The Responsibility to Protect Syria

A Grounded Approach

Roskilde University
The Responsibility to Protect Syria – a Grounded Approach

Sandra Sichlau
Sirid Sæderup Halager
Johan Theil Nielsen
Jeppe Holm Nielsen

Supervisor
Laust Schouenborg

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Abstract

Through almost three years of civil war and numerous accounts of mass atrocity crimes, committed by the regime, the United Nations Security Council has yet to reach a clear agreement on resolutions that can effectively put an end to the Syrian conflict. However, the conflict has been viciously debated within the Security Council and several draft resolutions has been proposed and vetoed, while accusations of hidden agendas of regime change and economic self-interests has been hurled back and forth. It is within this evident conflict that our research paper takes its point of departure. The suggested reasons for the division within the Security Council are many, but several are concerned with the UNSC resolution, which by reference to The Responsibility to Protect equipped NATO with a mandate to intervene in Libya. Although the intervention effectively halted the Libyan state from committing mass atrocities, it has since been loudly critiqued for going to far in paving the way for regime change. By arguing that the R2P norm holds a role in the apparent conflict within the United Nations Security Council and that the issue of regime change poses a significant challenge for the Security Council in committing to unified action towards the Syrian crisis, we commence our research through study of the perceptions articulated in relation to the Syrian crisis, within the United Nations Security Council. By developing the perceptions held by the respective permanent member states of the Security Council, we find that both the Responsibility to Protect and the issue of regime change are significant factors in causing the division within the Council. Specifically, the different perceptions of the Syrian crisis are very much related to differences in the perceptions of the issue of regime change and the responsibility to protect, thus making them central to the conflict between the states.

We undertake our research through the Grounded Theory Method. Thus we underpin our arguments in a grounded empirical manner. The paper contains an analysis of the presented R2P norm within the UN, followed by a thorough analysis of the five permanent member states of the United Nations Security Council’s perceptions of the Syrian crisis. Thus meaning derived from these perceptions will be analysed in relation to the R2P norm and the issue of regime change. We argue that these aspects are interlinked, hence our argument above.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

The intention of this chapter is to introduce the logic and purpose of this research paper. By unfolding important aspects of the debate relating to our field of research, we wish to set the stage for our further proceedings.

1.1 Field of research

Mass atrocities and non-intervention

During the 1990s the world witnessed a number of mass atrocity crimes committed by states, targeting their own civilian populations (Thakur 2006:246; UN 2004:13). Instead of causing reaction, these incidents exposed the international community as divided in opinions and frozen in actions (UN 2004:34). In situations of extreme violence, where the world community expected the United Nations (UN) to commit to humanitarian intervention, it was pacified by discrepancies in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), leaning towards the principle of sovereignty inherent in the UN Charter.

The former Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan, addressed this problem of non-intervention in the name of sovereignty, when he asked the world community to not let this principle stand in the way of hindering mass atrocity crimes:

“(…) no legal principle — not even sovereignty — can ever shield crimes against humanity. Where such crimes occur and peaceful attempts to halt them have been exhausted, the Security Council has a moral duty to act on behalf of the international community.”

(UN 2000:35)

This statement points to the challenge of reconciling the principle of state sovereignty with humanitarian intervention. A challenge the UN was facing at the beginning of the new millennium.
Responsibility to Protect

To address the clash between state sovereignty and humanitarian intervention, a new idea known as the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) was developed. Beginning with its elaboration by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), which focused on the need for a change in the perception of sovereignty, this idea has developed over time. The 2005 report of the Secretary General In Larger Freedom describes the R2P as the international community’s responsibility to:

“(…) use diplomatic, humanitarian and other methods to help protect civilian populations, and that if such methods appear insufficient the Security Council may out of necessity decide to take action under the Charter, including enforcement action, if so required.”

(UN 2005:59)

Eventually R2P was ratified in a doctrine, unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2005, while the UNSC formalised its support for this doctrine in 2006 (UNGA 2005, para.138-140; UNSC 2006, para. 4). Although the doctrine was not a mirror to the original idea of the ICISS, it did reflect its core perceptions (Evans 2011:36).

R2P in use

Since its ratification in 2005 by the UNGA, the R2P doctrine has been referred to in a number of resolutions, passed by the UNSC, aimed at stopping mass atrocity crimes in sovereign states (ICRtoP 2013). Not all cases of reaction, where R2P was given as a reason for intervention, have been successful. However, the case of Libya in 2011, although sparking a division of opinion, can be taken as a clear example of action by UNSC to stop mass atrocity crimes, committed by a state against its own people (UNSC RES 2011). Enforced by NATO-troops, the UNSC resolution effectively halted the Libyan regime in committing mass atrocity
crimes against its own citizens, while referring to a state’s responsibility towards its own people – a responsibility inherent in the R2P.

The conflict within

Even though the UNSC resolution 1973 on Libya is left as an example of a powerful and united UNSC, the fact that five countries including Russia and China decided not to vote for the resolution, is an important part of the story (UNSC 2011a). In addition to this, it has been pointed out that the intervention in Libya in the end exceeded its mandate, by causing a regime change, thus creating scepticism towards R2P and constituting a setback for the idea (Evans 2011:41; Information 2012). That the conflict within the UNSC is persistent seems strikingly clear with the emergence of the Syrian conflict. Through the almost three-year long civil war, members of the UNSC have vetoed three draft-resolutions, and the Syrian government continues to kill its own peoples (UNSC 2011b:2; UNSC 2012b:2; UNSC 2012d:2).

The debate on R2P

Aidan Hehir has a clear explanation to the divergence between the Libyan and Syrian case. In focusing on the historical track-record of UNSC initiated humanitarian intervention, he concludes that one cannot expect a specific set of factors to be superseding influential in all instances of intervention.

“As surprising as Resolution 1973 arguably was, however, it is consistent with the Security Council’s record of inconsistency”

(Hehir 2013:157)

Rather, he argues that the reasons for intervening in humanitarian conflicts are many and changing. He specifically states that the R2P’s role in changing the international community’s perception of intervention has been overestimated. Rather the intervention in Libya was a case of contingency:
“R2P has possibly become one factor in the decisionmaking calculus of states, but it is one among a great many – a loud voice in a large, disparate, chanting crowd.”

(Hehir 2013:159)

The conclusion reached by Hehir is controversial for the reason that it dismisses the idea that a norm like R2P would ever have consistent influence, if not backed by a change of the fundamental power structures of the international community (Hehir 2013:159).

In relation to Hehir’s inclination towards a complex of factors, as decisive to choosing intervention as opposed to non-intervention, Roy Allison emphasises the importance of relations and interests. In the case of Syria he claims that Russia’s current stance of non-intervention, leaves it in a powerful position within the Middle East and the international community (Allison 2013:821).

In opposition to this, Ralph Janik concludes that the Russians and the Chinese are not directly opposed to military intervention and regime change in Syria although they are proponents of the status quo (Janik 2013:82). Janik would be inclined to agree with Hehir’s conclusion; that many factors are decisive to the choice of intervention or non-intervention. In the case of Syria Janik argues that the Russian and Chinese resistance, towards UNSC intervention, is a result of the limited role that the two states were allowed to play in the aftermath of the Libyan intervention:

“Thus, it seems that ignoring their interests when it came to dividing the Libyan pie has showed the impossibility not only of creating an atmosphere of mutual trust in the Security Council but also of establishing an effective and coherent approach towards the implementation of the Responsibility to Protect.”

(Janik 2013:83)

Prominent advocate of R2P, Gareth Evans, has turned his attention to a dilemma concerning R2P-intervention, appearing in the aftermath of the reactions towards
Gaddafi in Libya and Gbagbo in Côte d’Ivoire (Evans 2011:40f). Evans states that the reluctance towards R2P, which was first displayed by the international community, has worn off to some degree. By this he suggests that there is less resistance towards R2P, on the grounds that it is not perceived as a direct threat to the common interpretation of sovereignty (Evans 2011:39f). But both Evans and Alex J. Bellamy talks of a new point of controversy appearing on the international agenda following the interventions in Libya and Côte d’Ivoire, here exemplified by Bellamy:

"(...) the problem was not so much the use of force to protect civilians from mass atrocities – in both cases this had been duly authorised by the Security Council – but the facts that this use of force resulted in regime change and that this result was intended by those responsible for implementing the Security Council’s decisions even though the Council itself had not specifically authorised regime change."

(Bellamy 2011:22)

In this way Bellamy supports the notion that the recent interventions have resulted in new disagreements relating to R2P, namely the extent of R2P-related interventions. Bellamy suggests that the opposition towards invoking regime change might have caused the R2P norm to loose traction as the new standard of intervention in relation to intra-state conflicts and mass atrocity crimes.

Parts of the academic debate concerned with the future of the R2P norm, which we have just outlined, thus suggests that Libya was a highpoint for R2P and that the impact of the norm in international relations might be on the retreat. Thus we direct our attention to the future of the R2P norm, which seems to be decided as the conflict in Syria unfolds. To this effect Evans raises an interesting question relating to the development of R2P after the intervention in Libya:

"But there has certainly been a negative reaction to the very broad way in which NATO interpreted its mandate in Libya, and the question we have to address is whether we now have a new benchmark for how to handle extreme cases in the
future, or whether this year will rather prove to be the high water mark from which the tide will subsequently recede.”

(Evans 2011:40)

The question that Evans raises leads us in the direction of assessing what part R2P is playing in the debates concerning the Syrian situation. Is R2P still being understood as a legitimate reason to react to situations of mass atrocity-crimes or has the norm outplayed its role in international relations? Thus we are looking to investigate how the R2P norm can be seen as represented in the UNSC meetings concerning the Syrian crisis.

Throughout this chapter, we have established that R2P possesses a central role within the international community, but that it is difficult to estimate whether the norm has become important in defining the actions of the UNSC and the rest of the international community. Not of less importance is the question of whether the fear of regime change has trumped the R2P norm, and thereby constitutes the deciding factor in the present UNSC deadlock.

Consequently, throughout this research paper, we argue, that the R2P norm holds a role in the apparent conflict within the United Nations Security Council in regard to the Syrian crisis. Furthermore we claim that the issue of regime change poses a significant challenge for the Security Council to take unified collective actions towards the Syrian crisis.

1.2 Approach of this research paper

In this section we outline the overall research agenda and approach of this research paper. The debate, which we have unfolded above, frames the purpose of this research paper: to examine to what extend the perceptions of the UNSC member states, regarding the Syrian conflict, encompass the R2P norm. Furthermore this study is aimed at understanding the role played by regime change in relation to the choice of intervention or non-intervention in Syria. The issue of regime change is included, as the debate above suggests that this aspect is a possible challenge to the consolidation of the R2P norm, as a decisive factor in
choosing intervention or non-intervention in Syria. In order to underpin our argument, the research is conducted from the following problem statement:

To what extent is the ‘responsibility to protect’ present in the perceptions of the five permanent member states of United Nations Security Council regarding the Syrian conflict and what is the role of regime change in this context?

As the problem statement is comprised of different elements, we find it necessary to elaborate on these. Here, the different elements will be touched upon, but several of the points will be further elaborated throughout the following chapters. As evident from the problem statement, the main focus of this paper will be on the perceptions of R2P relating to Syria. We aim to clarify, how the member states of the UNSC perceive, the Syrian conflict. Their perceptions will be derived from statements made to the UNSC. We stress that we do not wish to judge the UNSC member states as either “good” or “bad” R2P states. We accept that generally speaking, the R2P norm is not a clearly defined entity, but rather a norm, which is shaped by different actors, through their perceptions and actions, and in turn shape the actions and perceptions of the individual actor.

To be able to answer ‘to what extend’ we need to first clarify how the R2P norm is perceived. As the R2P has largely been developed through the UN, we study how the norm is perceived within the UN. The following two research questions frame our approach:

1) How is the norm of ‘responsibility to protect’ framed by the United Nations?

2) How do the permanent member states of the United Nations Security Council perceive the Syrian conflict?

The questions will be answered in an empirical manner. To do this we apply the Grounded Theory Method (GTM). The GTM will be applied to answer the research questions, which provides us with findings, enabling us to answer the problem statement. GTM provides us with analytical tools to examine the R2P
norm and the perceptions held by the member states. Furthermore, process is the object of analysis in a GTM approach; there is a focus on the process from the occurrence of a problem to the derived idea and action hereof. This process is relevant in our analysis; the Syrian conflict is the problem, we then analyse how the member states perceive the conflict, and to what extend their actions, derived from their perceptions, correlate with the idea of R2P. This will be further elaborated in the following chapter.

As apparent, from the problem statement, we only wish to investigate the five permanent member states of the UNSC. We acknowledge the influence of the ten non-permanent member states on decisions in the Security Council. However, due to the veto right vested in the five permanent member states, we assign greater importance to these. As we study member states, we do not intend to analyse decisions made by the UNSC as a unity. Furthermore we do not intend to study the UN as an institution. Therefore, the relationship between the different organs, e.g. the General Assembly and the Security Council, in relation to R2P, will not be our focus of attention.

Finally, as the problem statement clarifies, we are only studying the perceptions of the Syrian conflict, as opposed to the occurrence and development of the conflict. Thus the conflict is central for our paper, but will not be the focus of attention. The conflict will only be included when the member states refer to it in their statements.

Chapter 2 Methodology

Throughout this next chapter\(^1\) we will illustrate how the Grounded Theory Method (GTM) will frame our research and support answering our problem statement. As emphasised in the introduction, we aim at producing empirical evidence, to support our statement and answer the questions posed. We find it necessary to ground our research, thus the GTM is selected as approach. This will

\(^1\) This chapter is drafted in cooperation with former group member Bérénice Perroud.
give us a clear idea of how the R2P norm is perceived within the United Nations and how the permanent member states of the Security Council perceives the situation in Syria, which is a case of mass atrocity.

The Grounded Theory Method has its point of departure in the work of Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin. Research conducted within the GTM approach is anchored in data and generates empirical evidence to clarify the field of research. The GTM is not initially intended for research within the field of political science. Rather this method is most commonly applied to objects within the sociological and phenomenological field of research, where humans and their actions are at the centre of attention. Here the purpose of the research is to develop a grounded theory on how the elements of the field are related (Strauss & Corbin 1998:12ff & Boilsen 2010:207ff). One of the strengths within GTM is that it enables the researcher to discover underlying dimensions of the object of analysis (Strauss & Corbin 1998:12ff). Applying GTM in our research enables us to discover how the UNSC acts towards Syria as compared to the R2P norm within the UN by giving us specific analytical tools. This will be explained below.

Since the international community of states constitutes our field of interest, our field of research is more complex than what the method was intended for. This is due to fact that a study of the international community has more levels than a study of the individual, within the phenomenological approach. This has the implication that we must exercise some creativity in order to conceptualise this method, making it applicable to our object of interest. Throughout this paper we understand the UN as an object of human influence. Thus the structure of the UN is created and controlled by humans. We therefore perceive it as an expression of the process of human ideas, action and interaction. This is further elaborated in the forthcoming section.

2.1 Philosophy of Science
The philosophy of science of the GTM is another reason why we have chosen this approach. The philosophy of science is fundamental to understanding the logic of
our research, as it what shapes our approach to the field of research. In this section we account for how the philosophy of science has influenced our research.

**Interactionism and Pragmatism as epistemological frame**

The Grounded Theory Method has an interactionist and pragmatist epistemological outlook. The epistemological outlook takes priority over the ontology, as it constructs the frames of what is.

*Interactionism and the Action/Interaction-perspective*

Interactionism or symbolic interactionism implies that meaning is given to and derived from human action and interaction (Corbin & Strauss 2008:2). In short Herbert Blumer explains interactionism through three premises (Blumer 1969:2). First, humans act towards phenomena, physical as well metaphysical, on the basis of what meaning they assign to these. Second, the meaning that one assigns to these phenomena is derived from interaction with other individuals. Third, the meanings are handled in and modified through interpretation of the phenomena that one encounters (Blumer 1969:2).

This perspective encourages us to address the issue of human action and interaction related to our field of interest, namely the Security Council’s perception of the Syrian conflict in regard to R2P. Specifically, we wish to uncover the permanent member states’ perception of how to handle intra-state crises through their action and interaction regarding the Syrian conflict. The significance of phenomena within this paper will become more apparent in chapter 4.

*Pragmatism and process*

The pragmatist perspective also emphasises action as the main point of interest, thus we will place prominence in action throughout our research. Action is, in a pragmatist view, believed to be developed within a process as an answer to problematic situations (Corbin & Strauss 2008:2f.). Action and interaction are in turn perceived as reactions to unusual problems, which needs solving. A logical consequence of the pragmatist focus on action and interaction is that it is
concerned with process - the process of action and interaction towards problematic situations (Corbin & Strauss 2008:3). In this regard we interpret the R2P as an idea derived from a process. By process we are referring to problems derived in relation to an occurring phenomenon. Such a problem in turn spurs the emergence of an idea, which causes action or interaction. In that context R2P is viewed as an idea, arising from the problem of non-intervention in intra-state conflicts. In that regard R2P was constructed to facilitate action in response to mass atrocities committed within sovereign states. The paper then sets out to study how the permanent member states of the UNSC perceives phenomena related to how to act upon the mass atrocities committed during the Syrian crisis.

