The past, present, and future of intervention

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Abstract. Despite the prominent place of intervention in contemporary world politics, debate is limited by two weaknesses: first, an excessive presentism; and second, a focus on normative questions to the detriment of analysis of the longer-term sociological dynamics that fuel interventionary pressures. In keeping with the focus of the Special Issue on the ways in which intervention is embedded within modernity, this article examines the emergence of intervention during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, assesses its place in the contemporary world, and considers its prospects in upcoming years. The main point of the article is simple – although intervention changes in character across time and place, it is a persistent feature of modern international relations. As such, intervention is here to stay.

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Rethinking intervention

There are few issues more pressing to contemporary world politics than intervention. On the one hand, intervention is a routine policy tool employed by states to quell disorder abroad and transform other polities. On the other hand, the use of intervention as an instrument of statecraft often sparks intense public debates both in intervening and target states: over the rights of states to suspend sovereignty rights; over the utility of intervention as a policy tool; and over the relationship between intervention and other tools of coercive reordering, from sanctions to war. Intervention, therefore, embraces a range of thorny normative, analytical, and substantive concerns.

Such debates make this Special Issue timely. What makes it even timelier is its extension of debates beyond the limited ways in which the topic is often approached. For their part, most policymakers see intervention as a relatively uncontroversial 'end of the line' for instances in which other tools of coercive diplomacy have been

tried and have failed.[1] For most academics, debate centres on the 'ought' of intervention: whether and when states should intervene; the balance to be struck between interests and ethical concerns; the power asymmetries between intervening and target states, and so on. If the former see intervention as a relatively uncontroversial policy instrument to be used in the face of an incalcitrant problem, the latter reduce intervention to a boo-hooray conversation that yields much noise, but little light.[2] In this sense, there is no lack of *quantity* to policy-oriented and scholarly work on intervention.[3] But there is a discernible lack of analytical and historical *quality* to much of this work.

This Special Issue, therefore, is both timely and important. The collection makes two major contributions to the study of intervention. First, rather than see intervention as an exceptional practice *vis-à-vis* the norm of non-intervention, the contributors demonstrate that intervention is an important mechanism in its own right, fundamental to how core strands of international order have spread around the world.[4] Second, the Special Issue moves away from the contemporary fixation with intervention as a practice that belongs primarily to the post-Cold War world. The collection both historicises intervention and embeds it within the emergence of modern international order. This represents a shift away from normative, presentist concerns with the rights and wrongs of recent interventions towards a longer-term assessment of the sociological dynamics that shape interventionary policies over time and place. For contributors to this Special Issue, intervention is a persistent social practice that mediates the two basic drivers of modern world order: the extension of markets, governance structures, and symbolic schemas to a global scale *at the same time* as sovereign territoriality has been instituted as the ground-rule of a global inter-state system. In this concluding article, we add to the collective concerns of the Special Issue by: first, tracing the emergence of the modern concept of intervention; second, examining its place in the contemporary world; and third, offering some reflections on why, and in what ways, the practice of intervention is likely to endure in upcoming years.

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[1] This was made clear in the exchanges that took place between academics and British policymakers during the seminar series that acted as the incubator for this Special Issue. Policymakers tended to dwell on the 'lessons' of interventions they considered to be 'successful' (such as Kosovo), while discounting those they considered to be 'failures' (such as Iraq). But what was most striking about parliamentarians of all political persuasions was their shared view of intervention as a routine policy tool *regardless* of judgements about its success or failure.

[2] The sheer volume of this work makes if impossible to *précis* effectively. What is important to note is the partisanship within debates about intervention. On one side are advocates ranging from Gareth Evans to Fernando Tesón. On the other are critics ranging from Noam Chomsky to Mark Mazower. This partisanship is reinforced by the presence of scholarly journals such as *The Global Responsibility to Protect* (which is largely supportive of the practice) and the *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* (which is not). The result of this 'with us or against us' mentality is, for the most part, a non-conversation.

[3] For example, at the April 2013 meeting of the International Studies Association in San Francisco, there were over 100 papers and roundtable contributions on intervention. The great majority of these were concerned with normative issues, particularly in relation to recent interventions in Libya, Mali, and Cote d'Ivoire, and the failure to intervene militarily in Darfur and Syria, reinforcing the presentism that tends to surround discussions of intervention.

[4] This is not a new point in and of itself – indeed, it is one made by Stephen Krasner in his seminal work on the subject, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). However, as will become clear, the approach taken by the contributors does mark a distinctive departure in terms of how the intervention/non-intervention dynamic is approached.

The past of intervention

While the contributors to the Special Issue agree that intervention is a modern social practice, they disagree about what this means. Most papers associate intervention with the 'long nineteenth century' and the advent of modernity, a configuration of industrialisation, rational statebuilding, and 'ideologies of progress' that bifurcated the world into core and peripheral polities, and constructed an international order in this image.[5] As the introduction to the Special Issue makes clear, intervention is the 'will to order', a modality that regulates the dual dynamics that lie at the heart of modern international order: first, the drive towards the globalisation of social space; and second, the fixing of political authority within territorially bound sovereign states. As Eddie Keene shows in his contribution, ideas about intervention, rooted in the formulations of Vattel, Wolff, and others, were linked to changing ideas about hierarchy that, in turn, constituted a shift in how international order was imagined. Rather than associating international order with a 'ranking of powers' based on precedence, title, and position, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed a shift towards the 'grading of powers' based on power capabilities. The 'grading of powers' led to the formal recognition of 'Great Powers'. Great Powers possessed special rights (for example, over intervention) and responsibilities (such as a duty to maintain international order). They also agreed to recognise sovereignty between each other. It was only with such mutual recognition, and a concomitant hardening of notions of inside and outside, that intervention as a discrete social practice could emerge. The recognition of sovereignty acted as a brake on territorial transgressions. In turn, intervention became a specific right afforded *to* the Great Powers *by* the Great Powers.

Other contributors, however, offer more expansive understandings of intervention, seeing it as common to any international order in which polities transgress another unit's realm of jurisdiction. The article by Chris Reus-Smit, for example, argues that intervention is a practice that involves the reconfiguring of identities, institutions, and practices of one political entity by another. As such, intervention is not limited to an international order constituted by sovereignty, but is premised on a broader conception of individual rights and mutual recognition. This understanding of intervention chimes with some recent scholarship that traces intervention to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, associating it, as does Reus-Smit, with the development of rights over religious conscience.[6] The European Reformations, it is argued, were central to the development of intervention rights in that they arose from competing claims to political authority: the transnational (as vested in the Pope) vs. the territorial (as vested in absolutist monarchs).[7] The tying together, it is argued, of

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[5] Barry Buzan and George Lawson, 'The Global Transformation: The Nineteenth Century and the Making of Modern International Relations', *International Studies Quarterly*, 57:3 (2013), In Press. On the concept of the 'long nineteenth century', see Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875–1914* (London: Abacus, 1987), p. 8.

[6] See, for example, Stefano Recchia and Jennifer Welsh (eds), *Just and Unjust Military Interventions: European Thinkers from Vitoria to Mill* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Brendan Simms and D.J.B. Trim (eds), *Humanitarian Intervention: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[7] The centrality of ideas of individual rights, rooted in concerns for freedom of conscience, to the development of intervention during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is relayed in Christian Reus-Smit, *Individual Rights and the Making of the Modern International System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), ch. 3. See also Jonathan Havercroft, 'Was Westphalia "All That"? Hobbes, Bellarmine and the Norm of Non-Intervention', *Global Constitutionalism*, 1:1 (2012), pp. 120–40.

issues of confessional solidarity with notions of 'liberty', generated the first interventions against foreign 'tyranny'.[8] These, in turn, became the forerunners of later campaigns that deepened notions of human rights beyond an association with religious (particularly Christian) conscience.

