non-interference and human security issues and build consensus on how best to respond to human security crises. The Canadian Government responded by

---

<sup>6</sup> International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect* (Ottawa: ICISS, 2001), 2.

establishing the ICISS which produced its report “The Responsibility to Protect” (2001) following extensive research and consultations with State and Civil Society actors. In 2004, the United Nations (UN) High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change released its report “A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility” incorporating the principles of R2P and explicitly endorsing the concept as an “emerging norm.”<sup>7</sup> Gareth Evans, co-chair of the ICISS and strong advocate of R2P, was a panel member. In 2005, Kofi Annan submitted his report “In larger Freedom” to the 2005 World Summit. Annan’s report strongly endorsed R2P and recommended that the UN Security Council (UNSC) incorporate R2P’s guidelines on the use of force. Subsequently, Annan remained actively involved in the promotion of R2P. In 2005 at the World Summit, more than 150 States agreed to the principle of R2P and incorporated the concept into the Outcome Document. However, criteria governing the use of force were not incorporated because of the many reservations member states had regarding the adoption of R2P. In 2006, the UNSC reaffirmed the adoption of the R2P principle, the Summit Outcome Document (Resolution 1674) referred to the R2P principle in the context of the deployment of UN peacekeepers to Darfur (Resolution 1706). The role of norm entrepreneurs in the progress of R2P from an idea in a report to an international norm was critical and the primary norm entrepreneurs in the lead up to the 2005 Summit should be noted: the Canadian Government; Gareth Evans; Kofi Annan; and the Responsibility to Protect-Engaging Civil Society project.

Currently R2P has a large base of norm entrepreneurs and norm brokers working from sophisticated organizational platforms attempting to consolidate the R2P norm through: high-

---

<sup>7</sup> Report of the Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, UN GAOR, 59<sup>th</sup> Sess, Supp. No. 565, UN Doc. A/59 (2004) at paras 57-58, online: United Nations <<http://www.un.org/secureworld/report.pdf>>.

level advocacy; research and analysis; policy creation; awareness raising/civil society engagement; monitoring and capacity building. R2P's primary entrepreneurial platforms are discussed below. Analysis of the functions and capacities of these organizations indicates the strength of R2P's norm entrepreneurial and broker base and highlights the types and range of activities in which they are involved. Although states can act as norm entrepreneurs and norm brokers, due to their unique qualities as socializing agents, they are more accurately viewed as norm leaders and as components of the 'critical mass' necessary for norm cascade.

### International Crisis Group

The International Crisis Group (ICG), a NGO whose purpose is the prevention and resolution of deadly conflict, is "one of the top ten think tanks in the world".<sup>8</sup> The ICG utilizes a tri-fold strategy to achieve its agenda of peace and security including: extensive field-based analysis; viable policy prescription; and high-level advocacy.<sup>9</sup> With an estimated annual budget of US \$15 million (2008) and 140 full-time staff,<sup>10</sup> as well as access to high-level policy makers the ICG has enjoyed considerable influence in national and international policy prescriptions and peace processes. One of the six stated activities of the ICG is:

---

<sup>8</sup> Report of the Think Tanks and Civil Society Program, 'The Global "Go-To Think Tanks": The Leading Public Policy Research Organizations in the World', (2007), online: Foreign Policy Research Institute <<http://www.fpri.org/research/thinktanks/mcgann.globalgotothinktanks.pdf>>, 16.

<sup>9</sup> International Crisis Group, 'About Crisis Group', online: ICG <<http://www.fpri.org/research/thinktanks/mcgann.globalgotothinktanks.pdf>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

*...strongly supporting a rules-based, rather than force-based, international order, in particular significantly influencing UN resolutions and institutional structures in relation to the new international norm of the 'responsibility to protect'.<sup>11</sup>*

ICG President and CEO Gareth Evans (Co-Chair ICISS) has utilized the ICG platform to promote R2P and has incorporated R2P principles and criteria into the NGO's policy analysis/prescription and advocacy functions. Evans has spoken about R2P on at least thirty-eight occasions and published on R2P fifteen times.<sup>12</sup> Other ICG staff have spoken or published on R2P seven times and the NGO has produced fourteen reports that directly invoke R2P.<sup>13</sup> The ICG was also instrumental in the creation of the Global Centre for R2P. Evans and the ICG have focused primarily upon the need to institutionalize adequate capacity and conceptual clarity and the need to prevent 'backsliding' through the appropriate application and invocation of R2P by norm entrepreneurs and brokers.<sup>14</sup>

### The Responsibility to Protect: Engaging Civil Society

The Responsibility to Protect: Engaging Civil Society (R2P-CS) project was established by the World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy in 2003 to raise awareness of R2P and build a network of NGOs to advance R2P principles in governmental, regional and