**Interactionism and Meanings within Actions**

The interactionist perspective furthermore lets us study how actors perceive the phenomena, which we derive in chapter 4. By scrutinising the actions and interactions of the states within the UNSC, we will be able to extract the meaning that they assign to the Syrian conflict in relation to R2P. When analysing the R2P norm there is, however, a slight adjustment from the original interactionist approach as we do not examine direct action, but rather declarations of intent framed around action or non-action.

**Pragmatist focus on effects**

Apart from this, the pragmatic approach lets us obtain the standpoint that objects are perceived from their inherent effects. Strauss and Corbin takes over James Dewey’s view that the test of ideas lie within the consequences of the acts to which ideas leads. This relates to the assumption that the envisaged consequence of a particular action affects whatever action is actually taken, that is, particular actions are chosen because of their expected outcome (Corbin & Strauss, 2008: 3). By transferring this perspective to the R2P we may understand that the actors will perceive R2P through its inherent effects. Whether this is its effect on mass atrocities or state sovereignty, it makes sense for us to look into the actor’s perception of R2P, in order to understand the way in which they act or abstain from action in regard to the Syrian conflict.
In sum the field of interest of this research paper, is concerned with the process of human action and interaction in relation to ideas derived from problems posed by occurring phenomena. Therefore this epistemological understanding provides us with a relevant basis for answering our research question.

**Ontology of Grounded Theory Method**

The ontology of GTM is not as extensive as the epistemology and does not carry the same importance, which is a logical consequence of the pragmatic and interactionist philosophy of science. Thus this paragraph will not be as extensive as the previous.

The ontological outlook of GTM perceives the universe as a changeable entity, which is consistent with contingency of knowledge. The phenomenon of the universe is however partly determinable through a naturalistic analytical approach (Corbin & Strauss 2008:5f). The phenomenon of interest to research conducted within the GTM approach is humans and how they, through action, interaction and responses, construct and shape the structures, which, in turn, shape their lives (Corbin & Strauss, 2008:5f). In the process of shaping norms humans construct and change their world through action and interaction (Corbin & Strauss 2008: 6). Our research is very much concerned with the processes of human action that shape norms. But instead of looking at individual humans, as the GTM was originally constructed for, we apply it to a field of research, where the actors are member states of the UN. In relation to our research, we are concerned with examining how the permanent member states of the UNSC act and interact to shape the norm of state sovereignty in relation to intra-state humanitarian crises.

**2.2 Operationalisation of Grounded Theory Method**

The section will clarify which analytical tools and specific coding strategies from the GTM that will be used to answer the problem statement. We will therefore only elaboration on the parts of the GTM approach, which we do intend to utilise during our research.
Grounded Theory Method is in itself very flexible, as the method allows the researcher a great deal of freedom. The GTM is not to be perceived as strict rules but rather a craft that should be mastered, and in that way is not a dogmatic discipline (Strauss & Corbin 1998:14). This enables us to choose from different parts of the GTM that will let us answer the problem statement outlined in section 1.2 Approach of this Research Paper. The GTM is flexible to the extent that it should fulfil the main criteria for evaluation (Strauss & Corbin 1998:268). These criteria can be divided into two categories. The first category of criteria is concerned with the validity, reliability and credibility of the data (Strauss & Corbin 1998:268). While the second category is directly linked to the GTM and concern the process in which the research has been conducted and whether it is empirically grounded (Strauss & Corbin 1998:268). These criteria will serve to validate our research and ensure that our collection of empirical data takes place within the relevant frames, in accordance with its declared purpose. These will be clarified in chapter 3.

**Applying Grounded Theory Method**

There are five stages within the methodological framework of this research paper, which will be elaborated below in figure 1. First the aim of the research is established; secondly the empirical data is collected on the basis of the problem statement; thirdly the categories are formed on the basis of the research question; fourthly the categories are developed and analysed through axial coding; and then fifthly the problem statement is answered through a comparison of the results from the fourth stage. The different stages are illustrated in figure 1 below.
Stage One
Stage one is carried out in chapter 1, where the debate is described and the problem statement is presented. The problem statement will be what narrows down our search for data and makes the research questions central (Strauss & Corbin 1998:36ff).

Stage Two
Second stage is to collect the data that will serve as the foundation of the analysis. Within the GTM approach, many different sources can be perceived as data, and the empirical data of a research paper will therefore typically be characterized by variation (Strauss & Corbin 2008:27). This paper is also characterized by variation, but this will be elaborated in chapter 3.

Stage Three
Hence the interactionist view of philosophy of science it is essential to studying action and interaction regarding a specific phenomenon. Thus the most important
analytical tool within GTM is coding, which enables the extraction of meaning from the data. Coding is applied at all stages of a GTM-led process along with different analytical tools. In this paper we will code on the basis of categories, which are found through the analytical tool: in-vivo coding. In-vivo coding consists of using the language of the object of analysis to form categories (Strauss & Corbin 2008:65,82). This tool is especially useful when coding on very compact informative texts, which this research paper does, because the codes are explicit in the arguments of the texts. Within the GTM the language of the actors is very important, as it illustrates how actors perceive phenomena. Thus it presents us with the opportunity to understand how the members of the UN perceive the R2P norm and the Syrian conflict, and thereby enables us to answer our problem statement. The in-vivo coding and the purpose of categories are further elaborated in chapter 4, where the in-vivo coding is executed. The categories found in stage three will act as the point of departure for answering our research questions.

**Stage Four**

Stage four, axial coding, is where the categories are fully developed. This consists of coding around the axis of a category where it represents the core of the object of analysis, and thereby adding depth and structure to the category (Strauss & Corbin 1998:123ff; 2008:195). The categories that are used are the ones found using in-vivo coding from stage three, where the foundation of the axial coding is derived. The axial coding, within this paper, will be executed through two analyses according to the research questions. During the axial coding subcategories derive. These relate to our overall categories found through the in-vivo coding. Through the subcategories we will be able to expand and define the content of our categories. Throughout the coding it is important to be observant of new emerging subcategories.

The axial coding analysis consists of three steps; step one is to write memos while going through the data; step two consists of three tasks that should be executed; and step three entails linking the subcategories to the category (Corbin & Strauss 1998: 126,135f). The final step is what answers the research questions.
The three steps are illustrated below in figure 2 and accounted for in the next paragraphs.

**Step One**
Step one consists of writing memos, thus memos will be written throughout the handling of data. Memos are written records of analysis and their scope is to give the researcher a tool to keep track of thoughts and findings during the research, which enables the researcher to be grounded (Corbin & Strauss 2008:117). Thus the content of memos will often spur from reflections. However, because it is not the form of memos that is important, but the fact that reflections have been written down concurrently, there is no correct approach to constructing them (Corbin & Strauss 2008:118). In this way the memos are both a way of moving the analysis forward and to trace the final conclusion backwards (Corbin & Strauss 2008:118f). We will use the memos to organise relevant points relating to the categories from the data. Thus we will be able to derive subcategories, and examining the data with the purpose of developing the specific subcategories and thereby the categories.

**Step Two**
As described step two consist of different tasks. The first task consists of laying out the properties and dimensions that are directly linked to the categories. The properties are the characteristics that define and explore the meaning of the
categories, while the dimensions are the range of the properties (Corbin & Strauss 1998:101,116f). Properties and dimensions will become evident through the reflections in the memos, which enables us to proceed to the second task. The second task is concerned with the conditions, action/interaction and consequences, which relate to the interactionistic perspective of the philosophy of science accounted for above. Through interactionism categories and subcategories derive. This then relate to the third and final task, which moves the coding to step three; it consists of relating the different subcategories found during the coding to the overall categories.

**Step Three**
This step is what develops the categories fully by linking the subcategories to the categories. Through this procedure we answer our research questions concerning the perception of the R2P norm and the statements held by the permanent member states of the UNSC regarding the Syrian conflict.

**Stage 5**
As a result of the four prior stages, stage five is within the GTM approach concerned with creating a theory. However, as that is not the aim of this research paper, stage five is framed differently. The aim is to answer to what extent the R2P norm is present in the debate within the UNSC and what the role of regime change is in this context. Thus the analysis is based on a thorough examination of the perceptions held by the member states for the purpose of comparing these with the R2P norm. Stage five of our research is then not in itself a step within the GTM framework, but will be undertaken on our own account, though it is founded on the GTM approach.
Chapter 3 Data

This chapter is divided in two sections. The first section focus on data for research question 1) *How is the norm of ‘responsibility to protect’ framed by the United Nations?* and the second focus on date for research question 2) *How do the permanent member states of the United Nations Security Council perceive the Syrian conflict?* As the different data is presented it will be followed by a clarification of why we have chosen the specific data.

To examine the R2P norm by the UN we have included paragraph 138 and 139 on *Responsibility to Protect* of the UN 2005 World Summit Outcome (WSO) and the five annual reports on R2P by the Secretary-General as data. Regarding the Security Council meeting records regarding the Syrian crisis account as data.

As outlined in the previous chapter, stage two of the method emphasises data collection. As underlined earlier our data is collected on the basis of the problem statement as it is what frames the research paper and indirectly the research questions. Our conclusive findings will depend on the data as the GTM states data as the most fundamental part and what the findings emerge from. There are different criteria within GTM. One of these is that the research must be grounded in the data. This means that there are different standards to the data, which the research is founded on. Therefore the data within this research paper vary according to the research questions. As the research questions differ on their aim they result in a differentiation between the documents concerning the R2P within the UN. The WSO and the annual reports are all data explicitly concerned with framing the R2P norm, while the meeting records show us how Syria, an R2P-related crisis, is dealt with in reality. To increase the validity, reliability and credibility of our data, and thus the findings of the research, we have emphasised the use of primary sources both regarding the UN in general and the permanent member states of the UNSC.
3.1 Data Regarding the United Nations on R2P

R2P is a norm that has been developed over several years and by numerous people in different contexts. This research paper, however, focuses solely on how it is perceived within the UN, thus this has been basis of our data selection. Consequently documents that are normally considered core R2P documents are left out. One example is the report Responsibility to Protect by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) from 2001. This is the first time that the term ‘responsibility to protect’ is comprehensively developed. However as the ICISS was initiated and appointed by the Canadian government, and not by an UN appointed working group we have chosen to leave the report out of this paper. Further, we have intentionally chosen not to include any data from either the General Assembly or the Secretariat regarding specifically the Syrian situation. On the contrary we have selected documents describing the general R2P norm within the UN. We argue that this is beneficial in enabling us to answer the problem statement. As we seek to study the extent to which R2P is present in statements of the Security Council’s member states, we first need to develop an understanding of the exact content of R2P. We believe that the chosen data provides us with this insight.

When studying the R2P within the UN, the document that is most essential is the 2005 World Summit Outcome (WSO). The R2P is defined in paragraph 138, 139 and 140. However paragraph 140 will not be included in the data, as it just states that the member states support the Special Advisor on prevention of genocide and thus not elaborate on the R2P norm itself. The General Assembly adopted the World Summit Outcome Document in its resolution 60/1 on 24 October 2005 and the UNSC adopted paragraph 138 and 139 in its resolution 1674 on 28 April 2006. Paragraphs 138 and 139 are then the foundation of the perception of R2P within the UN, thus these are included as data in this research paper. The remaining paragraphs of the WSO are not included, thus when we refer to the WSO it will only be in regard to paragraph 138 and 139. The R2P of the WSO is founded on the Charter of the United Nation. Though the importance of the Charter of the UN is emphasised in the WSO, the Charter in itself will not be
included as data in this research paper. The Charter will be included through the annual reports, as the annual reports present thorough elaborations of the WSO, and thus also of the R2P in relation to the UN Charter. It must be underlined that the Charter will still be referred to in the paper, as it constitutes the frame of R2P and intervention in Syria.

At one hand the WSO is the most precise definition of R2P as states the exact aspects of the norm. On the other hand the short definition also makes it a broad definition, thus the R2P in the WSO can be interpreted differently. Therefore, we have chosen to include further data for the purpose of a thorough examination of research question 1. As the question is concerning the UN we have chosen to include the annual reports on R2P by the UN Secretary-General. These are all taking point of departure in the WSO and elaborating on specific elements of paragraph 138 and 139. Thus the annual reports and the WSO are closely interlinked. It is, however, important to underline that the WSO is adopted by the UN member states, in contrast to the annual reports. Thus they differ in legal validity. Though as the Secretary-General is elected by the member states we find it reasonable to argue that he, and the entire Secretariat, to some extend represents the values of the member states. Furthermore this research paper does not aim to study the legitimacy of the actions of the UNSC in regard to Syria, but on the contrary to what extend the R2P norm is present in their approaches, and how the fear of regime change influences this. Consequently we find it crucial to include data that will enable us to unfold the R2P norm of the WSO.

The Secretariat has published five annual reports since 2009. The report, *Implementing the Responsibility to Protect*, was released on the 12th of January 2009 and was the first comprehensive document on R2P by the Secretariat. The second report, *Early Warning, Assessment and Responsibility to Protect*, was released on the 17th of July 2010. The third report, *The Role of Regional and Sub-regional arrangements in implementing the Responsibility to Protect*, was released on the 27th of June 2011. The forth report, *Responsibility to Protect – Timely and Decisive Response*, was released on the 20th of August 2012. The fifth and most recent report, *State Responsibility and Prevention*, was released on the 5th of August 2013. The titles of the reports indicate rather precisely what they are
regarding, thus we will not go further into depth with the specific reports in this chapter. Though, as the reports have separate focal points concerning the R2P it is natural if they are not all equally referred to in the analysis, as some of them will be more relevant than others. Nevertheless all five reports will be coded, as this will give a comprehensive view on the state and the international community within the R2P. During the axial coding in chapter 5 it will become clear which reports are the most significant to us.

Though the data has a timespan from the WSO from 2005 to the latest annual report of 2013, this is not considered problematic as the data is extremely closely interlinked to the UN and the R2P. Both the WSO and the annual reports will be included in the analysis, but as the annual reports often and thoroughly refer to the WSO, these will constitute the major part. The WSO, however, is basis of the in-vivo coding in chapter 4.

3.2 Data Regarding the United Nations Security Council

There exist numerous UNSC documents and letter exchanges between the Security Council and other parts of the UN concerning the crisis in Syria from its outbreak in 2011 until today. On this basis we have chosen to limit our collection of data as we prioritise being able to make a thorough analysis contrary a broad one. This prioritisation is a consequence of our limited timeframe. Thus we have chosen the Security Council’s meeting records as data. We argue that this is where we get most insight in the actions and statements of the member states. It is, though, important to underline that the statements in the meetings can only be understood if we have insight in the context they are presented in due to the agenda of the specific meeting. The resolutions and draft resolutions are essential to the context. Thus we have read these in order to get fully insight of the agenda of the meetings. The resolutions illustrate decisions taken by the UNSC as a unity, which is not the focus of our problem statement. The resolutions are then included to the extend, that the five permanent member state of the Security Council refer to them.

As the UNSC hosts numerous meetings, it has been necessary to delimit data on this account. Thus we have only included meetings where draft
resolutions are on the agenda. This delimitation is justified in light of the GTM approach, which stresses the significance of focussing on the interactionism. We perceive that in meeting concerning resolutions the member states are more likely to clarify their opinions related to the Syrian crisis, through statements and voting. As this research paper is only focusing on the five permanent members of the Security Council, a further delimitation has been made within each meeting record. Only statements by the permanent members are then considered as data and will be coded. Consequently statements by the non-permanent member states, the President of the UNSC or representatives from countries or organisations of relevance to the agenda will not be considered in this paper. In case a permanent member state holds presidency in one of the meetings, the statements are included where it is evident that the representative speaks on behalf of his or hers country and not as President.

Since spring 2011 the UNSC has held eight meetings with an agenda of specifically the situation in Syria. This is not the same as saying that Syria has not been discussed in other meetings as well, however then it has been in a broader context, e.g. the general situation of the Middle East or protection of civilians in armed conflicts. Due to our limited timeframe and the GTM approach we have only selected meetings with a draft resolution regarding Syria. As a result our data consists of seven meetings, which are presented in table 1. The remaining meeting, of the total eight, is meeting record S/PV.6524 from the 27th of April 2011. The meeting entails a briefing on the situation in Syria by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe, followed by remarks from the member states. As there is no draft resolution on the agenda it is not included as data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of meeting</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Agenda and outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th of October 2011</td>
<td>S/PV.6627</td>
<td>Draft resolution S/2011/612 is vetoed by China and Russia. 9 votes in favour and 4 abstentions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th of February 2012</td>
<td>S/PV.6711</td>
<td>Draft resolution S/2012/77 is vetoed by China and Russia. 13 votes in favour and none abstentions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From table 1 it is evident that the meetings are placed within the timespan from the 4th of October 2011 to the 27th of September 2013. Though we do not consider this as a remarkable timespan in itself, we must stress that the Syrian conflict has escalated rapidly, thus the timespan becomes significant. However, as we expect a certain degree of consistency in the statements by the respective member states, we argue that this is not a concern for the findings of our paper.