Although it is possible to detect interventionary practices in earlier periods,[9] in our view modernity fundamentally altered the concept and practice of intervention in three ways: it differentiated intervention from war both for policymakers and within public discourse; it established intervention as a tool for both the containment and the promotion of revolutionary ideologies;[10] and, by opening up issues of when and where intervention was legitimate, modernity generated the space for normative debates about intervention to emerge. In this sense, applying modern conceptions of intervention to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries runs a twofold risk: first, projecting modern political and normative questions onto historical periods where intervention was associated with a different – and less problematic – set of issues; and second, buying into a parochial concern with the Peace of Augsburg and the Treaties of Westphalia that are said to underwrite modern conceptions of territorial sovereignty. We do not have the space to rehearse the extensive debates that have accumulated around this latter issue except to note that the peace treaties of the early modern period were limited in scope, setting few boundaries to interventionary practices.[11] Nor is it clear that there was a distinction to be drawn between intervention and war during this period. Although it is often difficult to distinguish war and intervention, such a distinction is vital to understanding the specific qualities of the latter. Whereas war disregards sovereignty, intervention qualifies or suspends it. Before the nineteenth century, there was no understanding of intervention along these lines. Rather, debates about intervention were swallowed within broader discussions about war, particularly the just war tradition.[12]

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[8] Simms and Trim, *Humanitarian Intervention*, p. 24.

[9] This is particularly likely if intervention is defined in operational terms, either by defining it in terms of the transhistorical characteristics that distinguish intervention as a social practice, as per Reus-Smit in this Special Issue, or in terms of its primary objective, for example in changing the authority structure of target polities. The latter is the focus of Oran Young, 'Intervention and International Systems', *Journal of International Affairs*, 22:2 (1968), pp. 177–87; and James Rosenau, 'Intervention as a Scientific Concept', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 13:2 (1969), pp. 149–71.

[10] On the importance of the French Revolution in particular, and the principle of self-determination in general, to understandings of intervention, see Hans J. Morgenthau, 'To Intervene or Not to Intervene', *Foreign Affairs*, 45:3 (1967), pp. 425–36.

[11] On this issue, see Benjamin de Carvalho, Halvard Leira, and John Hobson, 'The Big Bangs of IR: The Myths That Your Teachers Still Tell You about 1648 and 1919', *Millennium*, 39:3 (2011), pp. 735–58; Daniel Nexon, *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Andreas Osiander, 'Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth', *International Organization*, 55:2 (2001), pp. 251–87; and Benno Teschke, *The Myth of 1648* (London: Verso, 2003).

[12] Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Luke Glanville, 'The Myth of Traditional Sovereignty', *International Studies Quarterly*, 57:1 (2013), pp. 79–90. The relationship between just war theory, humanitarian intervention, and the use of force in contemporary international affairs is explored in Nicholas Wheeler, *Saving Strangers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Gary J. Bass, 'Jus Post Bellum', *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 32:4 (2004), pp. 384–412; and Nicholas Rengger, *Just War and International Order: The Uncivil Condition in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Interestingly, one of the main architects of modern just war theory, Michael Walzer, is largely sceptical about the concept of humanitarian intervention. See Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust War* (London: Basic Books, 1977), ch. 6. For Walzer's damning critique of the 2011 NATO intervention in Libya, see Michael Walzer, 'The Case Against Our Attack on Libya', *New Republic* (20 March 2011), available at: {www.newrepublic.com/article/world/85509/the-case-against-our-attack-libya#} accessed 7 July 2013.

Far more important to the emergence of intervention as a social practice was the clash between ideas of nationalism and transnational solidarities such as liberalism and socialism, the caging of capacities in rational bureaucratic states that went hand in hand with the extension of these polities into imperial territories, and the globalisation of market relations. These dynamics belong primarily to the nineteenth century.[13] During this period, a deep intensification of connections between polities was matched by the development of acute power differentials between them.[14] The result was the construction of a core-periphery international order in which sovereign territoriality was widely recognised between states in the core, but interventionary policies were considered normal for those in the periphery.[15] This bifurcated international order was mediated through the 'standard of civilisation' and policed through colonialism, which worked hand-in-hand to regulate the frontier between civilised and barbarian peoples.[16]

Intervention, therefore, emerged as a regulating force between increasingly invasive transnational social forces and increasingly rigid political boundaries, constituted through the mutual recognition of sovereignty. In short, intervention belongs primarily to modernity. However, to associate intervention with modernity does not mean giving it a single tenor. To the contrary, intervention has been deployed in two apparently contrasting ways: as a tool of 'order transformation' and as a means of 'order maintenance'. During the nineteenth century, intervention became associated with a family of practices, including blockades and sanctions, which were responsible for the coercive restructuring of 'other' societies. Intervention was a means through which to transform 'backward' places, whether this backwardness was conceived as a deficient economy, an illegitimate polity, or an uncivilised culture. Some of these legacies live on, as exemplified by interventions in former colonies during the Cold War and after. It is only with post-World War Two decolonisation and the emergence of a fully global sovereign order that intervention became a practice mainly constituted between sovereign states. In previous iterations, it is better seen either as an inter-imperial practice or as one carried out within imperial domains.

If 'order transformation' in the periphery is one component of intervention, a second component is 'order maintenance' in the core. As noted above, core states tended to respect non-intervention within the Family of Nations. However, there were exceptions to this norm. For example, during the nineteenth century, a range of insurgent ideologies, from nationalism to republicanism, destabilised absolutist states. Intervention was a tool through which absolutist regimes sought to forestall these challenges.[17] The best-known example of this tendency is the Concert of Europe

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[13] Buzan and Lawson, 'Global Transformation'.

[14] C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[15] Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of 'Civilisation' in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Shogo Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire: China and Japan's Encounter with European International Society* (London: Routledge, 2009).

[16] Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Robert Knox, 'Civilizing Interventions? Race, War and International Law', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 26:1 (2013), pp. 111–32; Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law, 187–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For a guide to this literature and these debates, see the contribution by Robbie Shilliam to this Special Issue.

[17] Roger Bullen, 'The Great Powers and the Iberian Peninsula, 1815–48', in Alan Sked (ed.), *Europe's Balance of Power 1815–48* (London: MacMillan, 1979), pp. 58–9; Paul Seabury, *Balance of Power* (London: Chandler, 1965), p. 205.

system instituted after the 1815 Treaty of Vienna. The Concert was constituted out of Burkean concerns to preserve the 'European Commonwealth' in the face of the multiple challenges represented by the Atlantic Revolutions of the late eighteenth century.[18] For Burke, the French Revolution defiled the fabric of the European states-system, trampling on European traditions of order and custom, and standing for the rejection of property rights and absolutism. More importantly, even if the English were 'neither the converts of Rousseau nor the disciples of Voltaire', other states around Europe were not similarly immunised against the three symptoms of the French disease: regicide, Jacobinism, and Atheism.[19] Burke made the case for active suppression of the French Revolution justified by what he called the 'law of neighborhood': that radical change in one state affected others to the extent that, if necessary, revolutions could be suppressed by force. Such conceptions were central to interventions carried out by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Naples (in 1821), the French in Spain (in 1823), and the Prussians in Bavaria and Baden (in 1849).

Burke's doctrine of counterrevolution had two major consequences for the practice of intervention. First, the Concert of Europe explicitly linked domestic and international security – instability at home threatened instability abroad.[20] In this way, the *internal* organisation of states became seen as a potential threat to *international* order.[21] This permitted counterrevolutionary interventions in situations when domestic unrest was seen as unsettling to international affairs, such as the reinstating of Ottoman authority in Lebanon/Syria in 1839–40. Far from being a neutral tool of statecraft, intervention maintained a form of state sovereignty that limited forms of political expression considered threatening to incumbent elites, whether this took the form of alternative religious beliefs, republicanism, socialism, nationalism, or anti-colonialism. Second, intervention became a means through which to preserve the balance of power. Not only was this important during the nineteenth century, it also served as a justification for a range of interventions during the Cold War, when both the United States and the Soviet Union intervened in order to preserve a sense of global balance. Henry Kissinger, for example, justified US interventions around the world in the interests of preserving the global correlation of forces.[22] And for their part, the Soviets limited the sovereignty of satellite states and intervened frequently to maintain the homogeneity of their bloc, including in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

This analysis yields two conclusions. First, intervention should be understood as both a means of 'order maintenance' and 'order transformation'. If, as noted above, intervention was a tool used by absolutist regimes and Cold War superpowers to maintain order and preserve international balance, it was also a practice with a

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[18] Brendan Simms, 'A False Principle in the Law of Nations: Burke, State Sovereignty, (German) Liberty and Intervention in the Age of Westphalia', in Brendan Simms and D.J.B. Trim (eds), *Humanitarian Intervention: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 89–110.

