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**MANAGING THE ARAB SPRING:
REACTIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY TO THE
CRISES IN LIBYA AND SYRIA**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the differences in the reactions of the international community to the recent crises in Libya and Syria. In the Libyan crisis, the international community was able to agree on a concerted response, which resulted in sanctions and ultimately a military intervention to protect civilians. In Syria, however, the international community has been deeply divided. It has not been able to agree on common policies, even though the death toll of the Syrian civil war has far exceeded the death toll in Libya prior to the military intervention there.

Both conflicts belong to the chain of revolutionary uprisings known as the Arab spring, which started to unfold in Tunisia in December 2010. In this chain of events, however, Libya and Syria stand out, because in them the level of violence has been the most extreme.

The differences in the reactions of the international community are analysed through five institutions of international society: great power management, diplomacy, sovereignty, equality of people and the market. The tools of analysis come from the English school approach to international theory.

The research material of the thesis consists of statements and comments made by the leaders of the so called great powers, as well as the United Nations Security Council's resolutions on Libya and Syria. The term great power, in this study, refers to the permanent members of the Security Council – the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France. The research material is supplemented by analyses and news articles. In all, 74 texts have been chosen as primary sources.

The analysis reveals that, in the case of the Libyan civil war, there were many factors that made outside intervention possible, even appealing. In the Syrian case, however, the analysis reveals many difficulties with intervention. One of these reasons, it can be argued, is the legacy of the Libyan crisis, which strained the relations of great powers.

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1. Introduction

This thesis will focus on the reactions of the international community to two recent crises, the uprisings in Libya and Syria. I am especially interested in finding out why the responses have been so different. In Libya, the brutal crackdown of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's forces prompted a swift response, which culminated in the establishment of a no-fly zone over Libya, and a multi-state military intervention to protect civilians. In Syria, however, although the death toll has far exceeded the casualties of Libya prior to the military intervention, the international community has not found ways to resolve the crisis.¹

Both conflicts belong to the chain of revolutionary uprisings known as the Arab spring, which started to unfold in Tunisia in December 2010. In this chain of events, however, Libya and Syria stand out, because in them the level of violence has been the most extreme, and the crises have escalated to civil war. The Libyan crisis began in February 2011 with protests in the eastern city of Benghazi. Protests escalated into a rebellion that spread across the country, with the forces opposing Gaddafi establishing an interim governing body, the National Transitional Council. In March, as the forces loyal to Gaddafi were closing in on Benghazi, the rebel stronghold, the United Nations Security Council authorized all means to protect civilians under threat. The result was a long and wide multi-state bombing campaign, led by the United States and its allies Britain and France, which helped push back government forces. The civil war ended in rebel victory in October, with Gaddafi captured and killed attempting to escape from his hometown Sirte. According to estimates, more than 30000 people died in the civil war. (The Guardian, 26.10.2011)

The crisis in Syria is ongoing. It started around the same time as the Libyan conflict, in March 2011, with protesters demanding the resignation of president Bashar al-Assad. After months of military sieges, and the army firing on protesters, the uprising evolved into an armed rebellion, with the Free Syrian Army as the main armed opposition group, and the exile Syrian National Council established as the political face of the revolution. According to a November 2012 estimate by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based opposition watchdog, 38000 people have died in the civil war, and the number is rising. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent estimates that 2,5 million people have been uprooted from their homes since the crisis began. (International Business Times, 14.11.2012) From the start, the international community's response to the crisis has been awkward.

¹ It has been estimated that the death toll of the Libyan conflict was around 1000-2000 at the time of the military intervention. (The Guardian, 26.10.2011)

There's been a complete diplomatic standoff among the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council over the issue, and the prospect of intervention to resolve the crisis seems nonexistent.

The tools to compare the reactions of the international community to the crises in Libya and Syria come from an approach to international politics known as the English school. At the centre of English school theory are the institutions of international society. Five institutions – great power management, diplomacy, sovereignty, equality of people and the market – will be applied to carve out the differences and explain why the international community has behaved differently in the two cases. To my knowledge, previous research does not include a comparative study in which the institutions of international society have been applied. However, similar approaches include Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez's study of how the institutions of international society function in the Middle East, as well as Alexander Astrov's analysis of how the institution of great power management functioned in the 2008 Georgian war. (Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009, Astrov et al. 2009)

The phrase international community, which is used in the title of this thesis, is commonly used in colloquial language to refer to the peoples and governments of the world, or to a group of them. It is often used in the context of calls for action to be taken against political repression and to preserve the respect for human rights, as in the case of Libya and Syria. In this study, the focus is on the great powers as representatives of the international community since, as veto wielding members of the United Nations Security Council, they are responsible for international crisis management. Their voice and actions, in other words, are seen to represent the international community in relation to the Libyan and Syrian crises. The term international community comes close to the English school's main theoretical concept, international society, which is discussed in more detail in the next chapters.

The thesis will progress as follows. In chapter 2, I will outline the theoretical and methodological approach chosen for the study, namely the institutions of international society, and how they will be applied to analyse the cases. The methodological approach of the English school will also be discussed in more detail. In chapter 3, I will analyse the crises in Libya and Syria in relation to the chosen institutions. The findings will be summarized in chapter 4. I will also present some ideas for further research.

2. Theoretical and methodological solutions

The theoretical-methodological framework of this study comes from the English school, a broad tradition of thought, whose trademark approach began to emerge at the London School of Economics in the 1950s, and evolved among the members of the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics during almost a thirty-year period up to the 1980's. Today, the English school can be seen as a world-wide network of like-minded scholars building on the traditional work of the school, but also drawing from a variety of other theoretical sources. Notable members of the English school include Charles Manning, Martin Wight, Hedley Bull, Alan James, Adam Watson, John Vincent, and among the more recent contributors, Andrew Hurrell, Tim Dunne, Nicholas Wheeler, Robert Jackson, Barry Buzan and Richard Little. (Linklater&Suganami 2006, *passim*, Suganami 2010, p. 17)

The English school approach has also been called rationalism, which refers to theorizing about international society, or the element of inter-state intercourse and cooperation in a condition of international anarchy. International society stands between the competing influences of international system (realism), which is about anarchy and power-politics between states, and world society (revolutionism), which focuses on individuals, non-state organizations and the global population as a whole.² English school scholars have also been characterized as institutionalists, given their stress on the institutional bases of international order. According to Buzan, the concept of institutions is central to English school thinking because it fleshes out the substantive content of international society, and underpins what English school writers mean by order. (Buzan 2004, p. 161)

The main focus of the forthcoming chapters will be on the works of Barry Buzan and Hedley Bull, and particularly their view of the role and range of institutions in international society. Some of the institutions of international society will then be defined in more detail and developed as methodological tools to compare the reactions of the international community to the crises in Libya and Syria. This will be done by drawing on the texts of a variety of English school contributors.

² The key concepts are comprehensively developed by Wight (1994). A revision of the concepts is made by Buzan (2004).

2.1 Institutions

In international relations theory, the concept of institutions has been used in at least two ways.

Keohane points out that an institution may refer to a general pattern or categorization of activity, or to a specific human constructed arrangement. Both types of institutions involve persistent and connected sets of rules (formal or informal) that prescribe behavioural roles, constrain activity and shape expectations. The difference is that specific institutions, such as the United Nations, are discrete entities identifiable in space and time, whereas general institutions, such as diplomacy, are practices or patterns of activity. Specific institutions may also be exemplars of general patterns of activity. For instance, the United Nations exemplifies multilateral diplomacy (Keohane 1988, p. 383).

According to Buzan, this is one of the main things that differentiates English school scholars from the mainstream, rationalist, neoliberal institutionalists, study of international regimes. While the former are concerned with relatively fundamental and durable practices that are historically evolved rather than designed, in Buzan's terms primary institutions, the latter are concerned with particular human constructed arrangements, or secondary institutions. (Buzan 2004, pp. 161, 167). This is in tune with the definition given by Bull, one of the founders of the English school. He saw institutions as not an organisation or administrative machinery (secondary) but a set of historically evolved habits and practices (primary) shaped towards the realisation of common goals of international society by the main actors of international society, the states (Bull 1995, 71). The actors and institutions are seen to be mutually constitutive, in that the institutions also shape the states and their patterns of legitimate activity in relation to each other (Buzan 2004, 167).

English school primary institutions are closely associated with the rules of international society. Bull saw that, while states operate in an anarchical environment, without a superior authority, they are able to agree on some fundamental rules, such as the duty to respect the sovereignty of another state, to preserve order in international society (Bull 1995, 66-68). The function of the institutions is to ensure the preservation and protection of the rules. For them to be effective, the rules have to be communicated, administered, interpreted, enforced, legitimized, adapted and protected via the institutions. (Bull 1995, pp. 64-71, Linklater & Suganami 2002, p. 51) In addition to rules, which are specific prescriptions for actions, institutions also embody norms and principles. Compared to rules, norms can be seen to represent more customary and implicit social regulation of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations. Principles can be seen as beliefs of fact, causation and rectitude,

which might serve as general propositions from which rules can be deduced (Krasner, 1983, p. 2, Buzan 2004, pp. 163-164). The principle of sovereignty, for example, generates the rule of respecting another state's sovereignty and territorial integrity, a rule that has also been recorded in international law.

2.2. Institutions and conceptions of international society

The primary institutions of international society are rooted in values held commonly by the members of international society (Buzan 2004, p. 181). The more uniform the society is in terms of its culture and values then, the more potential there is for common institutions. The traditional point of departure for the English school has been that international society has relatively few legitimate institutions, thereby implying that the society has not many common values. The classic definition of international society, as can be seen in the quote below, supposes very limited cooperation between states. Among the defining values are order and peaceful coexistence between states, which are seen as a condition of the realisation of other values. (Bull 1995, p. 94) For Bull and Watson, international society meant,

“A group of states (or more generally, a group of independent political communities) which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behaviour of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others, but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognise their common interest in maintaining these arrangements.” (Bull and Watson 1984, p. 1.)

This framework led Bull to identify a set of five institutions: the balance of power, international law, the diplomatic mechanism, the managerial system of the great powers, and war. According to Bull, the main function of the institutions is to carry out positive functions or roles in relation to order in international society. (Bull 1995, pp. 71)

Buzan approaches the idea of institutions from a wider conception of international society than Bull. He sees Bull's classic set of five institutions as a statement about pluralist or coexistence international societies, and a prescription of how order is to be maintained in them. Pluralism and coexistence refer to the Westphalian balance of power system in which the balance of power is accepted as an organising principle by the great powers, and sovereignty, territoriality, diplomacy,

great power management, war and international law are the core institutions of international society. This, according to Buzan, is close to the experience of modern European history up to 1945. (Buzan 2004, p. 191) In his view, the contemporary global interstate society has moved on from the Westphalian model, and can now best be described as a cooperative or solidarist society, which builds on the Westphalian model, but is also based on developments that go beyond coexistence. (Buzan 2004, p. 160)³ In a cooperative solidarist society the focus is not only on order and competition, but also cooperation over a wide range of issues and values, such as trade and human rights, which are to some extent in conflict with traditional Westphalian principles such as sovereignty and territorial integrity. (Buzan 2009, p. 26)

Buzan concedes that international society is primarily a society of states, but introduces two non-state domains to supplement what he calls interstate society. In addition to interstate society, his conception of international society consists of the transnational society and the interhuman society. Transnational society refers to social structures composed of non-state collective actors such as firms or civil society actors. Interhuman society refers to social structures based on interactions among individual human beings (Buzan 2004, p. 134, Buzan 2009, p. 26).⁴ The shared practices and values of interstate society, embodied in the institutions, may also be extended to, and accepted by the non-state actors of transnational and interhuman societies (Buzan 2004, p. 181).

To clarify the relationship between the three domains, it is useful to note that Buzan takes contemporary global international society

“to indicate something like the arrangement that emerged during the twentieth century, where the basic political and legal frame is set by the states-system, with individuals and TNAs [transnational actors] being given rights by states within the order defined by interstate society... Individuals and TNAs are participants of international society rather than members of it... [and] dependent ‘objects’ of

³ Buzan identifies four types of interstate society: 1) a *power political society* is based largely on enmity and the possibility of war, and the driving force is survival, 2) *coexistence society*, 3) *cooperative society*, 4) *convergence society*, in which there is a substantial enough range of shared values within a set of states to make them adopt similar legal, political and economic reforms (Buzan 2004, pp. 160, 190-195).

⁴ This is a revision of the traditional English school triad of *international system*, *international society* and *world society* as introduced by Wight (1991) and Bull (1995). They have been the main concepts in English school theory and can be seen as forces which are in continuous interplay in international relations. Buzan’s purpose is to strengthen the theoretical clarity of the concept of world society, which he argues has been the Cinderella concept of the English school, a dumping ground for all those influences that have been rejected by the school because they have not been seen as important or because they threaten the states-system. World society, in Buzan’s scheme, refers to the domains of transnational and interhuman society. (Buzan 2004, p. 11, Buzan 2009, p. 26)

international law rather than independent ‘subjects’ of it with standing in their own right.” (Buzan 2004, p. 202)

Taking all this into consideration, the contemporary institutions of international society are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 Contemporary international institutions⁵

Primary institutions		Secondary institutions
Master	Derivative	(examples of)
Sovereignty	Non-intervention International law	UN General Assembly Most regimes, ICJ, ICC
Territoriality	Boundaries	Some PKOs
Diplomacy	Bilateralism Multilateralism	Embassies United Nations Conferences
Great Power management	Alliances War Balance of power	Most IGOs, regimes NATO UN Security Council
Equality of people	Human rights Humanitarian intervention	UNHCR
Market	Trade liberalisation Financial liberalisation Hegemonic stability	GATT/WTO, MFN Agreements IBRD, IMF, BIS
Nationalism	Self-determination Popular sovereignty Democracy	Some PKOs
Environmental stewardship	Species survival Climate stability	CITES, UNFCCC Kyoto protocol, IPCC, Montreal protocol etc.

Buzan’s definition of international society leads to a combination of coexistence and cooperative institutions. Sovereignty and territoriality are no longer the only organising principles, and states are not the only actors. The inclusion of solidarist/cooperative institutions reflects the idea that primary institutions are neither permanent nor fixed. They will typically undergo a historical pattern of rise, evolution and decline as the norms of international society change (Buzan 2004, pp. 181, 195).

