

Post-Sovereign Security and the Absence of the Political

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Abstract

The present study offers a comprehensive account of the dynamics at the base of the meaning of post-sovereign security, with particular attention to its emerging humanitarian sensibility. Using recent post-positivist theoretical approaches, the universalist ontology proper of human rights considerations is critically considered, and its codification illustrated through the principle of Responsibility to Protect. As several failures of the recent past showed, humanitarian practices need to reject their cosmopolitan attitude ultimately unfeasible within an anarchical system, and apply instead the interactional concept of the political. In this way the pluriverse of identities proper of anarchy can be assessed, and a fruitful synthesis with the universalist values of the humanitarian regime can be found. Indeed, although a more flexible new medieval international order of overlapped authorities could have a positive impact, the rejection of absolute state-sovereignty cannot consent to easily pursue universal aims. Anarchy remains the ultimate systemic condition, and the political its main corollary. In conclusion, a politicisation of humanitarian practices appears as the only practicable solution for an effective international action.

Keywords: post-sovereign security, post-positivism, human rights, Responsibility to Protect.

From deterrence to the ‘responsibility to protect’

Post-positivist approaches and the redefinition of security

The last two decades have witnessed a profound adjustment in the meaning of security, especially as a primary sub-field of international relations theory. The main purpose of this redefinition process was the achievement of a more inclusive connotation, capable of providing systematic recognition to harmful threats habitually ignored within previous analyses, and of giving human rights' security issues a practical recognition. In this sense, the principal obstacle to this theoretical resurgence was symbolised by the dominant (neo)realist logic to security studies, which persuasively dictated the debate since the onset of the Cold

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War through numerous influential publications on the subject and acknowledged academic authority.

Indeed, the Cold War systemic arrangement seemed to efficiently adapt itself to the (neo)realist international order under various connected aspects. Its confrontational stand, the intellectual simplicity of its bipolar scheme, as well as the presence of a nuclear absolute threat, were all elements that realism appeared to accurately envisage in its elegant rationale. Under these circumstances; security thinking defined mainly on military terms and founded upon the idea of national interest and (material) power, should not be unexpected. As has been correctly maintained; "the problem of deterrence did more than anything else to create the modern academic field of strategic studies",¹ and its theoretical affirmation is hardly separable from the persistence of the Soviet opponent.²

Although still predominant, in the early 1980s this perception of security eventually came under question. Voices of dissent, often placed within the same realist paradigm, represented the origin of that redefinition process which gave the current meaning of security its expanded analytical foundation and purpose. In this regard it is fair to say that Ullman's article 'Redefining Security', which appeared on *International Security* in 1983, well symbolised the emerging sufferance for the theoretical limits of strategic studies. The main intention of the article was to present a "more comprehensive definition of security"³ able to denounce the misleading tendency to think of "national security in terms of military threats".⁴ Even though significant in its ability to overcome predominant militaristic considerations, Ullman's theoretical scheme continued to endorse the nation-state as both the central subject and object of security studies, achieving perhaps a more generous security agenda instead of a substantial redefinition of the notion of security *per se*.⁵

A more refined ontological critique of the concept of security followed the appearance of two distinct events, namely (i) the affirmation in the theoretical debate of a sociological and historical line of inquiry, and (ii) the almost concurrent end of the Cold War. Obviously, this particular outline entails a fair amount of simplification.⁶ Nevertheless, both these events occupy a central position within the genesis of recent theoretical approaches to security, as well as in the codification of those new international humanitarian responsibilities centred upon the individual actor. The former of these changes draws attention upon the importance of expanding the data base of security analyses, combining

¹ Laurence, Martin "The future of strategic studies", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 3-3 (1980), p. 93.

² Jervis, Robert "Deterrence theory revisited", *World Politics*, 31-2 (1979), p. 290.

³ Ullman, Richard "Redefining Security", *International Security*, 8-1 (1983), p. 130.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 133.

⁵ Baldwin, David "The Concept of Security", *Review of International Studies*, 23 (1997), p. 8.

⁶ For a detailed account see Nye, Joseph Jr. and Lynn-Jones, Sean "International Security Studies: A Report of a Conference on the State of the Field", *International Security*, 12-4 (1988), pp. 5-27.

the political systemic approach with a too often ignored historical methodology.⁷ Moreover, on this particular tendency rests also substantial part of the post-positivist sociological trend of international relations theory, which by analysing the nature of our social knowledge put under critical reflection the “demise of the empiricist-positivist promise for a cumulative behavioural science”.⁸ Indeed, social constructivism and its theoretical assumptions exerted a major influence on both the redefinition of security studies and the political legitimacy of humanitarian concerns, a process furthered even more by the collapse of the Soviet Union. This second radical change forced security analysts to reproduce in their studies the shifting nature of conflict, the fragmentation of threats' sources, and the globally interconnected contemporary world, providing as a consequence a fertile empirical ground for a deep revision of the meaning of security.

Recent post-positivist theoretical contributions, by broadening the meaning of security and opening spaces for new political practices, seem to offer a peculiar ontological and empirical interpretation of the current humanitarian debate, which emerges under several aspects as more radical than the classic one offered by liberal approaches.⁹ The result is a theoretical design to which the post-sovereign quality of the current security debate appears significantly indebted, facilitating in this regard the following assessment of the emerging humanitarian thinking and the limits of its practices, like the responsibility to protect, within an anarchic structure.

Post-sovereign security after the Cold War

Together with these constructivist approaches to security, the end of bipolarity and the conclusion of the Cold War represented a main aspect – directly related to the international reality – for the redefinition of security. Indeed, the loss of the previous (nuclear) balance of power, combined with an increasing level of global interdependence in all social spheres of relations, presented a substantially altered context for security appraisals and demands. The affirmation of new types of security issues (environment, migration, natural resources) well symbolises this shift in political concerns, offering humanitarian subjects a solid empirical support for their securitization process.

A tangible symptom of this modified international arrangement, which resembled under several aspects the liberal ideal-type of ‘complex interdependence’,¹⁰ is eventually the expanding relevance of humanitarian concerns in modern international politics. As

⁷ Gaddis, John Lewis “Expanding the Data Base: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Enrichment of Security Studies”, *International Security*, 12-1 (1987), p. 21.

