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INDIA'S APPROACH TO HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT

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ABSTRACT

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is the most significant recent development in the debate over humanitarian intervention (HI). Despite broad international agreement on its principles, R2P faces serious divisions over implementation. R2P is underpinned by values. There has, however, been little in-depth analysis of how cultural values influence individual states' approaches to R2P. This paper seeks to do so for India. It assesses the influence of the dominant cultural values of non-violence, tolerance, pluralism and hierarchy in India's approach over the last 25 years. India is a liberal democracy but differs in its attitude to R2P and HI from Western liberal democracies. Understanding cultural values' role is essential if R2P proponents wish to influence this rising Asian power and bridge international divisions over the norm.

Introduction

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is one of the most significant international normative developments in the last two decades. It has shaped conceptions of humanitarian intervention (HI). The R2P principle encompasses and promotes the moral and political responsibilities of states to protect their civilian populations, and the responsibility of the international community to support states in doing so and step in when they fail to (UN General Assembly 2005). R2P is underpinned by values. While there has been broad rhetorical support for R2P from the Global South, recent events in Syria and Libya have highlighted international divisions regarding when and how actual application should take place. Similar to the cleavages over human rights, R2P and HI see the international community often divided along cultural lines.

Despite this, relatively little analysis has thus far been undertaken on cultural values and HI/R2P.¹ Furthermore, many of the existing explanations for states' approaches to HI/R2P fail to provide comprehensive accounts. Cultural values have a far greater explanatory power than is currently acknowledged. This paper seeks to contribute through analysis of a rising Asian power and key player in the debate – India, from 1987 to 2013. The paper argues that India's dominant cultural values have had a significant influence on the country's approach to HI, and subsequently R2P. I conclude by recommending that proponents of R2P understand and utilise India's cultural values when attempting to encourage the country to engage with, and support the norm. I touch briefly on how such lobbying efforts could be undertaken.

Understanding cultural values' influence on powers like India is essential if R2P proponents are to break the ongoing North-South impasse regarding application of the principle, and engage rising powers in the prevention of mass atrocities.² India has a unique image as a

¹ Notable exceptions include Mani and Weiss (2011) and Virk (2013).

² It is acknowledged that issues of trust are often cited by developing countries who take conservative approaches to the application of R2P. These states fear establishing a precedent which enables powerful states to attack and coerce weaker states. Such concerns will need to be assessed separately and are beyond the purview of this paper.

liberal, democratic and powerful Southern state, seen to act on principle and have comparatively little vested interest in most international conflicts.³

This paper is based on a more in depth piece containing case studies of each major humanitarian intervention or global debate over possible intervention in which India expressed a view or was involved (Pethiyagoda 2013). These include: Sri Lanka 1987; Iraq 1991; Somalia 1992; Kosovo 1999; East Timor 1999; Iraq 2003; Libya 2011; and Syria 2012-13 (Pethiyagoda 2013).⁴ The latter two cases receive special focus given their currency and the role played by R2P. My methodology is based in qualitative and quantitative content analysis of discourse and state behaviour. Cultural values' influence is measured through assessing preferences and perceptions (P&Ps) of India's foreign policy leaders (namely the Prime Minister, External Affairs Minister and other political leaders) (Pethiyagoda 2013).

The values to be examined were identified via an extensive exploration of India's history and culture through major secondary texts (Pethiyagoda 2013). Values that could be described accurately as India's 'dominant cultural values' had to: (1) have been dominant throughout history, and (2) be dominant within present-day India. Only four values were identified which adhered to these criteria – non-violence, hierarchy, tolerance and pluralism (Pethiyagoda 2013).

Inadequate Existing Explanations

As the crisis in Syria has shown, despite being liberal and democratic, India differs in its position on R2P and HI from liberal Western democracies. In the last few decades Western countries have expanded their focus beyond interstate conflict to include intrastate conflicts and 'human security' (Hurrell 2007; Paris 2001; van Hooff 2009). Cosmopolitan and solidarist viewpoints have had increasing influence. With the growing norm of R2P, some developing countries had begun to move closer to the Western position, at least rhetorically if not in practical application. India, however, continued to maintain the post-WWII focus on interstate violence and opposed most humanitarian interventions.

³ This is the case in comparison to both other global powers and smaller players within the region where HI is undertaken. The exception is when the HI is occurring in India's own region where it does not hold an unbiased reputation.

⁴ India's intervention in Maldives will not be assessed as it was not framed as a humanitarian crisis.

Several explanations are currently offered for India's behaviour. These focus heavily on the traditionally cited factors – Third World Solidarity/anti-Western suspicion, and strategic interests/desire for multi-polar world (Virk 2013). None of the cases of intervention explored, however, could be understood by these explanations alone, in the absence of cultural values.

Realist explanations of India's opposition to HI regularly cite Kashmir. They argue India fears an international precedent being set for HI that could lead to, at worst foreign intervention in Kashmir, and at best more international scrutiny. This logic may be applicable to the vast majority of anti-HI developing countries. Weak states support the principle of sovereignty as it protects them from being coerced, attacked and invaded by stronger states, potentially under the guise of HI. India's support for sovereignty and opposition to HI overall however, are based in different reasons.

India has little to fear from setting a precedent for HI. The country's size and strength – which is greater than all other developing states bar China – ensure that it is unlikely to be the recipient of an unwanted intervention. India even has less to fear than China, given that it is a democracy with a better international reputation for human rights. Furthermore, while the world has seen HI become a more common occurrence and the growth of norms like R2P, international scrutiny of Kashmir has not increased. The threat of intervention further decreased in the last two decades as India moved closer to the West.

Realist explanations emphasising strategic/material interests are also undermined by several cases where India's opposition to intervention came at the cost of important strategic interests by way of relations with the West. This can be seen in India's highly publicised opposition to the Kosovo, Iraq 2003, Libya and Syria cases. India's behaviour and rhetoric led to disappointment amongst Western powers. These cases demonstrate values having a stronger, or at least as significant, influence as strategic/material interests. Values often trumped strategic interests in motivating leaders.