---

<sup>11</sup> International Crisis Group, 'About Crisis Group', online: ICG <<http://www.fpri.org/research/thinktanks/mcgann.globalgototthinktanks.pdf>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>12</sup> International Crisis Group, 'The Responsibility to Protect', online: ICG <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4521>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> G. Evans, 'Responsibility to Protect in 2007: Five thoughts for Policy Makers' (Presentation, President of the International Crisis Group, to Panel Discussion on *The Responsibility to Protect: Ensuring Effective Protection of Populations under Threat of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, Program to Commemorate 1994 Rwandan Genocide, United Nations, New York, 13 April 2007), online: ICG <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4773>>, (accessed: May 2008).

international bodies. “R2P-CS is now working with civil society partners to deepen the debate, promote international norms and monitor the responses of governments, the Security Council and other international bodies.”<sup>15</sup> In line with this R2P-CS’s primary goals include: increasing awareness; encouraging discussion of R2P concepts; contributing to processes that promote and operationalize the principle; and contributing to the development of NGO monitoring and early-warning mechanisms<sup>16</sup>. In line with these goals the R2P-CS project has: held significant global consultative roundtables concerning the perspectives of East Africa, Latin America and Asia and the prospects for an R2P Coalition; has produced reports and statements aimed at policy prescription and awareness raising; has conducted consultations with civil society organizations; and monitored and relayed to civil society (through the R2P-CS website and information brochures) the progress of R2P.<sup>17</sup> R2P-CS is financially supported by the Governments of Canada and the United Kingdom, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and individual donations.<sup>18</sup>

### Global Centre for R2P

The Global Centre for R2P (GCR2P) is an independent research and advocacy organization that was the initiative of five major international NGOs: ICG; Human Rights Watch (HRW); Oxfam International; Refugees International; and the Institute for Global Policy. The GCR2P was launched in February 2008 and is based at the Ralph Bunche Institute for

---

<sup>15</sup> Responsibility to Protect: Engaging Civil Society, ‘About the Project: Background’, online: R2PCS <<http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/pages/1>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., ‘About the Project: Mission’.

<sup>17</sup> See Responsibility to Protect: Engaging Civil Society, online: R2P-CS <<http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>18</sup> Responsibility to Protect: Engaging Civil Society, ‘About the Project: Background’, online: R2PCS <<http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/pages/1>>, (accessed: May 2008).

International Studies at the Graduate Centre of the City University of New York. GCR2P is co-chaired by Gareth Evans and Mohamed Sahnoun (ICISS Co-Chairs) and funded by Australia, Belgium, Canada, Netherlands, Norway, Rwanda, United Kingdom, the John D. and Catherine T. Macarthur Foundation, the Open Society Institute, and Scott and Elena Lawlor.<sup>19</sup> The Centre has been welcomed by a number of global leaders, including the past and present UN Secretaries-General Annan and Ki-Moon. The centre has a strong north-south character and is supported by associated centres in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The GCR2P will work to advance the R2P agenda by generating research, conducting high-level advocacy and facilitating “the activities of those working to advance the R2P agenda.”<sup>20</sup> Evans believes “the GCR2P will be a catalyst for implementing the commitment of all countries to protect people around the world from genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and war crimes.”<sup>21</sup> The GCR2P will work to clarify the scope of the concept; create structures and processes capable of delivering effective prevention and reaction, and stimulate the political will to act when the next actual or potential mass atrocity situation arises.

Specifically the GCR2P will:

- *Gain greater understanding and acceptance of the R2P norm;*
- *Ensure that the R2P norm is invoked accurately and effectively by a wide range of governmental, international and non-governmental actors;*

---

<sup>19</sup> Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, ‘About the Global Centre’, online: GCR2P <<http://www.globalcentrer2p.org/about.html>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>20</sup> N. Deller and D. Manning, ‘New Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect Opens’, (Press Release: February 14<sup>th</sup> 2008), online: <[http://www.globalcentrer2p.org/pdf/press\\_release.pdf](http://www.globalcentrer2p.org/pdf/press_release.pdf)>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 3.

- *Advance the debate on the limitations and possibilities of using military force to protect against mass atrocities;*
- *Support endeavours to build capacity within international institutions, governments, and regional organizations to fulfill their protection responsibilities and;*
- *Contribute to the mechanisms and strategies necessary to generate an effective political response as new R2P situations arise.*<sup>22</sup>

The GCR2P will also offer assistance to the UN Special Advisors on the Prevention of Genocide (Francis Deng) and on the Responsibility to Protect (Edward Luck).<sup>23</sup>

### Genocide Intervention Network

The Genocide Intervention Network (GI-Net, an initiative of students at Swarthmore College: 2004) is a US civil society organization (CSO) endorsed and supported by: high-profile players from the R2P norm advocacy circle, including Gareth Evans and Lloyd Axworthy; scholars; and non-profit research and policy organizations.<sup>24</sup> GI-Net “empowers individuals and communities with the tools to prevent and stop genocide.”<sup>25</sup> The GI-Net has embraced the