[19] Burke cited in Iain Hampsher-Monk, 'Rousseau, Burke's Vindication of Natural Society and Revolutionary Ideology, *European Journal of Political Theory*, 9:3 (2010), pp. 245–66.

[20] Martin Wight, 'Western Values in International Relations', in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds), *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Politics* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966), pp. 149–75.

[21] Bullen, 'The Great Powers', p. 54; Finnemore, *Purpose of Intervention*, pp. 117–18.

[22] Kissinger took his cues from the arch counterrevolutionary of the early nineteenth century, Prince Klemens von Metternich, one of the architects of the Concert of Europe. Kissinger wrote his PhD thesis on Metternich, later publishing it in book form. Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of the Peace 1812–1822* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999).

more radical purpose – the opening up and transformation of foreign spaces. Groups such as the French *parti du mouvement* favoured intervention in defence of oppressed 'nationalities' in Poland, Italy, and Belgium, while Britain carried out self-declared 'liberal' interventions against the slave trade, in Greece, and in the Iberian Peninsula during the early part of the nineteenth century. As Richard Little points out in his contribution to the Special Issue, the rising power of Britain – and later the United States – accompanied a shift away from the use of intervention as a duty to support other Great Powers towards the recognition of a right to self-determination, exemplified by the emergence of the legal category of 'belligerency' within civil wars. The United States (in 1815) and Britain (in 1819) used this category to proclaim their neutrality in the Latin American wars of independence rather than affirm their support for Spain and Portugal. In such cases, the focus on self-determination meant that the liberal position favoured non-intervention.[23] However, this contrasted with the development of overtly humanitarian concerns, such as the campaigns against the slave trade and the practice of sati, that were linked both to developments within Britain (including parliamentary reform, Catholic emancipation, and the Chartist movement) and outside it (including the emergence of transnational advocacy groups and International Non-Governmental Organisations, most notably the International Committee of the Red Cross).[24] As explored below, the relationship between liberalism and humanitarianism was to become much starker during the twentieth century, with considerable consequences for the development of intervention as a social practice.[25]

Second, rather than assuming a single form, intervention has changed in character over time and place. During the nineteenth century, intervention served the dual purposes noted above: the maintenance of order in the core and the transformation of polities, economies, and symbolic schemas in the periphery. In this context, intervention was used for a variety of purposes: to preserve the balance of power, to observe treaty obligations, to collect debts, to protect minority rights, to defend Christian populations, to halt atrocities, and to secure the extraterritorial rights of Europeans *vis-à-vis* indigenous populations. At first, the extension of the sovereign state system after World War Two expanded the possibilities of intervention as the Third World became deeply immersed in superpower competition. Hans Morgenthau, amongst others, stressed the need for the superpowers to prop up newly decolonised states given the weakness of indigenous governance structures.[26] The provision of military and economic aid created ties of inequality that the provider could exploit by either supplying or withdrawing aid, thus dramatically influencing local political

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23 Nicholas Onuf, 'Humanitarian Intervention: The Early Years', *Florida Journal of International Law*, 16:4 (2004), pp. 753–87. The key text here remains John Stuart Mill's 'A Few Words on Non-Intervention', written in 1859 and available at: {http://international-political-theory.net/texts/Mill-Non-Intervention.pdf}. For a discussion of Mill's approach to intervention, see Stanley Hoffman, 'The Problem of Intervention', in Hedley Bull (ed.), *Intervention in World Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), pp. 25–6. Interestingly, both Mill and other prominent liberals such as Giuseppe Mazzini, whilst against intervention to support liberal revolutions, were in favour of interventions that responded to attempts by reactionary powers to crush such revolutions. On this point, see Georgios Varouxakis, 'John Stuart Mill on Intervention and Non-Intervention', *Millennium*, 26:1 (1997), pp. 57–76.
24 Gary Bass, *Freedom's Battle: The Origins of Humanitarian Intervention* (London: Vintage, 2008); Onuf, 'Humanitarian Intervention'.
25 On the development of ideas of humanitarianism during the nineteenth century, see Michael Barnett, *The Empire of Humanity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Bass, *Freedom's Battle*; and Finnemore, *Purpose of Intervention*.
26 Morgenthau, 'To Intervene or Not to Intervene', p. 426.

developments.[27] At the same time, local elites often invited external aid as a means by which to counter domestic rivals and implement development projects. Given this context, the Cold War in the Third World can be characterised as a clash between two 'regimes of global intervention'.[28]

Over the past thirty to forty years, the suspension of formal sovereignty rights for states in the global south has become less straightforward. Postcolonial states, aided by the power of the Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) states and other international collectivities, have re-emphasised their right to non-intervention. As modes of intervention are constituted by the international orders in which they are embedded, practices of intervention are changing in accordance with this new context. As chronicled by David Williams in his contribution to the Special Issue, intervention is, at least to some extent, shifting from overt methods of coercive re-structuring towards 'everyday' forms of 'interventionism'. The next section assesses these changes in the context of contemporary debates about intervention.

The present of intervention

Scholarly attention on intervention has soared in the post-Cold War world. The onset of a wave of humanitarian, usually multilateral, interventions after the collapse of the Soviet Union prompted considerable work on the 'ought' of intervention.[29] At times, this work has sought to contextualise contemporary debates by reaching back to earlier instances of intervention claimed to have been carried out for humanitarian motives or to have had humanitarian outcomes: the British campaign against the slave trade; Gladstone's lobbying for action in the face of the 'Bulgarian horrors'; or India's intervention in East Pakistan (later Bangladesh).[30] However, buoyed by the possibilities opened up by the collapse of the Soviet Union, most commentators stress the newness of debates about intervention in the post-Cold War world. As Brendan Simms and David Trim write, humanitarian intervention is usually treated as 'a subject without a history'.[31]

The problem with this presentist frame is that it fails to situate contemporary concerns within longer-term debates about intervention. This denudes contemporary debate to the extent that much of it takes place in a vacuum, seemingly unaware that normative questions about intervention have been the subject of considerable debate

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[27] Morgenthau, 'To Intervene or Not to Intervene', p. 426.

[28] Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[29] A selective sample of these texts includes Simon Chesterman, *Just War or Just Peace? Humanitarian Intervention and International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); J. L. Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane (eds), *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal and Political Dilemmas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Gene M. Lyons and Michael Mastanduno (eds), *Beyond Westphalia? State Sovereignty and International Intervention* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Anne Orford, *International Authority and the Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse, *Humanitarian Intervention in Contemporary Conflict* (Cambridge: Polity, 1996); Thomas Weiss, *Humanitarian Intervention* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007); Jennifer Welsh (ed.), *Humanitarian Intervention and International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); and Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*.

[30] Examples include Bass, *Freedom's Battle*; and Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*.

[31] Brendan Simms and David Trim, 'Towards a History of Humanitarian Intervention', in Brendan Simms and D.J.B. Trim (eds), *Humanitarian Intervention: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 2.

for over two centuries. The long-term nature of these discussions should tell present-day commentators that such issues are, at root, irresolvable. All interventions are contested because they require taking sides in disputes in which there are competing claims. Not only are such competing claims irresolvable in ethical terms, a world of plural states representing plural positions and plural interests cannot take an *a priori* position on whether a particular intervention is justified. The only fully consistent normative position is that contained in Star Trek's Prime Directive: 'no interference in the internal affairs of another civilization'.[32] But there are as few people who rule out intervention under any circumstances as there are true pacifists. In reality, most people favour intervention sometimes – the debate is not *whither* intervention, but where, when and how to conduct it. Such issues cannot be solved in any definitive sense. Rather, they take place within a context that is itself shaped by the historical development of the concept of humanitarianism, a development that, as the contributions to this Special Issue makes clear, is deeply contested.