⁵ Ibid, p. 187. Buzan bases his set of institutions on a summary of the works of several writers who have dealt with the idea of institutions within the English school. They include Martin Wight, Hedley Bull, James Mayall, Kalevi J. Holsti, Robert Jackson and Alan James.

Another indication of this is that the Westphalian institution of war is now seen not as a master but a derivative institution. This is explained by the observation that “in the twentieth century war became regarded more as the breakdown of international society than as a sign of its operation” (Buzan 2004, p. 173, quotes Mayall 2000, p. 19). Buzan also introduces a hierarchy among the institutions. Master institutions, he argues, are the ones that stand alone and generate other, derivative institutions. This logic is called “nesting” (Buzan 2004, p. 182).

2.3 Applying institutions to compare the crises in Libya and Syria

For the purposes of this study, it is important to pick out, from the contemporary set of master institutions, the ones that are most relevant for comparing the reactions of the international community to the crises in Syria and Libya. Buzan himself clearly leaves his set of institutions open for adaption and discussion by stating that he offers his interpretation as a way of opening rather than closing the debate on the subject. (Buzan 2004, pp. 184, 186)

The master institution of environmental stewardship (Table 1) is the institution in charge of looking after the future of the planet and the sustainability of the global commons. (Gonzalez-Paez 2009, p. 112) Although an increasingly important institution, especially due to global warming, environmental stewardship has not played an acute role in the crises in Libya and Syria, and therefore will not offer much insight into the questions at hand. Nationalism is a key institution of international society because the nation-state remains the basic political unit that defines the actors of the society of states. Nationalism, however, will not help us much in analysing the differences in the reactions of the international community to the crises in Libya and Syria. Territoriality, which embodies the principle that politics is to be organised on a territorial basis, is so intertwined with the institution of sovereignty that, for the purposes of this study, there is no point in discussing them separately.

From Buzan’s set then, I will take into closer examination five master institutions of international society: great power management, diplomacy, sovereignty, equality of people and the market.

2.3.1 Great power management

The institution of great power management looks at the special responsibilities that the great powers have, given their resources and interests, to manage the system. (Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009, p. 100) The role of the great powers in managing international relations is comprehensively developed in the work of Bull, who argues that great powers contribute to international order in two main ways: by managing their relations with one another; and by exploiting their preponderance in such a way as to impart a degree of central direction to the affairs of international society as a whole. The first point holds that the great powers seek to preserve the general balance of power, and to avoid, control and contain crises and wars among each other. The second has to do with the great powers unilaterally exploiting their preponderance, and also the idea of concerted action to pursue common policies. This, as Bull notes, is not a description of what great powers always do, since they often promote disorder, upset the general balance, and try to stir crises and win wars, to secure their own interests. (Bull 1995, p. 200-201)

Buzan argues that most classical English school writers have neglected the subglobal/regional level (Buzan 2004, p. 205). This is not an entirely fair assessment, at least not in the context of the great power management institution. Bull draws attention to the great powers' local preponderance, special interests and responsibilities in their spheres of influence (Bull 1995, pp. 212-218). The observation is particularly interesting in the context of the Middle East, which is an area of inherently mixed interests. This has been evident especially in Syria, in which the divided interests of great powers mix with the interests of regional powers such as Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey, and even transnational actors such as al-Qaeda.

With particular reference to great power management in the Middle East, Gonzalez-Pelaez finds two areas of analysis: great power management from global to regional level, and regional great power management within the region. She argues that the global to regional side of the equation is very active in the Middle East, with both sides interested in each other, creating a double-track use of this institution: the outside supply push and the local demand pull (Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009, p. 100). The outside supply push can manifest itself in the great powers supporting friendly regimes in the region to secure their oil supplies or to constrain the rise of unfriendly forces such radical Islamist or nationalist movements. The local demand pull is about Middle Eastern governments making use of great power management. It includes requests by regional governments to great powers to mediate in regional conflicts, and even supporting great power intervention to control and

punish regional belligerents, as was the case in the Gulf War against Iraq in 1991 led by the United States. In the cases of Libya and Syria, the opposition movements of the two countries, as well as the Arab League, have requested for Western intervention against the ruling regimes. The Syrian regime, on the other hand, has relied on Russian and Chinese support to hold on to power.

In Buzan's scheme, the master institution of great power management includes the derivative institution of the balance of power. A general balance of power refers to the distribution of power among the great powers themselves. Here, an interesting question to consider is, to what extent has the struggle between the great powers affected the reactions of the international community to the crises in Libya and Syria? Locally significant powers can also form local, or particular, balances of power in segments of the system. In an area where a local balance exists, the great powers' influence is not as strong as in their direct spheres of influence, but they can participate in the balance by forming alliances with local powers. Alliances are another derivative institution of great power management. Examples of present great power alliances with regional powers in the Middle East are the United States' traditional alliance with Israel and Russia's alliance with Syria.

According to Bull, local balances serve to protect the stability of the region and the independence of states, and provide the conditions in which other institutions can operate. Using Bull's terminology, one can argue that in the Middle East there exists a complex balance of power, with complex referring to three or more powers doing the balancing. (Bull 1995, pp. 97-99) The local balance in the Middle East is famously sensitive. Particularly in the Syrian case there have been fears that the crisis might upset the stability of the whole region. The focus has not only been on states but also the range of other forces that have an effect on the balance in the Middle East, namely non-state and transnational actors such as religious and ethnic sects, and militant political groups like Hezbollah, Hamas and al-Qaeda.

The master institution of great power management also includes the institution of war, defined by Bull as organised violence carried out by political units against each other. (Bull 1995, p. 178) In Buzan's scheme, war is seen as an instrument of the great powers. As such, war differentiates the crisis in Libya from the crisis in Syria. In the former case, war was applied as an instrument of great power management, while in the latter it has not been used. In addition to military power, great powers can use softer instruments of intervention, such as economic sanctions and multilateral or bilateral diplomatic pressure. Softer forms of coercion have been applied in both cases to put pressure on the regimes to conform to the rules of international society. Interestingly, Gonzalez-

Pelaez argues that, in the context of the sub-global or regional interstate society of the Middle East, war is a master institution rather than just a derivative institution of great power management. (Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009) The history of the region, most recently the civil wars in Libya and Syria, seems to suggest just that.

Finally, the institution of great power management begs the question, which are the great powers? Several definitions are possible. Wight defined great powers as powers with general interests, i.e. whose interests are as wide as the states-system itself (Wight 2004, p. 50). For Bull, there were three characteristics of great powers. They are, first of all, comparable in status in that they can be seen as equal members of a club with a rule of membership. Second, they are comparable, and in the front rank of international society, in terms of military strength. Third, great powers are recognised by others and conceived by themselves to have special rights and duties. (Bull 1995, pp. 194-196) Although the conventional way to perceive the great powers is in terms of the most powerful states, English school theorists have also used the term to refer to groups of independent political communities such as the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (Buzan and Waever 2003, Makarychev 2011). Bull recognises this in discussing Western Europe as a potential great power candidate (Bull 1995, p. 197), and the idea is also reflected in Buzan's institutional scheme (Table 1), where NATO and the United Nations Security Council are picked as secondary institutions of great power management.

This study will focus on the reactions of the UN Security Council, and particularly its permanent members, to the crises in Libya and Syria. The UN Security Council is essentially the most important multilateral arena of great power management, and its permanent members are, in Bullian terms, the members of a club where each country has equal status and voting power. As members, they also have the responsibility to deal with crises that potentially affect the peace and security of international society, as well as the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. (The UN Charter, Security Council Resolution 1674) As one might expect, the Security Council's permanent members have played a very active part in dealing with the crises in Libya and Syria.⁶

⁶ After the cold war, it has been common to refer to international society as unipolar, with the United States as the sole preponderant power. Bull would have been uncomfortable with this description, since he argued that there could not be simply one great power. (Bull 2005, p. 194) Bull would have perhaps described the present state of affairs as a complex balance of power, which does not require equal parity in power: "In a situation of three or more competing powers the development of gross inequalities in power among them does not necessarily put the strongest in a position of preponderance, because the others have the possibility of combining against it." (Bull 2005, p. 98)

2.3.2 Diplomacy

According to Wight, the diplomatic system is “the master institution of international relations” and can be defined as the art of communication between powers. (Wight 2004, p. 113) Diplomacy is also presented as a master institution in Buzan’s scheme, embodying the derivative institutions of multilateral and bilateral diplomacy.

According to Bull, genuinely multilateral diplomacy is the conduct of business among three or more states seeking to resolve an issue together, as in the UN General Assembly or Security Council. (Bull 1995, pp. 158) Multilateral diplomacy may also take the form of conferences outside international organisations. In the Syrian case, for example, multilateral diplomacy in the Security Council, or any form of concerted action, has been difficult because the great powers have been divided over what the right approach to the crisis should be. This is why diplomacy has spilled over to more ad hoc arrangements such as the Friends of Syria Group initiated by the French president Nicolas Sarkozy.

Bilateral relationships, and bilateral diplomacy, link one state or government with another. Concerning Libya and Syria, two levels of bilateral diplomacy can be identified. The first, which can also be seen as a dimension of the institution of great power management, is diplomacy between the great powers. The second level is the relations between the great powers and the object countries themselves. The second level differentiates Libya from Syria in that, while the Libyan regime received hardly any diplomatic support when waging war against the opposition, the Syrian regime enjoys good diplomatic relations with several countries, most notably Russia and China.

Diplomacy is usually understood as communication between states, but so called quasi- or second track diplomacy, or diplomacy conducted with non-state actors, has also been an important factor in the crises, as the opposition forces of Libya and Syria have challenged the sovereignty of the old regimes. In practice, it is quite difficult to determine when an opposition group should have diplomatic status or, as Bull puts it, when a rebel band takes on the character of a political unit.⁷

⁷ Bull raises the issue when discussing the difficulty of distinguishing war from peace. He observes that between the two states of affairs there are gradations: when does a blockade become an act of violence? When does a rebel band take on the character of a political unit? (Bull 1995, p. 179) The same gradation also applies to the issue of when a political group gains diplomatic status. In Libya and Syria, for instance, the international community has had to consider carefully who the opposition is and who they represent?

(Bull 1995, p. 179) This is a question the international society has had to ponder over when dealing with the opposition movements of Libya and Syria.

2.3.3 Sovereignty

Sovereignty, as Jackson notes, is one of the foremost institutions of our world. It was originally an institution of escape from rule by outsiders and to this day it remains a legal barrier to foreign interference in the jurisdiction of states. Basic norms of the UN Charter (Articles 2 and 51) enshrine the principle of equal sovereignty, the doctrine of nonintervention, and inherent right of self-defense. (Jackson 2005, p. 73)

States assert, in relation to a defined territory, what may be called internal sovereignty, which means supremacy over all authorities within that territory and population. States also assert external sovereignty, by which is meant independence of outside authorities (Bull 1995, p. 8) This international dimension of sovereignty constitutes the heart of international society, since it allows states to assume their places as members of the society of states. (Gonzalez-Paez 2009, p. 93) According to Jackson, sovereignty is the basic norm upon which a society of states ultimately rests and is thus a precondition of international society properly so-called. (Jackson 2005, p. 75) In practice, determining whether an entity is sovereign is often a matter of diplomatic dispute. This has been evident in the cases of Libya and Syria, where the sovereignty of the ruling regimes has been contested by strong opposition movements.

The master institution of sovereignty embodies the derivative institution of non-intervention, which is also the fundamental principle of international law. The non-intervention doctrine is central to the English school pluralist conception of international society. According to Vincent, the interplay between sovereignty and non-intervention is established simply by logic. If the members of international society are taken to be sovereign states acknowledging each other's rights to rule in their own domains, then it follows that intervention – the attempt to subject another state to one's will – is illegitimate as a violation of sovereignty: if sovereignty, then non-intervention. No matter that state practice has failed to deliver a body of clear rules on the subject of intervention: the answers can be got by recourse to first principles. (Vincent, 1986, p. 113) This inherently legal argument is followed by another deriving from the anarchical nature of the international system. If we are to assume that international society, conditioned by anarchy, is accurately described as composed of sovereign states with different political systems which they have to guard jealously,

then we may expect among its members two general attitudes towards the question of intervention: doubt about the motives of interveners; and scepticism about any good outcome of intervention. (Vincent 1986, p. 114) It follows then, that intervention will almost always be carried out in the selfish interest of the intervening state or states. Even in the case of intervention where solidarist or humanitarian motives are apparent, powerful arguments can be derived from cultural relativism: other countries can always criticise the intervening state or states for imposing one way of life over another.

Furthermore, even if intervention were to produce some good outcomes, there will always be some bad ones as well. As Vincent points out with particular reference to humanitarian intervention, any principle of intervention would issue a license for all kinds of interference, claiming with more or less plausibility to be humanitarian, but driving huge wedges into international order. (Vincent 1986, p. 114) To make an exception to the norm of non-intervention then, will simply open a door to the use of armed intervention as an instrument of foreign policy. This point has been made repeatedly by those writing on humanitarian intervention. (Slater&Nardin 1986, p. 95) Bull goes so far as to argue that the framework of international order is inhospitable to demands for human justice. If international society were really to treat human justice as primary and the coexistence of states as secondary, then in a situation in which there is no agreement as to what human rights are or in what hierarchy of priorities they should be arranged, the result could only be to undermine international order. (Bull 1995, p. 85)⁸ What makes this argument so powerful, according to Vincent, is the fact that it is within states that a platform of order is established on which justice we associate with the notion of human rights might be based: so anything that threatens order also threatens the possibility of achieving justice. (Vincent, 1986, p. 114)

Arguments for non-intervention can also be derived from the principle of self-determination, which in Buzan's scheme is a derivative institution of nationalism. Walzer bases his communitarian theory of non-intervention on John Stuart Mill's argument that the members of a political community must seek their own freedom, just as the individual must cultivate his own virtue. True political freedom, then, cannot be achieved by means of outside interference. According to Mill and Walzer, a state is self-determining even if its citizens fail to establish free institutions through intra-state struggle, but it has been deprived of self-determination if such institutions are established by an intrusive

⁸ Bull distinguished between three types of justice: international or inter-state justice; individual or human justice; and world or cosmopolitan justice. It is individual justice that we are concerned with here. Bull was not prepared to assert a general priority of order over justice. Rather, he argues that the question of order vs. justice should be considered in relation to the merits of a particular case. Bull 1995, *passim*.

neighbour. (Walzer 1992, p. 87) In this way, intervention constitutes a double violation of fundamental rights: of the right of a people to live unmolested by foreigners in a political community – a state – of their own, and the right of this state itself to political sovereignty and territorial integrity as a member of the society of states. (Slater&Nardin 1986, p. 87)

In the different reactions to the crises in Libya and Syria, one can clearly distinguish arguments deriving from sovereignty and non-intervention, but also arguments deriving from the equality of people institution outlined below.