---

<sup>22</sup> N. Deller and D. Manning, ‘New Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect Opens’, (Press Release: February 14<sup>th</sup> 2008), online: <[http://www.globalcentrer2p.org/pdf/press\\_release.pdf](http://www.globalcentrer2p.org/pdf/press_release.pdf)>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>23</sup> Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, ‘Launch of New Global Centre Against Mass Atrocity Crimes’, (Press Release: February 14<sup>th</sup> 2008), online: <[http://www.globalcentrer2p.org/pdf/press\\_release.pdf](http://www.globalcentrer2p.org/pdf/press_release.pdf)>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>24</sup> Genocide Intervention Network, ‘Endorses’, online: GI-Net <<http://www.genocideintervention.net/network/endorsers>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Genocide Intervention Network, ‘About the Genocide Intervention Network’, online: GI-Net <<http://www.genocideintervention.net/network>>, (accessed: May 2008).

concept of R2P as “perhaps the most significant recent development in civilian protection”<sup>26</sup> and argues that to “prevent genocide from continuing to occur in the twenty-first century, we have a responsibility to protect civilians who are being victimized by countries unwilling or unable to halt ongoing atrocities.”<sup>27</sup> GI-Net’s strategy to prevent genocide stems from Samantha Power’s analysis of the US’s failure to prevent genocide as a result of three factors: political will; permanency; and a lack of focus on protection.<sup>28</sup> The first two factors refer to the need for a permanent political constituency, the third, the need to focus on civilian protection. GI-Net addresses the first issue through advocacy campaigns and the second by “supporting activities on the ground that aim to protect civilians in harm’s way.”<sup>29</sup> GI-Net’s activities and services include: Advocacy Tool Kit (providing US citizens with advocacy tools, including a genocide-hotline to elected representatives and information on their elected representatives ‘record’ on Darfur); Sudan Divestment Taskforce; Stand (a student-activist arm); Civilian Rapid Response Network; S.E.A.L (4 Part US policy program re: Sudan); Civilian Protection Trust Fund (strategizes and implements programs to protect civilians in security crises alongside international and regional forces).<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> Genocide Intervention Network, ‘Protecting Civilians’, online: GI-Net <<http://www.genocideintervention.net/protection>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>27</sup> Genocide Intervention Network, ‘Learn more about Genocide and how to Prevent it’, online: GI-Net <<http://www.genocideintervention.net/educate>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Genocide Intervention Network, ‘Protecting Civilians’, online: GI-Net <<http://www.genocideintervention.net/protection>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Genocide Intervention Network, ‘Resources’, online: GI-Net <<http://www.genocideintervention.net/resources>>, (accessed: May 2008).

## R2P Coalition

The Responsibility to Protect Coalition (R2PC) is a US CSO established to enhance the political will of US policy makers towards R2P and the International Criminal Court. Their mission is “to convince the American people and its leaders to embrace the norm of the responsibility to protect as a domestic and foreign policy priority.”<sup>31</sup> Their activities include raising awareness, building a political constituency, building acceptance, refining R2P and identifying and promoting means of implementing the principle, and its endorsement by CSOs, Local, State and Federal Governments.<sup>32</sup> The R2PC Steering Committee includes senior members of the ICG, the Institute for Global Policy, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. The Advisory Board consists of eminent US scholars and leaders.

R2P evidently has a strong network of norm entrepreneurs and brokers, including many global and domestic leaders, and more CSOs and NGOs than can be discussed here. The activities undertaken by the above organizations (high-level advocacy; research and analysis; policy creation; awareness raising/civil society engagement; monitoring and capacity building) are predominantly socializing rather than persuasive. Norm entrepreneurs act as socializing agents at the political level by pressuring targeted actors to adopt new policies and laws, to ratify treaties and by monitoring compliance with international standards and, at the civil society level, through creating political constituencies. Thus, R2P has reached the norm cascade phase of development, characterized by socialization and institutionalization. However, the continued

---

<sup>31</sup> The R2P Coalition, ‘Mission’, online: R2PC <<http://r2pcoalition.org/content/view/23/53/>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>32</sup> The R2P Coalition, ‘Activities’, online: R2PC <<http://r2pcoalition.org/content/view/24/55/>>, (accessed: May 2008).

existence of R2P advocates indicates that R2P has yet to be internalized by the international community.

### ***Critical Mass and Socialization***

The ‘norm lifecycle’ model proposes that a norm’s transition between the norm emergence and norm cascade stage of evolution occurs with a ‘tipping point’ when enough states have adopted the new norm that appropriate behavior for the identity called ‘state’ (or a sub-set of states) is redefined.<sup>33</sup> A norm in the cascade stage has greater strength than an emerging norm as states are socialized (rather than simply persuaded) into accepting the new norm as it gains legitimacy and becomes an evaluative tool for measuring state conformity. Subsequently, the cost-benefit calculation of states is affected; recalcitrant states run the risk of damage to their reputation and credibility and a loss of trust<sup>34</sup> as a result of the linked relationship between international and domestic legitimacy.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the need to be perceived as acting legitimately can be a requisite for international and domestic credibility (of increased salience to popularly elected governments). Socialization is the process of induction of new members into the ways of behavior that are preferred in a society,<sup>36</sup> thus states socialize (through peer-pressure) other states to accept emergent norms. As the key mediator between norm emergence and norm cascade is a ‘critical mass’ of states, identifying the level of state support for a norm is crucial in norm-strength evaluation.