India's intervention in Sri Lanka is often cited as proof of strategic interests governing India's approach (Mohan 2011).⁵ Analysts liken India's approach to that of other major powers who each intervene within their perceived sphere of influence (Mohan 2011). However, India's efforts to obtain an invite before intervening, her conduct of the intervention, and her

⁵ This is similar to its intervention in Bangladesh which was prior to the period in question.

decision to withdraw at Sri Lanka's request, indicate more than purely strategic interests at play.

Some explanations cite India's post-independence role as a champion of independence struggles opposing re-colonisation under the guise of HI. However, Third World solidarity and anti-colonialism are no longer viable as comprehensive explanations for India's position on HI. These ideologies were largely jettisoned as central pillars of Indian foreign policy over the last two decades – particularly when the BJP took power in 1998 and closer relations with the US developed. Despite this, India still maintained strong opposition to HI, often at the disappointment of the US and the West.

Domestic politics and individual politicians' views have also been proffered as explanations. While these may have had some influence on India's own intervention in Sri Lanka, they played little part in its motivations regarding other intervention cases. This is particularly evident when looking at the consistency of India's policy despite eight changes of Prime Minister (PM) over the 25 years examined.

Cultural Values

For a fuller picture of India's approach to HI and R2P we must look at the significant role played by cultural values. Values' level of influence has been broadly consistent throughout the period. India's approach to each intervention was, in part, a factor of how the individual circumstances of the intervention either fit with or ran counter to, its cultural values. Those interventions that fit with India's cultural values, the country was more likely to support. For those that ran counter, it was more likely to oppose. The values that had the greatest direct impact are non-violence, pluralism and tolerance. Hierarchy played a more facilitating role.

Table 1 lists the cultural values examined and the preferences and perceptions (P&Ps) amongst leaders that these values either directly drive or enable/allow. The table also indicates which P&Ps influenced India's approach in each intervention case. For example, non-violence drove the 'preference for international peace, including the peaceful resolution of conflicts' which influenced India's approach to the Sri Lanka, Iraq 1991, Somalia, Kosovo, Iraq 2003, Libya and Syria cases. The table also displays how cultural values influence India's P&Ps regarding R2P.

Table 1

	Non-violence	Pluralism and Tolerance	Hierarchy	Interventions influenced by the P&P in question
Preference for international peace, including the peaceful resolution of conflict	Drives			Sri Lanka (slightly); Iraq 1991; Somalia; Kosovo; Iraq 2003; Libya; Syria
Preference for intra-state peace	Drives			Sri Lanka (slightly); Somalia (slightly); Libya; Syria
Preference for caution in using force and for using it as a last resort/Perception that force would not likely work	Drives			Iraq 1991; Kosovo; East Timor; Iraq 2003; Libya; Syria
Preference for supporting sovereignty	Drives	Drives		Sri Lanka (slightly); Iraq 2003; Somalia; Kosovo; East Timor; Iraq 2003; Libya; Syria
Preference for maintaining a non-violent image	Drives			Sri Lanka
Preferences for UN/multilateral/legal authorisation/control	Drives	Drives	Allows	Somalia; Kosovo; East Timor; Iraq 2003; Libya; Syria
Preference for accepting all regime types		Drives	Allows	Kosovo; East Timor; Iraq 2003; Libya
Preference for caution in condemning the behaviour of other states within their borders		Drives		Sri Lanka (slightly); Kosovo; Syria
Preference for regional interventions		Drives	Allows	Sri Lanka; Libya; Syria
Preference for maintaining a pluralist and tolerant image		Drives		Sri Lanka; Iraq 2003
Preference for enforcing pluralism internally within other states		Allows		Sri Lanka
Perception that India must present its views and lead on principle due			Drives	Kosovo; Iraq 2003

to its status				
Preference for contributing troops to UN peacekeeping missions			Drives	
Preference for not supporting strong states to dominate weak states			Allows	Kosovo; Iraq 2003
Perception that India was so powerful that it had little to fear from unwanted HI			Drives	All interventions/ debates
Preference to project a powerful image			Drives	Sri Lanka
Preference to support R2P's Pillar 1	Drives	Allows/ Drives	Allows	Libya; Syria
Preference to support R2P's Pillar 2	Drives	Allows/ Drives		Libya; Syria
Preference to oppose R2P's Pillar 3	Drives	Drives		Libya; Syria

Non-violence

The cultural value which had the most impact on India's approach is non-violence. This value has usually led India to oppose HI and subsequently, to only warm to certain aspects of R2P. While pro-HI Western states also value non-violence, India holds its own particular conceptions of the value when it comes to international relations.

For much of the period examined, India applied the value of non-violence to the level of states and 'peoples', thereby focusing on interstate violence. This is in contrast to pro-HI Western liberal solidarists who "accept not only a moral responsibility to protect the security of their own citizens, but also a wider one of 'guardianship of human rights everywhere'" (Wheeler 2000:11-12). India's divergence from this position is due, in part, to the country having a more collectivist perspective than Western states (Pandey 2004).

India's reluctance, up until recently, to alter and expand its conception of non-violence to include individual/human security is also underpinned by the rigidity of Indian policymakers' adherence to non-violence.

Also driving India's opposition to HI was the fact that the dominant conception of non-violence in Indian culture was passive rather than active. *Ahimsa*, propagated by Hinduism and Buddhism throughout history and Mahatma Gandhi in the modern period, translates to no-harm. The context in which it is adhered to is one of detachment from the world, not one of protecting others through HI (Harvey 2001; Tanham 1992:59). Furthermore, in many intervention cases it was unclear as to whether the level of violence caused by HI would be less than the violence it sought to prevent.