⁸ Lapid, Yosef “The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-positivist Era”, *International Studies Quarterly*, 33-3 (1989), p. 236.

⁹ Bellamy, Alex “Humanitarian Responsibility and Interventionist Claims in International Society”, *Review of International Studies*, 29-2 (2003), pp. 322-323.

¹⁰ Keohane, Robert and Nye, Joseph S. “*International Relations Theory: Power and Interdependence*” (New York: Prentice Hall, 2000).

Wheeler maintained, only a few decades ago such political dynamics would have been largely unthinkable.¹¹ Together with the theoretical redefinition described above, this modified international scene is what primarily favoured such a change. Indeed, during the past two decades the *political* value of human rights has come to establish an additional principle of legitimacy for any international subject¹², giving the individual a growing dignity within this novel "standard of civilisation".¹³ The concept of a global 'moral interdependence' promptly emerged, emphasising the role played by globalisation dynamics – instant media information coverage, flows of products and ideas – already at the base of material and economic types of interdependence.¹⁴

Although problematic in their claim of universality, human rights seem to sustain a precise set of social practices about the organisation of political relations in the contemporary international society, presenting a difficult incompatibility with norms like sovereignty and non-intervention above all. In this regard, "the doctrine of internationally protected human rights offers one of the most powerful critiques of sovereignty as currently constituted".¹⁵ As previously noticed, the same intolerance for the notion of absolute sovereignty characterises post-positivist approaches to security, and the interpretation they give to the humanitarian ontology. Indeed, the concept of Westphalian sovereignty has been recently constrained not only by the growing material/moral interdependence and the end of the Cold War, but also by the institutional presence of supranational forms of political organisation which sensibly fragmented the sovereign authority of the state.¹⁶ The neat Westphalian model, and the legal order dedicated to its preservation are therefore today both institutionally weak and normatively conservative, thus unable to take into account the changing (constructed) interests of present society.

Given these realities, security considerations seem to have approached an atypical phase where traditional schemes and innovative contents merge and overlap, producing what we have termed here 'post-sovereign security'. This particular description does not intend to suggest a security model entirely deprived of the notion of sovereignty, which in fact remains the main systemic principle of political organisation. At the same time, however, conflicting claims 'particular' sovereignty and 'universal' human rights cohabit in an unstable way. As Kratochwil rightly maintained, sovereignty has never been absolute, but always

¹¹ Wheeler, Nicholas J. "Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society" (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹² Wight, Martin "Systems of States" (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), p. 153.

¹³ Donnelly, Jack "Human Rights: A New Standard of Civilization?", *International Affairs*, 74-1 (1998), p. 1.

¹⁴ Donnelly, Jack "State Sovereignty and International Intervention: The Case of Human Rights", in Lyons, Gene and Mastanduno, Michael (eds.) "Beyond Westphalia? State Sovereignty and International Intervention" (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 140.

¹⁵ Sikkink, Kathryn "Human Rights, Principled Issue-Networks, and Sovereignty in Latin America", *International Organization*, 47-3 (1993), p. 411.

¹⁶ Lyons, Gene and Mastanduno, Michael "State Sovereignty and International Intervention", pp. 252-258.

constrained in its rights by explicit (lawful) obligations as well as by “changing *background conditions* that substantially shaped the conditions of legitimate dominium”,¹⁷ that “interpretative frame” in which actions take place.¹⁸ The idea of Westphalian sovereignty as ‘reference point’ or ‘organised hypocrisy’,¹⁹ constantly violated throughout its historical endurance, equally emphasises this constructivist and conditional nature of the concept. Nevertheless, the recent humanitarian discourse goes beyond this structural flexibility of sovereignty. Indeed, it tries to further *background conditions* based upon theoretical approaches inherently in conflict with the current systemic arrangement, with potentially serious implications for the international order. Post-sovereign security is therefore the synthesis between the theoretical refusal of sovereignty, the proposal of a truly cosmopolitan humanitarian attitude, and the practical reality of the international order. As the next section will show, however, empirical constraints often frustrate the translation of these theoretical models into political practice.

Human rights and the ‘responsibility to protect’

The current humanitarian thinking accurately epitomises this troubled synthesis. By assuming the Westphalian system as the primary source of human wrongs, “universality is therefore possible, desirable and logical”.²⁰ This particular set of moral concerns – human rights – have in fact obtained in the last two decades an almost universal recognition, establishing what has been generally defined as a ‘global human rights regime’.²¹ Generally defined as composed by “principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area”,²² the concept of regime proves extremely helpful. Indeed, the humanitarian regime seems to ultimately pursue those post-sovereign values and emancipatory patterns furthered by post-positivist theories, offering through securitization dynamics those political practices and institutions able to realise its inherent values. As Bernard Kouchner, French Minister for External Affairs and prominent voice within the humanitarian regime, often observed, “we are gradually forging a consciousness of our universal responsibility”, overcoming “the strict, rigid, separation between the humanitarian and the political world”.²³ In this regard, the main political codification

¹⁷ Kratochwil, Friedrich “Sovereignty as Dominion: Is There a Right of Humanitarian Intervention?”, in Lyons, Gene and Mastanduno, Michael (eds.) “*Beyond Westphalia?*”, p. 30. (Emphasis added.)

¹⁸ Kratochwil, Friedrich “On the Notion of Interest in International Relations”, *International Organization*, 36-1 (1982), p. 27.

¹⁹ Krasner, Stephen D. “Compromising Westphalia”, *International Security*, 20-3 (1995), p. 147.

²⁰ Booth, Ken “Three Tyrannies”, in Dunne, Tim and Wheeler, Nicholas (eds.) “*Human Rights in Global Politics*” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 62.

²¹ Donnelly, Jack “The Social Construction of International Human Rights”, in Dunne, Tim and Wheeler, Nicholas (eds.) “*Human Rights in Global Politics*” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 71.

²² Krasner, Stephen “Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables”, *International Organizations*, 36-2 (1982), p. 185.