---

<sup>33</sup> M. Finnemore and K. Sikkink, ‘International Norm Dynamics and Political Change’, *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (Autumn 1998): 902.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 903.

<sup>35</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink, ‘International Norm Dynamics’, 903.

<sup>36</sup> J. Checkel, ‘International Institutions and Socialization in Europe: Introduction and Framework’, *International Organization* 59, (Fall 2005): 804.

Identifying a critical mass is both a qualitative and quantitative exercise as the given 'weight' of a state varies depending on its moral, economic and military strength. A norm with the support of the entire UNSC would require fewer states to reach a critical mass than a norm with support from fewer 'critical' states. Unfortunately, there is insufficient research into the calculation of tipping points, however it is broadly presumed to rarely occur before one third of the states in the system adopt the norm, with unanimity among critical states being unnecessary.<sup>37</sup> Although beyond the scope of this paper to assess the relative weights and positions of all states, it is possible to argue that R2P has reached the norm cascade phase without needing to identify the precise tipping point due to the "mass of state practice, numerous conferences, seminars, plenary sessions, academic and commissioned research, and engagement by global civil society organizations"<sup>38</sup> In addition, the principle's incorporation into the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (ratified by more than 150 states) provides clear evidence of a critical mass of states redefining standards of appropriate behavior and thus engaging in socialization whilst evidencing its partial success. However, the version of R2P incorporated in the Outcome Document shows the normative limits of R2P. Although there was a critical mass of states in support of the principle of R2P, especially as applied in the first instance to a states responsibilities to its own nationals, the mass was not unified in its understandings/beliefs regarding the specifics of R2P concerning criteria, authority, and levels of responsibility.<sup>39</sup> This lack of unity amongst the critical mass effectively divided the R2P concept and the R2P

---

<sup>37</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics', 901.

<sup>38</sup> T. Chataway, 'Towards Normative Consensus on Responsibility to Protect', *Griffith Law Review* 16, no. 1 (2007), 211.

<sup>39</sup> See, e.g. Bellamy's analysis of State responses to R2P in: A. Bellamy, 'Whither the Responsibility to Protect? Humanitarian Intervention and the 2005 World Summit', *Ethic & International Affairs* 20, no. 2 (June, 2006):151-153.

framework, resulting in the situation where the concept of R2P has evolved further than the framework. This is shown by the relatively broad acceptance of the R2P concept in the context of ongoing negotiations between states regarding the interpretation and application of the principle and the focus of norm entrepreneurs on specifying and delineating the principle.

Stahn identifies five propositions contained in R2P, each with differing levels of support, ranging from the most to the least accepted. The propositions are:

- I. *The Host State has a Duty to Protect Citizens on its Territory*
- II. *States failing the Duty to Protect have a Weak Sovereignty Defense*
- III. *Foreign Entities may Intervene Nonforcibly*
- IV. *Foreign States may Intervene Forcibly*
- V. *Foreign Entities have a Positive Duty to Act*<sup>40</sup>

According to Stahn's analysis the first three of these propositions enjoy much greater support than the latter two<sup>41</sup>, indicating not only that the concept of R2P has evolved further than the framework and also that the components of the concept have not evolved uniformly.

### ***International Organizations, Networks and Institutionalization***

#### **The United Nations**

The principle of R2P was codified within the UN in 2005 in the World Summit Outcome Document. However, key elements of R2P, namely criteria governing the use of force, the scope for action in the event of UNSC failure and modifications to the UNSC decision-making process

---

<sup>40</sup> C. Stahn, 'Responsibility to Protect: Political Rhetoric or Emerging Legal Norm', *The American Journal Of International Law* 101, no. 99 (2007), 118-120.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

(restricted vetoes/indicative voting) regarding humanitarian crises have not been institutionalized. Likewise, capacities to implement R2P, other than the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission (2005) have not been established. Thus, whilst the concept of R2P has been formally accepted, the lack of institutionalization of evaluative criteria and capacity leave R2P dangerously unspecified and difficult to operationalize. Nevertheless, the UN General Assembly's (UNGA) adoption of the R2P principle has been subsequently reaffirmed in two UNSC resolutions, indicating the continued institutional acceptance of the principle and, furthermore, R2P has begun, to at least a limited extent, to be formally institutionalized within the UN; through the creation of the position of Special Advisor on the Responsibility to Protect at the level of assistant Secretary-General and with the role of "conceptual development and consensus building."<sup>42</sup> Overall, R2P has been codified but not substantively institutionalized by the UN.