Shaping India's conception of non-violence is the fact that it does not see the world in terms of good and evil. Similar to the ideas in the *Mahabharata*, and following on from the Nehruvian view, India sees adversaries in international relations as impermanent. War arises "from misperceptions and ideological systems that colour the attitudes of states and societies and spread fear and hatred" (Bajpai 2002:254). Bajpai (2002:254) explains the adversary is seen as misunderstanding India. Its leadership may be at fault with its citizens supporting it out of ignorance. The adversary therefore can be made into a friend by contact with India at all levels (*ibid.*). This view has been maintained long after Nehru by much of the political elite, including the Indian Foreign Service.

Non-violence was found to be the most highly represented cultural value in India's discourse. In the Iraq 2003, Libya and Syria cases, within the 27 documents assessed, there were 128 statements reflecting P&Ps influenced by non-violence. A consistency can be seen in the influence of non-violence throughout the period where India's support for a particular intervention is a product of the scale of the humanitarian need, minus the level of violence required to resolve it. India's intervention in Bangladesh, though outside the period in question, clearly reflects this thinking.⁶ The weight placed on non-violence in this equation, however, is greater than that placed on humanitarian need. This can be seen in the fact that India opposed the majority of interventions throughout the period.

India's non-violence driven P&Ps matched with many of the positions held by the anti-HI developing country bloc (Virk 2012). Common positions included: concern for Article 2 (paragraph 7) of the UN Charter which states the UN is not authorized to intervene in states' domestic jurisdictions (UN 1945); opposition to the use of force except as a last resort; and the view that any use of force must be authorised by the UN Security Council (UNSC) in

⁶ This intervention is often cited as one of the most pure real world examples of HI. It is far from clean of any strategic self-interests, however (Sunga 2005).

response to an interstate threat, or used in self-defence. The motivations of other states in the developing country bloc, however, are unlikely to be based in non-violence to the same extent. They are likely to be motivated more by strategic interests and a pluralist view of international relations. The centrality of non-violence in India's opposition stood out compared to other developing countries.

Central among the factors which influenced India's approach to HI has been the preference for international peace, including the peaceful resolution of conflicts. While peace is conceived as a normative condition by many states, (Walzer 1992) the dominance of non-violence in Indian culture makes peace an even stronger ideal.

In the last three interventions, there were 76 statements reflecting this preference. The preference has, particularly early in the period, contributed to India's opposition, or reluctance to support HI. Intervention was considered to usually involve the use of force, and therefore violence, between states. If India had applied non-violence at the level of the individual as in the 'human security' paradigm, then it is likely that it would have supported intervention to prevent violence against individuals (Paris 2001).

Other non-violence driven preferences found consistently throughout the cases include the preference for caution in using force and the perception that the use of force was unlikely to work. India's strategic culture contains a strong risk aversion when it comes to using force to resolve international conflicts (Mohan 2011). Also seen is the preference for force only as a last resort. This was witnessed in 16 instances in the last three cases. PM Singh stated in 2011 that "[s]ocieties cannot be reordered from outside through military force".

All the aforementioned P&Ps were also driven by India's preference for projecting a non-violent image of itself. This can be seen strongly in India's intervention in Sri Lanka where it ensured Sri Lanka invited Indian troops in. India's attempts to prevent Kashmir gaining international attention were also aimed at not tarnishing the country's non-violent image. India can be seen as having been somewhat successful in maintaining this image, albeit mainly outside its region.

Pluralism and Tolerance

Pluralism and tolerance together had the strongest influence following non-violence. These values led to a perception that accepted different and diverse regimes within international

society and tolerated how they ran their countries. Pluralism and tolerance were seen as the normal state of being in international society (Walzer 1997:19-21). Virk (2013:61) describes pluralism as one of India's "foundational myth[s]" and states that India's internal pluralism has strengthened its support for the principle of territorial integrity in foreign policy. In the three interventions/debates there were 99 statements reflecting P&Ps influenced by these values.

The majority of India's pluralism and tolerance driven P&Ps caused the country to oppose HI (Chimini 2001). This led India to stand with much of the developing world, holding positions such as the need for host state consent for intervention and determination by the UNSC of a threat to international peace (Virk 2012). Given India's historical role leading the Non-Aligned Movement, it is likely that the country's cultural values driven P&Ps influenced other developing states.

The motivation behind India's P&Ps is based more on values and less on strategic fear than most developing countries. Unlike many of the authoritarian states of the South which support pluralism and tolerance only at the international level, to democratic India, these values also have a place in the domestic realm. This has led to India maintaining a record of civil and political human rights and democracy that separates it from many of the most vociferous developing country opponents of HI, which have worse records. It is civil and political rights, such as the right to life, whose mass violation most often justifies intervention. Therefore, authoritarian regimes like China have greater strategic interests in avoiding a precedent for HI.

This would suggest India should be on the pro-HI side with Western states. Pluralism and tolerance, however, had an opposite effect on India's approach to HI. India stood in opposition to the majority of domestically pluralist, human rights supporting democracies (most of which are Western states) (*Economist Intelligence Unit* 2011). This suggests a cultural difference in the conception of pluralism and tolerance. India focused more on states while the West focused on individuals.

The contrast is seen in Western/liberal solidarist rhetoric in comparison to most of India's pluralism and tolerance driven rhetoric. Western discourse revealed a perception that the international community has a responsibility to act to stop mass atrocities, including without the consent of the recipient state – clashing with India's sovereignty preference (Wheeler

2000:11-12). The liberal solidarist viewpoint also demonstrated less concern for obtaining UN or multilateral authorisation and entailed broad interpretations of Article 2(7) (UN 1945). Western rhetoric emphasised concern for the humanitarian situation and the welfare of individuals rather than states.

One slight exception in India's behaviour can be seen in the Sri Lanka intervention. Here India talked of the importance of pluralism domestically in Sri Lanka. Even in this case however, pluralism was applied more at the state level. India needed official agreement from the Sri Lankan Government to enter, and it left at Sri Lanka's request to avoid breaching sovereignty.