2.3.4 Equality of people

The master institution of equality of people touches on the interhuman domain of international society, and is an institution that Buzan argues was established as a part of decolonization. (Buzan 2004, p. 183) Equality of people is a wide-ranging concept, and at the institutional level of international society it is represented by human rights and humanitarian intervention. They are both controversial subjects, and their institutional status in global international society is still contested (Gonzalez-Paez 2009, p. 107). Both institutions then, are still in the early stages of development, and not fully adopted by the international community.⁹ In the crises of Libya and Syria, the equality of people institution is emphasized by the fact that in both cases the governments of the countries have engaged in massive violations of human rights. In both cases the opposition movements of the countries have called for the international community to intervene to halt the violations and help bring down the oppressive regimes. In Libya, the international community intervened militarily, while in Syria, action by the international community has been restricted to sanctions, diplomatic maneuvering and the deployment of observer missions.

The controversy over equality of people as an institution of international society boils down to its inherent contradiction with sovereignty and its derivative institution, non-intervention. Many English school theorists advocating the solidarist conception of international society, however, have argued that there is a way around the contradiction. According to Linklater a solidarist international society endorses the principle of state sovereignty but strives to balance it with a commitment to

⁹ Although a young institution, the principle of humanitarian intervention was first formulated by Grotius as early as 1625: “So if a tyrant practices atrocities towards his subjects, even though those subjects cannot take up arms against him, it does not follow that others in a position of responsibility regarding humankind as a whole could not take up arms on their behalf.” (Vincent 1990, p. 247, quotes Grotius)

universal moral principles which address the injustices suffered by the victims of human rights violations, whether these be solitary individuals, indigenous peoples, or ethnic and other minority groups. (Linklater 1998, pp. 176-177) Measures, including humanitarian intervention, to halt violations of human rights then, could be seen as a systematic procedure in a solidarist international society. It follows from this that states that are guilty of gross violations of the basic rights of their citizens should expect a response from the global community. As Donnelly points out, the global community has at least a right, and perhaps even a responsibility, to act in cases of fundamental human rights violations. In fact, the burden of proof is largely reversed, requiring a strong argument for non-intervention in such cases. The argument is inspired by what can be called the cosmopolitan view of international politics. This view holds that individuals are subjects as well as objects of international relations, members of a global political community (*cosmopolis*) as well as citizens of states. (Donnelly 1993, pp. 619-620) It follows naturally from this that the community of mankind must be seen, in some ways, as superior to states and the society of states.

One way to track the development of the institutions of human rights and humanitarian intervention is to examine past interventions, which have been justified in humanitarian terms. Wheeler argues that humanitarian justifications for the use of force lacked legitimacy in cold war international society. This reflected the dominance of pluralist international society. According to Wheeler, there was a change of norm in relation to the legitimacy of humanitarian intervention after the cold war. By drawing on the cases of Western interventions in Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo, he argues that a new solidarist conception of international society shaped the interventions in the 1990s. (Wheeler 2000) Wheeler and Bellamy argue that, although justifying the use of force on humanitarian grounds remained hotly contested during the 1990s, with Russia, China and India defending the traditional interpretation of state sovereignty, by the end of the decade they had reluctantly come to accept that military intervention authorized by the United Nations Security Council was justifiable in cases of genocide and mass killing. Despite criticisms that interventions were not carried out for purely humanitarian reasons, were not always successful (Somalia), came too late (Rwanda), were carried out without a Security Council mandate (Kosovo)¹⁰, and criticisms for turning a blind eye in some cases (Srebrenica), it is argued that in the 1990s Western states took the lead in advancing a new norm of armed humanitarian intervention. (Bellamy&Wheeler 2007)

¹⁰ A commission of experts found NATO's intervention in Kosovo to be illegal but legitimate. While it did not satisfy international society's legal rules, it was sanctioned by its compelling moral purpose. (Bellamy 2004, p. 34)

According to Weiss, however, the notion that human beings matter more than sovereignty radiated only briefly. On this view, the September 11 attacks in 2001 marked the end of the “golden era” of humanitarian activism. The subsequent war on terrorism, and the invasion of Iraq in 2003, suggested that the political will for humanitarian intervention had evaporated with the United States losing its inclination to commit significant political and military resources for human protection. (Weiss 2004, p. 135-136) Bellamy, while refusing that the consensus about humanitarian intervention as an institution has changed, contends that the Iraq war undermined the standing of the United States and the United Kingdom as norm carriers, as they tried to justify their war in humanitarian terms. (Bellamy, 2004) These two trends, it is argued, contributed to the failure of the international community to intervene resolutely in the humanitarian crisis in Darfur. (Bellamy&Wheeler 2007, Bellamy 2004)

One of the developments that have solidified human rights as an institution is the adoption of the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) norm by the UN General Assembly in 2005. This principle places emphasis on the responsibility of the state to protect its own population, introducing the idea that the international community should assist states in this endeavour, and situating armed intervention within a broader continuum of measures that the international community might take to respond to genocide and mass atrocities. Bellamy identifies nine cases in which the RtoP has been invoked since its adoption up to 2010 (Bellamy 2010, p. 143) Interestingly, the 2011 intervention in Libya by the multi-state, Western dominated coalition presents the first case in which the norm’s military dimension has been mandated by the Security Council and enforced in full. In the Libyan case international society soon divided over the issue of whether the coalition had exceeded its mandate and used excessive force to bring down the government of Muammar Gaddafi. Critics have argued that the RtoP, and indeed the whole idea of humanitarian intervention, is a “Trojan horse” that legitimizes great power interference in the affairs of the weak. (Bellamy 2010, pp. 149-151) Skeptics might also argue that the fact that the RtoP has not played a role in Syria shows that intervention to save strangers is a long way from becoming a consistent procedure in international relations.

As the above discussion shows, the equality of people institution and its derivative institutions, human rights and humanitarian intervention, are still contested norms in international society, norms that are challenged by the traditional pluralist institutions of sovereignty and non-intervention every step of the way.

2.3.5 The market

The market is the social structure that allows buyers and sellers to exchange goods and services on the basis of a price negotiated between them and reflecting the interplay of supply and demand. (Gonzalez-Paez 2009, p. 110) Until the end of the cold war, the market was one of the core contested issues among the great powers, the rival principle being centrally planned economics. But with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the abandonment of central planning by China, the market has become a global institution in the sense that most states conform to market rules, and powerful secondary institutions exist to support this (IMF, WTO, World Bank). In contemporary international society, the market is strongly tied into multilateralism, with trade and financial liberalization, as well as hegemonic stability, as its major derivatives. (Buzan 2004, pp. 234-235, 233). The market touches on the transnational domain of international society, which refers to social structures composed of non-state collective actors, such as transnational companies. And similarly to equality of people, it creates tensions with traditional Westphalian institutions, such as sovereignty, territoriality and the balance of power. According to Buzan,

“[The market] is a principle of organization and legitimization that affects both how states define and constitute themselves, what kind of other actors they give standing to, and how they interpret sovereignty and territoriality.” (Buzan 2004, p. 194)

In the Middle East region, energy resources are an obvious market issue for the international community to consider. Oil and gas have played a crucial role in the politics of the region, and influenced the way the international community has interacted with it. For instance, although the official explanation of the US-British invasion of Iraq in 2003 was Saddam Hussein's alleged weapons of mass destruction, a very strong argument can be made that the real reason lies in Iraq's oil reserves, which at the time were the world's second largest. The independent policy watchdog Global Policy Forum (GPF) has asserted that Iraq's oil is the central feature of the political landscape there and that, as a result of the invasion, "friendly" companies expect to gain most of the lucrative oil deals that will be worth hundreds of billions of dollars in profits in the coming decades. According to GPF, US influence over the 2005 constitution of Iraq has made sure it "contains language that guarantees a major role for foreign companies". (Global Policy Forum, Oil in Iraq) James A. Paul of GPF argues that the importance of oil to national security is unlike that of any other commodity. It feeds the military machines of powerful governments:

“For this reason, the governments and general staffs of powerful nations seek to ensure a steady supply of oil... Such governments view their companies’ global interests as synonymous with the national interest and they readily support their companies’ efforts to control new production sources, to overwhelm foreign rivals, and to gain the most favorable pipeline routes and other transportation and distribution channels.” (Paul 2003, Global Policy Forum)

In this way, political and economic interests intertwine, and the market intermingles with traditional Westphalian institutions, such as great power management, sovereignty, war and the balance of power. It can be argued that the struggle for energy resources, the interests of great powers, as well as those of transnational companies, have also played a big role in the way the international community has reacted to the crises in Libya and Syria.

The above discussion shows that, although the market principle calls for cooperation, and is based on openness and liberalization, there is clearly an element of coercion and violence to it too. Buzan argues that liberal, or market, logic suggests that one can reduce the probability of having to fight by allowing the operation of a market economy to democratize and entangle political enemies. (Buzan 2004, p. 194) In the context of the Middle East, however, the goal of a free market, or that of democratizing authoritarian regimes, seems to take second place to securing and controlling vital energy reserves on which the world economy and the great powers rely.

The coercive dimension of the market has also manifested it in the form of economic sanctions, to which both Libya and Syria have been subjected. In the case of Libya, coercion soon turned into armed conflict as the international community, represented by the UN Security Council, mandated member states to wage war on Gaddafi’s regime. In the case of Syria, the unilateral economic sanctions imposed by western and Arab nations against Bashar al-Assad’s regime have been in place for more than a year, and have gradually been toughened. Syria’s most important allies, Russia, China and Iran, have not agreed to sanctions and continued to trade with the country.

Where energy resources are concerned, there is a big difference between Libya and Syria.

According to the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Libya was the world’s 18th and Syria the 34th largest oil producer in 2010. (The World Factbook, Country comparison: oil production). Libya’s production (1,8 million barrels per day) was 4,5 times that of Syria’s (400000 barrels per day). Perhaps more importantly, according to 2012 data, Libya had the world’s 10th

largest proven oil reserves, while the Syrian oil sector has suffered from depleting reserves.

(Wikipedia, Economy of Syria) Another considerable international market issue is arms trade. Of the great powers, up to the civil war, France and Russia were the most significant suppliers of arms to Gaddafi's regime in Libya. In Syria, of the great powers, Russian arms suppliers have up to now enjoyed an almost exclusive trading relationship with the armed forces of Syria.

2.4 Methodology

2.4.1 Institutions as methodological tools

One of Bull's key judgments is that what goes on internationally can be understood in the light of the rules and institutions of international society. (Linklater&Suganami 2006, p. 102) In this study, I will use the institutions outlined above as methodological tools to compare the reactions of the international community to the crises in Libya and Syria. Two recent studies are useful illustrations of how the institutions of international society have been applied to shed light on particular cases. First, Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez reviews Buzan's set of the primary institutions of international society in relation to the Middle Eastern regional interstate society, and analyses how they agree with or differ from the global level understanding. She argues that the Middle East has kept regional features strong enough to remain as a sub-global phenomenon with, for instance, war as master institution rather than a derivative institution of great power management as in Buzan's global set (Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009). Second, Astrov et al. analyse how the institution of great power management functioned in the 2008 Georgian war. They argue that Georgia was a case of mismanagement by Russia and the United States to avoid a crisis leading to a war between Russia and the Western oriented Georgia (Astrov et al. 2009). In a similar vein, the idea of this study is to review how the chosen set of institutions functioned in the crises in Libya and Syria, a process which should then enable us to detect some differences between the particular cases.

2.4.2 Verstehen

English school scholars have traditionally emphasized the importance of Verstehen, or understanding achieved through judgment and intuition, in giving accounts about international events. Linklater and Suganami define Verstehen as explanation of what goes on in the social field, by penetrating the minds, and uncovering the assumptions and motives, of its relevant actors, and imparting the knowledge or understanding thereby gained to those who are seeking to make sense

of the situation. (Linklater&Suganami 2006, p. 101) For one of the leading figures of the English school, Charles Manning, the aim of teaching international relations was to enable students to achieve an ever-improving aptitude for appreciating an international situation as it presents itself to the experienced statesman's eye. (Linklater&Suganami 2006, p. 100) Bull stressed the importance of developing a feel for the play of international politics and the moral dilemma to which it gives rise. (Bull 1969, p. 28) Wight observed that "statesmen act under various pressures, and appeal with varying degrees of sincerity to various principles. It is for those who study international relations to judge their actions, which means judging the validity of their ethical principles". According to Wight, "this is not a process of scientific analysis; it is more akin to literary criticism". (Wight 1994, p. 258) Bull explicitly set the English school against positivist scientism, a popular approach among American international relations theorists, which adopts its causal model of explanation from the natural sciences. He argued that "there is very little of significance that can be said about international relations if it is insisted that we must first find laws that meet the strict scientific standards of verification and proof". (Bull 1969, p. 20) This is in part due to the fact that international politics, as seen by English school scholars, is often concerned with substantive moral questions, for which there is no objective criteria. The subject-matter of international relations, it is argued, should not be limited to issues in which a rigorous scientific process is possible.

(Linklater&Suganami 2006, pp. 108-109, Bull 1969, p. 28)

The English school also acknowledges that the subject-matter of international relations is intrinsically historical, and that in any empirical study, the idiographic dimension cannot be neglected. Idiographic refers to seeking to establish knowledge about particular past events under descriptions unique to themselves. (Linklater&Suganami 2006, p. 85) This is to say that students of international relations should pay attention to the uniqueness of each entity and each event they examine rather than simply seek generalizations. (Suganami 2011, p. 35) This does not mean that English school scholars do not search for broad historical generalizations, but when this is the case, they will bear in mind that there may be differences, as well as similarities, in the cases compared.