### Regional and Sub-Regional Institutions

The African Union's (AU) Constitutive Act (2002) promotes the principles of R2P, specifically in Article 4h which established "the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State...in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity."<sup>43</sup> In 2004, the AU created the Peace and Security Council which is responsible for the implementation of each of the three elements of R2P, namely prevention, reaction and

---

<sup>42</sup> UN News Service, 'Secretary-General Appoints Special Adviser to Focus on Responsibility to Protect', online: UN News Centre <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=25702&Cr=ki-moon&Cr1>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>43</sup> African Union, 'The Constitutive Act', online: AU <[http://www.africaunion.org/About\\_AU/AbConstitutive\\_Act.htm](http://www.africaunion.org/About_AU/AbConstitutive_Act.htm)>, (accessed: May 2008).

rebuilding.<sup>44</sup> And in 2007 the African Charter on Human and People's Rights passed a resolution strengthening R2P in Africa (ACHPR/Res.117 (XXXXII)). The importance of the AU's institutionalization of R2P principles cannot be understated given the Organization for African Unity's preoccupation with the principle of 'non-interference'. Nevertheless, three issues may affect the utility of the AU in promoting R2P. Firstly, the decision-making process is not optimal regarding speed of response, an important element in the prevention and protection of civilians. However, the Peace Building Commission has established early warning mechanisms necessary for timely and effective responses to crises. Secondly, the AU lacks the capacity to carry out significant peacekeeping operations. Thirdly, the relationship between the AU and the UNSC is unclear regarding which has primary responsibility and this diffusion of responsibility could be utilized to justify inaction. However, despite these potential problems, the AU has institutionalized the concept of R2P that sovereignty is indeed limited in regards to civilian protection. Furthermore, the AU's adoption of this principle is viewed as being instrumental in the consensus reached at the 2005 World Summit.

Sub-regional African organizations have also institutionalized R2P. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security has established an early warning mechanism for conflict prevention and a capacity for intervention in situations that constitute humanitarian disasters.<sup>45</sup> Whilst the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ

---

<sup>44</sup> See the 'Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union', online: AU <[http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/organs/psc/Protocol\\_peace%20and%20security.pdf](http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/organs/psc/Protocol_peace%20and%20security.pdf)>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>45</sup> See 'Press Release: ECOWAS Early Warning & Early Response (ECOWARN) System, Sensitisation Workshop' (March 27<sup>th</sup> 2007), online: West African Network for Peacebuilding <[http://www.wanep.org/image/pr\\_ecowarn.pdf](http://www.wanep.org/image/pr_ecowarn.pdf)>, (accessed: May 2008).

on Politics, Defense and Security Co-operation is authorized to resolve conflicts, including intrastate conflicts, through the use of measures ranging from prevention to enforcement, in the case of genocide, ethnic cleansing and gross violations of human rights.<sup>46</sup>

The institutionalization of R2P principles within these African regional and sub-regional organizations highlights an important shift in thinking among African states, namely that the peace and security of the continent is dependent upon the peace and security of its people. However, the relationship between concept and practice is still hindered in Africa by a lack of capacity and the relatively short period of existence of the establishments responsible for preventing and responding to humanitarian crisis.

Institutionalization is an important part of the process of socialization and internalization of a norm, as “international organizations have long been viewed as the custodian of the seal of international approval and disapproval and play a crucial role in establishing and assuring adherence to international norms.”<sup>47</sup> However, institutionalization does not need to precede the norm cascade stage of development,<sup>48</sup> but can occur in either of the first two phases of the norm lifecycle. Presently, R2P has limited institutionalized capacity and clarity thus undermining the ability of the UN to act as a socializing agent of R2P. However, the institutionalization of R2P in African organizations suggests that these will act as agents of socialization for the norm.

---

<sup>46</sup> G. Puley, ‘The Responsibility to Protect: East, West, and Southern African Perspectives on Preventing and Responding to Humanitarian Crisis’ (Project Ploughshares 2005), online: <<http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php?module=uploads&func=download&fileId=163&>>, (accessed: May 2008), 11.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 903.

<sup>48</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink, ‘International Norm Dynamics’, 900.

### ***Relative Norm Strength and Implications***

R2P has reached the norm cascade phase of development, evidenced by the engagement of states and norm entrepreneurs/brokers in socializing activities. A norm in the cascade stage of development does not necessarily progress to internalization; additionally norms can regress through the stages as socialization does not necessarily include normative suasion. Nevertheless, R2P's current status as a cascading norm provides it with a moderate level of strength in reconstituting the identities and thus interests of states through the reformation of generally accepted intersubjective understandings regarding standards of appropriate behavior. However, the socializing strength of a norm is influenced by a variety of factors including norm specificity and durability, levels of norm contestation, the 'fit' of the norm with the existing international culture and the domestic salience of the norm. These factors influence how widely, quickly and effectively a norm is socialized into the international system.