A preoccupation with the humanitarian motives or outcomes of the interveners generates two problems. First, it is a one-sided view that fails to pay sufficient attention either to the target or to the dynamic between the intervener and the target. We return to this point in the final section. Second, the ethical intentions or outcomes of interventions can never be clearly identified. Regardless of the difficulties of ever knowing 'true intentions', interventions take place for a number of reasons: to maintain order, to support allies, to spread ideas, to safeguard strategic assets, to collect debts, to bring humanitarian relief, and more. As such, intentions are multiple, and ethics and interests interlace – there is no way of fully abstracting one from the other.[33] At the same time, there is no way of knowing humanitarian outcomes in advance – a point emphasised by the Brazilian government in their recent work on 'responsibility while protecting', an attempt to underscore the importance of civilian harm, whether this is caused by states or as a by-product of military intervention.[34] Generating a binary, or even a rank order, between ethics and interests serves to occlude the necessarily political dimensions of intervention. This is particularly evident in debates about the Responsibility to Protect, whose advocates attempt to dissolve political debates within a 'neutral' set of technical mechanisms.[35] Such an approach elides the power asymmetries involved in interventions, as well as the necessarily selective implementation of decisions to intervene and the strategic interests involved in these decisions. In this sense, it represents a step backwards from humanitarian intervention, which at least linked ethical concerns with judgements about 'doability' and interests.[36]

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[32] Perhaps the closest actual representative of this position was the nineteenth-century British parliamentarian, Richard Cobden. For a discussion of Cobden's non-interventionary credentials, see John Vincent, *Non-Intervention and International Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), Part II.

[33] Vincent, *Non-Intervention*, p. 8.

[34] See {http://www.un.int/brazil/speech/Concept-Paper-%20RwP.pdf} accessed 1 August 2013.

[35] The original report on 'Responsibility to Protect' can be found at: {www.un.org/secureworld/}. A key source for the report is Francis Deng et al., *Sovereignty as Responsibility* (Washington DC: Brookings, 1996). The Responsibility to Protect was formally adopted at the 2005 World Summit, which required states to 'take timely and decisive action' to protect populations from acts of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. Two useful, if starkly divergent, takes on the subject are Alex Bellamy, *Global Politics and the Responsibility to Protect* (London: Routledge, 2010); and Aidan Hehir, *The Responsibility to Protect* (London: Palgrave, 2012).

[36] See, for example, Tony Blair's 1999 Chicago Speech, {http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/international/jan-june99/blair_doctrine4-23.html} accessed 1 August 2013, which urged assessments of humanitarian intervention to incorporate calculations of interests and the likelihood of success. For a general discussion of this issue, see Chris Brown, 'The Antipolitical Theory of Responsibility to Protect', *Global Responsibility to Protect* (2013), In Press.

This Special Issue has sought to go beyond these debates. The contributors tackle conceptual, theoretical, and analytical issues that are not wedded to normative debates about intentions and outcomes, nor restricted to contemporary instances of intervention. What the articles collectively demonstrate are the ways in which present-day discussions of intervention rest on debates that are themselves a response to long-term dynamics, not least the clash between transnational social forces and sovereign territoriality. This exemplifies the need to historicise intervention and, thereby, chart both changes and continuities in its practice. By taking on this task, the Special Issue highlights the sociological dynamics that underpin interventionary dynamics over time and place. As the articles collectively demonstrate, intervention is an enduring social practice.

However, if intervention is an enduring social practice, a range of scholarship argues that contemporary forms of global governance, aid and development programmes are making direct military intervention obsolete.[37] Both public and private actors, it is argued, are now 'intervening' in polities around the world to such an extent as to coercively reshape state-society relations without resorting to military force. In the introduction to this Special Issue, John MacMillan highlights three forms of asymmetrical power that lie behind interventions: Great Power status; market control; and the construction of forms of symbolic 'difference', such as race or religion. These, in turn, can be loosely associated with different types of intervention: the first with military interventions; the second with economic interventions, such as those to open up markets or collect debts; and the third with ideas such as the 'standard of civilization' that underpinned a range of interventions during the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century. The continuing hold of these three forms of hierarchy is discussed in turn.

As discussed in the previous section, Great Powers represent the 'great intervening parties of modern history'.[38] Indeed, the very definition of a Great Power is that it is able to carry out interventions, but is itself secure from intervention.[39] We have already noted the ways in which the notion of 'Great Powers' assumed its significance during the early part of the nineteenth century, when some states took on the right to intervene. Hierarchical social relations were linked to understandings of *who* could intervene and *when* they could intervene; intervention was an illustration that states were not *de facto* equal, even if they were *de jure* sovereign.[40] In part, the right to intervene held by Great Powers rested on superior power capabilities; in part, it rested on status. The link between intervention and status was important in that it pressed Great Powers to commit troops to interventions even at significant cost to themselves.[41] For example, Chaim Kaufmann and Robert Pape argue that the sixty

[37] Mark Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of Peoples* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007); Shahar Hameiri, *Regulating Statehood: State Building and the Transformation of the Global Order* (London: Palgrave, 2010).

[38] Hedley Bull, 'Introduction', in Hedley Bull (ed.), *Intervention in World Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), p. 1. See also Raymond Aron, *Peace and War* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1966), p. 487; and John Owen IV, 'The Foreign Imposition of Domestic Institutions' *International Organization*, 56:2 (2002), p. 376.

[39] Bull, 'Introduction', p. 1.

[40] William Ezra Lingelbach, 'The Doctrine and Practice of Intervention in Europe', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 16:1 (1900), p. 4.

[41] Jeffrey Taliaferro, *Balancing Risks: Great Power Interventions in the Periphery* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004). During the nineteenth century, such costs derived from both resistance in target countries and the reduced numbers of troops the intervener could deploy out of concerns about domestic disorder. As Roger Bullen notes, 'intervention was the price that the powers paid for their great-power status'. See Bullen, 'Great Powers', p. 59.

year campaign to end the slave trade cost Britain more than 5,000 lives, as well as an average of nearly 2 per cent of national income per year.[42] This dynamic was equally strong during the Cold War when interventions by both superpowers had the potential to turn into damaging wars, most notably for the US in Vietnam and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The 'blowback' of intervention has also been pronounced in the post-Cold War world as repeated failures have taken their toll on intervening as well as target states: the US has spent over $150 billion on relief and reconstruction alone in Iraq and Afghanistan.[43] In this sense, if superior power capabilities make intervention something Great Powers *can* do, their concern for status makes intervention something Great Powers *must* do, even when this is at considerable cost to both their capabilities and reputation.

Some aspects of the Great Power 'right to intervene' remain central to the governance of the contemporary world, most notably in the obligations of the UN Security Council to uphold international order and, following the agreement on the Responsibility to Protect, to intervene in order to halt genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. There are two factors, however, that mitigate these obligations. First is the uncertain implementation by the Security Council of their role in guaranteeing international peace and security, including via the Responsibility to Protect. In 2011, the Security Council authorised the use of force for human protection purposes against the wishes of a functioning state (Libya) for the first time.[44] However, five states (Brazil, China, Russia, India, and Germany) abstained from the vote. Further disagreements over the scope of Responsibility to Protect in relation to Syria and the Cote d'Ivoire demonstrate the difficulties of turning agreement on principles into decisive action.[45] Second is the emergence of new units of global governance, ranging from the BRICS to the G20, which place considerable stress on non-intervention. Of the five states that abstained on the Security Council vote to authorise force against Libya, four are BRICS states. China, in particular, consistently stresses its adherence to the norm of non-intervention. Beijing's approach to intervention is discussed below. For now, it is worth making the general point that the system of Great Powers that first claimed the right to intervene was closely tied to Western ideas and practices. In a world in which Western power no longer serves as the fulcrum of international order, it is not axiomatic that Great Powers will take a comparable view of intervention, particularly when emerging powers have spent many years struggling for non-intervention to be recognised in *de facto* as well as *de jure* terms.