(Linklater&Suganami 2006, pp. 85, 96)¹¹

The approach outlined above, which stresses the importance of empathy, judgment and intuition to explain international events, situates this study firmly in the field of qualitative research. According

¹¹ One example of generalization in the English school is Martin Wight's illustration of the historical patterns of international thought in *The Three Traditions*. (Wight 1994). Another is Buzan's account of four ideal-types of interstate society. (Buzan 2004, pp. 160, 190-195)

to Alasuutari, qualitative analysis is made up of two stages: the reduction of observations and solving the puzzle. First, the reduction of observations implies that the research material is analysed from a certain theoretical-methodological perspective. (Alasuutari 2011, p. 40) In this study, I analyse the research material from the point of view of the institutions of international society, to point out differences in the reactions of the international community to the crises in Libya and Syria. Second, solving the puzzle means that the student produces an interpretation of the case under investigation, by using the clues provided by the research material and previous research. (Alasuutari 2011, p. 44) This view of analysis comports well with the classical English school approach outlined above.

2.4.3 Research material

The research material of this study consists, firstly, of statements and comments made by the leaders of powers that have taken part in managing the crises in Libya and Syria. Many of the comments come from leaders of the so called great powers, a term that in this study refers to the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. Secondly, I have studied the Security Council's resolutions and draft resolutions on Libya and Syria, as well as the sometimes heated discussion around them. Thirdly, the material is supplemented by analyses of the conflicts by a plethora of writers and organizations, as well as a bulk of news articles, which have been important in accumulating my overall understanding of the cases. As we have seen, a firm historical knowledge of the cases is paramount to the method of study of the English school, which stresses the importance of Verstehen, understanding, which is applied to explain international events by penetrating the minds, and uncovering the assumptions and motives, of relevant actors.

In all, I have included 74 documents as primary sources in the thesis. The sources have been published during the period from the beginning of the crisis in Libya in February 2011 to the end of September 2012. In selecting the material, I have focused on important milestones, such as UN Security Council meetings and other events that have sparked reactions from the international community. I have not only concentrated on milestones, however, but also followed both crises as they have unfolded. Much of the research material has been gathered simply by following the news and analyses of the cases in several English-language international media on a day-to-day basis. The method of choice, i.e. the institutions of international society, has naturally influenced the way I have searched, processed and classified information about Libya and Syria along the way. Once

again, where the crisis in Syria is concerned, it should be reminded that, at the time of finishing this thesis, the conflict is still going on and its outcome uncertain.

2.4.4 Source critique

During the process of writing the thesis I went through hundreds of news articles on the crises in Libya and Syria. Where the media is concerned, one of the most striking features – in Libya, Syria and some of the other uprisings of the Arab spring – has been the rise of citizen journalism, which has to some extent compensated for the international media's lack of access to information. As governments have severely restricted the access of international journalists, videos, still photos and reports sent to traditional media – or posted on Youtube, Bambuser, Facebook, Twitter and other social media from the scene – have become important sources of information. Basically, anyone in the right place at the right time can now become a contributor to news, provided they are carrying a mobile phone or some other handheld device with them. The positive effects of wartime citizen journalism are obvious – it brings news of the violence of oppressive regimes to the world's attention. This work was recognized in March 2012, when a group of Syrian citizen journalists and activists were awarded the Google-sponsored Netizen prize by press freedom organization Reporters Without Borders (RSF). The award was presented to the media centre of the opposition organization, Local Coordinating Committees of Syria (LCCSyria), which brings together groups of citizen journalists to collect and disseminate information and images of Syria's uprising.

I have the utmost respect for people who risk their lives to get the message out from conflict areas where representatives of traditional media cannot or do not dare go. However, there are some issues the researcher – as well as the ordinary consumer of day-to-day news – should keep in mind when dealing with reports from situations such as these. Firstly, wartime citizen journalists are more often than not affiliated to opposition groups, such as the above-mentioned LCC, and work to bring down the regimes whose atrocities they seek to uncover. In Libya and Syria, for instance, the aim of many activists has been to influence foreign powers get them to exert pressure on the regimes. In light of this, concerns can be raised as to the objectivity of citizen reporting. Secondly, during the Arab spring, there have been concerns as to the accuracy and authenticity of citizen reporting. For instance, Khalil Gorbal, co-founder of Le PaCTE, an organization promoting democracy and training citizen journalists in Tunisia, admits that

“We have seen a huge amount of wrong information which has led us to rethink and re-teach the ethics of journalism.” (Journalism.co.uk, 13.3.2012)¹²

Thirdly – and this point touches both Libya and Syria – when international media are running news based on information from citizen journalists, activists or opposition groups, they have no way to independently verify the information if they have been denied access to the countries. This point, of course, is readily admitted in the stories that are run. The situation can be very difficult for the media, which are competing for news in circumstances where they cannot verify the facts.¹³

During the process of studying the reactions of the international community to the crises in Libya and Syria, it has also been interesting to witness some of the ideological differences among international media. The Russian government funded English-language television channel Russia Today, for instance, has displayed a highly critical attitude towards any kind of western interference in Libya and Syria, which falls in line with the views of the Russian regime. The Saudi Al Arabiya news channel and the Qatari news network Al Jazeera, on the other hand, have been accused of supporting the rebels’ cause in Syria, thus reflecting the political positions of their funders, the royal families of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. (Al Qassemi, Foreign Policy, 2.8.2012) Western English-language media have come under harsh criticism for failing to give a balanced view of what is happening in Syria, as well as for relying too heavily on rebel sources. This point has been made, for instance, by the Syria-based British journalist Stephen Starr, and Ari Kerkkänen, the director of the Finnish Institute in the Middle East, which operated in the Syrian capital Damascus up to the spring of 2012. (Journalism.co.uk, 3.7.2012, Yle uutiset 7.2.2012)

The points mentioned above remind us that source critique is of the utmost importance, especially when studying wartime situations, which are always precarious, chaotic and laden with complex networks of interests. In situations such as these, it is up to the researcher to form as balanced a picture of the cases as possible with the information available. Certainly, these are issues I have kept in mind as I have tried to form an overall understanding of the crises in Libya and Syria.

¹² The Electronic Intifada provides a good account of how suspicious information started to spread in social media during the first few months of the Syrian conflict: <http://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/how-cnn-helped-spread-hoax-about-syrian-babies-dying-incubators>. The theme of dying babies was also used in the 1990 Gulf War by the government of Kuwait to persuade the United States to attack Iraq: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nayirah>.

¹³ CNN provides a good illustration of the use of footage from opposition citizen journalists from Homs, Syria: <http://edition.cnn.com/video/#/video/world/2012/03/14/pkg-damon-syria-only-one-survivor.cnn?iref=allsearch>. The report is based entirely on an amateur video obtained by CNN. Not much is said about the origin of the footage. According to CNN “the video is said to have been shot in the neighbourhood of Sabeel last month”. It is also said that “CNN is confident of the video’s provenance”.

3. REACTIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO THE CRISES IN LIBYA AND SYRIA

3.1 Libya

3.1.1 Great power management

“Expressing grave concern at the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and condemning the violence and use of force against civilians. Deploring the gross and systematic violation of human rights, including the repression of peaceful demonstrators, expressing deep concern at the deaths of civilians, and rejecting unequivocally the incitement to hostility and violence against the civilian population made from the highest level of the Libyan government.” (UN Security Council Resolution 1970)

Security Council Resolution 1970 was the initial concerted reaction of the great powers to the crisis in Libya. The reaction was swift – it came less than two weeks after the uprising began in mid February 2011. And it was determined – the condemnation of Muammar Gaddafi’s regime was unanimous, with all members voting in favour of the adoption of the resolution. The great powers were also able to agree on several common policies to deal with the crisis. It referred the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court, declared an arms embargo on the country, and slapped a travel ban and an asset freeze on Gaddafi and several of his close allies. It called on member states to facilitate the return of humanitarian agencies in Libya, and decided to establish a committee consisting of all the members of the Security Council to undertake the monitoring of the sanctions against Libya. Following the adoption of the text, Secretary-General of the UN Ban Ki-moon welcomed the Council’s ‘decisive’ action:

“While it cannot, by itself, end the violence and the repression, it is a vital step — a clear expression of the will of a united community of nations.” (Ban Ki-Moon, UN Security Council, 28.2.2011)

Some cracks appeared in the united front of the great powers after the adoption of the first resolution, when the idea of the establishment of a no-fly zone over Libya was introduced. Russian

foreign minister Sergei Lavrov called the idea ‘superfluous’ and said the world powers must instead focus on fully using the sanctions approved by the UN Security Council. China signalled potential opposition by arguing that the crisis should be resolved through peaceful means. (Bloomberg 2.3.2011) But as Gaddafi’s forces began to gain ground and advanced towards the rebel stronghold city of Benghazi in March 2011, the most vocal advocates of the no-fly zone, France and Britain, worked to pave the way for a new resolution that would also sanction military intervention by member states to protect civilians in Libya. The result was resolution 1973, introduced to the Security Council by France, Britain and Lebanon, with the support of the United States. The resolution authorised member states to establish a no fly-zone and to

“to take all necessary measures...to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory.”
(UN Security Council Resolution 1973)

On March 18th, the 15-member Security Council voted 10-0 in favour of the resolution, with five abstentions: Russia, China, India, Germany and Brazil. What was crucial, however, was that Russia and China abstained rather than used their power of veto as permanent members to block the resolution, effectively paving the way for the other great powers to intervene in Libya with the blessing of the international community.

A key factor in securing the mandate to intervene in Libya, and in legitimising the sanctions and operations undertaken thereafter, were the calls from the region to the international community for assistance. This is a good example of the local demand pull track of global to regional management which, as it was argued, is very active in the Middle East region. The fact that the Arab League, and the Libyan opposition, had called for a no-fly zone to protect civilians in Libya certainly got a lot of emphasis in the resolutions as well as the statements of politicians justifying the actions against Libya’s regime.

“Taking note also of the decision of the Council of the League of Arab States of 12 March 2011 to call for the imposition of a no-fly zone on Libyan military aviation, and to establish safe areas in places exposed to shelling as a precautionary measure that allows the protection of the Libyan people and foreign nationals residing in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.” (UN Security Council Resolution 1973)

“We must never forget the reasons why the international community was obliged to act in the first place. As Libya descended into chaos with Colonel Gaddafi attacking his own people, the Arab League called for action. The Libyan opposition called for help. And the people of Libya looked to the world in their hour of need.” (Prime minister James Cameron, president Barack Obama and president Nicolas Sarkozy in a joint statement, BBC News 15.4.2011)

Arguably, the local demand pull was also a key factor in convincing Russia and China not to block resolution 1973. China had pledged to “heed and respect the opinions and positions of Arab countries and African countries” (Li Baodong, China’s ambassador to the UN, Bloomberg 2.3.2011). And in any case it would have been very difficult for either Russia or China to take the side of Gaddafi’s regime and go against the wishes of the Arab League and the Libyan opposition.

The other track of global to regional management, the outside supply push, was quite obviously manifested in the crisis in Libya, as western great powers took an active role in influencing the course of events in Libya. The most active players were France and Britain, which effectively brokered the international consensus which enabled the adoption of resolution 1973, and which took the lead in the military campaign. The overt aim of these measures was to protect civilians from the crackdown of Libyan authorities to suppress the uprising. However, other motives have also been identified. In the French case, it has been suggested that one of president Nicolas Sarkozy’s motivations in leading the campaign was to bolster his popularity at home before the coming year’s presidential election. Another interesting perspective is that the Libya operation was used by Sarkozy to reassert France as the most militarily capable European power and the leader in European foreign affairs. According to Stratfor, a Texas-based private intelligence company founded by American scholar George Friedman, this move was made to bolster France’s position especially in relation to Germany, the undisputed economic powerhouse of Europe. (Stratfor, Forbes 29.3.2011) Moreover, it can be argued that Britain, France as well as the United States all stood to benefit from a Libya governed by the rebel forces instead of Gaddafi. During Gaddafi’s 42-year rule, Libya was implicated in the financing of many terrorist groups, including the Irish Republican Army (IRA). In the most famous instance, Gaddafi was directly implicated in the 1988 Lockerbie bombing in which 270 people died after a Pan Am plane, bound for New York from London, exploded over Scotland. In 1986, the US launched air strikes on several targets in Libya in retaliation for attacks on US troops and citizens in Vienna, Rome and Berlin. From this perspective,

it is possible to draw the conclusion that, for the West, the rebels must have seemed a more attractive alternative to the unpredictable Gaddafi. The troubled history, combined with the fact that Gaddafi was sitting on the largest oil reserves in Africa, probably made the prospect of change in Libya appealing to the European great powers as well as the United States when the opportunity presented itself.

The analysis of Russian influence over the course of events in Libya is not as straightforward. President Dmitry Medvedev decided not to use his power of veto over resolution 1973, and has had to defend his decision especially to his domestic audience:

“These are balanced decisions that were very carefully thought through. We gave our support to the first Security Council resolution and abstained on the second... Overall this resolution reflects our understanding of events in Libya too, but not completely. This is why we decided not to use our power of veto. This, you realise, was a qualified decision not to veto the resolution, and the consequences of this decision were obvious. It would be wrong for us to start flapping about now and say that we didn’t know what we were doing.” (Dmitry Medvedev, Kremlin 21.3.2011)

It is difficult to say what – in addition to the officially stated aim of protecting human rights and stability in North Africa – motivated the Russian president to accept sanctions, followed by a resolution mandating intervention, on Libya. Certainly, there were others in the Russian elite who thought that his policy was foolish and gullible, and that Russia should have used its power to protect its interests. As sanctions prevented Russia from trading with Libya, Russia’s ambassador to Tripoli blamed Medvedev for a betrayal of Russia’s interests. There was even a famous bust-up between the president and prime minister Vladimir Putin, who harshly criticized resolution 1973 and the western military intervention. (The New York Times 26.4.2011) These developments gave the impression that the president and the prime minister had very differing views on how to handle Libya. An interesting question to consider is, would the reaction of the international community have been different had Putin, who became president of Russia in March 2012, been in power during the Libyan crisis?