²³ Kouchner, Bernard “*Twenty-third Annual Morgenthau Memorial Lecture*”, 2004. Available at: <http://www.cceia.org/resources/publications/morgenthau/5001.html> [Accessed 20 August 2009].

stemmed from this global human rights regime is the principle of 'responsibility to protect' (RtoP). Indeed, it is in the RtoP that the universal/particular dichotomy of post-sovereign security emerged with more clarity. Supported by those values and norms of the current humanitarian regime, the RtoP emphasises with its empirical quality the constraints the systemic order exerts on the genuine application of its principles, corrupting as a consequence its primal cosmopolitan sensibility.

The securitization of human rights and the conceptual genesis of RtoP are closely related to the historical occurrences of the 1990s. Cases of 'new' interstate conflicts, combined with phenomena of ethnic cleansing, mass starvation and refugee flows, have verified respectively in Iraq ('91), Somalia ('93), Rwanda ('94), and Bosnia ('95), promptly giving an example of the transformed post-Cold War security environment. It was from these types of crises and the political inability to address them effectively that the idea of 'sovereignty as responsibility' emerged within the security debate. In this regard "to be legitimate, sovereignty must demonstrate responsibility, which means at the very least ensuring a certain level of protection for [...] the people".²⁴ As Boutros Boutros-Ghali maintained, "the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty [...] has passed; its theory was never matched by reality".²⁵ It is upon this dual responsibility – externally, to respect the sovereignty of other states, and internally, to respect the basic rights of the people within the state – that RtoP as an affirming international principle is rooted.²⁶

The crisis in Kosovo ('99), the NATO military response, and the failure of the United Nations (UN) to find a political compromise for a rapid common intervention furthered more than anything else the attention over the necessity of a new international sensibility. To avoid the repeating of such a humanitarian tragedy, Secretary General Kofi Annan argued, "it is essential that the international community reach consensus [...] on ways of deciding what action is necessary, and when, and by whom",²⁷ in order to protect civilians' basic human rights if needed. The independent International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) expressly tried to address the policy challenge of humanitarian intervention. It is in its final Report that the terminology 'responsibility to protect' first appeared. The rejection of the idiom 'right to intervene' permitted in fact a redefinition of the notion of sovereignty as a conditional right, more closely linked to the responsibility of states to their citizens.²⁸ Moreover, a 'residual responsibility' was believed to rest on the international community as well:

²⁴ Deng, Francis M. et al. *"Sovereignty as Responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa"* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1996), p. 27.

²⁵ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "An Agenda for Peace", June 17, 1992, paragraph 17, page 5. Available at: <http://www.un.org/Docs/SG/agpeace.html> [Accessed 7 July 2009].

²⁶ Evans, Gareth and Sahnoun, Mohamed "The Responsibility to Protect", *Foreign Affairs*, 81-6 (2002).

²⁷ Annan, Kofi "Two concepts of sovereignty", *Economist*, 18 Sep. 1999, Vol. 352, Issue 8137.

²⁸ International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) *"The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the ICISS"*, International Development Research Council, Ottawa, 2001, pp.11-12.

Where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect.²⁹

Responsibility to protect: from theory to practice

The initial codification of the RtoP appeared to precisely contain both the ontological affinity of the humanitarian regime with post-positivist theoretical schemes, and its transcendent attitude towards the present systemic order. The several references within the ICISS Report to 'human security' seem to substantially support this radical rationale.³⁰ However, the subsequent encounter with the international scene – the empirical side of post-sovereign security – will considerably contaminate this latent cosmopolitan sensibility, showing its theoretical contradictions without nonetheless eliminating them.

During the following years, the adoption of the RtoP concept by the UN's High-Level Panel "A more secure world: our shared responsibility" (2004), and its subsequent place in the UN report "In a larger freedom" (2005), contributed to a useful refinement of the notion, previous to its final adoption in the 2005 World Summit. Although enshrined in its humanitarian rationale, this UN version of RtoP largely diminishes the challenge to the principle of sovereignty, not mentioning any "specific residual responsibility on the part of states to take action to halt the slaughter of civilians",³¹ and inducing to assume that its adoption "has done little to resolve the challenge of preventing future Rwandas or Kosovos".³² What it has furthered is instead a 'gradation of sovereignty',³³ more familiar to the liberal interpretation of humanitarian issues. Although this conceptualisation of RtoP appears more firmly anchored in current international law, it still embodies a principle which, if meant to become customary international law through practice and *opinio juris*, could profoundly redefine the whole international political order. "The solidarist claim that states have a long-term security interest in promoting and enforcing human rights because an unjust world will be a disorderly one"³⁴ is inherent to the concept of humanitarian intervention. The RtoP, even in its latest constrained form, ultimately introduced a solid codification of this thinking into the international practice.

²⁹ ICISS "The Responsibility to Protect", p. XI.

³⁰ ICISS "The Responsibility to Protect", pp. 5; 6; 12; 15.

³¹ Welsh, Jennifer "The Responsibility to Protect: Securing the Individual in International Society", in Gould, Benjamin and Lazarus, Liora (eds.) "Security and Human Rights" (Portland: Hart Publishing, 2007), p. 378.

³² Bellamy, Alex "Whither the Responsibility to Protect? Humanitarian Intervention and the 2005 World Summit", *Ethics and International Affairs*, 20-2 (2006), p. 167.

³³ Keohane, Robert "Political Authority After Intervention: Gradations in Sovereignty", in Holzgrefe, J.L. and Keohane, Robert (eds.) "Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal and Political Dilemmas" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 277.

³⁴ Wheeler, Nicholas J. "Saving Strangers", p. 301.

RtoP is not merely an abstract notion. It exerts a substantial influence on the international scene, and has strong support from civil society. "It may be euphemistic, but it is henceforth the name given to the instrument for preventing massacres",³⁵ alighting as a consequence a peculiar vision of the international order where normative and moral reflections attempt to achieve, in Kouchner' terms, a fusion of the political and the humanitarian. The support to this novel principle of international conduct, expressed on several occasions by the European Union³⁶ as well as by the United States³⁷, proves the current relevance of this ideal-type within the international political routine.