Chief amongst the P&Ps influenced by pluralism and tolerance is the preference for respecting sovereignty. The value of pluralism is seen as enshrined in the legal principle of sovereignty. India felt all states have a right to manage their domestic policies as they see fit and these need not match the ideological beliefs of India or other states. This stems from the policy of Panchsheel or Peaceful Coexistence which was central to Nehru's foreign policy.

This preference was seen in 41 instances within the last three interventions/debates. The preference was also clearly seen in India's support/non-opposition to those interventions where sovereignty was less of a concern, such as Somalia 1992, Sierra Leone 1997 (UN Department of Public Information 2000) and Haiti 1994.

India held the related preference for caution when condemning the behaviour of other states within their borders. This included condemnations of human rights abuse. This relates to the acceptance of various regime types states may have – democratic or authoritarian, capitalist or communist, human rights respecting or abusing.

Sengha (2011:45) notes how India's dominant religions contain values of interconnectedness of all things in Brahma (the divine) and suggests these match with liberal solidarism and cosmopolitanism, leading to support for the idea of HI. What Sengha (*ibid.*) misses, however, is that the conception that all things are interconnected is coupled with an pluralism and tolerance-driven acceptance of different ways of interpreting the truth, different lived experiences, life chances etc., amongst different beings. In the HI context, this translates to an acceptance of the different regime types, ideologies and systems that

peoples in different states live under. Therefore, interconnectedness does not necessarily lead to support for fighting wars for humanitarian purposes.

The preference for UN/multilateral/legal authorisation and UN control of interventions was seen in almost every intervention assessed. This gives the intervention a characteristic of a multilateral international agreement amongst diverse states rather than unilateral action by certain states to impose their views upon others. It thereby adheres to pluralist principles. The preference was referred to 36 times in the last three cases – Iraq, Libya and Syria.

Pluralism also drove the related preference that no state should have authority to push its particular views onto another state. This is due to a key component of India's values of pluralism and tolerance – the belief that no viewpoint is more correct than another. In foreign policy this led to an aversion to overtly holding an ideology and, particularly in the past, a preference for non-alignment.

India also held a preference for regional, rather than foreign interventions. Regional organisations/states were seen as more legitimate in intervening because they are more similar culturally, politically and economically to the recipient state. In a pluralistic and diverse world, this is important.

India had a strong preference to maintain the image of having a pluralistic and tolerant worldview which respected sovereignty. This can be seen in the country's intervention in Sri Lanka and its rhetoric on all other HI cases.

Hierarchy

Rather than directly driving P&Ps like the other values discussed, hierarchy played a more facilitative role. India held a hierarchical worldview which entailed certain countries having higher international status than others, but not having authority over others. This particularly non-authoritarian conception of hierarchy, combined with the experience of Mughal and British colonial rule over the preceding centuries, affected for an aversion towards domination of weak states by powerful states. The same hierarchical worldview also meant that India did not actively support authoritarian regimes and the repression of populations by governments. The perception allowed for many of the above P&Ps driven by non-violence, tolerance and pluralism.

For instance, the preference for UN/multilateral/legal authorisation or sovereignty would not have been as strong had India held a conception of hierarchy which accepted powerful states easily intervening in the affairs of weaker states. UN authorisation gave interventions less of a 'one state dominating another' character.

Hierarchy allowed for the pluralism driven preference for regional solutions. India's aversion to unilateral action by powerful states was mitigated when those powerful states were regional players. Intervention by regional powers was seen as less 'foreign' and less of a domination. This is likely due to the role of anti-colonialism in shaping India's conception of hierarchy.

If it were only strategic interests that motivated this 'double standard', it would have opposed all foreign interventions whilst undertaking interventions which were strategically beneficial for itself in Sri Lanka and Maldives. India's support for the Arab League's efforts in Syria and the African Union's initiative in Libya, however, show that this preference existed even when there were few strategic gains to be made.

Additionally, there were some P&Ps which were directly driven by hierarchy, though these were less frequently expressed. This included the perception that as a state worthy of high standing internationally, it was India's role to lead on principle and thereby present a view. This perception led to India speaking out strongly and publicising its views on many HI cases, particularly when this meant standing up to the major powers. The perception also led to India contributing troops to UN peacekeeping missions, thereby projecting itself as an important international player (Kundu 2004:27).

There was also the perception that India had little to fear with regard to being intervened in itself because it was such a great state. While this was based largely on strategic calculation, the bravado with which the view was sometimes expressed revealed the 'great state' perception.

The Responsibility to Protect

In recent years India's position on HI saw some evolution. This was likely largely due to the growing strength of the R2P norm. India's PM had, along with 149 other Heads of State at the 2005 World Summit at UN General Assembly (UNGA), endorsed the idea of R2P (UN General Assembly 2005).

India, however, did not simply endorse R2P wholesale. Rather, there was a process of 'norm localisation' (Acharya 2004). History demonstrates that India only followed those international norms that fit with its own values and/or interests. Acharya (2004) argues that 'norm diffusion', the acceptance of international norms, depends on the ability of agents to gel them with pre-existing local norms.

Cultural values helped determine the degree to which India warmed to R2P and which aspects of R2P it supported. On the one hand, the first two 'pillars' of R2P gelled with India's values.

In a 2009 UNGA debate over R2P India affirmed its support for the First Pillar – that states have primary responsibility to protect their populations (Puri 2009). Pluralism and tolerance played a key role in determining this support for this Pillar. These values support a democratic ethos and civil and political human rights, and provide room for seeing sovereignty as tied to certain responsibilities. The Pillar's emphasis on sovereignty as responsibility also finds echo in Indian culture through Buddhist and Hindu views of government being a contractual agreement (Sengha 2011:46; Eraly 2005:85). This does not clash with India's conception of hierarchy, given this conception does not entail acceptance of authoritarianism. The Pillar also gelled with non-violence. In turn, the Pillar is likely to have contributed to India's preference for international peace expanding to include intrastate peace.