The institution of great power management embodies the derivative institution of war, which manifested itself in the US-European military campaign in Libya. From the outset, the military operation was highly controversial, and it clearly divided the international community and whatever

consensus there might have been over policies concerning Libya before the adoption of resolution 1973. Amid reports that the military coalition's bombing campaign was causing civilian casualties, as well as accusations that the coalition's true motivation was to change the regime in Libya, China, Russia, India, Brazil, Turkey, and the Arab League, argued that the use of force was excessive and exceeded the mandate of resolution 1973.

“What is happening in Libya differs from the aim of imposing a no-fly zone. And what we want is the protection of civilians and not the shelling of more civilians.”

(Arab League secretary general Amr Moussa, The Washington Post 20.3.2011)

“The resolution is defective and flawed. It allows everything. It resembles medieval calls for crusades.” (Vladimir Putin, China Daily 21.3.2011)

The strong opposition to the military intervention in Libya is a reminder of Mayall's and Buzan's observation that, “in the twentieth century war became regarded more as the breakdown of international society than as a sign of its operation” (Buzan 2004, p. 173, quotes Mayall 2000, p. 19). Even as an instrument of the great powers, operating under a UN mandate, war is a highly controversial institution. And it can be argued that the tensions the Libyan war caused in international society also had repercussions for its reactions to the crisis in Syria.

The institution of great power management also embodies the derivative institution of the balance of power. Here, it is useful to recollect Bull's observation that, where local balances exist, the great powers' influence is not as strong as in their direct spheres of influence. Where a local balance is lacking, it can be argued then, the great powers have more room to maneuver. In the Libyan case, it is possible to draw the conclusion that the lack of a strong local balance was a permissive factor that enabled the international community's active intervention in the crisis. Libya sits in North Africa, surrounded by Algeria, Tunisia, Niger, Sudan, Chad and Egypt, none of which are strong regional powers. The closest regional great powers, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran, are not in the immediate vicinity of Libya, and in any case none of them were allies of Muammar Gaddafi's regime or had an interest in supporting him in the conflict. Where alliances are concerned, none of the world powers had strong ties with the Libyan regime either. On the contrary, Gaddafi's history with the great powers, and indeed with a significant part of the international community, was plagued by animosity, particularly over his involvement in international terrorism. With these issues in mind, it

can be argued that, from the balance of power perspective, there was room for active intervention by the US-European coalition.

3.1.2 Diplomacy

From the outset of the crisis, Gaddafi's public appearances did not portray a picture of a leader who was willing to negotiate with either his domestic opponents or the international community. In a televised speech aired a week after the uprising against his regime had begun, he proclaimed,

“I am a fighter... I will die as a martyr at the end... I have not yet ordered the use of force, not yet ordered one bullet to be fired...when I do, everything will burn...Leave your homes and attack them in their lairs. Starting tomorrow the cordons will be lifted, go out and fight them.” (Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, New Statesman 23.2.2011)

Gaddafi's open defiance of the international community's calls for an end to violence resulted in the Arab League suspending Libya's membership in the organisation, and several countries severing or scaling down their bilateral diplomatic relations with the country. It also paved the way for multilateral great power diplomacy in the UN Security Council to produce resolution 1970, which unanimously condemned the violence against civilians and slapped sanctions on Gaddafi's regime. In Libya, rebel leaders refused to lay down their arms and begin talks on the country's future before Gaddafi and his sons step aside. The great powers of the West showed an equal unwillingness to negotiate with Gaddafi:

“We will look at each and every way of stepping up pressure on this regime, further isolation of this regime by expelling it from international organisations... and we do not in any way rule out the use of military assets, we must not tolerate this regime in using military force against its people... It is clear that this is an illegitimate regime that has lost the consent of its people, and our message to Colonel Gaddafi is simple: go now.” (David Cameron, BBC News 28.2.2011)

By the end of February 2011, all western permanent members of the UN Security Council had called for Gaddafi to relinquish his power and walk away. By this time, there was also a diplomatic alternative to Gaddafi's regime, as the anti-regime forces had organised themselves politically under the Libyan National Transitional Council, an entity which France was the first to recognise as

the legitimate representative of the Libyan people on March 10th. Multilateral great power diplomacy, in the form of resolution 1973, then paved the way for a military reaction by the international community to the crisis, with Russia and China deciding not to use their veto to give diplomatic shelter to Gaddafi's regime. Although Russia and China were highly critical of the bombing raids of the US-European led coalition, and called for a peaceful, negotiated settlement to the crisis, even Russian president Dmitry Medvedev had reservations about the possibility of reaching a diplomatic settlement with Gaddafi:

“The...problem is who to talk with there. Most of the Western countries consider the current Libyan leader, who says he holds no state post, someone they cannot shake hands with, someone they will not have dealings with. The Russian Federation has not officially severed diplomatic ties, and we could thus act as a mediator in this sense... But this does not mean that we do not see what this country’s authorities have done. This is something everyone, both inside and outside the country, should remember.”

(President Dmitry Medvedev, Kremlin 21.3.2011)

The Russian position seemed to be that it was uncomfortable dealing with either Gaddafi or his opponents, the rebels under the NTC, whose legitimacy it only recognised only at the very end of the civil war. President Medvedev joined Western leaders in calling for Gaddafi to step down in May, and made clear that he would not be granted asylum in Russia. (CNN World 27.5.2011, Al Arabiya News 1.9.2011) In the eyes of the international community then, Gaddafi appeared to be an isolated dictator. Rejected by the Arab League and by almost the entire international community, it can be argued that Gaddafi was too hot to handle even for China and Russia, who have traditionally been critical of putting international pressure on authoritarian regimes.

3.1.3 Sovereignty

The internal sovereignty of Libya under Gaddafi's regime was challenged by a strong opposition movement, with the National Transitional Council, recognised by France as the legitimate representative of the people of Libya on 10th March, as its political face. Already at the outset of the crisis, Gaddafi's regime was hit by notable defections of key politicians, military units, diplomats, and tribes, who joined the opposition movement. And within the first couple of weeks of the civil war, rebel troops were in control of most of Libya, as well as its oil fields, and even talked about tapping revenue from the country's vast oil resources. Towards the end of February 2011, Gaddafi's

regime seemed to be crumbling so significantly that there appeared to be a real possibility of it falling quickly.

The initial reactions of the international community to the crisis came against this backdrop. The external sovereignty of Gaddafi's Libya was challenged by a widespread condemnation of his crackdown on protests, and travel bans, an arms embargo and asset freezes were introduced in Security Council resolution 1970 to put pressure on the already ailing regime. Arguments were also derived from Gaddafi's lack of popular sovereignty, with Western governments arguing that, by massacring his own people, Gaddafi had totally lost legitimacy in the eyes of the Libyans. The clearest challenge to the external sovereignty of Gaddafi's regime came from Italy, by far the largest importer of Libyan oil, whose foreign minister Franco Frattini suspended a 2008 friendship treaty with Libya that included a non-aggression clause, a move that would enable the use of its military bases in a possible future intervention. Frattini argued that,

“We signed the friendship treaty with a state, but when the counterpart no longer exists – in this case the Libyan state – the treaty cannot be applied.” (Franco Frattini, The New York Times 27.2.2011)

From the traditional English school pluralist perspective, this is a very strong argument. As we have seen, the traditional interpretation holds that the assumption of sovereignty annuls the possibility of intervention into the affairs of states. But if the state has failed, lost its sovereignty, then it can be argued that the logical conclusion is that sovereignty's derivative institution of non-intervention must also be re-evaluated.

A similar notion was also prevalent in the statements of the heads of the US, France and Britain who, a couple of weeks into the military operation against Gaddafi, jointly argued that, even though their duty was not to remove Gaddafi by force, Libya under his rule would be a failed state that would induce terrorism and threaten peace and security around the world.

“It is impossible to imagine a future for Libya with Gaddafi in power... It would condemn Libya to being not only a pariah state, but a failed state too. Gaddafi has promised to carry out terrorist attacks against civilian ships and airliners... Any deal that leaves him in power would lead to further chaos and lawlessness. We know from bitter experience what that would mean. Neither Europe, the region nor the world can

afford a new safe haven for extremists.” (David Cameron, Barack Obama, Nicolas Sarkozy, BBC News 15.4.2011)

In the same statement, the leaders also suggested that the intervention of the international community in fact helped Libyans to determine their own future, a very liberal interpretation of the traditional principle of self-determination, which holds that a state is self-determining even if its citizens fail to establish free institutions through intra-state struggle, but it has been deprived of self-determination if such institutions are established by an outside power. (Walzer 1992, p. 87)

“Britain, France and the United States will not rest until the United Nations Security Council resolutions have been implemented and the Libyan people can choose their own future.” (David Cameron, Barack Obama, Nicolas Sarkozy, BBC News 15.4.2011)

To some extent, before the bombing raids against Gaddafi had begun, there seemed to be a notion even among the staunchest defenders of the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention that Gaddafi’s Libya was no longer a plenipotentiary member of the society of states. And in resolution 1973, which mandated a no-fly zone over Libya and all means to protect civilians, even Russia and China, who usually routinely block efforts to meddle in the internal affairs of member states, enabled the further downgrading of the sovereignty of Gaddafi’s regime by abstaining from the Security Council vote.

However, if there was some consensus among the great powers over the interpretation of Libyan sovereignty in resolution 1973, it soon evaporated after bombs started to rain down on the country. The coalition led by France, Britain and the United States was accused of violating the Security Council resolution by bombing indiscriminately and hitting non-military targets, which resulted in civilian casualties. The most hotly contested issue was regime change. The strategy of the military coalition, with heavy bombing of Gaddafi’s forces, the deployment of military advisers to aid rebel forces, and statements about Gaddafi being a legitimate target himself, was evidence of the fact that the West was effectively taking the side of the rebels to topple Gaddafi. This aim, as Russia and China protested, had been explicitly denied by western leaders at the start of the operation:

“Of course, there is no question that Libya – and the world – would be better off with Qaddafi out of power. I, along with many other world leaders, have embraced that

goal, and will actively pursue it through non-military means. But broadening our military mission to include regime change would be a mistake.” (Barack Obama, The White House 28.3.2011)

The feeling that the West took advantage of resolution 1973 to intervene militarily in a Libyan civil war resulted in the great powers of the East reverting to very traditional arguments concerning sovereignty and non-intervention. According to Russian president Medvedev, outside interference would only have negative consequences for order in Libya, and for the Libyan aspirations for self-determination.¹⁴

“The situation has already got out of control and it’s very sad... One should understand that the viability of the Libyan state itself is now at stake. What will we, I mean the international community and certainly the people of Libya, have – a single Libya or several states governed by puppet governments, and even by nobody or by radicals, extremists? This threat is quite realistic.” (Dmitry Medvedev, Russia Today 13.4.2011)

Chinese state-run media expressed grave doubts as to the motives of the Western intervention:

“Iraq was attacked because of oil, and Libya is also being attacked for its oil.” (China People's Daily quoted by Reuters 22.3.2011)

“The air attacks are an announcement that the West wants to dominate the world. The West still believes down to its very bones that it’s the leader of the world.” (The Global Times quoted by Reuters 22.3.2011)

The reactions of Russia and China to the apparent breach of the sovereignty institution can also be analysed against the backdrop of the sovereignty of the two countries themselves. It has often been pointed out that, during the Arab spring, the two states have been worried about protests, inspired by the popular uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East, spreading within their own borders. An all the more worrying matter for Russia and China would be if the West were to be able to take advantage of the dissent to interfere in their domestic affairs. Pictures of a dead Gaddafi, killed by

¹⁴ Interestingly, the result Medvedev suggested intervention would have is precisely the situation the leaders of the West said would be avoided by their intervention.

the rebels after French jets and a US drone, flown by a pilot in Los Angeles, attacked his car convoy must have been an unwelcome sight for Russian and Chinese leaders. It was evidence of the fact that the West was willing to go all the way to topple unfriendly regimes. This, and the feeling that the West had betrayed the international community by abusing resolution 1973 and intervening in the Libyan civil war also had, it can be argued, heavy repercussions for the reactions of the international community to the crisis in Syria.

3.1.4 Equality of people

In the Libyan crisis, there was no short supply of evidence that Gaddafi's forces were violating human rights. As they attempted to suppress the uprising, what were coined in international media as 'massacres', were widely reported from towns around the country. According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, there were reported arbitrary arrests, detention and torture of peaceful protestors. And according to some sources cited by Pillay, thousands may have been killed only during the first week or so of the uprising. The picture was made all the more grim by reports of the Libyan government employing snipers, artillery, helicopter gunships, warplanes, anti-aircraft weaponry, and warships against demonstrations and funeral processions. And as if to prove the point, Gaddafi himself appeared on national television to urge Libyans to attack his opposition. (UN News Centre 25.2.2011, The Daily Telegraph 20.2.2011, Al Jazeera 23.2.2011) As a response to the reports, the human rights commissioner and the international community evoked the responsibility to protect norm very early on in the crisis:

“In its emergency session [on Libya] this week, the Security Council highlighted the need to uphold the responsibility to protect. When a State is manifestly failing to protect its population from serious international crimes, the international community has the responsibility to step in by taking protective action in a collective, timely and decisive manner.” (Navi Pillay, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 25.2.2011)

The following day, the Security Council produced resolution 1970 on Libya, which focused on the “gross and systematic violations of human rights” committed by the Libyan authorities, which “may amount to crimes against humanity”. To back up the sanctions imposed on Libya, the council also referred the situation to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

From the outset, there seemed to be a sense of urgency in the reactions of the international community to the situation in Libya. One reason is probably that the violence was by far the worst the international community had witnessed during the Arab spring. But in addition to the horrible human rights violations, there might be other reasons for the rapid response too. For instance, it has been suggested that France, which emerged immediately as the most vociferous opponent of Gaddafi's regime, and the engine behind amassing support for intervention, was making up for its catastrophic response to the first uprising of the Arab spring in Tunisia, which turned out to be a public relations nightmare. French foreign minister Michele Alliot-Marie offered the Tunisian government official help in dealing with the protesters. Three days later, Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was forced to flee the country. It was revealed that, during her holiday in Tunisia, the foreign minister had used the jet of a businessman close to the Ben Ali's regime, and that her parents were negotiating a business deal with the same businessman. The ordeal was embarrassing, as well as politically damaging to Sarkozy, as the vast Arab audience in France had a particularly negative reaction to Paris's handling of the revolution in Tunisia. (Stratfor, Forbes 29.3.2011)

Nonetheless, the sense of urgency about the humanitarian situation in Libya only grew, when Gaddafi's troops pushed the rebels back in March, and were closing in on their stronghold city of Benghazi. As Gaddafi's troops were poised to strike the city, on March 17th, the Security Council passed resolution 1973, which authorized member states to "take all necessary measures...to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, including Benghazi."