In practice, the first resolution containing the RtoP was adopted in relation to the humanitarian situation in Darfur. The Security Council agreed unanimously in July 2007 on Resolution 1769, which obtained the Sudan's consent for the deployment of the 'hybrid' UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), authorising the active use of force to protect both civilians and personnel.³⁸ However, in general terms the UNAMID mission failed the test, setting an unrealistic ideal which compromised the attainment of more achievable political goals.³⁹ As we shall see in a moment, the absence of the political element provides a careful explanation for these operational weaknesses which limit the humanitarian hopes inscribed within the RtoP. The same limits are shown by the human rights abuses in Burma (Myanmar), where the allegedly universal values of the humanitarian regime have been, so far, unable to overcome the political vetoes posed by both China and Russia to produce a practical intervention.⁴⁰ The approaching idea that "priority should be the humanitarian crisis [deferring] decisions about the country's political future"⁴¹ is a main reason for this operational inability.

In conclusion, although differences are obviously present, contemporary international reality and post-positivist theoretical approaches seem to share a similar rationale, which by refusing a static and narrow meaning of security, try to prevail over restrictive concepts of

³⁵ Kouchner, Bernard "Twenty-third Annual Morgenthau Memorial Lecture", 2004.

³⁶ European Union "EU Priorities for the 63rd UN General Assembly", 2008, 1.5 (18). Available at: http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_8160_en.htm [Accessed 20 August 2009].

³⁷ U.S. Mission to the United Nations "Remarks by the Ambassador Susan E. Rice on the UN Security Council and the Responsibility to Protect", 15 June 2009. Available at: http://www.usunnewyork.usmission.gov/press_releases/20090615_126.html [Accessed 20 August 2009].

³⁸ United Nations "Report of the Secretary General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the hybrid operation in Darfur", letter dated 5 June 2007 from the Secretary General of the United Nations to the President of the Security Council, S/2007/307/Rev1, 6 June 2007.

³⁹ De Waal, Alex "Darfur and the Failure of the Responsibility to Protect", *International Affairs*, 83-6 (2007), p. 1054.

⁴⁰ United Nations "Security Council Fails to Adopt Draft Resolution on Myanmar, Owing to Negative Votes by China, Russian Federation", Security Council, SC/8939, 12 January 2007.

⁴¹ Miliband, David and Kouchner, Bernard "Burma: Aid Before Politics, Please", *The Times*, 9 May 2008. Available at: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article3896843.ece [Accessed 20 August 2009].

sovereignty and non-intervention. The current securitization of human rights and their related protection/enforcement practices is the most articulated manifestation of what we have defined 'post-sovereign security'. Nevertheless, reality matters. Indeed, norms like RtoP appear ultimately unable to transcend the present international arrangement, and remain on the contrary restricted by the same principles they attempt to redefine. Although it constitutes an international norm with substantial influence in the political scene, RtoP remains confused and detached from the empirical level. The following analysis of the political and its role within an anarchic system will elucidate the terms of this condition.

A critique of post-sovereign security

Post-sovereign security is not a simple recognition of practices and objective realities. It is an appraisal in which certain values, social truths, material and normative beliefs combine in order to provide a particular system for the identification of threats as functions of a given conception of interests. As reminded above, post-sovereign security rests on several post-positivist theories which, although dissimilar in their critical path, communally promote an inclusive agenda where the dissatisfaction of previous (neo)realist state-centred schemes ultimately qualifies their aspirations and proposals. The result is the appearance of a peculiar set of political and social institutions through which those values are codified within the current international order, often creating an opposition of principles difficult to restrain. In this regard, the recent humanitarian sensibility and its political expression through the RtoP are a valuable illustration of this dialectical relationship between values and institutions. Moreover, the fact that post-sovereign security contains in its theoretical declination a substantial dismissal of the present international arrangement only amplifies the practical implications inherent to its rationale. As Kratochwil suggested, "different and incompatible visions of the purposes of political associations led to fundamentally different conceptions of the appropriate domestic and international structures".⁴² This mutual construction of systemic order and systemic security gives rise to important political outcomes.

Post-sovereign security and the persistence of anarchy

It has been already noted how the critical attitude towards the notion of state sovereignty, both in its theoretical and practical terms, is a crucial recurrence of the present security debate and humanitarian regime. The ideas of emancipation and humanitarian concerns proper of the theoretical sphere of post-sovereign security, combined with the empirical phenomenon of a globally interconnected world with different, coexisting levels of political authority, are main aspects at the base of this denunciation of the Westphalian arrangement. In this structural variation process, the suggestion of a secular medieval order, with overlapping authorities and segmented loyalties able to weaken the notion of modern

⁴² Kratochwil, Friedrich "The Challenge of Security in a Changing World", *Journal of International Affairs*, 43-1 (1989), p. 120.

sovereignty, seems a particularly valuable conceptual image. A reconsideration of this 'new medievalism' was accurately presented, among other alternatives to the contemporary systemic order, by Hedley Bull, noting how "if modern states were to come to share their authority [...] to such an extent that the concept of sovereignty ceased to be applicable, then a neo-medieval form of universal political order might be said to have emerged".⁴³ The analysed humanitarian request for 'post-sovereign communities', a potential source of a more inclusive cosmopolitan identification, appears to precisely incorporate this idea of new medievalism.⁴⁴

In addition, the current international system seems to further a pattern of shared expectation about how legitimate political actors should behave and which ends they should pursue.⁴⁵ Within this social construction, the humanitarian issue stands as an essential aspect. Post-sovereign approaches to security seek in this way to overcome that 'conspiracy of silence' the previous absolute sovereignty principle shrouded over the (human) rights and interests of the single individuals,⁴⁶ disputing as a consequence the balance between order and justice the Westphalian (or 'Westfailure')⁴⁷ system had achieved. Nevertheless, such 'new medieval' assessments, although optimistic in their attitude, fail in our opinion the comprehension of the deep international structure – those ordering principles of a system that shape its social quality –, focusing their critique merely on the sovereign state and the obstacle it constitutes for the redefined (humanitarian) security agenda. As we shall elucidate in a moment, a condition of overlapping authorities and multiple loyalties surely succeeds in broadening the notion of security and its analytical basis, but at the same time this altered systemic order does not entail the loss of that anarchical status by which it is ultimately restricted. Since new mediaeval arrangements do not obviously represent a type of world government, anarchy remains the primary international organising principle, and within its margins post-sovereign security and its humanitarian annex have to constantly operate.