### **R2P and Factors influencing Norm Strength**

#### ***Structural and Political Congruence (International)***

The 'fit' of a norm to the prevalent culture, or its structural and political congruence, affects the likely strength of a norm due to the relationship between socialization and legitimacy (the more legitimate a norm appears the more easily it will be socialized). The positive effect that adjacency claims have on normative influence have been evidenced by the success of new normative claims when linked with existing norms compared with their success prior to such

linkages.<sup>49</sup> Thus, establishing the congruence of R2P with the contemporary international culture is important to predictions of R2P's potential normative strength. To this end, the ICISS commissioners, and subsequent norm entrepreneurs and brokers, have highlighted the R2P's legal and normative foundations as:

*... international legal obligations under human rights and human protection declarations, covenants and treaties, international humanitarian law and national laws that set forth standards of conduct and the means to enforce these standards. Particularly relevant are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the four Geneva Conventions and the two Additional Protocols, the Convention Against Torture, the Genocide Convention, the Conventions on civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The emerging norm of human security played a large part in shifting the debate from territorial security, and towards the security of the people.<sup>50</sup>*

The R2P framework also harmonizes with the UN Charter and commonly accepted interpretations of the Charter regarding the promotion of the UNSC as the appropriate authorizing body for the use of force and the implementation of sanctions and other peaceful measures to maintain “peace and security” and the established interpretation of peace and

---

<sup>49</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics', 908.

<sup>50</sup> The Responsibility to Protect: Engaging Civil Society, 'Frequently Asked Questions (Part 1: The Origins of the Responsibility to Protect and the R2PCS Project)' (15 May, 2006), online: R2P-CS <[http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/civil\\_society\\_statements/?theme=alt3](http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/civil_society_statements/?theme=alt3)>, (accessed: May 2008).

security as regarding human as well as state security.<sup>51</sup> Accordingly, Macfarlane, Thielking and Weiss state “...there is a substantial and growing body of quasi-legislation or soft law under the general rubric of the responsibility to protect.”<sup>52</sup>

Many components of R2P are drawn from well established legal and normative principles and are in keeping with the principles and structure of the UN Charter. Furthermore, R2P entrepreneurs and brokers have made explicit these links utilizing the power of adjacency claims to promote the norm. However, norms, due to their role in re-interpreting appropriate behavior, necessarily conflict with existing interpretations and may have entirely new elements that thus cannot find resonance in existing legal and normative frameworks. The R2P commissioners association of human security with certain duties, namely the collective responsibility to act, was their innovation. International law imposes only limited positive duties on states, so the positive duties encompassed in R2P are progressive and difficult to legally identify. The US’s position espoused by ambassador John R. Bolton that they would “not accept that either the UN as a whole, or the Security Council, or individual states, have an obligation to intervene under international law”<sup>53</sup> evidences the role of precedence, fit and adjacency claims on the perceived legitimacy of norms.

### ***Specificity***

---

<sup>51</sup> A. Charron, ‘Putting R2P into the Security Council Context’ (paper presented at the International Studies Association, San Francisco, CA, March 26, 2008, online: ISA <[http://64.112.226.71/one/isa/isa08/index.php?click\\_key=2](http://64.112.226.71/one/isa/isa08/index.php?click_key=2)>, 6.

<sup>52</sup> S. Macfarlane, C. Thielking and T. Weiss, ‘The Responsibility to Protect: is Anyone Interested in Humanitarian Intervention’, *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 5 (2004): 989.

<sup>53</sup> Letter from Ambassador Bolton to UN Member States Conveying U.S. Amendments to the Draft Outcome Document Being Prepared for the High Level Event on Responsibility to Protect, (August 30 2005), online: R2P-CS <[http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/government\\_statements/](http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/government_statements/)>, (accessed: May 2008), 2.

The specificity of a norm affects the level of ‘intersubjective understanding’ and the subsequent ability of norm leaders and entrepreneurs to hold actors accountable to the standard of appropriate behavior. That is, the primary mechanisms in norm socialization are the praise and censorship of states regarding the norm and the role of IOs in assuring adherence to the norm. Specificity is thus important to enable IOs to fulfill their socializing role and in assuring consistency amongst states’ socializing activities, thus ensuring that a critical mass is maintained and subsequent motivations of legitimacy and conformity remain strong. The lack of inter-actor agreement regarding the application of the R2P principle, and the subsequent lack of institutionalization of specifying criteria (e.g., the use of force or the unambiguous delineation of chains of responsibility) thus detracts from the normative strength of R2P by making it more difficult for actors to clearly identify and respond appropriately to norm violations. However, norm leaders and entrepreneurs, recognizing the dangers associated with lack of specificity (which lowers norm strength and allows norm contesters to undermine the norm) are engaging in projects designed to counter this issue, including: building greater consensus amongst norm supporters regarding the application of R2P; defining and delimitating the scope of R2P; creating policy prescriptions and targeted reforms aimed at further institutionalization of R2P; and assessing how the R2P principle applies to current and past situations.