Furthermore, table 1 show that the outcome of four of the meetings were an adopted resolution, contrary the remaining meetings, where the veto right was used by both Russia and China on all three issues. By this we expect that the statements presented by the member states in the former group of meetings are more alike than in the latter group. As the member states are central of the analysis, opposed to each meeting, this aspect might not be distinct in the paper, though it interesting to reflect upon.

### Chapter 4 In-vivo Coding

As mentioned in subchapter 2.2, we will in this chapter execute the in-vivo coding. Through the in-vivo coding the following two categories will be derived: the state and international community.

As stated in the previous chapter the World Summit Outcome constitutes the basis of the in-vivo coding. As the R2P norm within the UN spurs our research,
the WSO is evidently at the core of the research. The WSO contains the description of the R2P by the UN member states and thus we argue that it entails the most crucial aspects of the R2P norm under the auspices of the UN.

Though the categories are derived from data closely related to the R2P we argue that these also enable us to derive meaning regarding the issue of regime change. This issue is closely related to both categories. However as the axial coding of the state and the international community is conducted separately in this report, we have chosen to illustrate the issue of regime change in relation to the international community, as we find it more interlinked with the category of the international community that the state.

As described in the methodology chapter the axial coding is the centre of our analysis as it enables us to answer our problem statement. Thus the in-vivo coding will be the point of departure of the axial coding.

In-vivo coding is the analytical tool that we use to create categories. Categories capture the essence of the data, and are then also understood as phenomena (Corbin & Strauss 1998:124f). In the GTM approach there is a hierarchy of ideas where the categories are the highest and the broadest ones. Beneath the categories there are subcategories, which define the categories. The purpose of the research within the GTM is to define the categories and thereby understand the field research from a grounded perspective. This is done through connecting the subcategories to the categories. The subcategories are therefore elements that answer questions about the categories (Corbin & Strauss 1998:125).

4.1 In-vivo Coding of the 2005 World Summit Outcome

This section will show how the state and international community are derived as categories through in-vivo coding. The full text of the WSO is presented in below as the coding is conducted directly upon it. Thus every sentence of the text is numbered, which enables us to refer to the text as we code.

“138. [1, ed.] Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against
humanity. [2, ed.] This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. [3, ed.] We accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it. [4, ed.] The international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility and support the United Nations in establishing an early warning capability.”

(UNGA 2005, para. 138)

Sentence 1 illustrates ‘state’ as a phenomenon, as the content of the sentence, ‘responsibility to protect’, is linked to ‘state’. The following two sentences elaborate on ‘responsibility’, thus ‘state’ is still the overall phenomenon. Sentence 4 then refers to ‘international community’ as one to help the ‘state’, thus ‘international community’ is implied as a phenomenon, though it is still linked to ‘state’.

“139. [5, ed.] The international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. [6, ed.] In this context, we are prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII, on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. [7, ed.] We stress the need for the General Assembly to continue consideration of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and its implications, bearing in mind the principles of the Charter and international law. [8, ed.] We also intend to commit ourselves, as necessary and appropriate, to helping States build capacity to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic
cleansing and crimes against humanity and to assisting those which are under stress before crises and conflicts break out.”

(UNGA 2005, para. 139)

Sentence 5 refers to ‘international community’ as first thing. The ‘international community’ is appointed the same responsibility as ‘state’ in sentence 1, thus it becomes evident that ‘international community’ is a phenomenon like ‘state’. Sentence 6 and 7 stresses how the ‘international community’ intends to meet the responsibility they are assigned in sentence 5, thus ‘international community’ is still the overall phenomenon of these two sentences. Sentence 8 refers to the interlinked relationship between ‘state’ and ‘international community’ as also implied in sentence 4.

Through the in-vivo coding above we have manifested ‘state’ and ‘international community’ as the two phenomena within the WSO. Thus these are constituted as the categories that will be developed by the axial coding in chapter 5 and chapter 6.

From the in-vivo coding it becomes clear that the categories are interlinked, which also is an important aspect within the GTM as interaction, as accounted for in the methodology chapter, contributes to develop of the categories.

Through the in-vivo coding subcategories begin to emerge, e.g. ‘responsibility’, however it is not the aim of the in-vivo coding, thus they are not incorporated. The subcategories emerge through stage four, the axial coding, in chapter 5 and chapter 6. Due to the fact that the analysis is conducted on the basis of the two research questions, the subcategories within the two chapters will not be identical. However, the point of departure of the two analysis will be the same, hence the categories.
Chapter 5 The R2P Norm

The aim of this chapter is to elaborate on the perception of the R2P within the UN on the basis of the two categories; the state and the international community. Thus this chapter is directly linked to the first research question of the paper. The notion behind elaborating the perception of R2P is linked to the pragmatist perspective of GTM, which prescribes that analysis is concerned with the process of problem, idea and action. In this regard an elaboration of the mentioned categories will allow us to understand the UN-stated idea of R2P, thus further understanding the calls for action that follow R2P.

Before initiating the analysis we have read and discussed the memos of the R2P-related data. The analysis is then further undertaken by means of the axial coding, identifying subcategories in order to make the main categories as developed as possible.

The chapter is structured according to the original two categories, but the different subcategories will be emphasised separately. The category the state has less properties and dimensions, than the category of the international community. This is due to the fact that the responsibilities of the latter are more complex than of the ones of the state.

At the end of the chapter we will briefly summarise on the R2P norm and thereby elaborate on the relationship between the subcategories.

5.1 The State

As the category of the state refers to the state in relation to its population all other references to the role of states have been coded as indication of the international community. Thus the role of the state is characterised as a matter of internal responsibilities toward the population.

One of the most important subcategories connected to both the category of the state and the international community is: state sovereignty. The perception of sovereignty constitute the basis of understanding the role of the respectively the state and thus the international community. The R2P is framed within the Charter of the UN, thus this is where all external affairs and obligations are stated. The
data though stress that all state have a responsibility to assist each other and to respond to mass atrocities, but in this research paper these aspects are considered under the category of the international community, which is described in the section below. Further, this distinction will become more evident through chapter 6. As the subcategory of state sovereignty is highly important it is firstly outlined in this chapter, and then followed by a development of the subcategories: the internal responsibilities of the state and the responsibilities of the individual.

**State Sovereignty**

In all of the data the state is to some extend defined in relation to the perception of sovereignty. Thus it is important to develop the subcategory based on the different documents in order to understand the R2P norm fully.

In the first annual report on R2P it is underlined that the responsibility of states is to protect its population, which is an obligation that comes with sovereignty. It is further stressed that this is nothing new.

“The responsibility derives both from the nature of State sovereignty and from the pre-existing and continuing legal obligations of States, not just from the relatively recent enunciation and acceptance of the responsibility to protect.”

(UN 2009, para. 11)

The aim of R2P is then not to dismantle the world order of sovereign states; however, as it is also stressed in the 2011 annual report, the R2P is concerned about linking state sovereignty with responsibility.

“First and foremost, the responsibility to protect is about reasserting and reinforcing the sovereign responsibilities of the State.”

(UN 2011, para. 10)

The annual reports often refer to existing obligations and the Charter of the UN in connection with the debate of sovereignty and world order. Though the R2P norm
stresses an obligation of the states to protect the population, the annual report of 2009 claim that the R2P norm does “not alter, indeed it reinforces, the legal obligations of Member States” (UN 2009, para. 3).

Throughout this brief paragraph we have illustrated how the subcategory state sovereignty is perceived in the data. It shows that the R2P norm does not downplay the importance of state sovereignty. On the contrary the perception of sovereignty has become more comprehensive, thus states are described as having a “sovereign responsibility to protect” (UN 2012, para. 18). Responsibility to protect the population is added as criterion to possessing state sovereignty, and thus the description and perception of such responsibilities is the next subcategory, which is deeply interconnected with the subcategory of state sovereignty. Thus the following paragraph analyse how responsibilities of the state is considered in the data.

The Internal Responsibilities of the State
The overall role of the state in relation to R2P is described in connection to the increased articulated responsibility to protect its population. All of our data emphasise this responsibility.

Both the WSO and 2013 annual report emphasise that states are the foundation of the responsibility to protect as this responsibility is formally assigned to the states (UNGA 2005, para. 138-139; UN 2013, para.5, para. 68). The WSO states protection as protection from genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and war crimes (UNGA 2005, para 138). Furthermore it is stated, in the 2011 annual report, that prevention of mass atrocities is encompassed in the legal responsibilities of the state (UN 2011, para. 12). It is clear from all of our data is that there should be no distinction between who is entitled to protection. This is especially underlined in the first annual report; “(...) responsibility of the State to protect its populations, whether nationals or not (…)” (UN 2009, para. 11). This is supported by the claims that “(...) [the state should] provide safe and stable conditions for all their populations, irrespective of identity” (UN 2009, para. 46).
In the data, especially in the 2013 annual report, the aspect of protection is further elaborated in a preventive manner. It is a common understanding in the data that the crimes occur as a result of underlying factors (UN 2013, para.5). In the 2012 annual report it is claimed that R2P-related crimes often are conflicts rooted in underlying tensions (UN 2012, para. 6). Thus the responsibility of the state also entails ensuring an equal and tolerant domestic society, where such conflicts will not spur. It is evident of the following quote.

“(…) the most effective form of prevention lies in constructive management of diversity to promote good governance, equality, inclusivity, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and observance of democratic values and practices. This is primarily the responsibility of the State (…)”

(UN 2012, para. 6)

It is important to underline that the in the WSO, adopted by the states, prevention is framed as “(…) prevention of such crimes [genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and war crimes, ed.], including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means” (UNGA 2005, para. 138). The statement above is then the Secretariat’s interpretation and elaboration of the WSO. The Secretariat refers to “constructive management”. Especially the report of 2013 emphasises this aspect. Several policies are presented and it is stated that they “can be tailored to the context of each State” (UN 2013, para. 33). As the quote above also illustrates the policies are directed at developing strong state capacities and promoting human rights (UN 2013, para. 35 and para. 49). As the policies are determined by the specific context, e.g. arrangement of the state and the kind of crime at risk, the purpose of such policies are prior to the content of them, as the aim is to prevent the four R2P-related crimes (UN 2013, para. 30).

The Responsibilities of the Individual

The civil society is emphasised as having an important role as well. In the 2012 annual report it is stated that “each individual has some degree of influence and
hence a share of responsibility” (UN 2012, para. 47). The national civil society organisations possess essential tools and influence to both prevent and respond to crimes (UN 2012, para. 46). The civil society can play a part in advocating for the implementation of the R2P norm as well as in holding the government accountable on the basis of R2P (UN 2012, para. 45). The civil society might possess new technologies by which early warnings of conflict can spread throughout the population (UN 2012, para. 46). Further, it is underlined that individuals are not to engage in any crimes themselves. This two-folded responsibility of individuals is evident from the following.

“This includes a responsibility to speak out against intolerance, discrimination and incitement, as well as a responsibility not to participate in the commission of crimes and violations relating to RtoP.”

(UN 2012, para. 47)

By this it becomes clear that though the state is a fundamental actor of keeping peace and protecting the population, the population also holds an essential responsibility in the R2P norm.

5.2 The International Community

Through this section the other category of the international community is developed. The WSO unfolds the responsibility of the international community as two-folded; a responsibility to assist the states in meeting their responsibilities and a responsibility to respond if the states fail their responsibility. However as the Secretariat also points out these are very interlinked.

“It may be argued that the first two pillars of the implementation strategy address prevention, and the third, response. The dividing lines are, however, not so clear in practice.”

(UN 2012, para. 11)
The impact of both assistance and respond is based on correct and extensive information and assessment. Decisions of the UN “should be informed and enriched, whenever possible, by local knowledge and perspectives, as well as by the input of regional and subregional organizations” (UN 2010, para. 11). Thus the states and other actors of the international community are also given the responsibility to inform and advise. In this regard especially neighbouring states are underlined as they “may have critical and timely information” (UN 2010, para. 12). In addition the importance of different organs of the UN and the Special Advisors is highlighted (UN 2009, para. 6). Though the aspect of assessment is extensively unfolded in the data, it will not be elaborated further as it is not the aim of this research paper to examine the reliability of the information that decisions are taken upon in regard to Syria.

Likewise, collaboration is the basis of implementing the R2P. It is stated that preventive diplomacy is “most effective when different organizations work together, speak with one voice” and responses should be based on “collective actions” (UN 2009, para. 49; UN 2012, para. 24). This aspect is important in underlining that the international community is more than the UN. Though the possibilities and impacts of internationals interaction on different levels in regard to the crisis in Syria, is not the focus of this research paper. Thus, an elaboration on the role of different actors is left out of this chapter. On the other hand, data concerning the UNSC is included and elaborated. This is essential to obtain a full understanding before studying the different statements of the member states in relation the Syrian crisis.

Consequently, the rest of this chapter will clarify the subcategories; Responsibility of the International Community to Assist the State, Responsibility of the International Community to Respond and Collaboration and the Security Council.

**Responsibility of the International Community to Assist the State**

According to the WSO, the role of the international community is to assume some of the responsibilities of the state in cases where the state either cannot or will not
live up to these (UNGA 2005, para. 139). This claim is supported in the first annual report.

“When a State is unable to fully meet this responsibility, because of capacity deficits or lack of territorial control, the international community should be prepared to support and assist the State in meeting this core responsibility (…)”

(UN 2009, para. 13)

Thus the international community plays an important role in the preventive aspect of the responsibilities of the state, in assisting with e.g. capacity building. All the reports claim this statement. Furthermore they underline that the assistance must be of a peaceful and non-coercive sort. In the 2012 report it is for instance stressed that “it is not the role of the United Nations to replace the State in meeting those responsibilities” (UN 2012 para. 14). Thus the annual report of 2013 elaborates that prevention of mass atrocity must be rooted in national efforts and has to have an aim of creating a community that is resilient to atrocity crimes (UN 2013, para. 68). It is important to note that the restriction of non-coercive measures within this subcategory defines the limits of how far the international community can go in assisting the state. However in case the state is failing to such an extent by which the crimes of genocide, ethnic cleansing, crime against humanity and war crimes escalate it is stresses that the international community has a responsibility to respond (UNGA 2005, para. 139). This is elaborated in the following paragraph.

**Responsibility of the International Community to Respond**

This paragraph is concerned with the subcategory: *the role of the international community in case the state fails to meet its responsibilities.*

We do not intend to go into depth with the difference between whether the state fails because it cannot or will not meet its responsibilities. What is important is the fact that the international community has a responsibility to respond when a state “manifestly fails to protect” (UNGA 2005, para 139). This is framed precise in the first annual report where it refers directly to the WSO:
“(…) actions, either peaceful or non-peaceful, could be invoked by the international community if two conditions are met: (a) “should peaceful means be inadequate” and (b) “national authorities are manifestly failing to protect their populations (…)”

(UN 2009 para. 49)

Measures and actions of R2P are based on a case-by-case basis (UN 2009, para. 49), thus the quote, and of cause the WSO itself, is the complete definition of when the international community has a responsibility to respond. Furthermore the quote also indicates that actions can be shaped differently. There is a spectrum of measures to apply; they range from peaceful to non-peaceful. Though there is a consensus that force should only be used as a last resort. This is for instance evident of the following quote from the 2012 annual report.

“Enforcement action under Chapter VII of the Charter is to be contemplated when other measures are judged unlikely to succeed or when they have already failed. The use of force should be a measure of last resort.”

(UN 2012, para. 60)

In terms of the peaceful responses, mediation and diplomacy are central (UN 2012, para. 23). Though these are often applied in response to “a specific pattern of events or set of concern”, thus it is framed in a more preventive manner (UN 2012, para. 11). In case conflicts calls for more radical coercive means, actions must be taken through the UNSC; if the crime escalates to such an extent that actions of diplomatic or other peaceful means are considered inadequate further actions must be authorized by the UNSC under Article 41 and 42 of the Charter as the quotation above also illustrates (UN 2009, para. 56; UN 2012, para. 31). Thus this section entails a specific paragraph about the UNSC below, as this is another important subcategory and a central object of this research paper.

Such coercive actions are mostly referred to as either sanctions or military intervention. In the 2009 annual report sanctions are emphasised; for instance targeted sanctions on travel, financial transfers, luxury goods and arms (UN 2009,
para. 57). Though it is underlined that sanctions might be insufficient in stopping a comprehensive mass atrocity, they can imply that the international community is intending to meets its responsibilities of responding. Consequently, military intervention is the last resort. Military force can be utilised in different ways. In the 2012 report it is exemplified in relation to “the deployment of United Nations-sanctioned multinational forces for establishing security zones, the imposition of no-fly zones, the establishment of a military presence on land and at sea for protection or deterrence purposes (…)” (UN 2012, para. 32).