Benghazi played a crucial part in the initial justifications of the coalition's war on Gaddafi's regime. Rebel leaders argued that there will be a catastrophe if the international community does not implement the resolutions of the Security Council. And that was also the message the leaders of France, Britain and the US conveyed to the world:

"By responding immediately, our countries halted the advance of Gaddafi's forces. The bloodbath that he had promised to inflict on the citizens of the besieged city of Benghazi has been prevented." (David Cameron, Barack Obama, Nicolas Sarkozy, BBC News 15.4.2011)

President Obama drove the point home to the American audience in an even more graphic manner:

“Qaddafi’s forces [were] bearing down on the city of Benghazi, home to nearly 700,000 men, women and children... At this point, the United States and the world faced a choice. Qaddafi declared he would show ‘no mercy’ to his own people. He compared them to rats, and threatened to go door to door to inflict punishment. In the past, we have seen him hang civilians in the streets, and kill over a thousand people in a single day. Now we saw regime forces on the outskirts of the city. We knew that if we wanted – if we waited one more day, Benghazi, a city nearly the size of Charlotte, could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the conscience of the world. It was not in our national interest to let that happen.” (Barack Obama, The White House 28.3.2011)

The role that Benghazi played in the justifications to start the military operation against Gaddafi’s regime bring to mind Michael Walzer’s argument that “humanitarian intervention is justified when it is a response (with reasonable expectations of success) to acts ‘that shock the moral conscience of mankind’” (Walzer 1992, p. 107) In the Libyan case, of course, the intervention was pre-emptive in that the shock was only waiting to happen. But the argument was that, based on past evidence of Gaddafi’s behaviour, something inexplicably horrible was about to happen.

To the advocate of the solidarist conception of international society, the case of Libya might indeed suggest that measures, including humanitarian intervention, to halt violations of human rights, could be seen as a systematic procedure in a solidarist international society. And that states that are guilty of gross violations of the basic rights of their citizens should expect a response from the global community. The equality of people institution, and the Responsibility to Protect norm, also hold the idea that there ought to be consistency to the application of human rights and humanitarian intervention. In other words, the international community should intervene wherever fundamental human rights violations occur. However, in relation to Libya, president Obama made clear that America did not see humanitarian intervention as a consistent doctrine. Rather, in each situation, humanitarian interests are to be weighed against national and strategic interests, and sometimes, as in the case of Libya, they converge. The Libyan crisis moreover, according to Obama, presented a unique opportunity to apply American power for the right cause:

“America cannot use our military wherever repression occurs... we must always measure our interests against the need for action. But that cannot be an argument for never acting on behalf of what’s right. We had a unique ability to stop that violence:

an international mandate for action, a broad coalition prepared to join us, the support of Arab countries, and a plea for help from the Libyan people themselves. We also had the ability to stop Qaddafi's forces in their tracks without putting American troops on the ground." (Barack Obama, The White House 28.3.2011)

This is a reminder of the fact that, in international politics, morality is heavily affected by circumstance. And it reveals that the idea behind the equality of people institution, and the cosmopolitan view of international politics, that the community of mankind is in some ways superior to the society of states, is often challenged by practice. During the Arab spring, this has been highlighted by the US not choosing to put pressure on the regimes cracking down on protesters in Yemen or Bahrain, where its strategic interests have overridden moral concerns. From this perspective, Russian prime minister Vladimir Putin's sarcastic comment seems quite justified:

"Is there a lack of such crooked regimes in the world? Are we going to bomb everywhere and conduct missile strikes?" (Vladimir Putin, Al Arabiya News 27.4.2011)

3.1.5 The market

In the case of Libya, the most significant market factor to consider is its contribution to the world's energy market. The country was the world's 18th largest oil producer in 2010 and, more importantly, holds the world's 10th largest proven oil reserves. From the perspective of the market, such resources not only create immense opportunities for transnational energy companies, but also generate fabulous wealth for the governments that control the resources. This wealth can be invested in infrastructure, arms and other undertakings, which in turn create lucrative business opportunities for other market players.

It is no surprise then, that already a decade ago, as the international community started to lift its sanctions against Libya (caused by terrorism and weapons of mass destruction programs) the leaders of great powers and corporations attempted to court Gaddafi's government in the hope of profitable contracts. In 2007, Tony Blair, who was then prime minister of Britain, and president Nicolas Sarkozy of France visited Tripoli and obtained large contracts for companies back home. Gerhard Schröder did the same in 2004, when he was chancellor of Germany. And in 2008, president Vladimir Putin of Russia oversaw the signing of deals worth more than 10 billion dollars

on a trip to Libya that sought to gain market share for Russian companies. (The New York Times 16.4.2008)

The internal strife brought about in Libya by the Arab spring rocked the global oil markets and put Libya's existing trade relations with foreign powers in limbo. The possible fall of Gaddafi, it can be argued, created opportunities for some of the international community's major players. Where the economic interests of France and Britain – the main proponents of the bombing campaign against Gaddafi – are concerned, it has been suggested that they were in a position to benefit from helping the rebels. In a March 2011 analysis, Stratfor argued that,

“As for interests in Libya, France has plenty, but its situation could be improved. French energy major Total SA is involved in Libya but not to the same extent as Italian ENI or even German Wintershall. Considering Libya's plentiful and largely unexplored energy reserves, French energy companies could stand to profit from helping rebels take power in Tripoli. But it is really military sales that Paris has benefited from thus far. Between 2004 – when the EU lifted its arms embargo against Libya – and 2011, Tripoli has purchased approximately half a billion dollars worth of arms from France, more than from any other country in Europe. However, the Italian government was in negotiation for more than a billion dollars worth of more deals in 2010, and it seemed that the Rome-Tripoli relationship was overtaking Paris' efforts in Libya prior to the intervention.” (Stratfor, Forbes 29.3.2011)

As for Britain, Stratfor argues that London could in fact gain the most from the removal of Gaddafi:

“British energy major BP has no production in Libya... The May 2010 Macondo well disaster in the Gulf of Mexico has made BP's — and London's — Libya strategy even more urgent... The disaster cost BP 17.7 billion dollars worth of losses in 2010, and the company also has had to set up a 20 billion dollar compensation fund. Estimates of potential further spill-related costs range between 38 billion and 60 billion, making BP's future in the United States uncertain... Ultimately, London could gain the most by the removal of Gadhafi or winning the allegiance of a rebel-controlled government in some kind of semi-independent state in eastern Libya. With no oil production in Libya and arms sales that lag those of France and Italy by a considerable margin, the

United Kingdom could substantially benefit from new leadership in Tripoli or even just Benghazi.” (Ibid)

If France and Britain had a lot to gain from ousting Gaddafi’s regime, it was Russia that stood to lose the most. Before the civil war, there were considerable Russian interests in Libya. With the arms embargo in place, however, Russia lost 4 billion dollars, including unrealized contracts and lost benefit, in arms sales to Gaddafi’s regime (Itar-Tass, 17.8.2011). There were also question marks over what would happen to the operation of Russian companies in the arms, energy and railway sector under the rebels, who had been so strongly supported by the great powers of the West. In Russia, there was certainly a feeling that Libya was a lost cause in rebel hands.

“We’ve lost Libya completely. Our companies won’t be given the green light to work there. If anyone thinks otherwise they are wrong.” (Aram Shegunts, director general of the Russia-Libya Business Council, Deutsche Welle 31.8.2011)

Here, the market manifests itself as a zero-sum, anarchical environment rather than an institution based on rules, open competition and the law of supply and demand. The above discussion clearly shows how the interests of governments and transnational companies intertwine, and how the market intermingles with other institutions of international society, such as great power management, war and sovereignty. In light of this discussion, it can be argued that the struggle for energy resources, the economic interests of great powers, as well as those of transnational companies, did influence the way the international community reacted to the crisis in Libya. At times, the matter was brought up in the debate over the intervention in Iraq. Russian premier Vladimir Putin, pondering over the fact that Libya has Africa’s largest oil reserves and its fourth largest gas reserves, remarked that,

“Of course, this instantly raises the question: could this be the main subject of interest to those who are operating there?” (Prime minister Vladimir Putin, The New York Times 26.4.2011)

3.2 Syria

3.2.1 Great power management

“The United States is disgusted that a couple of members of this Council continue to prevent us from fulfilling our sole purpose...addressing an ever-deepening crisis in Syria... For months, this Council has been held hostage by a couple of members... Any further bloodshed that flows will be on their hands.” (The United States’ UN ambassador Susan Rice, CNN News 4.2.2012)

“Some influential members of the international community, unfortunately – including those sitting around this [Security Council] table – from the very beginning of the Syrian process have been undermining the opportunity for political settlement, calling for regime change.” (Russia’s UN ambassador Vitaly Churkin, CNN News 5.2.2012)

The quotes from Susan Rice, the US ambassador to the United Nations, and her Russian counterpart, Vitaly Churkin, recorded after Russia and China blocked a second attempt to produce a Security Council resolution on Syria, neatly sum up the deadlock that has prevailed among the great powers over the Syrian crisis. Whereas in the Libyan crisis the great powers were initially able to make a concerted response, there has been next to no agreement at all on common policies to deal with the situation in Syria. Bickering among the great powers also drove the United Nations international peace envoy for Syria, Kofi Annan, to resign in August 2012 and state that,

“At a time when we need – when the Syrian people desperately need – action, there continues to be finger-pointing and name calling in the Security Council...Without serious, purposeful and united international pressure... it is impossible for me, or anyone, to compel the Syrian government in the first place, and also the opposition, to take the steps necessary.” (Kofi Annan, The Telegraph 2.8.2012)

One of the main reasons for the deadlock is the legacy of Libya, and the breakdown of relations between the great powers over the handling of the crisis in that country. Russia and China, although consenting to the adoption of resolution 1973, claimed that the resolution was overstepped and taken advantage of to topple the Libyan regime. For them, so it would seem, the crisis was a stark reminder that western governments, given the opportunity, will use their military might to further

their interests under humanitarian pretexts. In other words, if you give the West an inch, you will lose a mile. This is why the two great powers have consistently drawn the line whenever the rest of the members of the Security Council have attempted to produce a position on Syria, which would enable the international community to exert the same kind of pressure on Syria's authorities as it did on Muammar Gaddafi's regime. In all, China and Russia have vetoed three resolutions, of which none have explicitly included military intervention.

As in the case of Libya, the outside supply push dimension of great power management has been highly active in the case of Syria.¹⁵ In Syria, the most active source of the supply push has been Russia, whose strategic interests have been highlighted throughout the crisis. Russia leases a naval facility at the Syrian port of Tartus, giving the Russian navy its only direct access to the Mediterranean, and Moscow its only remaining military base outside the former Soviet Union. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which tracks arms transfers, the present total value of Syrian contracts with the Russian defence industry is likely more than 4 billion dollars. It has been argued that Russia's strong support for Syria's president Bashar al-Assad stems out of fears that sanctions on Syria, and particularly the formation of a new government, would jeopardize both Russia's arms contracts and its access to Tartus. (Mankoff, CSIS 2.2.2012) Others have argued that Russia's policies are not so much motivated by material considerations but by a desire to bolster its great power status. Through Syria, it is still able to assert some kind of authority in the Middle East, and challenge the United States' influence in the region. (Pukhov, The New York Times 6.7.2012) In this way, the setting is reminiscent of the cold war, during which the competition for influence in the Middle East between the Soviet Union and the US was fierce, with both great powers participating in the local balance of power through alliances. And today, Syria is in fact Russia's only true ally in the region, and it seems that it represents to Russia what Israel represents to the US: a friendly foothold in the strategically important Middle East region.

Russian interests have clashed with Western attempts to influence the outcome of the crisis in Syria. Where the United States', and its allies' Great Britain and France are concerned, it seems that the demands for president al-Assad to step down partly stem out of strategic motivations. For the West,

¹⁵ As it was argued in chapter 2.3.1, great power management from global to regional level is very active in the Middle East, with both sides interested in each other, creating a double-track use of this institution: the outside supply push and the local demand pull (Gonzalez-Pelaez 2009, p. 100). The outside supply push can manifest itself in the great powers supporting friendly regimes or constraining the rise of unfriendly forces such radical Islamist or nationalist movements. The local demand pull is about Middle Eastern governments making use of great power management. It includes requests by regional governments to great powers to mediate in regional conflicts, and even supporting great power intervention.

and especially the US, getting rid of al-Assad's regime probably presents itself as an opportunity to weaken the regional influence of Iran, one of the United States' main foes in the region. Syria has been a key ally of Iran for decades, and also serves as Iran's conduit for arming its Lebanese protégé, Hezbollah. If Hezbollah is weakened by Assad's fall, it will also dramatically affect Iran's capability to project force in the region, an outcome that would be beneficial for the US's most important ally in the region, Israel. (Karon, Time World 2.2.2012) These considerations have been clearly articulated by the hawkish US Republican Senator John McCain.

"The end of the Assad regime would sever Hezbollah's lifeline to Iran, eliminate a long-standing threat to Israel, bolster Lebanon's sovereignty and independence, and inflict a strategic defeat on the Iranian regime. It would be a geopolitical success of the first order." (John McCain, CNN 20.7.2012)

Of course, this scenario would also weaken Russian, and perhaps to some extent Chinese, influence in the region, which would be a beneficial outcome for the United States as well other Western powers.

In the Syrian case, the local demand pull is clearly manifested in the efforts by the Syrian regime to maintain relations with the great powers Russia, China, and its local ally Iran, on whom it is economically dependent. Hugh Griffiths, an arms-trafficking expert at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, has suggested that the Syrians have had good reasons to keep buying Russian arms – even if they did not really need them:

"They're desperately trying to keep Russia on board as a partner by channeling more cash to the Russians and building on that relationship." (Hugh Griffiths, Time World 1.7.2012)

The dependence of Syria on the great powers of the east has been deepened by a US and European blockade on Syrian exports, which has depleted Syria's hard currency reserves. In August 2012, for instance, Syrian deputy prime minister Qadri Jamil led a delegation of several Cabinet ministers to Moscow and requested a Russian loan, diesel oil and other oil products in exchange for crude supplies to keep the ailing Syrian economy going. This differentiates Syria from the Libyan regime, which was not able to get assistance from outside powers.

