

Abstract

The Responsibility to Protect is a set of principles that commit countries to protect civilian populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. This thesis sets out to explore the extent to which powerful states' narrow political and economic interests override the call to protect civilian populations by looking at how three permanent members of the Security Council - the United States, China, and Russia - have responded to various crises where the R2P could be invoked. Through a comparative case study analysis of five humanitarian crises qualifying for the invocation of the R2P, I determined that intervention was only permissible when these three countries did not stand to lose a critical security interest throughout the process. I ultimately conclude that these three countries invoke the R2P only when it concurs with their narrow security or economic interests, rather than on the basis of a threat to civilian populations