Furthermore the R2P norm entails that the international community has a responsibility to hold the persecutors accountable. It is stated that: “responsibility requires accountability” (UN 2011, para. 19). By this the Secretariat stresses the importance of accountability mechanisms. The reports emphasise the role of the International Crime Court (ICC) in relation to accountability on the international level (UN 2009, para. 18; UN 2011, para 19). This is an important part of the R2P norm, though it does not propose new obligations on this regard, as it is framed within already existing law. Thus it is not further elaborated.

**Collaboration and the Security Council**

In relation to the preventive part of R2P, where the international community is characterised in an assisting manner, especially regional and sub-regional arrangements are emphasised (UN 2011, para 3; UN 2013, para. 71). But also the civil society and the private sector are stressed (UN 2009, para. 11). The collaboration is underlined as a non-coercive relationship between the individual state and relevant parts of the international community. However in case the state manifestly fails its responsibilities the face of the international community changes. Then the international community resorts to “collective actions”, which are coercive to different degrees (UN 2009, para 49). Then collaboration is aimed at how different parts of the international community must collaborate to respond towards the crime. As R2P is to be applied on a case-by-case basis there are no strict instructions on collective actions. The annual reports refer to the WSO, which claims that actions must be taken “in a timely and decisive manner, through
the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations” (UNGA 2005, para. 139). The UNSC then holds an essential role. Further the annual report of 2009 addresses the significance of the right to veto.

“(…) the five permanent members bear particular responsibility because of the privileges of tenure and the veto power they have been granted under the Charter. I would urge them to refrain from employing or threatening to employ the veto in situations of manifest failure to meet obligations relating to the responsibility to protect (…)”

(UN 2009, para. 61)

The role of the UNSC is emphasised in the quote. It becomes evident that if current and future mass atrocities are to be halted, when preventive measures fail, it is most essential that the members of the Security Council, especially the permanent five, act according to the R2P norm. The quote emphasise the need for more radical and intrusive actions by the UNSC in cases of mass atrocities.

5.3 Recapitalisation
This paragraph briefly summarise the essence of the R2P norm within the UN. The aim of the chapter was to develop the subcategories of the two categories of state and international community, to get a fully understanding of the R2P. Thus, this paragraph is concerned with the relationship between the categories and subcategories.

State sovereignty is the foundation of R2P. Thus the specific perception of sovereignty influences both the perception state and international community, and it is thus a subcategory to both. Even though sovereignty is framed according to the Charter of the UN, the R2P norm adds a new criterion to state sovereignty; a state must uphold its ‘responsibility to protect’ the population from genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Thus the state is given a central role in preventing mass atrocities. The state must ensure that underlying tendencies of suppression and inequality are managed before they result in armed conflicts. Thus prevention is stressed. In this regard both the individuals and the
international community are also stressed as possessing responsibilities. They must support the implementation of the R2P and assist the state in meeting its responsibility to protect.

The international community is largely defined as the United Nations, hence the member states, but through the axial coding it has become evident that there is more to it; e.g. the civil society, regional and sub-regional organisations and actors in the private sector. Collaboration is then of the essence, which also provides a strong basis for share of information and assessment.

If a situation of mass atrocity occurs, it is conceived as the state failing its responsibility, and thus the international community has a responsibility to respond. However, as R2P is base on a case-by-case basis there is no threshold to when a state is “manifestly failing” its responsibility or not. Nor is there a strict guideline to how the international community should respond. It is stressed that diplomatic and peaceful measures are preferred, and in regard to collective actions the importance of UNSC is emphasised. In case of coercive measures especially the Security Council is central.

Chapter 6 Perceptions within the Security Council

This chapter has two aims; first derive the perceptions of the Syrian crisis, held by the individual member states within the UNSC, and second, to relate these perceptions to the perception of the R2P norm, presented in chapter 5. The first aim is linked to the second research question whereas the second aim is closely related to the problem statement. As stated in chapter 5, elaborating the perceptions within the UNSC is linked to the pragmatist perspective of GTM, which prescribes that analysis is concerned with the process of problem, idea and action. In this regard an elaboration of the mentioned categories will allow us to understand the UNSC’s idea of the Syrian crisis, and relating this to R2P norm, we can understand to what extent this norm is present within the UNSC. Additionally, we wish to study the role of regime change within the UNSC, to understand its influence on the UNSC member’s perception of how to respond to the Syrian conflict. To account for this, we will derive the perception of regime
change, as held by the UNSC members, under the category related to the international community.

Throughout the analysis each member state will be thoroughly analysed individually, according to the two aims mentioned above. The first part of analysing each state will be commenced by developing the two categories; the state and the international community, through axial coding. As with the analysis in chapter 5, we have read and discussed the memos derived from the meeting records of the UNSC. Through the production of memos, the subcategories related to each member state, has emerged. The analysis is then undertaken by means of axial coding, linking subcategories in order to make the properties and dimensions of the main categories as developed as possible – creating more abstract categories. This is specifically done by drawing on central statements from the UNSC meetings. These statements will relate to the two categories, the international community and the state, and thus by linking the statements to these, we will elaborate the perception contained within these categories.

The second part of analysing each member state, will be commenced by comparing and discussing the findings from the first part up against the R2P norm as accounted for in chapter 5. Through this part of the analysis we seek to understand to what extend the R2P norm is present within the UNSC in relation to the Syrian conflict, and what role the issue of regime change holds in this context.

6.1 France

6.1.1 The Perception of the Syrian Conflict
The State
France is the first member state to speak on the first UNSC meeting regarding a resolution on Syria. The meeting was held on the 4th of October 2011. The French representative Mr Araud made it clear in his speech that the Syrian authorities “have lost all its legitimacy by murdering their own people” (UNSC 2011b:3). Here he connects the Syrian government’s legitimacy to the killings of its own people, suggesting that the Syrian state’s legitimacy was eroded when it started killing the Syrian protesters. He stresses that the regime carries the responsibility for the escalating crisis:
“(…) the regime is continuing its bloody repression of demonstrations, to carry out torture, arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances and sexual violence.”

(UNSC 2012c:3)

Further Mr Araud states that the people of Syria hold “legitimate aspirations that have been so bravely expressed” (UNSC 2011b:3). Again he states that they are “legitimately demanding to exercise their own fundamental rights” (UNSC 2011b:2). This allocation of responsibility in regard to the violent conflict is most clear when he characterise the Syrian regime as “perpetrators of this barbaric repression of a peaceful civilian population” (UNSC 2012b:6). Thus there is no doubt that France perceives the regime responsible of the Syrian crisis.

In regard to the resolution adopted on the meeting on the 14th of April 2012, Mr Araud underlines that the Syrian regime is not just to halt the mass atrocities, which they are responsible for, the regime must also respect human rights:

“The collective message we are sending today is an appeal for a halt to violence in every form — not just heavy artillery but also torture, arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances and sexual violence, all of which are violations of human rights and have been committed systematically and on a huge scale by the Syrian regime’s security forces for 13 months."

(UNSC 2012b:6)

The international community
In the first meeting on the situation in Syria on the 4th of October 2011 the French delegate, Mr Araud, presents the French take on the Syrian conflict. This is evident from the statement below:

“Faced with the extreme violence being brought against a population demanding to exercise their rights; faced with the deafness of the Syrian authorities; and confronted with the risk of regional instability, a united response from the international community was, and continues to be, necessary. The Security
Mr Araud defines the regime as an oppressor and claims that it has refrained from initiatives to stop the violence. He then claims that the Syrian situation could leave to regional instability, thus the conflict is of interest of the Security Council due to its stated purpose.

As France perceives the Syrian regime as illegitimate and responsible of the crisis, France asserts an international response directed at the regime. The French delegate underlines that the conflict has reached a point where actions of the international community are crucial:

“After so many months of obstruction, Syria must understand the unanimous message being sent by the international community as well as the meaning of its commitments to put an end to an intolerable situation.”

(UNSC 2012c:3)

Mr Araud underlines that the internal conflict in Syria, is one of international responsibility, to the degree that the Syrian regime fails to stop the mass atrocities.

“If that [Syria fulfilling its commitments, ed.] does not happen, it will be the responsibility of all members of the Council to consider the measures that should be taken.”

(UNSC 2012b:6)

Mr Araud points out that both sanctions through the European Union and extensive diplomatic efforts by the UNSC have been invoked against the Syrian regime, though “the Syrian authorities have remained deaf to those efforts” (UNSC 2011b:2). Hence at the following meeting, on 4th of February 2012, Mr Araud, underlines that France will continue to “up the pressure by imposing further sanctions of the European Union” (UNSC 2012a:4). This elaborates the
statement that measures must be taken by the international community to end the Syrian crisis. However, France perceives it as a possibility to pressure the Syrian regime through other channels than the UNSC. Mr Araud further elaborates on the purpose of responses from the international community. He states the objective as:

“(…) to stop the brutal crackdown by the Syrian regime (…) This would create an atmosphere free of violence and intimidation and thus allow for the emergence of an inclusive political process led by and for the Syrian people.”

(UNSC 2011b:2)

Mr Araud refers to a political transition, which he several times accounts for as an emerging need. At the following meeting on the situation in Syria on 4th of February 2012, China and Russia veto draft resolution S/2012/77, and the French delegate then stress that “is a sad day for the Council; it is a sad day for the Syrians; and it is sad day for all the friends of democracy” (UNSC 2012a:3). Thus the aim of a political transition towards democracy is explicit. This becomes further obvious at the next meeting on Syria, where resolution 2042 is adopted. Mr Araud calls for a united international community to:

“(…) speak with one voice in response to the Syrian crisis and to contribute to a peaceful transition to democracy.”

(UNSC 2012b:6)

The French delegate elaborates on this, when he refers to the purpose of both resolution 2042 and resolution 2043:

“(…) we are not seeking merely to freeze the situation on the ground. The Council is supporting Mr Annan’s plan of action, designed to facilitate Syria’s political transition to democracy in order to meet the aspirations that the Syrian people have so courageously expressed.”

(UNSC 2012b:6)
“I would like to recall that our goal in deploying the Mission is not just an end to repression; above all, it is the launching of a political transition in Syria towards a democratic system (…). We can wait no longer. More civilians are dying with each passing day.”

(UNSC 2012c:3)

In the two statements Mr Araud frames the need for a political transition in two ways. In the first he states that the international community has a responsibility to respond and assist the Syrian population in its aspirations. In the second he stresses the importance of political transition in relation to the increasing death toll. Thus at the meeting on the 19th of July 2012, where China and Russia for the third time veto a resolution, the French delegate state that “we must not shirk our responsibilities” (UNSC 2012d:4). In the following remark, it becomes further illustrated that France has no intention of refraining from its stated responsibility to protect the Syrian population from the Syrian regime:

“We will continue to support the Syrian opposition on its road to a democratic transition in Syria. In every forum, France is resolved to work unceasingly with those who share its values (…)”

(UNSC 2012d:4)

This stand is present already at the first two meetings on Syria. Here Mr Araud states that:

“France, along with all its partners, will not cease its efforts to ensure that the rights of the Syrian people are recognized and respected, so that those responsible for the violence can one day be brought to justice — and they will — and to promote an inclusive, credible political process that can fulfil the aspirations that are being expressed daily in Syria.”

(UNSC 2011b:3)
“We have no right to abandon the Syrian people to its tragic fate. I tell the Syrians that France will continue to work in all forums and with all partners (…)”

(UNSC 2012a:4)

Besides the fact that all three statements above clearly illustrate that France expresses a responsibility of the international community in relation to the Syrian conflict, other aspects become evident as well.

Mr Araud explains that the vetoes invoked by Russia and China are disappointing and condemnable, as the critique of the draft resolution are without grounds. He explains that there is no ground for the Russian and Chinese allegations that the resolution paves the way for military intervention and regime change (UNSC 2012a:4). This is evident when Mr Araud states that:

“(…) we have been accused of seeking regime change and preparing for military intervention. That is patently false. We have fully answered those concerns.”

(UNSC 2012a:4)

As presented, Mr Araud on occasion referred to the risk of regional instability. At the meeting on the 14th of April 2012 he raises this concern again: “The line separating us from the abyss of a civil war or its regional ramifications is a narrow one“ (UNSC 2012b:6). Though the Syrian conflict is continuously escalating this concern is not further put forward.

6.1.2 The Extend of R2P and the Issue of Regime Change

The State

By looking at the French perception of legitimacy in relation to the two parts in the conflict, it becomes evident how they perceive the role of the Syrian state in the conflict. Mr Araud states that the Syrian authorities “have lost all its legitimacy by murdering their own people”. France’s obvious perception of the Syrian regime as illegitimate in killing its own people can be said to correlate with the perception inherent in the R2P norm. The R2P perception of the state, as put
forward in *chapter 5* implies that a state has a responsibility to not kill the peoples within its territory. The French statement shows that the French government shares this perception. To elaborate on this, the basic premise of the R2P norm, as shown in *chapter 5*, is that the people of states must be protected from crimes of genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and war crimes, a responsibility assigned to the state. Thus France is, according to the R2P norm, right in perceiving the Syrian regime as responsible for the crisis, a perception, which is evident from the statements from the UNSC meetings.

Additionally, France claims that the Syrian people are “*legitimately demanding to exercise their own fundamental rights*”. This perception, accordingly, fits within the perception inherent in the R2P norm. According to the R2P norm, as stated in *chapter 5*, the Syrian authorities would be judged responsible for not providing these exact rights in the first place. Thus, according to France, the case of Syria is a case of failed prevention of mass atrocities.

Within the R2P norm, as accounted for in *chapter 5*, the individual holds a responsibility as well as the state, in abstaining from participating in crimes relating to R2P. Thus it is possible to argue that the population holds some of the responsibility for the crisis, by resorting to violence. However, France does not state that this is within their perception of the situation. In turn, they vest all responsibilities with the Syrian regime.

**The International Community**

The first apparent perception brought forward by the French statements to the UNSC, is how the international community has a responsibility to help the Syrian population. According to the French delegate, Mr Araud, as the Syrian people is being met by violence from the regime in exercising their rights, the international community, in the shape of the Security Council, has a responsibility to react. This perception is in accordance with the R2P perception, shown in *chapter 5*, where it is stated that the international community assumes the perceived responsibilities of the state if it fails in meeting these.

In relation to the responsibilities of the international community, as perceived by the French state, is the responsibility of the international community
to react to the Syrian crisis because it comprises a threat to the regional stability. The issue of regional instability is included in the Charter of the United Nations under chapter VIII. Thus, calls for international actions in relation hereto, can be directed to the Charter. Seeing that the R2P norm refers to this part of the Charter, the French perception that the international community should react, to instances of threat to regional peace and stability, can be understood as encompassed within R2P, although not being central.

The French call for an international response, to the Syrian crisis, centres around a call for intervention. Specifically Mr. Araud argues for the need of sanctions to the Syrian regime. The French perception; that sanctions should be applied to the Syrian case, in order to halt the mass atrocities committed, is in coherence with the R2P norm. In chapter 5 we have shown how the R2P norm prescribes the application of sanctions in cases of mass atrocity crimes. The idea of outside intervention is, in this respect, perceived as legitimate and necessary.

In relation to the idea of invoking political pressure, by applying sanctions to the regime in Damascus, the French delegate suggests that France will seek to apply pressure to the Syrian regime through alternative channels other than the UNSC. This strategy of exerting pressure through other forums than the UNSC is not included in the R2P norm, which we have put forward in chapter 5. In reverse it is specifically stated that all action must go through the Security Council, along with the call for a united UNSC in relation to R2P crimes, which is additionally called for by the French delegate.

The French calls for sanctions, which are vetoed by Russia and China, could easily be perceived as what spurs the idea of seeking backing from other forums than the Security Council. In relation to this is the French critique of those members of the UNSC who applies their vetoes to block the sanctions, which France perceives as necessary to halt the conflict. The French critique of the use of veto is in line with the R2P norm contained in chapter 5, where it is clarified that UNSC members should abstain from using their veto rights in cases of mass atrocity crimes.

One of the reasons given for the use of veto to halt resolutions is that it was perceived as a pretext for military intervention and, consequently, regime change.
The French envoy denies this allegation and further denies that France would have any intentions in pursuing military intervention or regime change in Syria. This allegation, concerning a French wish for regime change, is, however, not entirely unjustified. On several meetings, the in the UNSC, Mr Araud states the French aspirations for a political transition for the Syrian people. Seeing that the French envoy openly declares French support for the Syrian opposition, referring to the fact that they share the same values as France, along with the obvious Syrian discontent with the regime, it seems likely that the French are actually pushing for regime change. With regard to the R2P norm shown in chapter 5, regime change should not be the aim of intervention by the international community. Reversely the international community has a responsibility to protect populations from mass atrocities, not to start political transitions or invoke regime change within states. In this respect France can be perceived to be crossing the limits of actions in relation to the R2P norm. However, as the R2P norm is based on a case-by-case basis and as actions are to be taken in a “timely and decisive manner” it is possible to argue that if the French government perceives a regime change as the only way to protect the population of Syria it could be perceived as within the R2P norm. This is, however, to be seen in relation to the statement in chapter 5 that the United Nations is not “to replace the State”.