Sengha (2011:45) contends the Golden Rule – do unto others as you wish done unto yourself – provides the normative foundation for R2P’s First Pillar. He argues that this should find resonance in Indian culture by arguing that Hinduism (Mahabharata 113.8) and Buddhism (Samyutta Nikaya v. 353) both support the golden rule.

R2P’s Second Pillar “underscored the commitment of the international community to assist States” in meeting their protection obligations (UN Document SG/SM/11701 2008). India stated its view that the international community should “encourage and help states to exercise their responsibility to prevent genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity” (Puri 2009). Non-violence is evident in India’s enthusiasm for this Pillar. It fits in with India’s preferences for peaceful resolutions of conflicts and for using force only as a last resort. This Pillar spearheaded R2P’s emphasis on exhausting all peaceful non-military methods of intervention (diplomatic, economic and legal) prior to the use of force. By emphasising cooperation and peaceful resolution, the Second Pillar shifts the focus away from the violent, forceful aspects central to traditional conceptions of HI. It lessens the likelihood of the need to resort to violent force. At UNGA 2009, India expressed its support for the use of peaceful means to prevent mass atrocities (Puri 2009). India stated:

...it would be useful to recall that in Para 139 [of the World Summit Outcomes Document], the international community was enjoined to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, and I would like to repeat, peaceful means, to help protect populations in the specific situations of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity...(*ibid.*).

India’s non-violence driven preferences for peaceful resolution and for using force as a last resort are predictors of its approach to R2P. India states:

Willingness to take chapter VII [the use of force] measures can only be on a case-by case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations with a specific proviso that such action should only be taken when peaceful means are inadequate and national authorities manifestly fail in discharging their duty (*ibid.*).

R2P’s stipulation that force only be used once the approval of the UNSC has been obtained, appealed to India’s preference for UN/legal authorisation of interventions. India stated at UNGA 2009 “These measures...have to be in conformity with the provisions of the UN Charter” (*ibid.*). Also fitting this preference was R2P’s precept that a number of clearly

defined criteria be met prior to using force. India warned that R2P must not be misused for “humanitarian intervention or unilateral action” (*ibid.*).

On the other hand, cultural values have influenced India’s concern and reservations over the more coercive, Third Pillar of R2P (Seybolt 2007:2). This Pillar mentions the responsibility of the international community to take timely and decisive action with a broad range of measures, both peaceful and military, when a state is unable or unwilling to prevent mass atrocities within its borders (Evans 2008; UN Document SG/SM/11701 2008). This would potentially lead to threats to sovereignty, contravening India’s values of pluralism and tolerance. The Third Pillar could also allow for the use of force by foreign powers, potentially against a state – contravening India’s non-violence driven preference for international peace.

Some R2P scholars argue that Indian culture’s conception of non-violence should not prevent it from supporting R2P, but should affect for the opposite (Parra 2011:70). Sengha (2011:47) cites ‘just war’ doctrine as an important way world religions have responded to the question of violence. In articulating how just war doctrine is relevant to R2P, Sengha (2011:47) describes how criteria spelled out by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) and in the September 2005 World Summit contain virtually all the elements of Christian just war doctrine: just cause, proportionality, likelihood of success, and right authority. However, while Indian culture contains notions of just war, it has occurred in an overall context of relatively passive non-violence being the dominant value. Just war has not been a dominant value or driver of India’s actions. The existence of descriptions of the just war viewpoint in Hindu texts does not compare, as a motivating factor, to the broad historical circumstances which have led to India maintaining a value of non-violence and more readily applying it to the issue of HI than other comparable states (Thapar 2002; Eraly 2005; Basham 2004). Similarly Sengha (2011:30) argues that the Hindu/Buddhist concept of *ahimsa* requires the protection of life. This is a misinterpretation both in the literal sense and in the spirit of the idea. *Ahimsa* – as it was understood throughout most of Indian history – is largely passive (Thapar 2002; Eraly 2005; Basham 2004). Hall (2013:107) acknowledges an influence of “religious beliefs and political ideologies that lean toward ‘pacifism’”.

Parra (2011:70) cites Gandhi as a strong influence on India’s conception of non-violence. He states that Gandhi’s interpretation of Hindu/Buddhist *ahimsa*, is “by no means passive”. Gandhi’s concept of *satyagraha* or truth force, was uncompromising in its conviction that

truth and justice would inevitably trump oppression and unjust power. However, it is the *method* of achieving justice, through non-violent, passive resistance, that stood out as something exceptionally associated with Indian culture. Parra's (2011:70) argument therefore, may explain India's non-support for authoritarianism and support for human rights, but fails to explain why India would approve of violent force as the method achieve it. In contrast, the key difference between India's freedom movement and others is the former's disapproval of the use of force even to achieve justice. Parra's (2011:70) analysis does better as a theory of why India may support the preventative, non-violent aspects of R2P.

Libya

In March 2011, the UNSC was asked to vote on a resolution which: imposed a ban on all flights in Libya's airspace (a no-fly zone), and tightened sanctions on the regime. It also authorised Member States "that have notified the Secretary-General" to "take all necessary measures to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack" (UN Document S/RES/1973 2011). The resolution was adopted. The 10 votes in favour consisted of all the Western countries except Germany, and several developing countries. India was one of the remaining five UNSC members who abstained. It was joined by China, Russia, Brazil and Germany (UN Department of Public Information SC/10200 2011).