The subtle distinction here is between structure – the comprehensive principle on the basis of which the constituent units are separated and interact – and system – the result of such interactions. Accepting the ontological base offered by structural realism, our critique rejects the neorealist radical assumption "that as long as anarchy endures, states remain like units", and that if units cease to be alike, then anarchy ends.⁴⁸ As Ruggie pointed out, an international structure made of (i) an organizing principle, (ii) the functional differentiation of

⁴³ Bull, Hedley *"The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics"* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1977, 3rd ed.) , p. 246.

⁴⁴ Linklater, Andrew *"Critical Theory and World Politics"*(New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 107.

⁴⁵ Friedrichs, Jorg "The Meaning of New Medievalism", *European Journal of International Relations*, 7-4 (2001), p. 488.

⁴⁶ Bull, Hedley *"The Anarchical Society"*, p. 80.

⁴⁷ Strange, Susan "The Westfailure System", *Review of International Studies*, 25-3 (1999), pp. 345-354.

⁴⁸ Waltz, Kenneth *"Theory of International Politics"* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p. 93.

its units, and (iii) the degree of concentration or diffusion of capabilities within the system,⁴⁹ (where *only* the third element is conceived as a variable), is intrinsically incapable “to account for, or even describe, the most important change in international politics in this *millennium*: the shift from the medieval to the modern international system”.⁵⁰ In order to refuse this ‘ontological reductionism’,⁵¹ the second element of the Waltzian structure – the functional differentiation of the units – needs to be taken into account, refusing the *a priori* exogenous likeness of the units within an anarchical homogenising principle. The variable identities of the units and their patterns of interaction do represent a potential source of structural alteration and systemic change, in a mutual constitutive relation between agent and structure which ultimately affects how states provide for and think about their security.

In accordance to this theoretical scheme, both the emerging new medieval system of overlapped authorities and its post-sovereign security corollary find an explanation that is intimately connected to the principle of anarchy. Although anarchy does not preclude the differentiation of the units, the overcome of absolute sovereignty or the positive enrichment of the notion of security suggested above, its presence still remains an inescapable structural confine. Regarding anarchy itself as the essence of the security problem, however, would be inaccurate. Rather, it symbolises “the form in which the security problem comes [...] and the framework within which to seek [possible] solutions”.⁵² This awareness seems to be absent in most recent security approaches, in particular within the interpretation of the humanitarian regime they sustain and promote, furthering as a consequence perilous social expectations and ambiguous international practices like the RtoP. But how does anarchy manifest its political quality? And what type of empirical repercussions this has on international security and humanitarian practices?

The political as an interactional concept

According to neorealism, anarchy gives inevitably rise to a ‘self-help’ systemic order. This self-help logic stems directly from the inherent absence of a superior authority able to impose a form of hierarchy on the system, and shapes the state-units as essentially self-interested and risk averse actors in urgency of balance. It is from this constrain of anarchy that states are made functionally similar, with the principal differences among them defined in terms of capabilities.⁵³ Nevertheless, as previously noted this scheme, this ‘logic of anarchy’, is somewhat flawed in its account of the current international order. As Wendt

⁴⁹ Waltz, Kenneth “*Theory of International Politics*”, p. 88.

⁵⁰ Ruggie, John G. “Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Towards a Neorealist Synthesis”, *World Politics*, 35-2 (1983), p. 273.

⁵¹ Wendt, Alexander “The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory”, *International Organization*, 41-3 (1987), p. 341.

⁵² Buzan, Barry “*People, State & Fear*”, p. 149.

⁵³ Waltz, Kenneth “Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory”, *Journal of International Affairs*, 44-1 (1990), p. 36.

suggests, self-help is neither a logical nor a contingent feature of anarchy,⁵⁴ but rather only a potential systemic outcome among other possible solutions. In this regard, what the present analysis considers as a valuable alternative option is the introduction of the notion of the 'political' and a comprehensive account of its association with anarchy. Indeed, it is within the political that the ultimate stable, intrinsic feature of any anarchical system finds expression.

To paraphrase Carl Schmitt, the concept of *anarchy* presupposes the concept of the political.⁵⁵ Obviously, the translation of the political from a domestic dimension to an international one entails that some of its aspects assume a different connotation compared to the Schmittian outline. Nevertheless, their theoretical liaison proves helpfully descriptive. The political is conceived here as an 'interactional concept', *setting the terms for the interaction of the units in an anarchical order*. In contrast to the neorealist self-help assumption, the political corollary of anarchy is essentially neutral and unbiased, concerned primarily with its influence on the systemic process inherent to the structure rather than with the structure *per se*. In this way, through the political and its procedural quality anarchy obtains its practical codification, setting a basic limit for any international system – Westphalian or (new) Mediaeval – which is founded upon its organising rationale.

Instead of emphasising the absence of a superior authority, the political principle derives its origin from the intrinsic plurality of dissimilar units which necessarily qualify an anarchic arrangement. The idea of anarchy as a "pluriverse" of identities, where fragmented interests cohabit without formal hierarchy, is particularly evocative of this state of affairs.⁵⁶ In fact, although alternative configurations make it possible to manage the international absence of an enforcing central authority – as through the establishment of an anarchical society based on certain values and institutions, the achievement of a 'mature' anarchy of peaceful fragmentation, or the enhancement of the dynamic density of the units –,⁵⁷ the presence of different confronting interests appears to be the invariable attribute of anarchy.

In regards of how the political manifests itself in practice, the idea that political actions could be reduced to a specific political distinction between friends and enemies surely presents a useful conceptual model.⁵⁸ However, the neutral and anormative quality of the political as an interactional principle results in this particular declination rather blurred. In contrast, the Hegelian distinction between the Self and the Other seems to better adapt to the pluriverse of anarchy, setting the ontological dichotomy the political has to constantly reproduce in its actions. The Self is therefore related to the Other in a mutual constitutive

⁵⁴ Wendt, Alexander "Anarchy is What States Make of It", p. 396.

⁵⁵ Schmitt, Carl "The Concept of the Political" (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1932), p. 19.

⁵⁶ Schmitt, Carl "The Concept of the Political", p. 53.