6.2 Russian Federation

6.2.1 The Perception of the Syrian Conflict

The state

In several meetings, the Russian representative to the UNSC, Mr Churkin expresses the importance of committing to the sovereignty of Syria. This is exemplified in the UNSC meeting on the 4th of October 2011. Here he puts emphasis on the Russian respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity and preference for the principle of non-intervention, which he feels should govern the UNSC’s response to the Syrian crisis (UNSC 2011b:3). Furthermore, the Russian representative states that the Russians have agitated for a formulation in the resolution on Syria that stated the “non-acceptability of foreign military intervention” (UNSC 2011b:4).
“Based on respect for Syria’s sovereignty, we have cautioned against destructive attempts at external interference and against imposing any kind of illusory fixes.”

(UNSC 2012b:3)

In the quote above, Mr Churkin again underlines the Russian opinion that it would be a breach of Syria’s sovereignty, to exert external pressure on Syria. It is thus obvious that the respect for the sovereignty the Syrian states is central. However, at the same meeting Russia votes in favour of a resolution, giving mandate to sending an observer mission to Syria. Russia had changes made to the resolution, making it more considerate of the sovereignty of the Syrian state. Mr Churkin says;

“Oh the initiative of Russia and a number of other members of the Council, the initial draft resolution underwent substantive changes to make it more balanced, appropriately reflect realities and take into account the prerogatives of the Syrian Government in receiving the observer mission on its territory.”

(UNSC 2012b:3)

In general the Russian delegate to the UNSC is very occupied with protecting the sovereignty of the Syrian state. However, that does not mean, that he overlooks the violence committed in Syrian, nevertheless the blame is not put solely on the regime;

“With respect to Syria, we are not advocates of the Al-Assad regime. We believe that the violence is unacceptable, and we condemn the repression of protests by peaceful demonstrators. However, the continuation of this tragedy cannot be blamed only on the harsh actions of the authorities.”

(UNSC 2011b:4)

Consequently, the Russian delegation widens the responsibility for the conflict to include both the opposition as well as the Syrian government. This is also evident,
when the Russian representative states that one of the main reasons for the Russian vetoes has been the bias inherent in the draft-resolutions; only targeting the Syrian regime. Mr Churkin argues that this is wrong because violent members of the Syrian opposition “(...)have been pushing their own geopolitical intentions, which have nothing in common with the legitimate interests of the Syrian people” (UNSC 2012d:8). Additionally the Russian delegate argues that the international community should demand of the Syrian opposition that: “(...) there should be an end to attacks by armed groups on State institutions and neighbourhoods.” (UNSC 2012a:9). This supports the notion that Russia perceives the armed Syrian oppositions uprising as illegitimate in its militant resistance of the Syrian state.

Moreover, the representative distances himself and Russia from the arguments of, for instance, France who aligns the Syrian regime's violent behaviour towards their population with a loss of legitimacy. Instead Mr Churkin states that:

“Given the basis of statements by some Western politicians on President Al-Assad’s loss of legitimacy, such an approach could trigger a full-fledged conflict in Syria and destabilization in the region as a whole.”

(UNSC 2011b:4)

The international community

At the UNSC meeting on the 19th of July 2012, the Russian delegate clearly states that Russia perceives the western states to have an agenda of military intervention in regards to Syria. He furthermore says of the western states that:

“Their [the western UNSC members, ed.] calculations to use the Security Council of the United Nations to further their plans of imposing their own designs on sovereign States will not prevail.”

(UNSC 2012d:8)
This clearly shows the Russian scepticism towards the western agenda and interestingly criticises that the western UNSC members suggested actions to thwart the Syrian crisis is a challenge to state sovereignty. Such statements leave the impression that Russia favours a role of the international community, which does not include interference in sovereign matters.

Instead of intervention the Russian non-confrontational strategy towards the Syrian regime, calls for an inclusive political process of negotiations (UNSC 2011b:3f.). At the UNSC meeting on the 4th of October 2011, where Russia vetoed a resolution for the first time during the Syrian conflict, Mr Churkin expresses concern that the proposed draft-resolution S/2011/612 could be a step towards military intervention in Syria. He clearly states that, in the Russian perception, the resolution was based on “(…) the philosophy of confrontation.” (UNSC 2011b:3). He then goes on to refer to the Russian and Chinese resolution draft, that was not put to vote;

“Of vital importance is the fact that at the heart of the Russian and Chinese draft was the logic of respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria as well as the principle of non-intervention, including military, in its affairs; the principle of the unity of the Syrian people; refraining from confrontation; and inviting all to an even-handed and comprehensive dialogue aimed at achieving civil peace and national agreement by reforming the socio-economic and political life of the country.”

(UNSC 2011b:3)

Here he firmly states, that sovereignty is of great importance and that intervention or confrontation is to be desisted from. Instead he argues that dialogue is what should solve the conflict. At the same meeting he argues that the Russian delegation “cannot agree with this unilateral, accusatory bent against Damascus” and that they “deem unacceptable the threat of an ultimatum and sanctions against the Syrian authorities” (UNSC 2011b:3).

This is again made clear at a later UNSC meeting on the 19th of July 2012:
“The Russian delegation had very clearly and consistently explained that we simply cannot accept a document, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, that would open the way for the pressure of sanctions and later for external military involvement in Syrian domestic affairs.”

(UNSC 2012d:8)

This leaves the clear impression that the Russian state does not perceive the role of the international community, in relation to Syria, as one of intervention or diplomatic pressure.

At the first UNSC meeting regarding Syria, on the 4th of October 2011, Mr Churkin expresses distinct worry over the role of NATO, in relation to the implementation of the UNSC resolution in Libya. He specifically makes a connection between the Libyan and the Syrian situation:

“The situation in Syria cannot be considered in the Council separately from the Libyan experience. The international community is alarmed by statements that compliance with Security Council resolutions on Libya in the NATO interpretation is a model for the future actions of NATO in implementing the responsibility to protect.”

(UNSC 2011b:4)

This statement clarifies that the Russian government is reluctant to issue resolutions that refer to the Responsibility to Protect because of NATO’s interpretation of its mandate during the intervention in Libya – effectively leading to the fall of Gaddafi’s government.

At the UNSC meeting on the 4th of February 2012, where Russia and China applied their vetoes, for the second time in relation to the Syrian crisis, Mr Churkin likewise argues that the confrontational approach, which the draft proposed, is counterproductive to solving the Syrian crisis (UNSC 2012a:9). He claims that the international community and the states representing the approach contained within the resolution “have undermined any possibility of a political
settlement, calling for regime change, encouraging the opposition towards power, indulging in provocation and nurturing the armed struggle”(UNSC 2012a:9). This statement both points to that the Russians perceive the language of the resolution as encouragement to the opposition, which we will return to. But moreover the statement expresses the Russian perception that parts of the international community have expressed a desire for regime change. In opposition to this approach Mr Churkin expresses the Russian hopes that:

“(…)intensive efforts of the international community will be continued, with a view to an immediate end to the violence and a successful beginning and conclusion of an inclusive Syrian political process and to withdrawal of that country from a profound crisis.”

(UNSC 2012a:9)

Mr Churkin’s perception, that the draft’s confrontational approach is an encouragement to the Syrian opposition, is repeated at the next UNSC meeting regarding Syria on the 14th of April 2012. Here, he states that the reason for the Russian support of resolution S/RES/2042 is partly due to its inclusion of a clear division of responsibilities relating to all Syrian parties, not only the Al-Assad regime:

“We supported today’s Security Council resolution owing to the need for a rapid deployment to Syria of the United Nations advance observer mission. The resolution addresses requirements both for the Government of Syria and for opposition groups to fully cooperate with monitors and fulfil the Annan six-point proposals.”

(UNSC 2012b:3)

Thus, it is very clear, that the Russian understanding of the Syrian crisis is that the international community should not hold the Syrian government as the sole responsible for the crisis. Additionally, at the UNSC meeting on the 4th of October 2011, the Russian delegate emphasises the need for the international community,
to take into account that not all Syrians agree with the move towards changes to their country (UNSC 2011b:4).

As the Russian representative argues that confrontation, in forms of external interference along with taking sides in the conflict, is destructive, he instead calls for a dialogical approach. Churkin tells, that one reason for the veto to the resolution draft S/2012/77 was that Russia wanted “the proposal to show more flexibility for the intermediary efforts of the League of Arab States, which would increase the chances for the success of an inclusive Syrian political process” (UNSC 2012a:9. Thus, for Russia the role of the international community, this time in the form of the Arab League, is one of diplomacy and mediation. At the meeting on the 14th of April 2012, the Russian delegate seems to have altered this perception as he argues that:

“Russia has firmly and consistently called for the non-use of force by all parties and has emphasized the need for a political solution to the problems confronting the country through an inclusive political dialogue conducted by the Syrians themselves.”

(UNSC 2012b:3)

Through this statement Mr Churkin suggests that the international community should stay out of the political dialogue and let the Syrian parties handle this themselves.

6.2.2 The Extend of R2P and the Issue of Regime Change

The state

By deriving the Russian perception of the state, in relation to the Syrian conflict, it has become clear that there are some differences between the Russian perception of the state and that inherent in the R2P norm.

The Russian perception of the state, in relation to Syria, is clearly guided by the respect for territorial sovereignty. This is evident as the Russian delegate, on several occasions, stresses the Russian inclination towards respecting the
sovereignty of the Syrian state, and abstaining from every measure, beyond dialogue, that could halt the conflict within Syria. The respect for sovereignty is also inherent in the R2P norm, however, this perception, does not regard the state as sovereign if it fails its inherent responsibilities, by for example, committing mass atrocities or disturbing the peace and security in its region. Specifically, Russia perceives the Syrian state’s sovereignty as a shield from outside interference. This comprises the principle of non-intervention in any aspect, neither diplomatically nor militarily. The R2P norm, as pointed out in chapter 5, establishes military intervention as the very last of possibilities, but, nonetheless, it is a possibility if all others have been exhausted. In relation to other forms of intervention, for example diplomatic in the form of sanctions, the R2P norm is less cautious and suggests these as preceding military intervention. Thus Russia’s perception of sovereignty differentiates from the one inherent in the R2P norm.

Another subject, touched upon by the Russian delegate is the shared responsibility between the state and the Syrian opposition. The Russian delegate stresses that the responsibility of the Syrian conflict is divided between the opposition and the regime. He frames the violent actions of the regime as unacceptable, and the actions commenced by the opposition as illegitimate.

In the R2P norm from chapter 5 it is stressed that the responsibility of R2P related incidents should not necessarily be solely placed with the state. Inherent in this perception is that all individuals carry responsibilities, to not exert violence. Thus the Russian inclination to share the responsibility, for the Syrian crisis, between the Al-Assad regime and the opposition groups is consistent with the content of the R2P norm from chapter 5.

**The International Community**

The Russian perception of the Syrian state, greatly influences the perception of the international community in relation to the Syrian crisis. Thus their perception of sovereignty makes Russia a strong advocate of non-intervention. This is evident as Russia opposes both diplomatic and military interventions as means to halt the Syrian conflict. Instead, Russia prescribes an inclusive political dialogue,
where both sides of the Syrian conflict are heard. This is what the Russians work towards until the final meetings, where the Russian delegate suggests that the international community should leave negotiations to the Syrians themselves.

As already stated, the R2P norm revolves around the perception of a broader sovereignty, adding on the weight of responsibilities. This also entails that the international community has an inherent responsibility towards populations of other sovereign states. In the Russian rejection of almost all kinds of international involvement in the Syrian conflict, the Russian perception of the role of the international community, in relation to R2P related conflicts, places itself outside of the R2P norm. The redefinition of sovereignty inherent in the R2P norm is incompatible with the Russian perception sovereignty as territorial sovereignty. This is a sign that the Russian government has not adopted the most central perspective of the R2P norm in the case of Syria – that sovereignty is dependent on responsibilities and does not constitute a shield against outside intervention. Calls for dialogue between the parties, is not a measure within the R2P norm stated in chapter 5. This is likely due to the fact that voluntary negotiations is not perceived as conflicting with state sovereignty, which is why it is not included in a perception that deals with such measures. Thus the Russian perception of the international community’s role in relation to halting the Syrian conflict is not reconcilable with the perception of R2P in chapter 5.

The reason for Russia’s reluctance towards international interference, and especially international interference through coercive measures, is likely to be found in the Russian perception of the agenda of the western states on the Council, in relation to the preceding intervention in Libya.

Throughout the UNSC meetings, related to the Syrian conflict, the Russian representative is vocal about the Russian concerns regarding the western UNSC members’ reasons for wanting to intervene in the Syrian crisis. The Russian perception holds that the Western wish for intervention is merely a pretext for imposing a regime change. This concern is clearly stated as related to the Libyan case, where an UNSC adopted resolution led to the fall of the Libyan government. This concern is accordingly stated as the reason that Russia is reluctant towards
resolutions that refer to the R2P norm. It seems likely that the Russian perception of state sovereignty as inviolable and their subsequent reluctance towards intervention in the Syrian conflict is related to their fear of regime change, which is connected to the intervention made in Libya.

6.3 China

6.3.1 The Perception of the Syrian Conflict

The State

Like the other members of the Security Council the Chinese delegate is worried about the developments in Syria (UNSC 2011b:5). In this respect China urges “(…) the various parties in Syria to exercise restraint and to avoid more bloodshed and all forms of violence” (UNSC 2011b:5). The Chinese delegate goes on to say at the meeting the 4\textsuperscript{th} February 2012 that dialogue and negotiations should be the primary focus point within Syria and that this should lead the way towards a peaceful solution in Syria that could restore stability within the country (UNSC 2012a:9). Furthermore the delegate emphasis:

“We call on all parties in Syria to stop the violence and in particular to avoid casualties among innocent civilians, to restore order in the country as soon as possible and to respect the request of the Syrian people for reform and for the safeguarding of their own interests”

(UNSC 2012a:9)

In the statement above the Chinese delegate emphasises that nothing good will come of the violence within Syria. In addition to this the delegate state that the dispute within Syria should be dealt with by the Syrians. Furthermore the representative argues that the request for reform should be respected, this imply that the population of Syria have a say in the Syrian agenda. However at the same time Mr Li Baodong emphasise that:
“(…) the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria should be fully respected.”

(UNSC 2012a:9).

Throughout the Security Council meetings, concerning Syria, the Chinese representative claims that the sovereignty of states should be respected. In addition to this the delegate emphasises that other countries should not interfere in the internal affairs of a state (UNSC 2011b:5). This implies that internal affairs of states are a national matter. This inclination to respect state sovereignty is in fact restated throughout all the Security Council meetings concerning the Syrian crisis (UNSC 2011b:5, UNSC 2012a:9, UNSC 20012b:8, UNSC 2012c:4, UNSC 2012d:13, UNSC 2013:9). In elaboration of this point, the Chinese representative refers to the United Nations Charter as the source of the Chinese stance:

“(…) sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries are the basic norms governing inter-State relations enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. China has no self-interest in the Syrian issue. We have consistently maintained that the future and fate of Syria should be independently decided by the Syrian people, rather than imposed by outside forces.”

(UNSC 2012d:13)

Furthermore this statement shows that the Chinese government places it upon the Syrian people to solve the crisis, without interference from the outside.

The fact that China continuously emphasises the importance of respecting the sovereignty of Syria, applying the Charter as a base for this argument, suggests that the Chinese government still considers Syria as a sovereign state.

**The international Community**

In relation to the emphasis on sovereignty and non-interference, the Chinese perception of what actions the international community can apply to the Syrian conflict, is very much dependent on their perception of the sovereignty of the
Syrian state. This is evident in that the Chinese delegate, Mr Li Baodong, continuously emphasises that respect for national sovereignty, territorial integrity and preference for the principle of non-intervention, should govern the UNSC’s relations to Syria. Talking of the Security Council Mr Li Baodong states that:

“In the meantime, it [the UNSC] should fully respect Syria’s sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Whether the Security Council takes further action on the question of Syria should depend upon whether it would facilitate the easing of tension in Syria, help to defuse differences through political dialogue and contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the Middle East.”

(UNSC 2011b:5).

In stating the above, Mr Li Baodong clarifies that any actions, coming from the UNSC, in relation to the Syrian crisis, should be related to political dialogue and maintains the peace and stability in the Middle East. In the meeting on the 4th of October 2011, the Chinese representative distances his state from the idea of applying diplomatic pressure onto the Syrian regime, through invoking sanctions (UNSC 2011b:5). The Chinese delegate, Mr Li Baodong, states that the confrontational approach of some UNSC-members is not respecting the core principles of the UN Charter, thus China cannot vote in favour of the draft-resolutions (UNSC 2012a:9). In the instances that the Chinese delegate votes in favour of resolutions, the emphasis on sovereignty is still present:

“We hope that the advance team will fully respect Syria’s sovereignty, act in strict accordance with the mandate of the Security Council (…)”

(UNSC 2012b:4)

At the meeting on the 21st of April 2012 where the Security Council adopts a new resolution concerning the Syrian crisis, the Chinese representative again emphasises the importance of the international community respecting the sovereignty of the Syrian state:
“We hope that the Supervision Mission will fully respect Syria’s sovereignty and dignity, act strictly in accordance with what the Security Council has authorized (…) .”