### ***Durability***

Durability refers to whether the norm has ‘stood the test of time’, that is, its length of existence and ability to withstand contestation. The R2P framework has only existed for a relatively small amount of time (7 years) and it may be too soon to assess its durability. However, the human rights norms and body of humanitarian law upon which R2P is based have

arguably stood the test of time and this durability conceivably extends to the components of R2P most connected with these durable norms. Thus, the responsibility of a state to its own nationals could benefit from this carry-over durability to a greater extent than the components of R2P which extend to international responsibilities.

### *Domestic Salience*

The domestic salience of a norm directly affects (at least in states with popular governments) the strength of a state's commitment to the norm and thus affects their receptivity to normative suasion and the level of normative socialization (note: domestic salience is not a necessary precondition to norm acceptance). Furthermore, the extent to which the international norm is congruent with the domestic political culture affects the burden of justification required for norm deviance. Thus, strong salience creates a prima facie obligation to the norm.<sup>54</sup>

Analyzing the domestic salience of a norm can, therefore, be a useful tool for predicting future or continued norm adoption. The domestic salience of a norm is affected by the congruence of the norm with the domestic political culture, its incorporation into domestic structures and policies and, prior to full norm internalization, domestic advocacy levels.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to assess the domestic salience of R2P in all key or norm wavering states (e.g. members of the SC and regional powers); however, given the US position of being the only SC permanent member to seemingly both embrace and reject R2P, assessing the US domestic salience of R2P is important and requires some preliminary observations.

---

<sup>54</sup> A. Cortell and J. Davis, 'Understanding the Domestic Impact of International Norms: A Research Agenda', *International Studies Association*, Blackwell Publishers, 2000, 69.

The political culture in the US is strongly congruent with R2P given the prominence of individual rights. Structurally, conditions in the US favor the creation of CSOs, NGOs and research institutions enabling international norms to enter the domestic arena separate to their diffusion by the state. The US has over 20 CSOs<sup>55</sup> working to promote the R2P norm domestically through the creation of a permanent political constituency, the generation of wide public awareness, and the creation and advocacy of policies to implement R2P in specific instances and at the general institutionalization of the concept in the domestic political structures. In addition to CSOs there are a number of research institutions promoting conflict resolution and policies aimed at more effective prevention and peace building. The United States Institute of Peace (a non-partisan government institution est. 1984) is a co-founder of the recently created Genocide Prevention Task Force, the goals of which are concordant with the principles of R2P.<sup>56</sup> The strong base of domestic R2P advocates and related research, their existence in a political environment responsive to the ideas of individual and human rights and a structural environment that encourages CSO/NGO creation and participation lead to the conclusion that R2P enjoys domestic salience in the US and has the potential to become more, rather than less, salient as the activities of CSOs/NGOs and research institutions continue. The activities of these organizations are especially relevant in generating cognitive dissonance<sup>57</sup> within the US Government, that is, in alerting decision makers to the inconsistencies between values and policies and thus increasing the potential for policy change.

---

<sup>55</sup> The Responsibility to Protect: Engaging Civil Society, 'List of NGO's who have expressed support for Responsibility to Protect principles', online: R2P-CS <<http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/pages/23>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>56</sup> For information regarding the principles of the United States Institute of Peace and the Genocide Prevention Task Force see the United States Institute of Peace and the Genocide website available at <<http://www.usip.org/>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>57</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics', 904.

## *Norm Contestation*

As norms redefine/reconstruct understandings of appropriate behavior they necessarily emerge in a contested environment, hence the need for norm entrepreneurs to persuade actors of the legitimacy of their reinterpretation of previously accepted standards of behavior. In the case of R2P there is a redefinition of the norms pertaining to ‘non-interference’ both in the sense of a state’s right to conduct its internal affairs (though this absolutist interpretation of internal sovereignty had been weakened by the vast body of humanitarian law and recognition that the UN Charter was designed to “protect the sovereignty of the peoples”<sup>58</sup> and was “never meant as a license for governments to trample on human rights and human dignity”<sup>59</sup>) and its right to sovereign/territorial integrity. Remarkably, given the direct relationship between limiting state rights regarding treatment of their civilians and the corollary need for enforcement capabilities of these limits, states have been more willing to accept reinterpretations of the absolutist interpretation of non-interference as being synonymous with a state’s right to behave unrestricted internally than reinterpretations of the rules regarding the use of force. The prevalence of contestation regarding the norms of non-interference was highlighted in 2000 by then UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette:

*As yet, there is not clear consensus on the precise circumstances, in which the international community should intervene in such primarily domestic conflicts, or indeed on the form that intervention should take. In principle, while some states argue eagerly for a right of so-called ‘humanitarian intervention’, the majority still strongly defend*

---

<sup>58</sup> Stahn, ‘Political Rhetoric or Emerging Legal Norm’, 112.