The second form of hierarchy noted in the introduction is market control. During the nineteenth century, intensified trade, improved transport and communication systems, and coercive practices such as colonialism generated a highly integrated international political economy. These changes eroded local and regional economic

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[42] Chaim D. Kaufmann and Robert A. Pape, 'Explaining Costly International Moral Action: Britain's Sixty-Year Campaign Against the Atlantic Slave Trade', *International Organization*, 53:4 (1999), p. 631. Interestingly, Kaufmann and Pape explain this commitment in terms of British domestic poilitics (incorporating non-conformist elites at a relatively low cost) rather than international status. Our thanks to Chris Brown for alerting us to this point.

[43] These are official US figures drawn from 'Special Inspector General' reports on Afghani and Iraqi Reconstruction. For more details, see Toby Dodge, this Special Issue.

[44] Alex Bellamy and Paul Williams, 'The New Politics of Protection? Cote d'Ivoire, Libya and the Responsibility to Protect', *International Affairs*, 87:4 (2011), p. 825.

[45] Bellamy and Williams, 'New Politics'.

systems, and imposed global price and production structures. As a consequence, levels of interdependence rose, making societies more exposed to developments elsewhere. However, this interdependence was conjoined with the opening of a huge power gap between 'core' and 'peripheral' societies. Those with access to the raw materials wrought from colonialism gained a pronounced advantage over those with limited access to these sources of power. By the end of the nineteenth century, four states (Britain, France, Germany, and the United States) provided two thirds of the world's industrial production. And one of these powers (Britain) claimed a quarter of the world's inhabitants and territory.[46] During this period, it is little surprise that many interventions were tied to the opening of markets, as chronicled by John McMillan in his contribution to the Special Issue.

Once again, the contemporary world is witnessing challenges to this strand of hierarchy. Crucial here is the role of the financial crisis in accelerating changes within the global economy. Over recent years, banking, securities, insurance, accounting, auditing, corporate governance, insolvency, creditor rights, and money laundering have become subject to international standards by bodies ranging from the G20 to the Financial Stability Board. Such a regulatory environment marks a lessening of Western control – the centre-of-gravity in the global economy is moving eastwards.[47] Although the US still produces around a quarter of the world's total output, this position is weakening. Whereas in 1971, over half of the world's largest manufacturing corporations were American (providing two thirds of global sales), now this is true of only a third (providing 34 per cent of global sales).[48] Not only do BRICS states hold around half the world's foreign exchange reserves, they are increasingly trading with each other: China is now Brazil's major trading partner, while Sino-Indian trade is worth $60 billion per year. Whether or not such changes herald an increase or decrease in interventionary practices is an open question. What is clear is that the economic interventions associated with Western control of trade, production and financial circuits are likely to recede.

The third strand of hierarchy noted in the introduction is the construction of 'difference' through ideas like the 'standard of civilisation' and practices such as racism. As Robbie Shilliam points out in his contribution to the Special Issue, much international law in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century sanctioned inequalities between states through denying the competences of non-European, non-white polities. These polities were quasi-sovereign – the wards of imperial powers that retained the right to intervene in order to correct deficiencies in practices, institutions, and cosmologies.[49] In this way, a legally constituted 'standard of civilisation' sanctioned a 'global rule of racialized difference'.[50] Intervention was a central tool through which this system was maintained.

As with the two other components of hierarchy discussed above, there are a number of challenges to the continued construction of hierarchy through difference. Most notably, racism is no longer a viable mode of differentiation. Indeed, advocates of

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[46] Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 74.
[47] Danny Quah, 'The Global Economy's Shifting Centre of Activity', *Global Policy*, 2:1 (2011), pp. 3–9.
[48] Pankaj Ghemawat, *World 3.0* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2011), p. 209.
[49] For an assessment of the legal debates around intervention, see Chesterman, *Just War or Just Peace?* On quasi-sovereignty, see Siba Grovogui, *Sovereigns, Quasi-Sovereigns and Africans* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
[50] Shilliam, this Special Issue.

intervention in the contemporary world tend to deny any fundamental source of difference between peoples around the world. Rather, inequality is the result of temporary conditions: deficient institutions, weak governance, poor leadership, a corrupt ruling elite, and so on.[51] This means that there are no longer formal barriers to intervention. Rather, the claims of present-day advocates of intervention are universal: 'if the UN truly was to reflect a humanity that cared more, not less, for the suffering in its midst, and would do more, and not less, to end it, the organization has to be an agent of intervention in every sphere of human security'.[52]

Kofi Annan's remarks speak to a world without frontiers in which boundaries of inside-outside, no longer resting on racial differentiation or constrained by norms of sovereign territoriality, are dissolved. Rather, the bundling of territoriality with rights of reciprocal sovereignty is to be replaced by a fluid notion of sovereignty that is contingent on meeting standards of human protection.[53] This is an important reformulation of the sovereignty norm. Rather than sovereignty being associated with the *control* of a territory, it is now seen as a *responsibility* that comes into force only when states pass a certain 'yardstick'.[54] As Anne Orford notes, this conception of sovereignty is, in many ways, a reversion to Hobbesian accounts of state authority, with the proviso that, this time, Hobbes's absolutist state is being constituted at the international level.[55] Forms of international administration, including international courts, territorial mandates, and peacekeeping forces are the 'neutral' mechanisms through which an international state assumes the functions of states around the world, particularly in the global south. The UN is now the second largest deployer of troops in the world (after the US); in 2013, the organisation was responsible for 100,000 peacekeepers in 15 operations.[56] All of these operations are taking place in the global south, the vast majority of them in Africa. At the same time, peacekeeping operations are assuming increasingly expansive roles – of the 49 UN mandated peacekeeping operations undertaken between 1989 and 2011, 34 contained a commitment to statebuilding.[57] In this sense, the line of civilisational apartheid that separated core from periphery and which made the sovereignty of the latter contingent on the caprice of the former has not disappeared, but is being reinscribed through the functions of international organisations, even as such differences are denied through claims of universality.[58]

Important as these observations are, they tend to overstate the bounded nature of political authority in modernity. In reality, states have always found it difficult to

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51 Kofi Annan, *Interventions* (London: Penguin, 2012).
52 Annan, *Interventions*, p. 13.
53 On the bundling and unbundling of sovereignty and territoriality, see John Ruggie, 'Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations', *International Organization*, 47:1 (1993), pp. 139–74.
54 The changing nature of sovereignty is discussed in Orford, *International Authority*. The notion of establishing a 'yardstick' for sovereignty can be found in Annan, *Interventions*, p. 132.
55 Orford, *International Authority*.
56 Figures taken from Annan, *Interventions*, p. 31; United Nations, 'Peacekeeping Fact Sheet', available at: {www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet.shtml} accessed 7 July 2013.
57 Mats Berdal and Dominik Zaum, 'Introduction', in Mats Berdal and Dominik Zaum (eds), *Power After Peace: The Political Economy of Post-Conflict Statebuilding* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 1–14. Also see Dodge, this Special Issue.
58 Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Mark Mazower, *Governing the World* (New York: Allen Lane, 2012); Ralph Wilde, *International Territorial Administration: How Trusteeship and the Civilizing Mission Never Really Went Away* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

exclude external actors from their domestic authority structures – indeed, as Steven Krasner argues, states have often invited violations of their sovereignty by signing up to human rights agreements or contracting powers to international and regional organisations.[59] Transnational solidarities from revolutionary movements to diaspora communities and indigenous groupings have consistently challenged the sovereign territorial frame.[60] At times, as Lee Jones points out in his article for this Special Issue, intervention has been conducted in solidarity with such movements; at other times, it has been used in their violent suppression. However effective international organisations are at reorganising the authority structure of particular polities, such action does not take place on the same scale or with the same intensity as the colonial projects that decimated, starved, and dispossessed entire continents. What is clear is that, if intervention is bound up with the tensions that arise between competing, exclusive claims over a particular polity, then the universal jurisdiction rights – and activities – of powerful states, collections of states, and international organisations must be seen as intervention by another name.[61] And this 'full spectrum' interventionism is taking place within a global imaginary that does not see anywhere as off limits. When there are no longer ascribed differences (such as race) through which to separate people into civilised and uncivilised, then claims of humanitarian solidarity assume universal form. The contribution by Toby Dodge to this Special Issue demonstrates starkly the centrality of such formulations to the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The future of intervention