⁵⁷ Respectively Bull, Hedley "The Anarchical Society", pp. 62-71; Buzan, Barry "People, State & Fear", pp. 175-176; Ruggie, John G. "Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity", pp. 281-285.

⁵⁸ Schmitt, Carl "The Concept of the Political", p. 26.

dynamic, deriving its identity from the regular recognition by the Other.⁵⁹ This Self-awareness of the deference from the Other is what produces the anarchic pluriverse of identities, and what gives the political its procedural rationale. In fact, given its anarchical origin, the political appears to consistently implement a dialectic process of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, providing the units of the structure with the only comprehensive scheme for successful interaction.

As already reminded in regard to social constructivist's approaches, the outcome of such dialectic phenomena is always something beyond the sum of its parts, where the idea of power is never the only explanatory aspect for a particular political result. Indeed, it is a synthesis where power is placed alongside other variables, as social influence, shared norms, or historical contingencies, which make difficult any type of calculations. For these reasons, the political is not conceived as a mere "struggle for power", but rather as a procedural container able to give the units an awareness of their simultaneous separation and ontological mutual dependence within an anarchic order, producing in this way a synthesis of their identities and interests able to redefine both of them at the same time.⁶⁰ Kratochwil grasped the point, lucidly noting that "we have to come to terms with our problems and by doing so we also gain the understanding of how others, different from us, have to cope with their destinies. Such a reflection has to be 'historical' and 'sympathetic' rather than analytical and cognitive".⁶¹

Two conclusions follow from this perception of the political as an interactional principle. First, every action performed by international subjects (states, international organisations, NGOs) is in this sense political, or more precisely has to be pursued through a political procedure. This implies that socially constructed interests, although variable in their contents and capable to alter the systemic order through novel institutions and practices, are in the end subjected in their achievements to this dialectic confrontation between dissimilar identities. As we shall see shortly, humanitarian security issues are not immune from this dynamic. The political is a comprehensive procedural concept, and not only "one among many types of activities [...] on the international scene".⁶²

Second, as implicit in the definition of the political, if a world government would be established and the anarchic organising principle of the structure replaced with a consensual, contractual or imposed hierarchical system,⁶³ then the political would lose its interactional quality. The Self and the Other would be as a result annihilated within a system of hierarchical authorities, and their contrast addressed through legal or administrative

⁵⁹ Hegel, G.W.F. *"Elements of the Philosophy of Rights"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 271.

⁶⁰ Morgenthau, Hans *"Politics among nations"*, p. 29.

⁶¹ Kratochwil, Friedrich *"Re-thinking the 'inter' in International Politics"*, *Millennium*, 35-3 (2007), p. 508.

⁶² Morgenthau, Hans *"Politics among nations"*, p. 30.

⁶³ Bull, Hedley *"The Anarchical Society"*, pp. 252-253.

means. At the present time however, the possibilities that such a radical alteration of the international arrangement will occur are considerably limited. Anarchy is very likely to remain the organising principle *par excellence* of the international system, and the political to personified its corollary praxis. Indeed, the progressive erosion of the empirical relevance of sovereignty in the current system, able to suggest the analysed idea of a new medieval order of overlapped authorities, does not consent a rejection of the political as procedural devise, but rather enhanced significantly the peril of its potential dismissal.

In this regard, the last segment of this study presents an account of the relationship between the political and the humanitarian feature of post-sovereign security. An emphasis on the moral obtuseness of its assumptions and incapacity to adapt to political types of interactions should inform the inherent weaknesses of post-sovereign security models, ultimately suggesting a more pragmatic and conscious implementation of its institutions. The RtoP norm should well illustrate such flaws and misplaced expectations within the practice of the current international scene.

The implications of the political on post-sovereign security

As previously analysed, a primary aspect of post-sovereign security is its distress for the notion of Westphalian sovereignty. This is produced on the one hand by a theoretical redefinition of security in which sociological post-positivist approaches refuse the narrow state-centric focus of analysis, while on the other hand by a globalised post-Cold War international scene where multi-level authorities and peculiar phenomena appear to weaken the absolute quality of state sovereignty. On this fruitful concurrence of theoretical and empirical, the present humanitarian regime seems to find a substantial part of its political legitimacy, ultimately able to pursue the cosmopolitan and 'system-transforming' ontology inscribed in its latent rationale. The analysed institution of the RtoP, practical codification of those humanitarian values and aims, is a pivotal outcome of this process and an evocative attribute of post-sovereign security.

Nevertheless, the theoretical reconstruction of the political as an interactional concept appears to dispute several assumptions proper of post-sovereign security, offering an explanation for the constraining effects reality imposes on the attainment of its ideal aims. In simple terms, although useful in its ability to delineate a broader agenda and to justify the individual as a significant referent of security studies, the rejection of absolute sovereignty in favour of a new medieval systemic order of overlapped authorities cannot imply the dismissal of anarchy and of its corollary principle of the political. Reality matters, and the current anarchic reality constitutes the limit for post-sovereign security and the securitization of its humanitarian features. Moreover, the universal and cosmopolitan sensibility which informs its practical manifestations needs to be assessed against the dialectical separation between the Self and the Other; that pluriverse of identities which is inherent to any anarchical order. Indeed, universality and anarchy remain in general terms mutually divergent.

In this regard, post-sovereign security has to reconcile its theoretical ambitions with the procedural instrument of the political, which appears to perhaps increase its value within a systemic order resembling under several aspects the medieval arrangement of overlapped authorities considered above. Indeed, in a condition of weak sovereignty the distinction Self/Other results rather blurred and often unclear, consequently obstructing the spontaneous emergence of the political as interactional principle. In a sense, post-sovereign security and its humanitarian rationale need therefore to be ultimately *politicised*, that is to consciously assimilate the notion of the political within their practices and codifications.⁶⁴ The humanitarian regime and the pursuit of its universalist values are an useful case of this state of affairs.

Human rights norms obviously tend to ontologically refuse a pluriverse condition, where different identities cohabit and influence each other. The Other is instead neglected, dominated within a process of deconstruction able to consign a rational ground for genuinely universal and collective truths. As a result, the outcome is an articulation of practices and institutions, like the RtoP, which are void of the political rationale necessary to pursue their ideals within an anarchic order, and constitute therefore a source of tension for the whole international system. In other words, "the [human] *rights discourse* points to the juridification" of the political, to its privatisation,⁶⁵ sterilising that dialectic synthesis between confronting identities able to facilitate exchanges and find shared interests. The political procedure is replaced with legal agreements – Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Charter, Helsinki accords – upon which claims of a utopic universality about humanitarian practices are rooted and developed.