Several explanations are offered for India's abstention from the vote. Realists may argue that India abstained from supporting the resolution because it had a strategic interest in not seeing increased Western influence in the Middle East. This is not likely to be the case, however, particularly given that increased Western influence directly harms India's main strategic rival, China. Further evidence of this is India's silence on the pro-West Bahraini regime's crackdown on its own democracy protestors around the same time, and its silence on pro-West Saudi Arabia's military support for the crackdown (Mohan 2011:4).

Bajpai (2011) argues that India had a strategic interest in not having China speed ahead of it in Africa and other regions. Had India voted in favour of the resolution while China abstained, the argument goes, this would have allowed Beijing alone to "stand as the champion of the weak in Africa, Asia and Latin America", further presenting itself as a "bulwark against bullying Western democracies" (*ibid.*).

India is, however, unlikely to have acted out of fear of being outdone by China's abstention. China abstained when it could have blocked the resolution with its veto. This is far from the actions of a state acting as a 'bulwark' against the West. Furthermore, 6 of the 9 developing countries on the UNSC, including 3 African countries, voted in support of the resolution, making it unlikely they would have seen a country voting against it as a champion of their cause.

Further evidence against the 'anti-Western bulwark' theory is the silence India maintained on the aforementioned Saudi intervention to support Bahrain's government. Here was an opportunity for India to criticise a pro-Western state in the Middle East. Instead, India received the Foreign Minister of Bahrain and the National Security Adviser of Saudi Arabia (Ministry of External Affairs- Government of India 2011; Ministry of External Affairs- Government of India 2011a; Mohan 2011:4). India's non-opposition to the Saudi intervention is likely because it was invited by the Bahraini regime and therefore did not constitute an interstate conflict, and thereby was not a breach of international peace.

Had India followed its strategic interests, it would have supported the West's position and voted in favour of the Libya Resolution. Western favour is a valuable strategic prize. Its value can be seen in that it is likely to have influenced China and Russia to abstain rather than use their veto power. Beyond direct Western favours, India would have built a reputation amongst certain Western circles of being a 'power player', a 'constructive member of the global community' and a 'responsible stakeholder' (Bajpai 2011). This could have strengthened India's case for permanent UNSC membership.

Instead, India's abstention had "disappointed many Western friends" (Mohan 2011). This is particularly important with regard to India's growing strategic partner, the US. This was the first intervention since the Indo-US Nuclear Deal, an agreement which was said to have entailed US expectations for Indian support and cooperation in American humanitarian interventions, among other areas (Carter 2006).

Mohan (2011) argues that India's abstention made Western states "wonder if India is ready to take its place among...major powers and contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security". It is said to have even 'complicated' Western support for India's bid for a permanent UNSC seat (Twining 2011). Western advocates of India's campaign were 'frustrated' (*ibid.*).

Also worth noting is the strategic benefit India forewent by not supporting the Libyan rebels. When Western intervention on the side of the rebels was foreshadowed, it would have been widely known that a rebel victory was assured, at least in the medium term. As such, it would have been strategically advantageous to throw in with the winning team (like most countries around the world) in order to have good relations with the future Libyan Government. Evidence of this is the threats made by the rebels against future investment opportunities for countries that abstained from the vote and did not support the intervention, like China, Russia and Brazil ('Rebels might redraw Libya's oil contracts', 2011, *RT News*, 23 August; Sotloff 2012).

Responsibility to Protect

Some argue that the increasing cosmopolitanism witnessed in the growth of R2P had a major impact on India's decision. From understanding India's qualified support for R2P, however, we can see that R2P made the idea of HI in Libya more palatable for India only to the extent that the norm adhered to India's cultural values. The debate on R2P in UNGA months after the Libya intervention showed developing countries generally as more amenable to the non-violent Pillars One and Two of R2P, rather than the force invoking Pillar Three (International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect 2011).

Furthermore, the Libya Resolution was milder than the already mild dictates of R2P. While it authorised Member States to protect civilians, it did not say they have a responsibility to do so. It only states that the Libyan regime *and parties to the conflict*, have a responsibility to protect civilians. Furthermore, it would have been almost impossible and somewhat useless for India to vote against the resolution, given that the usual opponents of intervention, China and Russia, did not veto it.

R2P did, nevertheless, lead to a slight evolution in India's conception of non-violence during the Libya case. India expressed greater concern for intrastate violence. Image-wise, India did not want to be seen as indifferent to intrastate violence, particularly when states considered even less liberal (China and Russia) did not veto. This influenced India to abstain rather than vote against the resolution.

India attempted to present itself as concerned with violence against civilians. It stated after the culmination of the conflict "India strongly condemns all acts of violence committed against civilians. We believe that the right to life is one of the fundamental rights and should

be the foundation of any social order. It is the obligation of all States to take appropriate measures to protect the lives of their citizens while maintaining social order” (UN Document S/PV.6855 2012). This reflects R2P’s First Pillar.

Non-violence

Cultural values also influence India’s approach to Libya beyond R2P. Non-violence was a key motivator of India’s position. Within India’s speeches on Libya, there were 32 statements found indicating the influence of non-violence.

Non-violence’s influence was often through its role in driving India’s preference for international peace. This can be seen in India’s earliest speech at the UN on Libya in February 2011 (UN Document S/PV.6491 2011). In the first paragraph India states “We deplore the use of force, which is totally unacceptable and must not be resorted to”. This statement seems to have been left deliberately open and aimed at both the Libyan authorities and the foreign powers considering using force against Libya. The emphasis on peace and aversion to the use of force is stronger than seen in the speeches from other countries. The statements were repeated in India’s next UN speech two days before the intervention began (UN Document S/PV.6498 2011).

In justifying its abstention, India stated that it preferred a political, and thereby peaceful, solution to the conflict (UN Document S/PV.6498 2011). India supported the peaceful efforts of the Secretary General’s special envoy and the African Union’s mission.

