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The 'Responsibility while Protecting': a
pivotal step in the road towards the
universal acceptance of humanitarian
intervention?

With particular attention on the ongoing Syrian crisis

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Abstract

At the time of writing the Syrian crisis is waging for over three years, while human lives are being threatened on a daily base. This study examines whether the proposal of Brazil on the 'Responsibility while Protecting' can serve as an outcome for the debacle within the United Nations around Syria. After assessing the main features of the 'Responsibility to Protect' concept and how this notion was put into practice during the Libyan intervention, this study will address the lessons to be learned. Next it will be analysed whether Brazil's proposal can indeed be a contribution. The thesis will therefore pay attention to its focal characteristics, the reasoning behind the proposal and its perception by the international community. It will be deduced that, although there are still some shortcomings and the concept can hardly be seen as adding something new, its main contribution lies in the fact that it can resuscitate some previously held debates and should not be disregarded. However, it is argued that the lack of political will is the main obstacle to overcome for humanitarian intervention. Therefore, this work concludes that the opportunity is missed to take the debate a step further by adopting a people-centred approach.

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