Evidently, the humanitarian regime's "attempt to impose so-called human rights upon others or to punish others for not observing human rights, assumes [necessarily] that human rights are of universal validity",⁶⁶ and the same ontological belief informs its corollary institution of RtoP. However, it is precisely for this "universal aspiration and the widely utilised rhetoric of this discourse" that humanitarian codifications "not necessarily resonate with 'others'".⁶⁷ Post-sovereign security and in particular its humanitarian/individualistic annex, fail to envisage in their ontological purposes the anarchic separation between the Self and the Other, and therefore to baptise the political as the preferred interactional procedure. The result is consequently a deep tension between universal or cosmopolitan claims and the pluriverse sustained by the current systemic anarchy, which needs to be ultimately politicised in order to remain controllable.

⁶⁴ The same terminology, although with a different meaning, is used in Booth, Ken "Theory of World Security", pp. 31; 172.

⁶⁵ Kratochwil, Friedrich "Re-thinking the 'inter' in International Politics", p. 496.

⁶⁶ Morgenthau, Hans "Human Rights and Foreign Policy", 1979, p. 4. Available at: http://www.cceia.org/resources/publications/1979_lecture_by_morgenthau/index.html/_res/id=sa_File1/HumanRights_ForeignPolicy_Morgenthau.pdf [Accessed 22 July 2009]

⁶⁷ Kratochwil, Friedrich "Re-thinking the 'inter' in International Politics", p. 497.

Indeed, to politicise post-sovereign security implies the awareness of the limits a deep ontological interpretation of humanitarian concerns – as the one offered by post-positivist theories – encounters within the empirical pluriverse of reality. The emancipatory role attached to the (socially constructed) humanitarian regime, and promoted by a system-transforming attitude in neat opposition to the sovereign principle, needs to put into perspective its universalist pretences and cosmopolitan finalities, since “the defence of human rights [...] can and must come into conflict with other interests that may be more important” in a given historical situation.⁶⁸ For these reasons, conceiving the promotion of human rights as a major foreign policy goal⁶⁹ necessarily entails the corruption of its transnational normative intentions, and the use of the political as a peculiar ontological derivate. In fact, this “failure to develop serious policies [...] has been the principal cause of the setback of humanitarian action in the 1990s”,⁷⁰ and the absence of the political from its universalist sensibility the primary reason for the restricted empirical codification the RtoP has received by the UN.

Three consequences of an a-political ‘responsibility to protect’

In practical terms this discrepancy between universalist ontology and anarchic pluriverse, the absence of the political as interactional method, has produced three main negative consequences in the empirical application of humanitarian values, primarily through the analysed institution of the RtoP.

The first limitation consists of (i) the inability to properly comprehend the peculiarities of each case or intervention, failing to adapt the normative purposes to the given reality. The regional context and the study of the identities involved is often minimised in the name of the universal values promoted, with the effect of neglecting other's reasons – economical, social, ethnical – usually at the base of humanitarian abuses. In this regard, the finest manifestation of the absence of the political is embodied by the principles of impartiality and neutrality which generally inform humanitarian actions.⁷¹ The inability to engage the dialectic process of thesis-antithesis-synthesis above reminded, to translate its cosmopolitan sensibility within an anarchic order through the concept of the political, obliges institutions like the RtoP to operate in an impartial manner in order to save their universalist ontology. “Neutral humanitarianism, when viewed more cynically, is a kind of hedged bet, in which intervening parties salve their consciences while avoiding the difficult political commitment”.⁷² The

⁶⁸ Morgenthau, Hans “*Human Rights and Foreign Policy*”, p. 7.

⁶⁹ Hoffmann, Stanley “Reaching the Most Difficult: Human Rights as a Foreign Policy Goal”, *Daedalus*, 112-4 (1983), p. 35.

⁷⁰ Roberts, Adam “Humanitarian Action in War: Aid, Protection and Impartiality in a Policy Vacuum”, *Adelphi Paper*, 1996, Vol. 305, p. 9.

⁷¹ Roberts, Adam “Humanitarian Action in War”, pp. 51-56.

⁷² Ignatieff, Michael “State Failure and Nation-building”, in Holzgrefe, J.L. and Keohane, Robert (eds.) “*Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal and Political Dilemmas*” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 316.

controversial consequences of such an approach have symbolised interventions like Rwanda (1994) and Bosnia (1995), with the massacre of Srebrenica as a tragic and bitterly famous illustration.

The second consequence, stemmed from the refuse of the political, is (ii) the high degree of conceptual manipulation attached to the humanitarian justification for potential interventions. The general universal declination of its values leaves the practical forms of humanitarian concerns rather imprecise in their operational conditions and requirements.⁷³ In this way, other concurrent interests which gravitate around human rights' protection can easily corrupt the normative logic of its actions. The immediate outcome is therefore a high level of selectivity about the merits of humanitarian practices, creating a situation of 'double-standards' and biases in which moral considerations usually represent the weak side of the intervention's rationale. Suggesting in some cases the affirmation of a 'new colonialism' hidden behind the mask of humanitarian practices,⁷⁴ this conceptual vagueness also alimments a form of perilous 'moral hazard'. Indeed the rising expectations of diplomatic and military intervention to protect from humanitarian disasters eventually promote irresponsibility and encourage the "fraudulent action of deliberately provoking state's retaliation against one's own group to attract intervention", like for instance during the Balkans conflicts.⁷⁵

The third and last aspect which demands the politicisation of post-sovereign security is associated to (iii) the progressive weakening of state-sovereignty promoted by humanitarian considerations. As the present analysis has tried to emphasise, a form of conditional sovereignty within a new medieval order – which seems under several points actually emerging – does not consent to replace the pluriverse of identities with a cosmopolitan approach avoid of the political. For these reasons, the practical action of the humanitarian regime, undermining the current balance between justice and order inherent in the sovereignty concept, presents a systemic concern in regard of the alternative arrangement it tries to further. Indeed, this aspect appears to assume a certain relevance in relation to the post-intervention phase, when ordering principles need to represent a clear foundation for the political reconstruction. In a sense, "the political consolidation of gains from humanitarian intervention will depend on institutions that limit and unbundle sovereignty".⁷⁶

To summarise, the Kouchner' idea of merging together the political and the humanitarian world is, in a way, appropriate. However this does not imply, as the affiliates of the humanitarian regime tend to think, the rejection of the political pluriverse in favour of a humanitarian universalism. On the contrary, it requests to politicise post-sovereign security in

⁷³ Johansen, Robert "Limits and Opportunities in Humanitarian Intervention", in Hoffmann, Stanley (ed.) *"The Ethics and Politics of Humanitarian Intervention"*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1996), p. 62.