(UNSC 2012c:8)

Instead of a confrontational strategy towards the Syrian authorities the Chinese delegate argues for the establishment of political dialogue and respect for sovereignty, by pointing to the draft-resolution sponsored by China:

“One, which China supports, advocates respect for the sovereignty of Syria and resolving the crisis there through political dialogue.”

(UNSC 2011b:5)

The Chinese delegate states China will participate in resolving the Syrian question, although only through mediation:

“Along with the international community, China is willing to play a positive and constructive role in appropriately resolving the question of Syria. We will continue to support the mediation efforts of the relevant countries and organizations in the region.”

(UNSC 2011b:5).

Thus the Chinese government seems to perceive the role of the international community, in relation to the Syrian crisis, as one of involvement, but only involvement through mediation. This role is further elaborated at the meeting on the 21st of April 2012:

“We have always supported and are actively committed to promoting a just, peaceful and proper settlement of the Syrian crisis through political dialogue.”

(UNSC 2012c:8)
Developing this approach further, Mr Li Baodong, shuns the notion of military intervention as a means to solving the conflict:

“*We believe that the Syrian issue must be resolved through political means and that military means would achieve nothing.*”

(UNSC 2012d:13)

At the UNSC meeting on the 19th of July 2012, the Chinese representative distances the Chinese perception from that of other state’s on the Security Council, by claiming that others, in their perception of the role of the international community:

“(…) *have been eager to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries* (…)”

(UNSC 2012d:14)

This statement properly illustrates how the Chinese delegate, as established above, highly disapproves and advise against an approach to the crises that does not take full consideration of the Chinese perception of sovereignty. At the UNSC meeting on the 4th of February, the Chinese delegate declares that confronting the Syrian government, without fully respecting the country’s sovereignty, may only complicate matters further, instead of helping to resolve the crisis (UNSC 2012a).

Overall, the Chinese perception of the role of the international community, in the case of the Syrian crisis, is as mediator of political dialog. Thereby the Chinese reject interference, which compromises the Syrian sovereignty and advocates an approach of non-military means and without the use of diplomatic pressure.

### 6.3.2 The Extend of R2P and the Issue of Regime Change

**The State**

Throughout the UNSC meetings, concerning the Syrian crisis, the Chinese representative emphasises that the Chinese government assigns massive importance to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Syrian
These are the decisive factors in the Chinese perception of the Syrian crisis. Maybe as a result of this, the Chinese representative reveals very little else about the Chinese perception of the state in relation to the mass atrocities committed in Syria. Basically the Chinese representative reduces the Chinese view of the state to be within the framework of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. The Chinese representative, on numerous occasions, refers to the UN Charter as the foundation for the Chinese perception of the state.

Regarding the R2P norm in *chapter 5*, the Chinese perception of the state is both within this perception and removed from it. This is to be understood in the way that the R2P norm is constructed around the UN Charter’s perception of sovereignty, but as stated seeks to widen this. Looking at the Chinese perception we argue that it revolves around the perception of sovereignty as stated in the Charter. That the Chinese delegates prioritises sovereignty of the Syrian state, suggests that abiding to the value of sovereignty is superior to halting mass atrocity crimes within the sovereign territory of other states. This tells us that the perception of R2P, as stated in *chapter 5*, is not represented to a great extend within the Chinese perception of the state in relation to the Syrian crisis.

Additionally, relating to the Chinese perception of the Syrian state in relation to the conflict, the Chinese representative states that the Syrian people should decide the future of Syria and that their request for reform should be respected.

This comes close to correlating with the perception of the state inherent in the R2P norm. The R2P norm carries an aspiration of removing all root causes leading to mass atrocities. We argue that in not heeding the Syrian peoples call for reform, the Syrian regime has created traction for the rebellion. Thus the Chinese delegate’s call for the Syrian regime to respect the Syrian people’s demands for reform is within the scope of the R2P norm.

When it comes to placing the responsibility of the crisis, the Chinese representative does not decisively choose sides. Rather Mr Li Baodong calls for all parties to cease the violent actions. We argue that this can be viewed as representing the R2P norm, as the R2P norm assigns responsibility to all parties.
involved in violent conduct. Furthermore the call for a cessation of the violent actions is the fundamental aim of R2P.

In addition, the Chinese representative emphasises political dialogue between the parties of the conflict. Like in the case of Russia, this is not enshrined within the R2P norm, because it is not perceived as an action that compromises the sovereignty of states. This exact fact can explain the Chinese inclination towards political dialogue. As already stated China emphasises state sovereignty as a primary concern.

The international community
The Chinese preoccupation with national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-intervention defines the perception of the role of the international community in relation to the Syrian crisis. The Chinese delegate repeatedly stresses that any action commenced through the UNSC should be governed by respect for these values. Thus these values define the specific actions proposed by China in relation to the international community’s relation to the Syrian crisis. Thus we argue that the Chinese perception revolves around the virtues of state sovereignty and non-interference as stated in the UN Charter. In order to not repeat ourselves, we will shortly state that the Chinese perception of the role of the international community, in relation to the Syrian crisis, is derived from the Charter of the United Nations, while not agreeing to any notable parts of the R2P norm. We argue that this explains the Chinese demand that actions undertaken by the UNSC should be within the scope of political dialogue. More specifically it is clarified that China wishes to play a role in resolving the conflict, by supporting other regional actors’ mediation efforts.

This correlates with the Chinese perception of which actions the international community should abstain from in relation to Syria. Mr Li Baodong claims that “other states” have been eager to interfere in the internal affairs of others. This remark suggests that China is in opposition to any outside interference, in the matters of sovereign states. In relation hereto the Chinese delegate emphasises that the international community should abstain from applying diplomatic pressure to the Syrian state. In this regard it is clarified that
China does not perceive sanctions to Damascus as a possible tool for halting the Syrian conflict. Additionally, Mr Li Baodong, states that the Chinese will accept no military measures within the scope of UNSC sponsored actions.

In this regard, the Chinese government’s perception of the role of the international community, in relation to the Syrian conflict, is not in correlation with the R2P norm. This is apparent as the Chinese rejects any actions that amount to a substantial pressure to the Syrian state. In rejecting both sanctions and military intervention, while criticising the notion of other states interfering in the matters of others, the Chinese perception does not allow for any of the prescribed actions contained within the scope of R2P. Although the R2P norm does not give carte blanche to military intervention, outright denying this possibility, along with diplomatic pressure, China rejects any means of applying coercive pressure to the Syrian parties.

6.4 United Kingdom

6.4.1 The Perceptions of the Syrian Conflict

The State

The British delegate, Sir Mark Lyall Grant, states his concerns regarding the situation in Syria, at the first meeting concerning the Syrian crisis on the 4th of October 2011, (UNSC 2011b:7). The expressions of concern relates to the way in which the Syrian regime has reacted towards the uprising:

“(…) the situation has deteriorated further. The regime continues to brutally repress its people. It has killed almost three thousand civilians. It has used disproportionate force and has arbitrarily detained many thousands of people. Its actions may amount to crimes against humanity.”

(UNSC 2011b:7)

Through this statement, Sir Grant, claims that the Syrian regime is committing crimes against humanity, thus connecting the Al-Assad regime to mass atrocities. In the above statement the British delegate, additionally, holds the Syrian regime
responsible for the mass atrocity crimes committed. The Syrian government’s responsibility is further emphasised at the meeting on the 14th of April 2012, when the British delegate states:

“(…) the Syrian people have for more than one year suffered unimaginable brutality at the hands of a regime that has prioritized its own survival over the needs, rights and aspirations of the people it should serve and protect.”

(UNSC 2012b:2)

This is evidence of a British perception that the role of the state is to protect and to serve its peoples, while recognising their rights, needs and aspirations. In elaboration of this Sir Grant, at the Security Council meeting on the 4th of February 2012, characterises the Syrian opposition’s aspirations as legitimate and therefore something that should be governed (UNSC 2012a:7).

Nevertheless the British delegate does not put the blame solely on the Syrian regime but also on the opposition, when stating: “We called on all sides to reject violence and extremism.“ (UNSC 2011b:7). This is again evident when Sir Grant states that:

“The opposition, too, must refrain from violence and ensure that it gives the regime no excuse to renege on its commitments (…)“

(UNSC 2012b:2)

Moving on, the British delegate claims that the Syrian government has a responsibility to fulfil its obligations to the international community, especially in relation to the obligations within the resolutions regarding the crisis in Syria (UNSC 2012c:6). This will be further elaborated in the following paragraph regarding the international community.

Throughout the Security Council meetings regarding the Syrian crisis, it has become evident that the British government perceives the Syrian state as responsible or the mass atrocities committed within Syria. The British delegate,
however, does not abstain from assigning some of the responsibility to the Syrian opposition. Additionally, the aspirations of the Syrian people, which has sparked the conflict, are deemed legitimate.

The International Community

The British delegate Sir Mark Lyall Grant is unequivocal in stating the British regard of the responsibility of the international community. The Security Council meeting on the 4th October 2011 he states:

“If the situation continues as it is, this Council will have to shoulder its responsibilities and take the tough action (…)“

(UNSC 2011b:7)

In stating the above, Sir Grant, clarifies that the international community should play a role in relation to the Syrian conflict. Specifically this responsibility amounts to halting the crimes committed by the Syrian government. Furthermore Sir Grant suggests that, in order to live up to this responsibility, the Security Council may need to invoke “tough action”. Accordingly the British representative suggests that the international community, through the UNSC, should come together in order to apply collective pressure the Syrian government to halt the violence:

“In an attempt to maintain the unity of this Council, for the past few weeks we have therefore been engaged in intensive negotiations aimed at ensuring that the Council could at least send a strong signal to the Syrian regime to stop the violence. “

(UNSC 2011b:7)

In relation to the wish of a united Security Council, agreeing to pressurise the Syrian Government, Sir Grant states his disappointment in the UNSC members who have vetoed a resolution regarding the Syrian conflict. At the meeting on the 4th of February 2012, he states that these UNSC members:
“(…) have failed in their responsibility as permanent members of the Security Council, and they have done so on the most shameful of days of the Syrian killing machine’s three hundred days of oppression. “

(UNSC 2012a:7)

The British delegate further elaborates that his government disapproves of the use of veto in the case of Syria:

“The United Kingdom is appalled by the decision of Russia and China to veto an otherwise consensus resolution (…)”

(UNSC 2012a:6)

That the delegate perceives the Security Council as holding a central place in regards to the Syrian crisis becomes clear in the following statement:

“It is deeply regrettable that the Council has been unable today to play the role for which it was established and is duty-bound to fulfil.”

(UNSC 2012d:3).

In addition to this the delegate emphasises that the Security Council members should “show their support for their [the Syrian people] struggle for basic human rights that most populations of the countries around this table enjoy” (UNSC 2011b:7). This point first of all shows the British inclination towards human rights, but furthermore assigns legitimacy to the Syrian peoples struggle for these. Calling upon the other council members to show support for this struggle, the British delegate is suggesting that the UNSC should assign legitimacy to such struggles too.

In relation to the actions that the British government perceives as legitimate in relation to the Syrian state, Sir Grant state that, if the Syrian governments cannot
or choose not to fulfil its obligations to the international community, sanctions should be applied:

"Continued failure of the [Syrian ed.] regime to meet its commitments or any attempt to hinder the work of the Mission must be met with robust sanctions by the Council.”

(UNSC 2012c:6)

As this statement illustrates, the United Kingdom considers sanctions as a legitimate response in case the Syrian government fails its perceived obligations. At the UNSC meeting on the 19th of July the British delegate states that:

“The events in Damascus over the past 48 hours demonstrate the need for urgent and decisive action by the Security Council”

(UNSC 2012d:2)

By this the delegate is stressing the fact that the Security Council should act in determination to halt the crimes committed by the Syrian government (UNSC 2012d:2).

Furthermore, The British delegate states that the British government sees it as essential that Syria undergoes political change:

“(…) achieve the political transition that is the only way forward for Syria. “

(UNSC 2012d:3).

This is elaborated, when Sir Grant stresses that when the violence have ceased “(…) all parties must move quickly to engage in a Syrian-led political transition that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people.” (UNSC 2012b:2). Here Sir Grant elaborates on the British perception of what the outcome of the Syrian crisis should be. Curiously, Sir Grant, on a previous occasion, commented
on the worry of some states, that a vetoed draft resolution was designed to open up for regime change:

“From the outset it [the draft resolution] had support from the vast majority of Council members and had the backing of the Arab League. Yet some Council members argued that the draft resolution imposed regime change. It said no such thing. “

(UNSC 2012a:7)

Here Sir Grant denies all allegations that the discussed draft resolution was a pretext for regime change. In relation to this, he later accommodates some of the criticism, which has been expressed by Russia and China, as their reasons for vetoing the proposed draft resolution at the UNSC meeting on the 19th of July 2012:

“They argued that a Chapter VII draft resolution was somehow designed to seek military action through the back door. Those arguments are irrational. The Council has adopted many Chapter VII resolutions, most recently on the Sudan and South Sudan. Today’s draft resolution, like that one, was set under Article 41. It was not under Article 42 of the Charter and could not therefore be construed as a precursor to military intervention.”

(UNSC 2012d:3)

This remark by the British representative suggests that there is no hidden agenda for enforcing a political transition through military means. He does so by referring to the charter and making parallels to both Sudan and South Sudan where, in both cases, military intervention was not initiated, although the relevant resolutions were drafted from the same chapters in the United Nations Charter. When making a distinction between article 41 and 42, where article 42 gives opportunity for military action, it seems clear that the resolution could not have open up for for a military intervention. In relation to the application of the veto-rights, the British representative, at the same UNSC meeting on the 19th of July 2012, states that the Security Council members who invoked the veto:
"(…) have failed the people of Syria for the third time, blocked an attempt by the majority of the Council and supported by most of the international community to try a new approach. The effect of their actions will be to protect a brutal regime. They have chosen to put their national interests ahead of the lives of millions of Syrians."

(UNSC 2012d:3)

Through this statement it becomes clear that the British government perceives it as highly problematic that UNSC member-states, by use of Veto, obstructs the UNSC from taking necessary action towards the Syrian crises.

6.4.2 The Extent of R2P and the Issue of Regime Change

The State

In his statements, at the Security Council meetings concerning the Syrian crisis, the British delegate implies that the Syrian government is guilty of committing crimes against humanity. We argue that this framing of the Syrian situation, suggests that the British government has adopted the emphasis on mass atrocity crimes contained within the R2P norm. The British representative blames the Syrian regime for not fulfilling its role as the server and protector of the Syrian people. This implies that the British government considers it the responsibility of the Syrian state to do exactly that. This line of thought is consistent with the R2P norm, which places a responsibility upon the state to protect its people and to not commit mass atrocities against it. Thereby the British representative’s allegations towards the Syrian regime are justifiable within the scope of the R2P norm.

Furthermore, the British delegate is not entirely unequivocal in distributing the responsibility of the Syrian crisis. This is to be understood in that he additionally calls on the Syrian opposition to halt its violent actions in order to suspend the crisis. This draws parallels to the thought of individual responsibilities contained within the R2P norm. The R2P norm clearly prescribes that individuals are not to
engage in violent crimes. It is, however, clear that the British delegate is more prone to stress the responsibilities of the Syrian regime, than of the opposition.

The International Community
The British delegate calls for a responsible UNSC. Sir Grant claims that the UNSC has an inherent responsibility to issue action towards the Syrian crisis in order to stop the violence. This approach implies that the British government perceives the international community as having a responsibility, which compels it to halt the crisis unfolding in Syria. Such a view of the international community is consistent with the R2P norm, which prescribes that the international community carries a responsibility towards populations of states, where the authorities are manifestly failing their responsibilities to protect. As we have illustrated, the British delegate states that the Syrian crisis constitutes a case of mass atrocities, where the state is failing to fulfil the commitments that it has towards the peoples of Syria. Thus it can be argued that the British government’s perception of the international community, as bound by responsibilities, fits within the R2P scope.

Moreover the British delegate proposes the UNSC to send a strong signal to the regime in Damascus. Thus the British perception prescribes that a united Security Council issues collective action in response to the Syrian crisis. In addition Sir Grant asks for tough action to be exerted towards the Syrian government. The actions put forward by the British delegate are within the scope of sanctions. Thus, the British perception of the international community, once again, seems to be in accordance with the R2P norm, which prescribes that the UNSC issues collective action to halt mass atrocities committed in states, where the authorities fail their responsibilities. Within the R2P norm, one way of intervening is through the issuing of sanctions, which are preferred to military intervention and are framed as an early step, where preventative measures have failed and mass atrocities are committed. The British delegate specifically calls for sanctions to be invoked if the Syrian regime does not comply with the UNSC sponsored resolution, demanding a complete stop to the violent acts. The R2P norm does not prescribe any distinct action to be issued in circumstances where a
state fails to comply with international resolutions. However, the R2P norm was constructed to halt the violence committed by states, and so, if the Syrian regime fails to bring an end to the violence, the R2P norm prescribes decisive action, e.g. through sanctions.