Intervention, therefore, is changing in form rather than waning as a practice, even if the formal inequalities that sustained it for nearly two centuries are diminishing. There are two further reasons to suggest that intervention will remain a core feature of world politics in years to come. The first lies in the relationship between intervention and international heterogeneity.[62] The antithetic conceptualisations of legitimate order held by states in heterogeneous systems erode cooperation between them. This, in turn, makes intervention a viable policy tool for policymakers operating in these systems.[63] Examples of this tendency were common during the Cold War, when each side intervened to maintain the homogeneity of its bloc. Various contributors to this Special Issue have further underscored the ways in which interventions are tied to attempts by elites to maintain their position in the face of heterogeneous social forces, ranging from transnational ideological networks to cross-border sectarian or ethnic ties.[64] As Susan L. Woodward shows, such dynamics have been crucial to

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[59] Krasner, *Organized Sovereignty*.
[60] George Lawson and Robbie Shilliam, 'Beyond Hypocrisy? Debating the "Fact" and "Value" of Sovereignty in Contemporary World Politics', *International Politics*, 46:6 (2010), pp. 657–70.
[61] We not have the scope to chart the multiple actors that take part in interventionary practices. Suffice to say that private actors, from think tanks to security firms, are central to interventionary practices. For more on this issue, see the contributions by David Williams and Toby Dodge to this Special Issue.
[62] Raymond Aron, *Peace and War* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1966); Fred Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics* (London: Palgrave, 1999); John Owen IV, *The Clash of Ideas in World Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); and Hoffman, 'The Problem of Intervention'.
[63] Aron, *Peace and War*, pp. 100–3; Owen, *The Clash of Ideas*, p. 54.
[64] Owen, *The Clash of Ideas*; Stephen M. Saideman, 'Explaining the International Relations of Secessionist Conflicts: Vulnerability versus Ethnic Ties', *International Organization*, 51:4 (1997), pp. 721–53; Stephen M. Saideman, *The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy, and International Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

Western interventions in the Balkans. And as David Williams illustrates, elite homogeneity is both the driver and outcome of development programmes that promote synergies between international actors and local 'partners'. Despite this, there has been no creation of a single universal demos. Rather, even as the world has become more intimately connected, so centrifugal tendencies have heightened particularities of governance and culture. The contemporary world is one of 'decentred globalism' in which no single power – or cluster of powers – is pre-eminent.[65] Such an order retains considerable heterogeneity. As such, it is fertile ground for intervention.

Second, as this Special Issue has shown, intervention is not tied to a particular motivation or aim. Rather, the great strength of intervention is its fungibility as a policy instrument – intervention is a response to a range of problems, whether these are conceived in humanitarian or security terms, or out of a broader concern for international order. In this sense, intervention represents an enduring political practice. As Lee Jones argues in his contribution, sovereignty limits the scope of political action by guaranteeing the borders of a territory. The ordering function of sovereignty is, therefore, highly partisan. Intervention lays bare what policymakers consider threatening to both domestic order and international security. This is not a transient phenomenon. Rather, it is likely to become increasingly influential in an international order in which experiences of colonialism remain live and sovereignty is guarded jealously. In this sense, even if the character of intervention shifts in order to accommodate new contexts, the recurrent feature of intervention in modern history can only be explained if we take account of how political dynamics shape not just a *decision* to intervene, but a *necessity* to intervene. Intervention is not simply a response to considerations of state security; rather, it responds to the more fundamental concerns highlighted in this Special Issue: modes of international order; regime security; concerns about capabilities and status, etc. The 'necessity to intervene' stems from how deeply such logics shape the interests and objectives of policymakers. Intervention is 'necessary' when other options (for example, aid, diplomacy, sanctions, etc.) are perceived as being either impractical or ineffective.[66] This makes intervention a routine, if 'end of the line', policy instrument. In short: intervention is here to stay.

If intervention will remain a core feature of world politics in years to come, the diffusion of power around the international system demands two changes in thinking about intervention as a social practice. First, it requires paying attention to the ways in which interventions in the periphery have been constitutive of developments in the core.[67] Examples include Vietnam and Iraq for the US, Suez for Britain, and Lebanon for Israel. Second, it means focusing more on interventions that have been carried out by non-Western Great Powers, such as the Soviet Union and China. Both cases offer a picture of increased interventionism. After being the target of multiple

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[65] Barry Buzan and George Lawson, 'Capitalism and the Emergent World Order', *International Affairs*, 90:1 (2014), In press.

[66] This analysis suggests that seeing military interventions as 'wars of choice' obscures more than it reveals. See, for example, Charles Krauthammer, 'Wars of Choice, Wars of Necessity', *Time Magazine* (28 October 2001), available at: {http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,181599,00.html} accessed 7 July 2013; Richard N. Haas, *War of Necessity, War of Choice: A Memoir of Two Iraq Wars* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

[67] There is a parallel here to the ways in which 'small wars' in the periphery are constitutive of dynamics in the metropole. See Tarak Barkawi, 'On the Pedagogy of Small Wars', *International Affairs*, 80:1 (2004), pp. 19–37. On interventions by Great Powers in the periphery, see Taliaferro, *Balancing Risks*.

interventions during the Russian Civil War, Soviet leaders authorised intervention in the Spanish Civil War.[68] During the Cold War, having secured its grip on its European satellites, Soviet interventionism was characterised by a dual dynamic: counterrevolutionary and defensive ('order maintaining') in Eastern and Central Europe; revolutionary and offensive ('order transforming') in the Third World.[69] Since the demise of the Soviet Union, Russia has intervened both directly and indirectly in its 'near abroad', most notably in Georgia in 2008.

Chinese intervention expresses a similar, if somewhat more complex, dynamic. Certainly, China's direct military interventions have been more limited in frequency and scope then those performed by other Great Powers.[70] After the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took power in the late 1940s, the party elite highlighted non-intervention as one of five principles of 'peaceful coexistence'. As Chou Enlai claimed, 'we are against outside interference; how could we want to interfere in the internal affairs of others?'[71] The US-Chinese Shanghai *communiqué* of 1972 contained a pledge to non-intervention. And since its 'opening-up', China has repeatedly claimed to be carrying out developmental programmes without Western-style conditionalities. Even when it has provided limited, often covert, support to national liberation movements, China has done so on the grounds of self-defence and, it is argued, in order to safeguard sovereignty. Chinese leaders have regularly denounced the 'neointerventionism, neogunboat diplomacy, and neoeconomic colonialism' of Western powers.[72] And at the 2005 World Summit, Hu Jintao reiterated China's concerns about the threat posed by the West's 'forceful interference' in the internal affairs of other countries.[73]

However, China's imperial and revolutionary past tells a different story. Under the Chinese imperial system, the emperor enjoyed a 'latent right of intervention', as exemplified by China's intervention in Vietnam in 1788 to restore the ruling family and in Korea a century later. During the Cold War, China intervened indirectly in the Third World, for instance in Angola, through the provision of arms and supplies to national liberation movements. Most notably, China intervened directly in Korea and supported North Vietnam in its struggle against the United States.[74] Beijing's

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[68] On the ideological, strategic and domestic drivers of Soviet intervention in Spain, see Stanley G. Paine, *The Spanish Civil War, the Soviet Union, and Communism* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 124–52.

