



Gießener Graduiertenzentrum
Sozial-, Wirtschafts- und Rechtswissenschaften

Third EISA Workshop EWIS, 6-8 April 2016 – Workshop Proposal

Rethinking Responsibility: Military Humanitarianism beyond Western States?

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Ten years after its endorsement by heads of states at the UN world summit, the status, meaning and applicability of the responsibility to protect (R2P) remain disputed. Unsurprisingly, NATO's controversial intervention in Libya 2011 reinforced the view of R2P critics who continue to see it as an encroachment on the sovereignty of weak states and as a hegemonic project of the West. At the same time, however, we observe a tendency among some non-Western powers to couch their own military interventions in a humanitarian language. Russia's interventions in Georgia 2008 and in the Crimea 2014, where humanitarian reasoning has been coupled with the politics of irredentism, are one case in point. Other examples relate to the way in which regional hegemons such as Brazil or Nigeria justified their military actions against or within adjacent states. Saudi-Arabia's intervention in Yemen seems to be the most recent case of a new military humanitarianism. The workshop proposal intends to shed light on such instances of non-Western "humanitarian" interventions by asking a number of empirical, conceptional and methodological questions: Are references to humanitarian principles simply meant to disguise strategic and geopolitical motives in these cases? Do humanitarian norms have constitutive effects on a global scale? What empirical evidence is needed to back up such claims? Is it still adequate/has it ever been adequate to understand the R2P debate in terms of a divide between democratic and non-democratic or Western versus non-Western states and their foreign policies?

The above mentioned examples also require us to rethink the validity and conceptional boundaries of theories of norm entrepreneurship, diffusion and contestation. They also might lead to new analytical efforts to operationalize the concept of norm abuse (and, thus, to establish it as a scientific rather than just a political term). Finally, non-Western military interventions which invoke humanitarian principles to protect nationals abroad or members of an affiliated religious or cultural community call into question the very essence of humanitarian ideas which tend to be associated with a universalist and cosmopolitan political agenda. The more humanitarian reasoning becomes intermingled with identity and irredentist politics, the more it appears to be grounded in a communitarian logic instead. Critics might note that this has always been so (bearing in mind that, for instance, France claims a special responsibility for the Maghreb region or that the R2P itself regards the

consent of regional players as a source of legitimacy), while those supporting the R2P will likely see it as a hollowing out of the basic idea of „saving strangers“.

The workshops encourages contributors working within and between different theoretical and methodological paradigms, to discuss all these and other fundamental questions and, thus, to rethink the R2P in light of non-Western military humanitarianism. Both, theoretical contributions and empirical case-studies are welcome. Last but not least, we invite contributors to think about the normative implications of their theoretical and/or empirical findings.

Topics

I. Theory

R2P and Democratic Peace Theory (or Democratic Distinctiveness)

R2P as a Hegemonic Project/Instrument

R2P as a Kantian Project (Constitutionalization of international law)

R2P and Cosmopolitanism / Universalism

R2P and Regionalism / Particularism

R2P and Irredentism / Communitarism

Non-Western IR Theory and R2P

Boundaries of norm compliance

Boundaries of norm diffusion

Concepts of norm abuse

II. Methods

How to measure / conceptualize...

III. Cases

R2P and China

R2P an Brazil

R2P and Russia

R2P and India

R2P and Saudi-Arabia (Yemen)

R2P and the Arab League

R2P and the African Union