Another manifestation of the local demand pull have been the calls of the exile Syrian opposition, the Syrian National Council, for a Libya-like military intervention in the crisis. The United States, France and Britain have established diplomatic relations with the SNC, but to date the request for military intervention has not been realized. The Arab League, on the other hand, has sought to resolve the crisis through the United Nations Security Council, or in other words, the great powers. Joint UN-Arab League undertakings have included two failed observer missions to Syria, and the appointment of two envoys, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi, to broker a peace agreement between the Syrian regime and the rebel forces. There have also been calls from individual Arab countries, like Qatar and Saudi Arabia, for more decisive action on Syria, but the deadlock among the great powers has prevented agreement on official common policies. Nevertheless, as was the case in the Libyan crisis, the local demand pull, especially that of the Arab League, has been used by the great powers to justify their own, conflicting positions on Syria:

“We believe that now is the time for all nations, even those who have previously blocked our efforts, to stand behind the humanitarian and political approach spelled out by the Arab League.” (US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, AFP 12.3.2012)

“We [Russia] confirmed our readiness to act for a rapid solution to the crisis based on the plan put forward by the Arab League. (Russia’s foreign minister Sergei Lavrov, BBC News 7.2.2012)

The Arab League has actually put forward two plans, but neither Clinton nor Lavrov specify which one they are referring to. In the Russian case, the reference is probably to the plan decided in November 2011, which included a pan-Arab monitoring mission to end the bloodshed in Syria, but which did not contest the position of president Bashar al-Assad. Clinton, on the other hand, might refer to the Arab League’s January 2012 plan for al-Assad to hand his powers to vice president Faruq al-Shara and for the formation of a national unity government to oversee the preparation of democratic elections. This plan was rejected by both Russia and Syria. With these vague statements, the great powers probably want to relate to the world, and especially the Arab world, that they respect the wishes of regional actors. The ultimate aim, it can be argued, is to legitimize their own positions on how the crisis in Syria should be handled.

In the discussion on the role of the balance of power in the Libyan crisis, it was argued that the lack of a strong local balance of power in North Africa, and Libya's lack of powerful allies in general, acted as permissive factors for active interference by the great powers. In the Syrian case, on the other hand, it can be argued that the local balance plays a very significant role, one that restricts the possibility of intervention from outside the region. Quite early on in the crisis, that significance was recognized by Martin Dempsey, a top-ranking US military officer and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, when discussing whether the US should intervene and arm the Syrian rebels:

“Syria is an arena right now for all of the various interests to play out. And what I mean by that is you've got great power involvement. Turkey clearly has an interest, a very important interest. Russia has a very important interest. Iran has an interest. And what we see playing out is that not just those countries, in fact, potentially not all of them in any case, but we see the various groups who might think that at issue is a Sunni-Shia competition for regional control.” (Martin Dempsey, CNN GPS
17.2.2012)

Dempsey's cautionary remarks are a reminder of Bull's observation that, in an area where a strong local balance exists, the great powers' influence is not as strong as in their direct spheres of influence. This is underlined by the possible interpretation of the Syrian conflict as a regional proxy war, with the local Sunni powers Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar supporting the Syrian opposition, and Shia powers, Iran and the Lebanon-based Hezbollah, supporting the regime. However, the Syrian crisis also shows that the local balance of the Middle East is tied to the general balance of power among the great powers. Russian and Chinese resistance to interference in Syria can be interpreted as an effort to restore the balance in great power relations after the Western intervention in Libya.

According to Bull, great powers participate in local balances by forming alliances. In the Syrian conflict, the great powers of the West, the Security Council members France, Britain and the United States, have demanded that president Bashar al-Assad's regime should go, and have sided with the Sunni block. Russia, on the other hand, has taken the side of the Syrian regime and the Shia block. The situation has generated some unlikely associations between players lining against al-Assad, such as the Jewish state of Israel and the Sunni Muslim Saudi Arabia, and the Western powers and al-Qaeda, which is apparently fighting against the Syrian government on the rebels' side. This

perhaps highlights the nature of international politics in the Middle East, which often seems to be driven by zero-sum security interests and an endless pursuit for power.

War is another derivative institution of great power management. As we have seen, the complex regional balance of power in and around Syria restricts outside intervention, and particularly the application of the institution of war as an instrument of great power management. In an interview with The Telegraph in October 2011, president al-Assad himself played on the fears arising from the complex situation in the Middle East:

“Syria is the hub now in this region. It is the fault line, and if you play with the ground you will cause an earthquake ... Do you want to see another Afghanistan, or tens of Afghanistans?... Any problem in Syria will burn the whole region. If the plan is to divide Syria, that is to divide the whole region.” (Bashar al-Assad, The Telegraph 29.10.2011)

Assad’s warnings evoke images of a much more dangerous military operation than the seemingly straightforward bombing campaign of Libya, in which the spill-over effect of the conflict to neighbouring countries was not as great. In fact, the Syrian civil war has already tested the borders and patience of Turkey and Israel, and spread to Lebanon, where the conflict is taking place along the same sectarian lines – Shia Alawites against Sunnis – as in Syria. A number of other reasons against the application of the institution of war to resolve the crisis in Syria have also been put forward. Many observers have pointed out that the situation in Syria in fact looks less like Libya and more like Lebanon, where a decades-long sectarian civil war resulted in over 150 000 deaths and a million displaced people. This is the kind of conflict the great powers of the West would want to avoid. Geography matters too. Unlike Libya, Syria is not a vast country with huge tracts of land where rebels can retreat, hide and be resupplied. Syria is not conveniently divided up into a rebel East and regime-held West as was the case in Libya. In Syria, the battle fronts are much less clear, with rebel and regime forces often battling it out in urban areas, in which allegiances are divided. In such circumstances, supporting the rebels from the air would be, if not impossible, at least much more difficult than in Libya. It has also been suggested that the lesson from the Libya operation made Western leaders cautious about intervening in Syria. According to this argument, the Libya campaign was much more difficult than Western leaders revealed publicly at the time, making the prospect of a Syria campaign much more worrisome for politicians with the Libya experience behind them. In other words, Gaddafi proved to be a tougher enemy than the coalitions’ leaders,

British prime minister David Cameron and French president Nicolas Sarkozy, had calculated.
(Walt, Time World 18.3.2012)

For these reasons, it seems that the bar for military intervention has been raised very high. According to president Barack Obama, the red line for a United States military intervention in the Syrian civil war is a clear indication that chemical or biological weapons are going to be used:

“We have been very clear to the Assad regime but also to other players on the ground that the red line for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized. That would change my equation... We are monitoring that situation very carefully. We have put together a range of contingency plans.” (Barack Obama, The Telegraph 20.8.2012.)

Following this line of thought, only the use of weapons of mass destruction, not conventional weapons, which have been used in Syria so far, would trigger a US intervention. Even in this scenario, however, it seems unlikely that a Western application of the war institution would be approved by the other great powers, Russia and China.

3.2.2 Diplomacy

Whereas Libya’s regime was isolated almost instantly after it started its crackdown on the opposition, there was no such immediate concerted condemnation and severance of diplomatic ties with Syria. In March 2011, after weeks of protests, and the Syrian security forces having opened fire on protesters on several occasions, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton explained why the situation in Syria was different from Libya, and why president Bashar al-Assad was a man worth dealing with:

“[Muammar Gaddafi is] someone who has behaved in a way that caused grave concern in the past 40-plus years in the Arab world, the African world, Europe, and the United States.” (Hillary Clinton, CNS News 28.3.2011)

“Many of the members of [the US] Congress of both parties who have gone to Syria in recent months have said they believe he [Bashar al-Assad] is a reformer.” (Ibid)

Assad's British education, his English and French language skills, and his British-born wife also probably helped paint of picture of a leader very different from the seemingly violent and sometimes irrational Gaddafi.

A clear condemnation of al-Assad by the West came in August, after months of the regime's violent crackdown on the opposition, and only after the United States' local allies Turkey and Saudi Arabia had changed their own policy against the Syrian regime. US president Obama, along with British Prime Minister David Cameron, French president Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, called for Assad to step aside and "face the reality of the complete rejection of his regime by the Syrian people". By this time, it was estimated that 2000 civilians had died in the five-month-old crackdown. (The Washington Post, 19.8.2011)

Western-led efforts to amass the international community's concerted pressure against al-Assad began in earnest in the autumn of 2011. The League of Arab States followed suit by suspending Syria from its membership in November. The first draft resolution on Syria put before the United Nations Security Council in October envisaged sanctions against Bashar al-Assad's regime. It was vetoed by Russia and China. Since then, Russia and China have used their veto power two more times. In February, they blocked a resolution which would have condemned the Syrian regime and supported an Arab League plan for Bashar al-Assad to step down and elections to be held in six months. And in July, they vetoed a resolution, which would have imposed economic sanctions on the Syrian government under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, a section of the charter that also allows for military intervention to enforce Security Council demands. Russia has criticized the West for siding with the rebels, and portrayed itself as the great power wanting a balanced, diplomatic solution to the crisis, while all Western great powers have cut off their diplomatic ties with the Assad regime and turned to the Syrian opposition.

The Security Council members have managed to come to an agreement about two observer missions to Syria, the Arab League observer mission in January and the United Nations observer mission from April to August 2012. Both missions ended because of "the operational implications of the increasingly dangerous security situation in Syria". In other words, it was impossible for the observers to carry out their duties because of the heavy fighting. Together with the Arab League, the Security Council has also appointed two peace envoys to find ways to halt the violence and reach a negotiated settlement. Kofi Annan, Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, produced a six-point proposal in April, which failed because of a refusal of

the Syrian counterparts to seize the violence and negotiate. According to Annan, the great powers also lacked commitment and failed to pressure the regime and the opposition to the negotiating table. (Kofi Annan, The Telegraph 2.8.2012) Since Annan's resignation in August, it has been up to the new joint envoy, Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi, to pick up where Annan left off.

Because of the failure of multilateral diplomacy in the United Nations Security Council, diplomacy has spread to more ad hoc conferences, such as the Friends of Syria Group, a group initiated by the then-French president Nicolas Sarkozy in February after the Russian and Chinese veto on the Security Council resolution condemning Syria. The group consists of almost a hundred countries – excluding for instance Russia, China and Iran – and other entities that seek to put pressure on the Syrian regime and isolate it from the international community. Efforts to resolve the crisis have also been made in the Syria Contact Group orchestrated by Kofi Annan. Already before the first meeting, however, the group was divided on the issue of Iran's participation, which Russia advocates and Western powers vehemently oppose.

Where diplomacy is concerned, the most significant feature of the Syrian crisis is arguably the bilateral relations between the Syrian regime and Russia and China. The diplomatic cover provided by the two great powers has enabled the Syrian regime to stay in power and also given it a chance to convince its local audience that Syria, even though condemned by Western powers, has other powerful friends in the international community. On the other hand, through Syria, Russia has had a chance to prove to its domestic audience, as well as the international community, that it is a great power. A good illustration of this was Russia's foreign minister Sergei Lavrov's visit to Damascus in February. He was greeted by a cheering crowd of thousands waving Russian flags, praising Russia for blocking UN pressure on Syria. In the talks, president Assad told Lavrov that Russia's position has played "a key role in saving our motherland". (Bashar al-Assad, CBS News 7.2.2012)

Another important bilateral relationship is that between the great powers Russia and China, who have found common ground in urging for a diplomatic solution to the Syrian crisis, and in defending Syria's sovereignty. In a joint declaration after the Russia-China summit in June, the two governments declared that they

"decisively speak out against attempts to resolve the Syrian crisis through external force as well as forcing, including in the U.N. Security Council, a line of changing political regimes." (CNN Security Clearance 6.6.2012)

3.2.3 Sovereignty

In Libya, the internal sovereignty of Muammar Gaddafi's regime was challenged early on by a relatively strong and united opposition movement, which organized itself under the Benghazi-based umbrella body, the National Transitional Council. The Syrian opposition, however, has remained deeply factious and divided. The exile Syrian National Council, which was aimed at offering a credible alternative to Bashar al-Assad's regime, and a single point of contact for the international community, has not succeeded in taking a similar unifying role as the NTC in Libya. The power struggles and inefficiency of the exile SNC have frustrated opposition groups based in Syria, as well as the leaders of regional Arab powers and western great powers. Because of the failure of the SNC, a new umbrella organization, the National Coalition for Syrian Opposition and Revolutionary Forces, was set up in November 2012 in an attempt to unify the fractured opponents of the Syrian regime and win greater international support. The new coalition, however, seems to be plagued by some of the same problems as its predecessor. While the coalition has won formal recognition from Turkey, France, Britain and Gulf Arab states, and been able to liaise more closely with the commanders of the Free Syrian Army, the response from many Islamist opposition fighters in Syria has been sceptical or downright dismissive. Yassir al-Karaz, a leader in the rebel Tawheed Brigade in northern Aleppo province, captures the mood well:

“They [the coalition] are the hotel warriors, we are the men in the trenches. No one should be allowed to marginalize us, politically or militarily. These coalitions are just fighting over us and not for us.” (Yassir al-Karaz, CNBC 22.11.2012)

Also, while in Libya Gaddafi's regime was hit by notable defections of key politicians, military units, diplomats and tribes, Syria has not witnessed as fast-flowing an exodus from the regime to the opposition's side. One of the reasons for this is that the country has been ruled for decades by Assad's Shia Alawite minority, which dominates government and security forces and is fearful of the Sunni Muslim forces behind the rebellion. Many members of the second largest minority of Syria, the Christians, also see Assad as a better alternative to the victory of the rebels, of which many are Islamists. Elites, such as the merchant and business class, have also been reluctant to join the opposition. And where control of territory is concerned, although the opposition forces have gained ground considerably during the civil war, the Syrian armed forces have so far been able to

counterpunch and keep control where it matters to the government, especially in and around the most important cities, Aleppo and Damascus. (Saab, CNN 18.2.2012, USA Today 11.5.2012)

An interesting insight into the situation can be found in an August report by the International Crisis Group. According to the report, the regime's staying power may even have increased as the conflict has carried on:

"Opposition gains terrify Alawites, who stand more firmly by the regime's side. Defections solidify the ranks of those who remain loyal. Territorial losses can be dismissed for the sake of concentrating on 'useful' geographic areas. Sanctions give rise to an economy of violence wherein pillaging, looting and smuggling ensure self-sufficiency and over which punitive measures have virtually no bearing. [The regime] has been weakened in ways that strengthen its staying power." (ICG, 1.8.2012)

The analysis also shows that it is in fact increasingly difficult to apply traditional traits of sovereignty to Syria. Internally, the civil war has split the country into two, and externally, Syria has been stripped of its ability to function as a full member on the international community. This, according to the International Crisis Group, has resulted in a situation where

"There can be nothing more to expect from a regime that, by its very nature – never much of an institutionalised state, no longer genuinely a political entity – has ceased being in a position to compromise, respond to pressure or inducement or offer a viable solution. Which means that the traditional international panoply of actions, from public blandishments to condemnation, from threats to sanctions, is not about to work." (Ibid)

Where sovereignty is concerned, the most significant feature of the Syrian crisis has been Russia and China's staunch defence of this institution in the international arena. For them, the issue of non-interference seems to be a matter of principle, a principle that needs to be guarded carefully after the unfortunate example of Libya. According to Leonid Medvedko, a regional analyst at the Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia could not, even if it were the most practical thing to do in this situation, publicly call for regime change in Syria, because it would create a very serious precedent for anyone who doesn't like their government.