[69] The latter was a response both to dynamics associated with superpower competition and the Sino-Soviet split, which generated competition between Moscow and Beijing over strategic regions (Southeast Asia, Southern Africa) and national liberation movements. This dynamic underscores how non-European powers began to shape the pattern of external interventions in important ways during the Cold War.

[70] Patricia Sullivan and Michael T. Koch, 'Military Intervention by Powerful States, 1945–2003', *Journal of Peace Research*, 46:5 (2009), pp. 707–18.

[71] Cited in Jerome Alan Cohen, 'China and Intervention: Theory and Practice', in John Norton Moore (ed.), *Law and Civil War in the Modern World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 348.

[72] Bates Gill, *Rising Star: China's New Security Policy* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), pp. 108, 111–12.

[73] Hu Jintao, 'Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity', Statement by the President of the People's Republic of China At the United Nations Summit, New York (15 September 2005), available at: {http://www.un.org/webcast/summit2005/statements15/china050915eng.pdf} accessed 1 August 2013.

[74] On China's use of force in the early phase of the Cold War, see George J. Gilboy and Eric Heginbotham, *Chinese and Indian Strategic Behaviour: Growing Power and Alarm* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 78–9.

decisions responded partly to strategic concerns and partly to ideological considerations reinforced by close elite ties.[75] China's subsequent offensive against Vietnam was aimed at both countering Soviet influence in Indochina – targeting what Deng Xiaoping defined as the 'Cuba of the East' – and at Vietnamese decisions, notably Hanoi's intervention in Cambodia, Beijing's principal ally in the region.[76] Intervention was meant to punish Hanoi or, as the Chinese authorities put it, to 'teach Vietnam a lesson'.[77] In this sense, the reaction by Chinese leaders to Vietnam's intervention closely resembles the paternalistic attitude used to legitimate interventions by other Great Powers.

Although Vietnam represents Beijing's last unilateral intervention, the end of the Cold War has seen a partial relaxation of Beijing's non-interventionist stance.[78] First, China has steadily increased its contributions to UN peacekeeping operations and UN missions, most notably in Afghanistan.[79] Second, China has endorsed the World Summit Outcome Document of 2005, including its references to the principle of Responsibility to Protect, albeit with the caveat that the UN Security Council must sanction any operations prompted by the principle.[80] Third, China is now the world's second largest aid donor, providing 'development assistance' to over 100 states in the global south, including those that are 'off limits' to Western donors such as North Korea, Burma, and Iran.[81] The Export-Import Bank of China provides a greater volume of loans than the G7 states combined; along with the China Development Bank, it lends more to developing states than the World Bank.[82] Furthermore, even if China has not, as yet, done much to promote a 'Beijing Model' of socioeconomic development, there are signs that China sees its rapid development as linked to its own 'special' characteristics.[83] As discussed in earlier sections of the article, this sense of cultural superiority is a common 'push' within interventionary practices. Continued growth is only likely to reinforce this tendency.

[75] In logistical terms, Korea offered a practical site for US-Chinese confrontation for those members of the Chinese elite who considered a confrontation with the US to be inevitable. On this point, see William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 98, 102. On the importance of close elite ties, see Jian Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 7, 54.

[76] David M. Lampton, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money, and Minds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), p. 171.

[77] Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 119–29. See also Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*, pp. 111–15.

[78] Allan Carlson, *Unifying China, Integrating with the World: Securing Chinese Sovereignty in the Reform Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

[79] Gill, *Rising Star*, pp. 113–21.

[80] Zhongying Pang, 'China's Non-Intervention Question', *Global Responsibility to Protect* 1 (2009), pp. 237–52.

[81] Gregory Chin and Fahimul Quadir, 'Rising States, Rising Donors and the Global Aid Regime', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 25:4 (2012), p. 494.

[82] Chin and Quadir, 'Rising States', p. 499. It is worth pointing out that all BRICS states are now net donors rather than net recipients. And all are using state-led financial institutions such as National Development Banks and Export-Import Banks in projects intended to drive growth and generate influence. These trends are not limited to BRICS states. States in the Gulf, for example, also use aid as a means of generating influence and developing alliances: Saudi foreign aid is worth $5 billion per year (4–5 per cent of GDP), two thirds of which goes to Arab countries and other Muslim states. As the crushing of the 2011 Bahrain uprising demonstrates, the Saudi's are not afraid to match this commitment with overtly interventionary practices.

[83] Shogo Suzuki, 'Why Does China Participate in Intrusive Peacekeeping? Understanding Paternalistic Chinese Discourses on Development and Intervention', *International Peacekeeping*, 18:3 (2011), pp. 271–85.

These two dynamics – Beijing's continued attachment to the norm of non-intervention and its increasing interventionism – are not necessarily contradictory. In fact, they represent two mutually reinforcing dynamics that are shaped by China's deeper embedding within international society. On the one hand, non-intervention is an attempt to secure domestic stability in a context of increased interdependence. On the other hand, China's extensive stake in contemporary international order encourages its leaders to cooperate with multilateral efforts aimed at minimising disruption to this order. In this sense, both China's non-interventionism and interventionist impulses are 'order maintaining'; they represent different tools used by Chinese leaders to secure stability, both at home and abroad.

However, these two dynamics also highlight an ongoing tension on which rests much of the future of intervention as a social practice. As China becomes more closely integrated within transnational circuits – and has more interests to protect – it is likely that it too will see intervention as a solution to problems where other policies have been tried and have failed. Furthermore, if China's lack of allies and limited ties to foreign elites has so far limited the likelihood of interventionism, this too may change as Chinese influence grows. Interdependence with other states will raise Beijing's stake in its allies' survival and stability, thereby opening up the space for intervention. At the same time, significant political crisis in key allies such as North Korea could trigger a Chinese response. Despite the strong links shaped by historical ties, military alliance and aid, the disruptive behaviour of North Korea and the reduced importance assigned by younger Chinese leaders to close ties with Pyongyang raises the questions of how the Chinese would react to the collapse of the North Korean regime.[84] In the event of such a collapse, Beijing has prepared contingency plans to perform both humanitarian operations aimed at assisting Korean refugees and 'order keeping' [sic] operations.[85]

Importantly, the prospects for a heightening of Chinese interventionism could emerge at just the same time as the relative decline of Western powers creates increased incentives for them to intervene militarily. Intervention is a means through which Western states could try to protect their position (using intervention as a means to preserve access to markets and resources), reaffirm their status (using intervention as a means to counter transnational threats), and forestall their own decline (using intervention as a means to maintain influence over allies). In more general terms, the combined effect of both China's integration in transnational capitalist circuits and the ongoing financial crisis raises further concerns. For example, the export driven growth of both prominent developing economies (such as China) and major developed economies (such as Japan and Germany) depends on the spending power of Western consumers, spending power that has been repressed by the financial crisis. This slack is unlikely to be taken up by consumption in developing countries where, since their own crash in the late 1990s, policies have tended towards promoting high levels of savings, the maintenance of sizeable foreign-exchange reserves and currency undervaluation. Taken together, this combination of uncertainty, imbalance and inequality is increasing strains on international monetary, financial,

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[84] Lampton, *Three Faces of Chinese Power*, p. 167.
[85] Bonnie Glaser, Scott Snyder, and John S. Park, 'Keeping an Eye on an Unruly Neighbor: Chinese Views of Economic Reform and Stability in North Korea', Working Paper, United States Institute for Peace (3 January 2008), available at: {http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/Jan2008.pdf} accessed 1 August 2013.

and trading regimes. Such analysis points towards a future of inter-capitalist competition.[86] And increased Great Power competition may, in turn, engender a renewed appetite for intervention.