An issue, which is also touched upon by the British delegate is the fact that both China and Russia have decided to apply their vetoes to obstruct the UNSC in sanctioning the Syrian regime. Sir Grant is very vocal in stating his country’s opposition to such acts, obstructing the majority of the Council from initiating actions halting mass atrocity crimes. This approach to the veto-right, namely that it should not be issued in order to hinder such action, fits within the R2P norm, which prescribes that states abstain from applying their vetoes to do exactly that.

A final point, which will be touched upon, is the British call for a political transition to take place in Syria. Through the British statements to the Council, it is clear that the British perception is that the Syrian conflict should end in a political transition, which accommodates the aspirations of the Syrian people. Such a notion is not contained within the scope of R2P, which solely looks at reactions to halt mass atrocities, without going into detail about what outcomes could entail, apart from a cessation of violence. However, the notion of a political transition, to meet the demands of a population, can be seen as entailed within the preventive scopes of the R2P norm. In its preventive scope, the R2P norm contains the aim of accommodating the will of the people, in order to prevent situations of mass atrocities from occurring.

In relation to the notion of political transition, the British delegate argues that a particular draft resolution was not a pretext for regime change. We argue that although the resolution might not have been a pretext for regime change, the continuous mention of a political transition in accommodation of the Syrian peoples aspirations, does indicate aspirations for regime change, as Al-Assad’s regime does not seem to accommodate the aspirations of the Syrians, hence the emergence of the crisis.
6.5 United States of America

6.5.1 The Perception of the Syrian Conflict

The State

At the first UNSC meeting concerning a resolution regarding the Syrian crisis, on the 4th of October 2011, the American representative Ms Rice talks of the Syrian state’s handling of the escalating crisis within its territory. In doing so, she firstly recount the Al-Assad regime’s actions towards the Syrian people by labelling these as “deliberately unleashed violence, torture” (UNSC 2011b:8). The American perception of the Syrian state’s role in relation to the crisis is further developed at the meeting on the 14th of April 2012, when Ms Rice connects the government in Damascus with “brutal violence” inflicted on its own people, along with “grotesque destruction”, “murderous policies” and “years of murderous rampage” (UNSC 2012b:9). That the responsibility, for the mass atrocities committed in Syria, lies with the state is supported by the assertion that follows this statement, where Ms Rice emphasise how peaceful protesters were met with violence by their own government, and again commands the Syrian government to “(…) end the violence” (UNSC 2012b:9). Again connecting the Syrian government with responsibility, Ms Rice states that it is responsible for the unstable security situation. Thus implying that the state is responsible for the violence and insecurity, which characterises the Syrian situation:

“(…) the very Government that is responsible for the main security threats.”

(UNSC 2012c:10)

Furthermore she emphasises that the actions of the Syrian state might be perceived as crimes against humanity in stating that:

“The High Commissioner for Human Rights has already warned that the Syrian Government’s appalling actions might amount to crimes against humanity.”

(UNSC 2011b:8)
In connection to Ms Rice’s framing of the Syrian government’s actions as human rights violations, she clearly states the United States’ opinion towards the actions undertaken by the regime in Damascus:

“In August, we clearly condemned the violence and made clear that the Syrian regime’s repression is utterly unacceptable.”

(UNSC 2011b:9)

After establishing that the United States perceives the Syrian regime’s actions against the Syrian protesters as unacceptable repression and possible human rights violations, committed against peaceful protesters and human rights defenders, Ms Rice goes on to connect the Syrian state to international obligations, obligations that the regime refuses to live up to:

“The Al-Assad regime flatly refuses to meet its international obligations (...)”

(UNSC 2011b:9)

This connection of the Syrian state to obligations is continued at the 6751st meeting in the UNSC, regarding the resolution S/RES/2042. Here the American representative, Ms Rice, talks of the Syrian state in relation to its peoples and again states that the Syrian state must comply with its obligations, this time articulated as commitments. She specifically demands that:

“The Syrian Government must meet all of its commitments, not only the bare minimum. It must do so now. The suffering of the Syrian people has gone on far too long.

(UNSC 2012b:9)
In continuation of this, when Ms Rice calls for an end to the Syrian government’s exercise of violence against the people of Syria, she emphasises that the Syrian people:

“(…) must be allowed to exercise their rights and freedoms peacefully, without fear of attack, detention, torture or death.”

(UNSC 2012b:9)

This statement comes in continuation of Ms Rice’s unambiguous account of the Al-Assad regime’s violence against civilians, terming it “an outrageous escalation of violence” (UNSC 2012b:9). In this way Ms Rice puts pressure on the Syrian regime to end the violence, by connecting the violent deeds of the regime, to the rights of the Syrian people, letting it be understood that the killings of civilians is in opposition to a free people, exercising its rights.

In addition, the American representative, through a statement directed at the UN Joint Special Envoy, connects legitimate governance with ending the violence, together with respect for the rights of the Syrian people:

“(…) stop the violence, respect the rights of the Syrian people and begin a transition towards stable and legitimate governance.”

(UNSC 2012b:10)

This suggests that the United States, perceives a legitimate government as irreconcilable with violence and non-respect for the rights that the American representative ascribes to the Syrian people. Accordingly the statement brings across the message that the ruling Syrian governance is not one of legitimacy.

At the meeting on the 21st of April 2012, Ms Rice further develops the American understanding of the Syrian state, once again pointing to its obligations. This is seen when she asks the Syrian government to:

“(…) honour all its obligations, including a sustained cessation of violence (…)”

(UNSC 2012c:10)
The International Community

In the UNSC meeting, on the 4th of October 2011, the United States’ delegate Ms Rice talks to the member states in the wake of veto of resolution 612, and connects the UNSC with responsibilities:

“The United States believes it is past time for this Council to assume its responsibilities and impose tough, targeted sanctions and an arms embargo on the Assad regime (…)“

(UNSC 2011b:8)

This perception is repeated at the meeting on the 4th of February 2012 (UNSC 2012a:5). Here Ms Rice’s articulation of the role of the UNSC shows the American perception of the international community in regards to Syria. She links the UNSC with responsibility of issuing sanctions and embargoes towards the Syrian state. The perception of an international community with responsibilities is repeated, when Ms Rice claims that the UNSC is failing its responsibilities, in not adopting the resolution:

“In failing to adopt the draft resolution before us, the Council has squandered an opportunity to shoulder its responsibilities to the Syrian people.”

(UNSC 2011b:9)

That the international community has a responsibility, is stated by the American Secretary of State, John Kerry, when the UNSC adopted resolution S/RES/2118 relating to the destruction of the Syrian stock of chemical weapons:

“As a community of nations, we reaffirm our responsibility to defend the defenceless,”

(UNSC 2012:4)
Here Mr Kerry articulates a perception of an international responsibility to defend civilians. In this particular case this statement is as aimed at the Al-Assad regime, warning that the United States and the international community acknowledges its responsibility towards the Syrian people. In addition to this, the American delegate Ms Rice, expands on the role of the international community in relation to the Syrian crisis, at the meeting on the 4th of February 2012:

“The international community must protect the Syrian people from that abhorrent brutality.”

(UNSC 2012a:5)

In this statement Ms Rice is referring to the Syrian government’s violent attacks on civilian Syrians. In connecting this with the international community, she clarifies that the international community should adopt the role as protector of the Syrian people.

In relation to the notion of responsibilities is the perception that the international community should hold the Syrian state to account for its actions. At the UNSC-meeting on the 21st of April 2012, Ms Rice makes it clear that the international community, constituted by the UNSC, must hold the Syrian government to account if the Syrian people are not given rights:

“If that hope does not materialize, however, the failure will be the Syrian Government’s, and it must be held accountable. And we must be prepared to do so, given the Al-Assad regime’s track record to date.”

(UNSC 2012c:10)

At the meeting on the 4th of October 2011, Ms Rice develops the notion that the international community must react to the Syrian crisis through the UNSC:

“The arguments against strong Council action grow weaker and weaker by the day.”
Relating to this the United States assigns the international community a role in halting the Syrian crisis at the 6756th meeting on April 21st, 2012, where Ms Rice calls for external pressure to the Syrian government:

“What can bring a halt to that murderous rampage is continued and intensified external pressure on the Al-Assad regime.”

Ms Rice on a later UNSC-meeting touches upon what external pressure could amount to, in order to change the situation and prevent the regime from killing the Syrian people. Here Ms Rice talks of the draft resolution S/2012/538, which was voted for by the US, but in the end vetoed by Russia and China:

“(…) It [the vetoed draft resolution ed.] also threatened (…) the Syrian regime, with sanctions if it continued to use those weapons brutally against its own cities and citizens.”

It can be concluded, from this statement, that the United States in voting for the resolution, perceives it as legitimate to impose sanctions to the Syrian state in order to pressure it into changing behaviour.

Furthermore Ms Rice articulates her country’s disappointment that the UNSC failed to react to the crisis in Syria, because members applied their vetoes to resolution S/2011/612. In this instance the American delegate frames the Syrian situation as a threat to the regional peace and security, which is covered by Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

“The United States is outraged that this Council has utterly failed to address an urgent moral challenge and a growing threat to regional peace and security.”
This same perception is repeated at the meeting on the 4th of February 2012, clarifying that the American government is a proponent of a forceful UNSC as the central instigator of reaction to the Syrian crisis (UNSC 2012a:5). The statement, in this regard, underlines an American opposition towards the enactment of the veto, which is also brought forward at the meeting on the 19th of July 2012. Here Ms Rice juxtaposes the UNSC-members, who have employed their veto right, with the Syrian regime, blaming these states, for the violence, which permeates Syria:

“(…) the fault lies squarely with the heinous Al-Assad regime and those Member States that refuse to join the international community and their fellow Council members in taking firm action against the regime.”

(UNSC 2012d:10)

Ms Rice further develops her country’s perception of those states that obstructed the enactment of resolution S/2011/612, namely that those states are in opposition to values like democracy and in support of totalitarian regimes:

“During this season of change, the people of the Middle East can now see clearly which nations have chosen to ignore their calls for democracy and instead prop up desperate, cruel dictators.“

(UNSC 2011b:8)

The statement shows the perception that the international community should act to secure democracy, liberty and human rights in Syria. Seeing that Ms Rice perceives the non-support of the resolution as direct opposition to democracy, she must perceive the resolution as a proponent of this. Looking at the vetoed resolution, it does contain strong elements of democratic rights (UNSC RES 2011:2). As that the American representative voted for the resolution she must perceive the international community as a champion of democracy in Syria. The exact same statement is repeated at the meeting on the 4th of February 2012.
Returning to the American call for UNSC-driven action, Ms Rice rejects alleged concerns that it would constitute a pretext for military intervention in Syria:

“Others claim that strong Security Council action on Syria would merely be a pretext for military intervention. Let there be no doubt: this is not about military intervention; this is not about Libya.”

(UNSC 2011b:8)

In this way Ms Rice claims that a reaction by the international community, to the crisis in Syria, would not entail military intervention leading to regime-change like it did in Libya.

At the meeting on the 14th of April 2012, the Council agreed to resolution S/RES/2042. On the grounds of this Ms Rice again talks of the responsibilities of the UNSC in saying that the resolution constitutes a step towards the Security Council living up to its responsibilities:

“The Council has authorized an advance group of monitors to verify the Syrian Government’s compliance. In doing so, the Council has taken a step towards fulfilling its own responsibilities. And it is about time.”

(UNSC 2012b:9)

In stating this, the American representative once again reveals that The United States perceives the UNSC as possessing responsibilities. In relation to the American perceptions of responsibilities in relation to the Syrian crisis, Ms Rice states that:

“The United States expresses its appreciation once again to Joint Special Envoy Kofi Annan for his dedicated work to try to stop the violence, respect the rights of the Syrian people and begin a transition towards stable and legitimate governance.”

(UNSC 2012b:10)
In acknowledging the work of the UN sponsored Joint Special Envoy, she specifically mentions the creation of “a transition towards stable and legitimate governance”. This leaves the impression that the American delegate is not only interested in stopping the ongoing violence, which Al-Assad’s government is authorising. In praising the Joint Special Envoy for beginning a transition towards legitimate governance, she could be understood as implicitly declaring her country’s support for a regime-change in Syria. This can be seen in that the American representative, as stated above, in the same meeting, perceives the Syrian regime as illegitimate due to its violent retaliation towards its own people. There is of course the possibility that the American government perceives it as a possibility to keep the Al-Assad regime in power, while invoking reforms creating legitimate governance. However, this seems highly unlikely given the situation. The statement brought forward by John Kerry, at the 7038th meeting of the UNSC on September 27th 2013, further supports this argument. Here he states that the adopted resolution, calls for a transfer of power to a transitional government, thus:

“(…) paving the way for democratic elections and a Government that can be chosen by the people of Syria to represent the people of Syria.”

(UNSC 2013:5)

In relation to the alleged American inclination towards more explicit action towards the Syrian regime, is the following statement from the meeting on April 21st 2012:

“The Syrian Government has ignored the Council. In the United States, our patience is exhausted. (…) We will not wait 90 days to pursue measures against the Syrian Government if it continues to violate its commitments or obstruct the monitors’ work.”

(UNSC 2012c:10)
Here Ms Rice clarifies that her government perceives it as a possibility to enact measures that lie beyond those, which have been agreed to by the UNSC members. One can only guess what such measures could be, but it seems clear that the representative is talking about measures that would exert a greater pressure to the Syrian government, than what it was subjected too through the resolutions. This suggestion should of course be viewed in the light of the statement presented earlier, where Ms Rice, at the same meeting, talks of “intensified external pressure” as a means to stop the Syrian government from killing the Syrian people (UNSC 2012c:10). In correlation with the above, the American representative repeats this rhetoric on the following UNSC-meeting on July 19th 2012, where she states:

“It is simply not credible to argue that the mere continuation of an unarmed observer mission in the midst of these threats and spiralling violence can or will fundamentally change anything.”

(UNSC 2012d:11)

From here Ms Rice goes on to talk about how an unarmed observer mission to Syria is not sufficient, and how the United States will, instead seek alliances outside of the UNSC to pressurise Al-Assad (UNSC 2012d:11). The clear-cut perception, which can be derived from this is that the American government is not contempt with the measures employed by the UNSC and, in relation to earlier statements, push for more decisive action. Ms Rice seems to go even further, when she states that the United States and their allies are willing to invoke the actions that are required, if the Syrian authorities do not end the killings of civilians:

“Yet let there be no doubt: we, our allies and others in this body are planning and preparing for those actions that will be required of all of us if the Al-Assad regime persists in the slaughter of the Syrian people.”

(UNSC 2012c:10)
6.5.2 The Extend of R2P and the Issue of Regime Change

The state

In regard to the violent perpetrations by the Syrian regime, Ms Rice frames these in terms that connect them to the types of crimes that are perceived as unjust within the R2P norm, as accounted for in chapter 5. This is evident when she, in a repetition of the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ words, blames the Syrian regime for perusing actions that “might amount to crimes against humanity”. Suggesting such perpetrations, the American delegate frames the Syrian conflict, as a case where mass atrocities are committed by the regime. Thus the American government perceives the Syrian crisis as a case within the R2P framework.

Within the R2P norm it is clearly stated that the sovereign states of the world has inherent responsibilities concerning their peoples. We argue that the American perception of the Syrian state fits within this R2P aspect. This can be seen when the American representative calls for the Syrian government to live up to its responsibilities by halting the violence against its own people, calling this unacceptable. Furthermore the American representative expands her country’s perception of the Syrian government as illegitimate due to its violent actions and overruling of rights, which permeates the behaviour of the state. One of the main points contained within the UN perception of sovereign states is exactly that a state should protect the rights of its people and that it should not kill or otherwise commit mass atrocities against the people within the borders.

The R2P perception extracted in chapter 5 additionally contains the notion that all individuals carry a responsibility. This is to say that although the state may not commit mass atrocity crimes against its people, the people also carry an inherent responsibility to abstain from such actions. This is however not a part of the American representatives articulations of Syrian crisis. Instead Ms Rice is very clearly stating that the responsibility to halt the violence lies with the state, and otherwise articulating the people of Syria as peaceful protesters. We argue, that in this way the United States fail to address the responsibilities of the armed opposition, which is applying violent measures to overthrow the government. In
this way the American perception of the Syrian crisis does not entirely correlates with the R2P norm.

Furthermore, the American government perceives the Syrian state to have additional responsibilities beyond its state boundaries. International responsibility is also captured within the R2P norm as it refers to the UN Charter. Ms Rice clearly states that she perceives the Syrian crisis as a threat to regional peace and stability, thus she call for actions of the UNSC to accommodate this threat. Consequently we argue that there is concordance between the United States’ perceptions of the international responsibility of Syria and the perception contained within the R2P norm in this regard.