The preference for caution in the use of force can also be seen in India’s justification for abstaining. India warns that the resolution authorises “far-reaching measures...with relatively little credible information on the situation on the ground in Libya” (UN Document S/PV.6498 2011). India’s representative also cautioned “We also do not have clarity about details of enforcement measures, including who will participate and with what assets, and how these measures will exactly be carried out” (UN Document S/PV.6498 2011). After the intervention, India expressed concern over the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation’s (NATO) perceived military overreach (Evans 2011). Mohan (2011) assesses that India’s risk-averse, sceptical and cautious strategic culture regarding the use of force led it to abstain, rather than any non-aligned/non-Western identity.

Caution in the use of force was intertwined with the perception that force would not work well. India feared that if force was used and there was no decisive, quick victory, it would worsen the situation and the prolong civil-war (Mohan 2011). Non-violence has also led to India's preference for using force only as a last resort.

Pluralism and Tolerance

Pluralism and tolerance played a significant role in India's decision to abstain from voting on the Libya resolution and its discourse surrounding the intervention. As with previous interventions, this included the preference for sovereignty. India's External Affairs Minister stated that "No external powers should interfere in it... What is happening in Libya is an internal affair of that country" ('LS demands resolution condemning Libya airstrikes', 2011, *Indian Express*, 22 March). Even after the conflict was over, by May 2012, India was still emphasising its preference for sovereignty. It stated at the UN "An inclusive, broad-based political process anchored in State sovereignty is the only way to achieve national reconciliation and overcome the multitude of problems that Libya is facing in the post-conflict phase" (UN Document S/PV.6772 2012). Sovereignty was so strongly preferred that India even stated that it supported "a calibrated and gradual approach" with regard to the matters referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) (UN Document S/PV.6491 2011).

Pluralism also led to India's preference for UN and multilateral authorisation. India preferred efforts such as the Secretary General's special envoy's mission over armed intervention. The preference for UN control can further be seen in India's voting for UN Resolution 2040, in March 2012, which extended support for the UN Support Mission in Libya. India's rhetoric also shows a preference for operating within international law.

Tolerance drove the preference to accept all regime types. India's EAM stated "Nobody, no two or three countries can take a decision to change a particular regime in a third country" ('LS demands resolution condemning Libya airstrikes', 2011, *Indian Express*, 22 March).

Syria 2011

From the start of the Syrian conflict, to the recent US moves to undertake military action following likely chemical weapons attacks on civilians, India demonstrated consistent opposition to intervention. India abstained from a 2011 UNGA resolution that called for political transition (Jacob and Raj 2012). It teamed up with Brazil and South Africa in sending a delegation (known as the IBSA delegation) to Syria to appeal to authorities to end the crackdown on anti-government protesters and implement democratic reforms (Ministry of External Affairs - Government of India 2011b).

Realist Explanations

Here again, realist arguments point to strategic interests as motivating India's position. One argument put forth against anti-interventionists Russia and China is that these countries have interests in Syria which would be harmed by regime change (Lauria 2012). This cannot be said for India.

Further evidence of India's lack of vested interests is its voting in favour of a draft resolution that would have authorised sanctions against the Syrian regime ('Russia, China veto resolution on Syria, India votes in favour', 2012, *Times of India*, 19 July). India also expressed its regret that the resolution failed (it was vetoed by Russia and China) (*ibid.*). If India had had vested interests, such a vote would no doubt have harmed them by angering the Assad regime.

Some argue that economic interests were central, particularly given India's current financial problems (Einhorn and Goyal 2013). This included concerns regarding oil prices (Bagchi 2013). This is unlikely to be the sole reason, however, given that oil prices are likely to affect many states who have voiced support for intervention. Also cited is that instability would threaten the foreign exchange earnings of the large numbers of Indian expats in the Gulf region (*ibid.*). Any intervention in Syria is, however, unlikely to lead to fighting within the Gulf states, even if these states intervened in the conflict.

Non-violence

With existing explanations failing to account for India's position, cultural values must be examined. Non-violence exerts a major influence on India's actions and rhetoric regarding Syria. 64 Statements were found which reflected non-violence.

The most common preference was that for international peace, including for peaceful resolution of conflicts. 36 Statements were found reflecting this preference. Early on in the conflict India stated at the UNSC "We have...called for a peaceful and inclusive political process to address the grievances of all sections of the Syrian society since the beginning of the protests..." (UN Document S/PV.6710 2012). The use of foreign military force in an intervention and armed support for the rebels by foreign powers was opposed. India stated "any further militarisation of the crisis can have catastrophic consequences for the region" (Krishna 2012) and "We unequivocally and strongly condemn all violence irrespective of whoever the perpetrators are and whatever justification is proffered" (UN Document S/PV.6710 2012). In June 2012 at a special session of the UN Human Rights Council, India again stated that "all parties need to abjure violence" if there is to be a lasting solution (Ministry of External Affairs - Government of India 2012,). In January 2013, India continued its calls for peaceful resolution of the crisis and for the abandoning of violence by both sides (Ahamed 2013). This preference is likely to have been further strengthened by misgivings about NATO's actions in Libya (Evans 2011), and the US's 2003 Iraq invasion.

India's justification for supporting a 2012 UNSC resolution on Syria further demonstrates the importance of the international peace preference. India's representative noted that "the resolution expressly rules out any measures under Article 42 of the Charter". Article 42 authorises the UNSC to employ the use of force.

The Syria debate, however, saw a slight expansion of India's conception of non-violence – likely due in part to R2P. This expansion meant the strengthening of India's preference for intrastate peace. India made 23 mentions indicating concern for internal violence, including violence against civilians, opposition and government forces. For instance, in a UNSC speech, India stated "The resolution of this problem cannot be found in violence or armed struggle and its violent suppression" (UN Document S/PV.6710 2012). Much of India's humanitarian and human rights concerns were related to violence.

India also indicated its preference for using force only as a last resort in several statements. This, combined with its international peace preference can be seen as motivating the country's contribution to the IBSA efforts.