If the global 'power shift' presents insights into one set of likely interventionary pressures, a second set of pressures arises from the possibility of intervention in the absence of a clearly defined 'core'.[87] In this regard, it is worth noting that interventions have not always been conducted by core states against peripheral polities. Examples from the Cold War include Egypt's intervention in Yemen, Syrian and Israeli interventions in the Lebanese Civil War, Cuba's intervention in Angola, Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia, and Tanzania's intervention in Uganda. More recent examples include the support by some Arab states for direct intervention in Libya in 2011 and, more indirectly, in their support for opposition forces during the Syrian Civil War. Periphery-periphery interventions respond to the same dynamics highlighted in the sections above. For instance, Vietnam's intervention in Cambodia was shaped by strategic interests, a desire to foster elite homogeneity and a sense of superiority *vis-à-vis* its neighbour. Not only did Vietnam establish local allies through whom it could pursue its objectives, it also organised a Cambodian guerrilla group out of Cambodians living in Vietnam that could stand as a 'new' leadership for a 'new' Cambodia.[88] Hanoi defended its presence in Cambodia by underscoring its role in helping both this group and the Cambodian people establish a 'correct' version of socialism.[89] These views were informed by experiences of success, particularly Vietnam's wars with France and the United States, generating a 'big brother' mentality in the Vietnamese leadership that fuelled and legitimised the intervention.[90] As in the case of China's intervention in Vietnam, ideological factors combined with historical experience to nurture both paternalistic attitudes and concerns about status that, in turn, fuelled an interventionist stance.

Yet there are four less familiar elements that characterise periphery-periphery interventions. First, peripheral states have limited options in terms of targets. With few exceptions (such as Cuba's intervention in Angola), they tend to intervene only in neighbouring countries. For the same reasons, smaller powers are more likely to act via regional organisations, as exemplified by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) intervention in Bahrain in 2011 and the calls by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for intervention in Cote d'Ivoire during the same year. Second, given the limited pool of resources a peripheral state commands, intervention may serve to increase the intervener's need for external support, making it more reliant on the support of a patron and/or regional powers. This, in turn, can heighten levels of inequality, as highlighted by Vietnam's increasing dependence on the Soviet Union after its intervention in Cambodia and Syria's increasing dependence on the Soviet Union after its intervention in Lebanon.[91] Third, linkages between the intervener and the target state are particularly threatening for peripheral

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[86] Buzan and Lawson, 'Capitalism and the Emergent World Order'.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Sophie Quinn-Judge, 'Fraternal Aid, Self-defence, or Self-interest? Vietnam's Intervention in Cambodia, 1978–1989', in Brendan Simms and D.J.B. Trim (eds), *Humanitarian Intervention: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 343–62.
[89] Quinn-Judge, 'Fraternal Aid', p. 353.
[90] Sophie Quinn-Judge, 'Victory on the Battlefield; Isolation in Asia: Vietnam's Cambodia Decade, 1979–1989' in Odd Arne Westad and Sophie Quinn-Judge (eds), *The Third Indochina War: Conflict between China, Vietnam and Cambodia, 1972–79* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 214.
[91] Naomi Joy Weinberger, *Syrian Intervention in Lebanon: The 1975–76 Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 320.

states. For instance, Syrian intervention in Lebanon in 1976 was a response not just to Syrian strategic and political interests, but also to the danger that the civil war in Lebanon posed to the stability of the Syrian state.[92] Finally, peripheral states are more vulnerable to the international and domestic repercussions that interventions entail. For example, Nasser's regime was weakened extensively by Egypt's failed intervention in Yemen in 1962, as was the wider cause of pan-Arab nationalism on which much of his status rested.[93]

The 'problem' of intervention

Intervention, we have argued, is a social practice that arises from the tensions that emerge in modernity between transnational social forces on the one hand and sovereign territoriality on the other. If intervention *in theory* is the mediating force through which the tensions between transnational social forces and sovereign territoriality have been mediated, intervention *in practice* has shifted in character across time and place. During the nineteenth century, core states tended to respect non-intervention within the Family of Nations, while core-periphery relations were marked by regular interventions. During the Cold War, both sides of the conflict pursued intervention as a means of extending their sphere of influence and maintaining the balance between them. In practice, this entailed 'intervention within the blocs, non-intervention between them, and a tenuous non-intervention outside them'.[94] In the post-Cold War world, intervention has changed again, becoming associated with 'everyday interventionism' even as direct military interventions have remained a routine tool of statecraft and extended into the remit of international organisations. At the same time, the rise of China and other BRICS states speaks to the continued salience of the mutual recognition of sovereign territoriality as a basis for international cooperation. And as long as tensions exist between transnational social forces and territorially bound polities, intervention will remain a core feature of world politics, a policy tool that regulates tensions and mediates crisis points.

Over the past few centuries, therefore, intervention has evolved as a social practice. As it has evolved, so intervention has become more expansive, shifting from a discrete practice reserved for the Great Powers to one that is permanent in form and universal in aspiration. In many ways, the capacity of intervention to transmute within different forms of international order is concerning – interventions have, at best, a patchy record.[95] As Toby Dodge argues in his contribution to the Special Issue, interventions in the post-Cold War world have been limited by their inability to construct durable institutions. The result of such interventions is not attractive: a return to authoritarianism in Iraq and the failure to consolidate a viable state in

[92] Weinberger, *Syrian Intervention*, pp. 329–32.
[93] Jesse Ferris, *Nasser's Gamble: How Intervention in Yemen Caused the Six-Day War and the Decline of Egyptian Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).
[94] Vincent, *Non-Intervention*, p. 353.
[95] On the general difficulties of foreign imposed regime change, see Richard K. Betts, 'The Delusion of Impartial Intervention', *Foreign Affairs*, 73:6 (1994), pp. 20–33. On the specific difficulties of promoting democracy through intervention, see Jeffrey Pickering and Mark Peceny, 'Forging Democracy at Gunpoint', *International Studies Quarterly*, 50:3 (2006), pp. 539–59; and Alexander B. Downes and Jonathan Monten, 'Forced to be Free? Why Foreign-Imposed Regime Change Rarely Leads to Democratization', *International Security*, 37:4 (2013), pp. 90–131. On the importance of external conditions

Afghanistan. Yet inaction is no better. At the time of writing (August 2013), the Syrian Civil War had killed more than 100,000 people; over a million Syrians have registered as refugees and nearly a quarter of the population has been displaced.[96]

So what is to be done? All too often, as chronicled in the sections above, contemporary policymakers and analysts of intervention are constricted by unreflective, presentist, ungrounded debates that fail to do justice to the complex history and ongoing tensions contained within intervention as a social practice. In truth, there are no easy answers either to the 'problem' of intervention or to the problems for which intervention is employed as a solution. The history of intervention suggests that coercive interference in other polities is fraught with difficulties, not least in its disruption of the principle of non-intervention that conditions orderly coexistence.[97] Perhaps the best that can be hoped for is a healthy scepticism about the utility of intervention as a policy tool. And alongside this awareness of the limits of intervention, the recognition that intervention is an inherently contested practice, one that is defined and enacted through often-conflictual political decisions rather than abstract assertions. In seeking to address the changing form, but enduring presence, of intervention, it is to be hoped that this Special Issue will serve as the first port of call for those charged with the difficult task of conceptualising and implementing interventionary practices.

(such as terrain) to the success of interventions, see Sarah Kreps, 'When Does the Mission Determine the Coalition?', *Security Studies*, 17:3 (2008), pp. 531–67. On the importance of internal conditions (most notably leaders' beliefs) to the success of interventions, see Elizabeth Saunders, 'Transformative Choices: Leaders and the Origins of Intervention Strategy', *International Security*, 34:2 (2009), pp. 119–61.

[96] 'Syrian Death Toll Now Above 100,000, says UN Chief Ban', *BBC News* (25 July 2013), available at: {http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-23455760} accessed 1 August 2013. Figures on refugees in Syria available at: {www.unhcr.org/50a9f829a.html} accessed 1 August 2013.

[97] This is a point made forcefully in Vincent, *Non-Intervention*, p. 331.