The international community
The American government assigns responsibilities to the international community in relation to the Syrian people, as the Syrian state has failed its responsibility to protect. This is evident when the American delegate, on numerous occasions, encourages the members of the Security Council to assume their responsibilities by protecting the Syrians against the violent actions of the regime. In this regard Ms Rice suggests that the UNSC has a responsibility beyond sending monitors to Syria. Through the speeches it becomes clear that the American government perceives the responsibility of the UNSC to include sanctions and embargoes to the Syrian regime. Ms Rice demands an intensified external pressure on the Al-Assad regime, by specifically calling for sanctions and embargoes to the Syrian regime in order to stop it from killing the Syrian protesters. This demand for action continues as the American representative states that her government is impatient and unsatisfied with what the UNSC has amounted to in terms of actions. Specifically Ms Rice shuns the notion that unarmed observers can change anything and at one point reveals that the Americans are contemplating to take action beyond what the UNSC can agree to authorise.

The perception that the international community has a responsibility to protect is one of the cornerstones of the R2P norm, as illustrated in chapter 5. It is emphasised that in cases where mass atrocities occur, the international community
has an inherent responsibility to protect those subjected to such crimes. Any chosen action should be commenced through the UNSC and additionally; sanctions and embargoes are legitimate measures, although their legitimacy duly depends on the situation and is a matter of assessment, related to the notion of “timely and decisive action”. We therefore argue that Ms Rice’s call for sanctions through the UNSC correlates with the R2P norm. What is, however, problematic of the American statements, in relation to the R2P norm, is the threat of exerting pressure through actions that lie beyond what has been agreed to within the UNSC. From our findings of the R2P perception, all action regarding R2P related crises should be agreed on and commenced through the Security Council, thus excluding the possibility of reacting by unauthorised actions, commenced through alliances outside of the Council.

In continuation of the American calls for a more dynamic Security Council as a proponent for action and pressure towards the Syrian regime, Ms Rice critiques those members of the Council who obstructs decisions leading in this direction. Openly vocal about the Russian and Chinese decisions to prevent suggested draft-resolutions from being enacted, by making use of their veto rights, the American representative attacks these decisions.

This critique of the use of vetoes to avert the Council from applying additional pressure to the Syrian government can be seen in accordance with the R2P norm. From the R2P perception, which we have derived in chapter 5 it is clearly stated that the permanent members of the UNSC should refrain from exercising this right in situations where states fail their responsibility to protect. This is however ignored by China and Russia and thus we argue that the American criticism of the application of vetoes, in this particular case, lies within the scope of R2P. However, we must underline that this claim is based on the perception that the Syrian regime does in fact “manifestly fail” its responsibilities.

A final point that will be touched upon in this chapter is the role of regime change. In the American contributions to the debate on Syria, the American representative denies the notion that the United States government contemplates
military intervention to stop the Syrian conflict. At the same time, Ms Rice rejects the comparison between Syria and Libya, which through military intervention, led to regime change. In this way the American representative seeks to refute the allegations that UNSC action would lead to a replacement of the Al-Assad regime.

In this way the American perception of UNSC action stays within the R2P norm. The idea of R2P contains the notion that prevention of mass atrocities is most effectively secured through such values as democracy and respect for human rights, but referring to R2P does not legitimise coercive actions that advocate such values. Thus we argue that although R2P contains the possibility of invoking actions to halt mass atrocity crimes, it does not prescribe actions that lead to an outcome beyond this.

We will argue however, that it is understandable why the American statements could give rise to concerns of whether the action called for by the Americans is a pretext for regime change. Throughout the American statements Ms Rice articulates a wish for a transition towards legitimate governance. As already stated above, the American government’s perception of legitimate governance is highly unlikely to include the Al-Assad regime, seeing that it is not a proponent for democracy. However, this is only additional factors on top of the all-encompassing issue; that the Al-Assad regime is manifestly failing its responsibilities by violently oppressing its people and committing mass atrocity crimes. In this relation it is thus evident that the American call for action with the aim of creating a democratic Syria that abide to human rights, goes beyond the limits of R2P-prescribed action.
Chapter 7 Merged Perceptions of R2P and Regime Change

In this chapter we will merge the perceptions, of the five UNSC member states, relating to the Syrian crisis. Relating these perceptions to each subcategory of the R2P norm, will give rise to a final understanding of the member states’ perceptions in relation to R2P. Thus we can discuss to what extend R2P is present within these perceptions. This will clarify what role regime change has in regard to the extent of R2P’s presence in the perceptions of the Syrian conflict.

We will structure this chapter on the basis of the subcategories from chapter 5, however leaving out the category related to Responsibility of the International Community to Assist the State. This is due to the fact that the member states do not express any perceptions relating to this subcategory. We argue that this is due to the advanced state of the Syrian conflict, which is perceived to be beyond the point where assisting the Syrian regime is perceived as neither legitimate nor constructive. Additionally, the issue of regime change will be derived in relation to the subcategory of Responsibility of the International Community to Respond, as these aspects are interlinked.

State Sovereignty

Throughout the UNSC meetings, China and Russia are the only member states, which are primarily concerned with state sovereignty and thus the only members explicitly concerned with this aspect. Both states stress the importance of sovereignty, here exemplified by China: “…the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria should be fully respected.” (UNSC 2012a:9). It is, in this regard, evident that the Chinese perception of sovereignty is highly influenced by the UN Charter. The Russian perception of the Syrian state is also affected by their inclination towards sovereignty: “Based on respect for Syria’s sovereignty, we have cautioned against destructive attempts at external interference and against imposing any kind of illusory fixes.”(UNSC 2012b:3).

The remaining UNSC members do not address any perceptions of sovereignty in relation to the Syrian state. On the contrary they fail to mention this
issue entirely. This, we argue, indicates that these states do not perceive the sovereignty of the Syrian state as a legitimate barrier against intervention. This can be connected to their perception that Syria constitutes an R2P related case.

In conclusion it is ambiguous to what extend the perception of state sovereignty, inherent within the R2P norm, is present within the members states’ perception of the Syrian crisis. The Russian and Chinese perceptions of state sovereignty correlate with the idea of sovereignty, inherent in the UN Charter, which the R2P builds on. However, both state’s preoccupation with sovereignty suggests that the R2P norm is not represented within their perception of the Syrian crisis. When it comes to the UK, America and France, their failure of relating to the sovereignty of Syria, in their dealings with the Syrian crisis, suggests that they perceive the sovereignty of Syria, as eroded due to its failure in meeting its responsibilities.

**Internal Responsibilities of the State**

The French, American and British perceptions of the internal responsibilities of the state correlate with the perception held within the R2P norm, in that they all perceive the Syrian state as having responsibilities to protect the Syrian people. All three member states link the state with responsibilities to stop the violent repression of the Syrian people and provide them with basic rights. The French perception becomes very apparent when the delegate states that the Syrian authorities “have lost all its legitimacy by murdering their own people” (UNSC 2011b:3). When placing the responsibility for the crisis, the three member states again agree. They primarily place this responsibility with the regime. In this regard the American representative frames the Syrian government as: “(…) responsible for the main security threats.” (UNSC 2012c:10). Both China and Russia are inclined to the same perception, although not as unambiguous. Here exemplified in a Russian statement: “However, the continuation of this tragedy cannot be blamed only on the harsh actions of the authorities.” (UNSC 2011b:4). Additionally, China calls upon the regime to respect the Syrian people’s request for reforms.
Within the R2P norm a state’s responsibility stretches beyond protection. A state must also provide rights and freedom to its people, as part of the preventive aspect of R2P. Thus the state has the primary responsibility in regard to both protection from the four R2P related crimes and the prevention of the emergence of these.

In this way we argue, that the perceptions by all members of the UNSC correlate with the R2P norm. However, they emphasises the responsibility of the Syrian regime in regard to the conflict to very different degrees. Thus the French, American and British perceptions are much more in line with R2P as they are unequivocal in placing the responsibility with the Syrian state, and further stress the importance of basic rights. The Chinese and Russian perceptions regarding to the responsibility of the conflict, is as stated not as unequivocally referring to the Syrian state. Rather the Russians and the Chinese are cautious in placing the initial responsibility with the state, but asks both parties to end the violence.

**Responsibilities of the Individual**

The perceptions of the UNSC members, relating to the responsibilities of individuals, are highly differentiated. The French perception is very unambiguously stated, when the opposition against the Syrian regime is framed as “legitimate aspirations” (UNSC 2011b:2). The French representative does, however, ask the opposition to put an end to the violence, thus recognising that it has a part in the fighting. Both the Chinese and the British delegate are more divided on the subject and urges “the various parties in Syria to exercise restraint and to avoid more bloodshed and all forms of violence” (UNSC 2011b:5). The Russian delegate perceives the oppositions resistance as illegitimate, thus suggesting that responsibility is also very much with the people. In this relation it is stated that the Syrian opposition “have been pushing their own geopolitical intentions, which have nothing in common with the legitimate interests of the Syrian people” (UNSC 2012d:8). The United States are in opposition here to and altogether fails to address a responsibility outside of the Syrian regime.

Thus we argue that the Chinese and British perceptions are closest related to the R2P norm, in that they hold all parties responsible for the crisis. The Russian
perception is very much defined by an emphasis on state sovereignty, where the state is seen as the only legitimate practitioner of violence. The French perception, we will also argue, does not correlate with the R2P norm. In leaving out any criticism of the opposition, but instead framing it as legitimate, the French government legitimates the use of violence committed too by the opposition, which is not in line with the R2P norm. Concerning the United States, the failure of mentioning the opposition in relation to responsibility, groups the American perception along with the French. However, it is essential to stress that this line of argument roots in the perception of the internal responsibility of the state. As the state, within the R2P, is assigned responsibility to prevent, which is largely framed as providing basic right, it can be discussed if the opposition in Syria can be justified on the basis of the Syrian regime failing this responsibility.

Responsibility of the International Community to Respond and the Role of Regime Change

The member state’s perceptions of the international community, in relation to the Syrian crisis, are very much influenced by their individual perceptions of the state sovereignty. Again there is a strong division of perceptions within the UNSC. The Western states, the UK, France and the USA, are all strong proponents of an international responsibility to protect the Syrian people from the regime, and thus an international respond. All three countries assert the use of sanctions in order to pressurise the Syrian regime. This perception, we argue, is in line with the perception inherent in the R2P norm, which prescribes that the international community has a responsibility to respond to crises where mass atrocities occur. In this regard sanctions are perceived as legitimate diplomatic tools.

China and Russia, in reverse, are not as determined in their perceptions regarding the role of the international community. Both states perceive a role for the international community in relation to halting the Syrian crisis, however their inclination towards respecting state sovereignty compel them to prescribe a less dynamic role. In opposition to any kind of coercive measures, they argue to support the means of dialogue between the two parties. As this initiative is directed at the relation between the two conflicting parties it does not necessarily
include the international community, thus it is not widely elaborated within the R2P norm. Russia even goes as far as stating that any dialogue established between the contending parties should be “conducted by the Syrians themselves” (UNSC 2012b:3). Thus we argue that the Chinese and Russian perceptions regarding the international community’s responsibility in the case of the Syrian crisis, is more limited than prescribed within the R2P. This is evident, when the Chinese delegate states that: “(...) sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries are the basic norms governing inter-State relations enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations” (UNSC 2012d:13).

As stated above, we argue that there is a great division between the western and the eastern states in relation to their perceptions of the role of the international community in regards to the Syrian conflict. However, four of the five member states, namely France, the UK, China and the USA, all stress the need for an international response to prevent the possible destabilisation of the Middle Eastern region as a consequence of the Syrian crisis. We argue that this perception is in continuation of the UN Charter and thereby the R2P Norm, which prescribes international response to crisis that constitute regional security.

In relation to the outcome of an international response France, the UK and the USA all perceive a response to the Syrian crisis as entailing a political transition. Both Russia and China recognise the need for reform, but does not mention transition. The French and American representatives are additionally both very unequivocal in demanding that the political transition leads to democracy. The delegate of the UK is less clear in stating his country’s expectations to the outcome of an international response.

We argue that response leading a transition towards democracy is not representative of the R2P norm, thus both France and the USA deviate on this aspect. Then the perceptions by China, Russia and UK correlate more with R2P, as they are less demanding.

In this relation we argue that the French and American perceptions relating to the outcome of an international response, can be understood as amounting to outright regime change. This argument is based on the interpretation that both the American and French governments no longer perceive the Al-Assad regime
neither as legitimate nor as a proponent of democracy. Thus the logical conclusion must be that his government is not likely to be included in a transition to democracy. However, the French, British and Americans have on separate occasions denied that they are in favour of a Syrian regime change. The refusals of this notion have been aimed at refuting allegations made by the Chinese and Russians, claiming that specific suggested draft resolutions were merely pretexts for military intervention and regime change. The Russians directly connects Syria with the Libyan case of military intervention and regime change when they state that: “The situation in Syria cannot be considered in the Council separately from the Libyan experience” (UNSC 2011b:4).

Thus we argue that the issue of regime change plays a significant role in the Russian and Chinese perceptions of the Syrian crisis, in that both countries refer to the fear of regime change as grounds for not supporting specific resolutions relating to the Syrian conflict.

**Collaboration and the Security Council**

In relation to the Syrian crisis collaboration within the UNSC is related to the above-disseminated issue of response to the crisis. Again, the clear division of opinions is evident in that China and Russia both have applied their veto-right in preventing the enactment of draft-resolutions. Their reasons for applying veto revolve around opposition towards coercive measures and regime change. For instance, the Russian delegate refers to draft resolution S/2012/77 as “calling for regime change” (UNSC 2012a:9).

The American, French and British delegates express an explicit criticism towards the use of veto, as disappointment and indication of the international community failing its responsibilities. Thus we argue that the issue of regime change plays a significant role regarding the application of veto, and thus preventing collective R2P actions within the UNSC.

We argue that the British, French and American perceptions represent the R2P norm. This is evident as the R2P norm prescribes that in situations of mass atrocities, the international community must enact their responsibility, by issuing collective action through a united UNSC. However, the French and American
representative states that their governments will seek to invoke actions towards the Syrian regime, through forums outside of the UNSC. Both delegates claim the applications of vetoes as their reasons for this. This is not consistent with the R2P norm, which clearly perceives that all actions, relating to crises of mass atrocities, should be commenced through collective action issued by the UNSC.

**Chapter 8 Conclusive Remarks**

This research paper has shown a clear division within the United Nations Security Council relating to the individual members state’s perceptions of the Syrian Conflict. This division in perceptions is generally related to whether the perceptions are shaped by the perception of intra-state conflict inherent in the R2P norm, or not. Thus the division is between those states that perceive the Syrian conflict as a case where the international community has a responsibility to protect the Syrian people and those that emphasise state sovereignty in articulated opposition to this perception. Consequently the R2P norm seems to influence both perceptions. We therefore argue that the R2P norm plays a definite role in the UNSC member state’s perceptions of the Syrian conflict. Thus we can conclude that the responsibility to protect is present to a great extent in the perceptions, of the five permanent member states of the Security Council, relating to the Syrian conflict. However, we stress that not all the member states’ perceptions are equally expressing the R2P norm.

Additionally the issue of regime change plays a distinct role in shaping the perceptions of the UNSC member states, in relation to the Syrian conflict. Like the R2P norm, the issue of regime change influences the perceptions of the UNSC member states to a great extent. While the issue of regime change shapes some UNSC members’ perceptions because they are opposed to regime change in Syria, others member states perceptions’ are shaped by this issue, because they, arguably, aim at invoking regime change in Syria. It is therefore clear that the R2P norm and the issue of regime change are interlinked in the case of the Syrian crisis. However, we stress that the issue of regime change does not influence all the member states’ perceptions equally. In conclusion, the issue of regime change
greatly influences the UNSC members’ perceptions of the Syrian crisis in relation to the responsibility to protect. It is evident that those states, which advocate regime change, have perceptions, regarding the Syrian conflict, which greatly correlate with the R2P norm. Reversely we will argue that those states, which oppose regime change, are very rarely holding perceptions of the Syrian crisis that correlate with the R2P norm. Thus we argue that the division within the UNSC, in regards to the Syrian conflict, is related to both the issue of regime change and the R2P norm.

One of the questions that arise in the wake of this research, is weather the issue of regime change, emerging from the Libyan intervention and decisive in UNSC response to the Syrian conflict, has forever taken permanent residence within the dilemma of intervening in intra-state conflicts. We believe that our findings suggest that the issue of regime change is so decisive in the Syrian conflict that there are reasons to conduct further research upon the role of regime change in other R2P-related situations. This would elaborate the role that regime change plays, suggesting whether it is a permanent issue or a contingent factor, which was only relevant in a short moment after Syria. Furthermore it will be interesting to conduct continuous research on the relationship between the R2P norm and the issue of regime change.
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