<sup>59</sup> K. Annan, UN Secretary-General, Intervention, 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Ditchley Foundation Lecture (June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1998), online: <<http://www.ditchley.co.uk/page/173/lecture-xxxv.htm>>, (accessed: May 2008).

*the absolute nature of national sovereignty and its corollary, the obligation not to interfere...*<sup>60</sup>

The level of normative contestation regarding non-interference has diminished significantly from the situation Frechette described, with the wide acceptance of the principle of R2P (evidenced by its codification within the UN and the mass of state references to the norm). However, a moderate level of norm contestation persists, most prominently in the area of territorial integrity and the non-use of force. Excerpts from statements made by China in the UNSC Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (2006) show this continued contestation; “the primary responsibility lies, first, with the Governments concerned. The international community and other parties, while providing support and assistance, should not undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned.”<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, Pakistan, at the UNGA World Summit, stated that “...measures to promote protection of civilians should not become a basis to contravene the principles of non-interference and non-intervention or question the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.”<sup>62</sup> Most worryingly, the US, a persistent ‘flip-flopper’ on R2P, claimed that “international efforts should only complement government efforts”<sup>63</sup> indicating at the least a residual belief in the norm of

---

<sup>60</sup> L. Frechette, ‘Deputy Secretary-General describes “Changing Landscape” of Peacekeeping in Ottawa Address’ (Press Release no. UNIS/DSG/38), (9<sup>TH</sup> June 2000), online at: United Nations Information Service <<http://www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/pressrels/2000/dsg38.html>>, (accessed: May 2008).

<sup>61</sup> The Responsibility to Protect: Engaging Civil Society ed., ‘Excepted Statements on the Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict’, online: R2P-CS <[http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/government\\_statements/](http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/government_statements/)>, (accessed: May 2008), 1.

<sup>62</sup> Responsibility to Protect: Engaging Civil Society, ‘State-by-State Positions on the Responsibility to Protect’, online: R2P-CS <[http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/government\\_statements/295?theme=alt1](http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/government_statements/295?theme=alt1)>, (accessed: May 2008), 7.

<sup>63</sup> Responsibility to Protect: Engaging Civil Society ed., ‘Excerpted Statements on The Responsibility to Protect at the Security Council Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict’, online: R2P-CS <[http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/united\\_nations/794?theme=alt1](http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/united_nations/794?theme=alt1)>, (accessed: May 2008), 5.

non-interference. Although the number of states resisting definitions of R2P that encourage intervention is small compared to those supporting pro-active international action to protect populations from ‘crimes against humanity’, the level of norm contestation is identified here as moderate due to inclusion in this group of powerful (‘critical’) states such as China and the Russian Federation. Norm contestation may be detrimental to the strength of an emerging norm by lessening socialization pressures and inhibiting the complete internalization of the emerging norm. Again, little work has been done to establish which norms will be more likely to prevail in contest scenarios, however, Boli and Thomas have found that “norms underpinned by these principles will be more successful internationally: universalism, individualism, voluntaristic authority, rational progress, and world citizenship”<sup>64</sup> principles in keeping with R2P.

## **Conclusion**

R2P is in the cascading phase of norm development, which is characterized by socialization of the norm by state actors and norm entrepreneurs and brokers within civil society, international and regional organizations and bi- and multi-lateral engagements. However, the normative strength of R2P is impeded by lack of substantive institutionalization and related lack of specificity, moderate levels of norm contestation, and its relatively short period of existence. Most worrying in this regard is the lack of specificity, resulting from differences amongst the ‘critical mass’ of norm leaders regarding the application of the principle, as this enables norm contesters to utilize the norm in a manner inconsistent with its original intent and inhibits the ability of norm advocates, states and IOs to assure adherence to the norm. Regarding R2P, this is shown by the assertion of China and others that the responsibility of the international community

---

<sup>64</sup> Finnemore and Sikkink, ‘International Norm Dynamics’, 907.

is to assist states in the exercise of their responsibilities and by claims regarding Darfur that the responsibility still remains with the state despite strong evidence of state failure to meet these responsibilities. The ability of R2P to reach the internalization phase of development is significantly hindered by these three factors. However, the strong congruence of R2P to the international culture (accepted normative and legal frameworks: humanitarian law; UN Charter law; human security norms etc) is a strong factor furthering the socializing strength of R2P. The intent of this paper was to highlight R2P's current normative strength and the factors that impede and enhance its prospects for continued norm evolution. The conclusions drawn are preliminary; more in-depth research is needed into the various levels of domestic salience in critical and wavering states and in the nature of the inconsistencies and consistencies regarding the interpretation and acceptance of R2P within the 'critical mass' so that stronger conclusions regarding R2P's potential can be drawn.