⁷⁴ Donnelly, Jack "Human Rights: A New Standard of Civilization?", p.13.

⁷⁵ Kuperman, Alan "The Moral Hazard of Humanitarian Intervention: Lessons from the Balkans", *International Studies Quarterly*, 52 (2008), p. 51.

⁷⁶ Keohane, Robert "Political Authority After Intervention", p. 291.

general and its humanitarian corollary in particular, allowing their empirical codifications to act in accordance to the anarchic structure and the plurality of identities it contains. In this way the ontological cosmopolitanism which rests at the base of human rights and individual security has to use the political to achieve a compromise with the current anarchic reality, reducing those negative empirical outcomes like the three cases just analysed.

Conclusion

The present study has been divided into two connected sections. The first part has offered a brief account of the alterations security theory and international security practice have experienced after the end of the Cold War, and the growing influence of new post-positivist theoretical approaches. Supporting each other, these two aspects properly illustrate the foundations of what has been named above as 'post-sovereign security', a peculiar security agenda in which universalist and particularistic claims rest in permanent mutual tension. Theoretical concepts like securitization, emancipation, and post-sovereign communities well symbolise the research for a more individual level of analysis, where the current humanitarian regime and a modified post-Cold War sensibility seem to ultimately obtain recognition.

In this regard, the principle of absolute state-sovereignty emerged as the main obstacle to such comprehensive notions of security. The rejection of 'national interest' types of considerations has been followed by the growing relevance of several supranational political organizations, weakening as a consequence the empirical authority of the Westphalian concept of sovereignty. In its place, a form of moral interdependence has appeared during the past two decades within the international scene, presenting the universal respect of human rights as a primary source for international legitimacy. In this 'new medieval' system of multiple and overlapped authorities the humanitarian regime – no more constrained by absolute sovereignty or realist state-centric logics – assumed a crucial position, favouring the achievement of its inherent cosmopolitan ideals. Moreover, in order to pursue these universalist humanitarian values within the current international order, a peculiar set of political and social institutions have been implemented. Indeed, these new collective responsibilities based on universalist humanitarian values ultimately need to transcend the present systemic order and its sovereignty principle, creating in this way that inherent tension at the heart of post-sovereign security.

It has been noted how the RtoP, most influential and primary institution of this emerging humanitarian sensibility clearly contains all the contradictions of a cosmopolitan rationale, which has to operate in a segmented international order. The main reason for this conceptual weakness is the erroneous idea that with the introduction of a more flexible notion of state-sovereignty, the universalist ontology of human rights would have been easily respected. However, as the second part of the present study has showed, as long as anarchy remains the primary ordering principle of the international system, any genuine universal set

of values will be eventually corrupted in their empirical attainment, and the principle of the political will represent the main conventional procedure of action.

Accepting the possibility of a functional differentiation of the units, the second section of the analysis measured those limitations the humanitarian regime encounters within an anarchical system. Indeed, although anarchy does not preclude the differentiation of the units, the rejection of absolute sovereignty and the positive enrichment of the notion of security, its influence remains significant. Anarchy implies a pluriverse of identities, a primordial separation between Self and Other that the humanitarian regime and its institutions have to include in their empirical manifestations in order to be successful. In this regard, the interactional concept of the political appears to be the natural corollary of anarchy, and the only procedure available to pursue international goals. Going beyond a mere struggle for power, the political procedure creates a dialectic relationship between the various identities present within anarchy, achieving a synthesis often able to redefine several subjects at the same time.

The implications for the humanitarian approach are obviously abundant. As we have noted, its universalist attitude need clearly to be assessed against the anarchic quality of the international system. In a sense, humanitarian considerations of security need to be politicised, to amend their cosmopolitan attitude and apply the procedural concept of the political to reach a fruitful synthesis between the various identities involved. The failure to perform this process is the main reason at the base of the operational trouble experienced by the RtoP in its recent history, leaving the international community with a concept highly controversial and of scarce utility. As the three reasons outlined above suggested, the RtoP appears today as "an idea whose time has come and gone",⁷⁷ without really being able to adapt its practices to the anarchical international reality and the attached pluriverse of identities.

Nevertheless, the present analysis does not intend to dismiss human rights *tout court* as a mistake. On the contrary, since humanitarian considerations constitute a positive aspect of the current enlarged security agenda which is likely to develop in the near future, institutions like the RtoP should reconsider their universalist ontologies in relation to the empirical fragmentation of politics, trying to politicise their practices in the sense outlined above. In this way the tension between universal and particular at the heart of post-sovereign security would be constrained, and a more realistic declination of humanitarian responsibilities would be achieved. Although the appearance of a new medieval international order could assist these changes, the presence of anarchy still imposes the interactional principle of the political. In this regard, post-positivist approaches failed the comprehension of a simple theoretical condition. Indeed, it is anarchy, and not absolute state-sovereignty, the primary

⁷⁷ Economist, the "An Idea Whose Time Has Come-and Gone?", 23rd July 2009. Available at: http://www.economist.com/world/international/displayStory.cfm?story_id=14087788&source=hptextfeature [Accessed 20 August 2009].

obstacle to the universalist ontology of humanitarian practices, and the political the only procedure able to find a synthesis between these two elements. In the end, the politicisation of the RtoP and other human rights institutions appears the best possibility to pursue in a realistic way those values within the current international system, obtaining as a result a more fair and just international environment.

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