Pluralism and Tolerance

Pluralism and tolerance had a clear impact on India's approach to the Syria debate. 42 statements were found reflecting these values. The most common pluralism driven P&P was the preference for respecting sovereignty. India states "We believe that the main role of the international community, including the Council, is to facilitate engagement of the Syrian people with all sections of Syrian society for an inclusive political process that takes into account the legitimate aspirations of all Syrians, while ensuring respect for the country's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity" (UN Document S/PV.6711 2012).

The sovereignty preference can also be seen in India's justification for its abstention from voting on the UNGA resolution proposed for Syria in 2011 (Jacob and Raj 2012). India said that it had objected due to the inclusion of a statement that UN Member States should sever all relations with Syria and that President al-Assad should step down from power (*ibid.*) – an infringement on Syria's sovereignty. India's pluralist worldview dictates that Syria's sovereign regime should not be made to adjust its leadership according to the views of foreign powers, despite alleged atrocities. India stated "we believe that the leadership of Syria is a matter for the Syrian people to decide" (Puri 2012a). India, however, had no problem with the parts of the resolution that condemned violence on both sides.

There was also some evidence to suggest R2P potentially impacting India's preference for sovereignty. When discussing Resolution 2043 which authorised a UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) of 300 unarmed military observers – India stated "We note that the resolution enjoins upon the government to protect its population, indicating that it should have the capacity to do so" (Puri 2012a). This fully encompasses the First Pillar of R2P. It also advocates for the Second Pillar – that the international community should support states to be able to protect their populations.

In line with its pluralist and tolerant worldview, India demonstrated a preference for regional player-driven solutions. This was indicated in 13 instances, namely when supporting the monitoring mission of the League of Arab States (Arab League). India states "The League of Arab States, as an important regional organisation, should play its required and historic role

in promoting political dialogue among the Syrian parties” (Puri 2012a). India even undertook to “engage with fellow Council members so that the Council can speak with a unanimous voice in support of the initiative of the League of Arab States to expeditiously resolve the Syrian crisis” (UN Document S/PV.6710 2012).

There were 9 statements indicating a preference for UN/multilateral authorisation of any missions to Syria. Following recent allegations of a chemical attack, India maintained its cautious approach, waiting for the UN investigation’s findings before making judgements (Bagchi 2013). As mentioned, India, like other UNSC members, voted in favour of Resolution 2043. India stated that it did so “with the expectation that UNSMIS will implement its mandate impartially” (UN Document S/PV.6756 2012).

The Syria debate further revealed India’s preference for not condemning the domestic behaviour of sovereign states. India abstained from voting on a resolution in the UN Human Rights Council which pointed to alleged human rights violations in Syria (Ministry of External Affairs - Government of India 2011b). In doing so, India argued that it opposed country specific resolutions in the Council as unhelpful and tantamount to “finger-pointing”. It stated that “we believe that it is imperative for every society to have the means of addressing human rights violations through robust mechanisms within themselves. International scrutiny should be resorted to, only when such mechanisms are non-existent or have consistently failed”.

Conclusion

Cultural values have had a consistently significant level of influence on India’s approach to HI throughout the last two decades, from Sri Lanka to Syria. This is likely to continue into the future. It concurs with assertions by those like Cohen (2001:65) that whatever approach India takes to foreign affairs – aggressive or conciliatory – it will be justified by its principles. Cultural values’ influence will continue even with India’s growing power and increased engagement with international norms.

In the last few years there has been a subtle change in India's application and conceptualisation of its cultural values, in part due to R2P. This includes a broader conception of non-violence. While India's primary concern remains violence between states, there has been a move to encompass concerns regarding what happens inside sovereign states. In the last 10 years, India expressed concerns regarding intrastate violence against civilians with increasing frequency. The number of statements grew from several regarding Iraq, to 5 statements on Libya, to 23 on Syria. Similar evolution is likely to be occurring with India's application of pluralism and tolerance in foreign affairs. This will continue into the future with some variation in the level and nature of the influence of cultural values as India continues to react to new norms like R2P. Consequently, various cultural value-driven P&Ps are likely to rise and fall.

If R2P's proponents (governments, international organisations, NGOs or academia) are to capitalise on this momentum and further India's engagement with the norm, they must appeal to the country's cultural values. The following steps are recommended:

1. R2P proponents must develop a nuanced understanding of Indian culture and its role in influencing the country's approach.
2. R2P proponents should appeal directly to India's cultural values by highlighting these values' convergence with Pillars 1 and 2.
3. R2P proponents should address Indian apprehension regarding Pillar 3 by focusing on the non-violent, pluralistic, and tolerant outcomes R2P can bring when applied globally.
4. R2P proponents can attempt to persuade India's leaders to expand their concepts of non-violence, pluralism and tolerance to encompass individuals, rather than states exclusively.
5. Lobbying efforts would be particularly effective if R2P proponents can combine an appeal to India's cultural values with an appeal to the Government's political interests. This would be by demonstrating how the Indian people may link the country's national identity and cultural values with pro-R2P actions internationally. This will complement appeals to strategic and other interests.

As India rises and its foreign interests expand well outside its region, there will also be greater interaction of cultural values and norms like R2P with strategic interests. Strategic concerns may play a greater role in India's calculations regarding HI, with more intervention

cases impacting India's material interests directly. Rather than clashing with cultural values, strategic concerns may further shape how India expresses these values as P&Ps. This evolution will also be shaped by greater engagement with the West, a more open economy, and a new generation of leaders and Foreign Service personnel.

India is also likely to continue to successfully maintain a relatively non-violent, pluralist and tolerant image in the medium term. This will give it credibility in the ongoing debates over HI/R2P, at least outside its region. In comparison to most states, particularly great powers from both the Global North and South, India will continue to be seen as somewhat more principled and less strategically driven. This image will make India a valuable partner in efforts by states, international organisations and NGOs to promote R2P.

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