“We cannot allow this precedent to be established. Now they don’t like Assad. Next they may not like someone in Lebanon. We’ve already seen how they didn’t like someone in Libya — we saw the fate of Qaddafi.” (Leonid Medvedko, The New York Times 4.7.2012)

Behind this thinking one can hear echoes of the classic Trojan horse argument that outside intervention under humanitarian pretexts is a tool used by the powerful to interfere in the affairs of the weak. And after the example of Libya, it is important for Russia and China to make sure that Western powers do not implement a regime change in Syria with the use of either sanctions or force. What is at stake here, according to president Vladimir Putin, is not just the sovereignty of Syria, but also international law and the rules of the game of international politics:

“The manner in which the Syrian crisis is resolved will largely determine the model the world community uses to respond to future internal conflicts of nations.”
(Vladimir Putin, Kommersant quoted by Middle East Online 17.7.2012)

Putin’s comment clearly brings to mind the pluralist argument that any principle of intervention would issue a license for all kinds of interference, claiming with more or less plausibility to be humanitarian, but driving huge wedges into international order. (Vincent 1986, p. 114)

The ferocious defense of the principle of sovereignty partly stems out of a Russian and Chinese fear of Arab Spring inspired demonstrations spreading to their own countries – a development that would make Russian and Chinese regimes vulnerable to criticism by the West. Analysts have pointed out that both Russia and China have Muslim and other considerable minorities. This threat is highlighted by Russian defence analyst Ruslan Pukhov:

“What Russia claims to fear most from this [Syrian] conflict isn’t the prospect of losing lucrative arms contracts. It’s radical Islamist’s taking power and threatening Russia’s national security.” (Ruslan Pukhov, The World 29.7.2012)

Dissent in Russia and China, of course, is not only limited to minorities demanding their rights, but it is also smouldering in the wider population. In Russia, for instance, there have been several demonstrations against the newly elected president Vladimir Putin this year.

To protect the principle of sovereignty Russia has gone so far as to supply Syria with weapons not only to fight the rebellion but also to protect it from outside interference. In June 2012, Russia's chief arms exporter Rosoboronexport announced that it was shipping advanced defensive missile systems to Syria that could be used to shoot down airplanes or sink ships if the United States or other nations try to intervene in the civil war. (The New York Times 15.6.2012) Infringing the principle of non-intervention, the Russians argue, would only lead to negative a negative outcome:

“[Military intervention] can only lead to catastrophe in the region”. (Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov, Russia Today 18.8.2012)

3.2.4 Equality of people

As in Libya, there has been no shortage of evidence of grave violations of human rights in the Syrian conflict. According to a report by the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria,

“war crimes, including murder, extrajudicial killings and torture, and gross violations of international human rights, including unlawful killing, attacks against civilians and acts of sexual violence, have been committed in line with State policy, with indications of the involvement at the highest levels of the Government, as well as security and armed forces.” (UN News Centre 15.8.2012)

In November 2012, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights estimated that 38000 people, mostly civilians, have been killed since the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad began in March 2011. The British charity, Save the Children, reports that children in Syria are subjected to “appalling” torture, imprisonment and abduction. (BBC News 25.9.2012)

The United Nations Human Rights Council held its first emergency session on Syria in April 2011, and in August, the UN’s human rights commissioner Navi Pillay for the first time called for the United Nations Security Council to refer Syria to the International Criminal Court for committing crimes against humanity. In December, Ms Pillay called for “international intervention” to protect Syrian civilians from the government’s crackdown, amid warnings that the country is headed toward civil war. (The New York Times 2.12.2012) And in February 2012, as the Syrian army was

carrying out a siege and assault on the city of Homs, Pillay flagged the responsibility to protect norm, which had been applied militarily in Libya:

“At their 2005 Summit, World leaders unanimously agreed that each individual State has the responsibility to protect its population from crimes against humanity and other international crimes...They also agreed that when a State is manifestly failing to protect its population from serious international crimes, the international community as a whole has the responsibility to step in by taking protective action in a collective, timely and decisive manner...The virtual carte blanche now granted to the Syrian Government betrays the spirit and the word of this unanimous decision. It is depriving the population of the protection they so urgently need.” (Navi Pillay, UN News Centre 8.2.2012)

As we have seen, none of the suggestions of the human rights commissioner have thus far been actualized in Security Council resolutions, even though the death toll of the Syrian conflict has far exceeded the death toll in Libya prior to the military intervention by the Western coalition.

It certainly seems then, that other factors than those deriving from equality of people and human rights have influenced the actions of the international community. Considerations for the local balance of power, for instance, and the struggle for power among the great powers, as well as their strategic interests, seem to have overridden human suffering. This is why Western powers, although they have unilaterally condemned the Syrian regime as well as blamed Russia and China for blocking UN action to pressure Syria, have been extremely cautious of the idea of humanitarian intervention throughout the crisis. In March 2011, when dozens of demonstrators had been shot in Syrian cities, Hillary Clinton was asked whether the US would not enter the conflict in Syria as it had in Libya. Her reply was: “No, each of these situations is unique”. (CNS News, 28.3.2011) In August 2011, Britain’s foreign secretary William Hague argued about intervention that,

“It's not a remote possibility. Even if we were in favour [of UN backed military action], which were are not because there's no call from the Arab League for intervention as in the case of Libya, there is no prospect of a legal, morally sanctioned military intervention. (William Hague, The Telegraph 1.8.2011)

It is also worth recalling president Obama's position on the humanitarian intervention doctrine when justifying the Western intervention in Libya.

"America cannot use our military wherever repression occurs... we must always measure our interests against the need for action... [In Libya], we had a unique ability to stop that violence: an international mandate for action, a broad coalition prepared to join us, the support of Arab countries, and a plea for help from the Libyan people themselves. We also had the ability to stop Qaddafi's forces in their tracks without putting American troops on the ground." (Barack Obama, The White House
28.3.2011)

The same cautionary attitude, and indeed the tension between strategic interests and human justice, is also visible in the comment below from Zbigniew Brzezinski, an American politician and critic, who was president Jimmy Carter's national security adviser from 1977 to 1981. Brzezinski argued in May 2012 that, even though the death toll in Syria is high, the human suffering there is exaggerated and that the US should stay out of the conflict:

"it is not as horrible or as dramatic as it is portrayed. If you look at the world in recent years, the horrible war in Sri Lanka, the killings in Rwanda, and the deaths in Libya and so forth. You know, let's have a sense of proportion here. This is a neurologic part of the world in which all of a sudden if we are not intelligent about it we can create a nexus between a difficult internal problem which has not assumed huge proportions yet and a regional problem and a global problem which involves our relationships with the other major powers, particularly Russia, but also the negotiations with Iran over the nuclear problem." (Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Daily Caller 30.5.2012)

It is also worth noting that the uprising in Syria, and the amount of civilian deaths there, have grown at a much slower pace than in Libya, where the situation quickly escalated into a full-blown civil war. In Libya, the UN estimated that thousands had been killed during the first week of the uprising. And a little over a month into the crisis, there was a massacre, as Western leaders argued, waiting to happen in the city of Benghazi, home to over 700000 people. In president Obama's words,

“If we waited one more day, Benghazi, a city nearly the size of Charlotte, could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the conscience of the world”. (Barack Obama, The White House 28.3.2012)

There was no such sense of urgency reflected over the human rights situation in Syria in the statements of Western politicians at the beginning of the crisis. In March 2011, US secretary of state Hillary Clinton compared the situations in Libya and Syria as follows:

“What’s been happening there [in Syria] the last few weeks is deeply concerning, but there’s a difference between calling out aircraft and indiscriminately strafing and bombing your own cities and then [the] police actions [in Syria].” (Hillary Clinton, CNS News 28.3.2011)

A cynic might argue that, although the death toll of the conflict tops 20000 at the time of writing this thesis, Syria has not had its own Benghazi moment, or in other words, an act that would shock, or threaten to shock, “the moral conscience of mankind”. (Walzer 1992, p. 107) The escalation of the crisis in Syria has been gradual, not explosive as in Libya. Not even the massacre of Houla or the siege of Homs have been enough to push the international community over the brink of humanitarian intervention, although parallels have been made between Benghazi and Syrian massacres.¹⁶ In April 2012, France’s president Nicolas Sarkozy stated that,

“Bashar al-Assad is lying in a shameful way, he wants to wipe Homs from the map like Gaddafi wanted to wipe Benghazi from the map.” (Nicolas Sarkozy, The Telegraph 19.4.2012)

It can be argued that, in addition to the reasons outlined above, other very practical matters have probably played down the enthusiasm to carry out a humanitarian intervention in Syria. For one, the Libyan and Syrian crises occurred simultaneously. Not Western states, or NATO, would have wanted to be entangled in two conflicts at the same time, or enter another conflict in the immediate aftermath of the intervention in Libya, which had taxed the military coalition’s resources. Where the

¹⁶ The UN estimates that, in the Houla massacre, 108 people were killed by the Syrian army and the sectarian civilian militia Shabiha, which is loyal to president Assad. In Homs, 700-1000 were estimated to have died in February 2012 during the Syrian army’s offensive on the opposition stronghold city.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_Homs_offensive

institution of war is concerned, it is worth recalling that it was in fact much harder to defeat the forces of Muammar Gaddafi than Western leaders had expected. With that experience in mind, they would be less enthusiastic to challenge the much stronger army of Syria, supplied by Russia, in a country topographically more challenging than Libya. Another intervention would also be difficult to justify to home audiences. According to polls made in the United States, for instance, the number of Americans calling for US action in Syria was 25 percent in February and 33 percent in June of 2012. (CNN 17.6.2012) And where the institution of trade – i.e. economic factors – are concerned, the motivation to intervene might also be lessened by the fact that Syria is not nearly as significant an oil producer as Libya.

Bearing all this in mind, the Syrian case presents a problem to the advocate of the solidarist conception of international society, who believes that measures, including humanitarian intervention, to halt violations of human rights, could be seen as a systematic procedure in a solidarist international society. Libya might have given hope to those who believe that states that are guilty of gross violations of the basic rights of their citizens should expect a response from the international community. But Syria has so far served as a grim reminder that in international politics, the equality people institution is often in conflict with other institutions, and surpassed by practical considerations.

3.2.5 The market

Where the energy sector is concerned, Syria's impact on the global market is considerably smaller than Libya's. In 2010, Libya's oil production was 4,5 times that of Syria's. Libya possesses the world's 10th largest proven oil reserves, while Syria's considerably smaller reserves are depleting. Whereas the loss of Libyan oil, caused by sanctions in 2011, rocked global markets and drove up the price of oil, the markets reacted calmly to the loss of Syrian crude caused by the western blockade of Syrian oil companies. (Reuters, 22.9.2011) The facts beg the question, is Syria's lack of significant resources one of the reasons for the international community's passivity towards the civil war? Would France, Britain and the United States have intervened in Syria if its oil reserves matched those of Libya's? Of course, it is perfectly possible to speculate that this is the case. It is worth keeping in mind, however, that even if Syria were a significant oil producer, there are several other factors, as outlined above, which make outsiders think twice about interfering.

In the Syrian case, a lot of attention has been given to Russian arms trade with Syria. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which tracks arms transfers, the present total value of Syrian contracts with the Russian defence industry is likely more than 4 billion dollars. The trade relationship between the countries is long. Since the 1950s, when it first became a client state of the Soviet Union, Syria has purchased almost all its weapons from Russia, making it a cherished customer. It is possible to draw the conclusion that, by blocking multilateral sanctions and keeping al-Assad's regime in power, Russia is protecting its interests in the arms sector. From a zero-sum perspective, if Russia were to lose this market, its competitors would have a chance to gain it. This, as many Russian businessmen and politicians would probably point out, is precisely what happened in Libya.

Russian military analyst Alexander Golts suggests that arms trade is not only about money, however. A weapons deal is not a simple cash-and-carry arrangement, but requires the buyer and seller to maintain stable relations, so that the weapons can be installed, serviced and repaired. The seller will often provide ammunition and training for years. "This is a serious bond", Golts argues. (Golts, Time World, 1.7.2012) So, for Russia, as well as other great powers in the business, arms trade is also about establishing stable, long-term relations and asserting their authority in what are their actual or potential spheres of influence. As for Russian arms trade in Syria, Golts suggests that,

"The root motivation here is ideology, not finances... It is the ideology of Cold War realpolitik, where you had two sides sitting at the chessboard and moving pieces around." (Ibid)

Cold war features can also be observed in the way the world's economic powers have been divided into two blocs over Syria. Western powers, as well as their allies in the Middle East, have cut Syria off from banking institutions and trade. Sanctions have, for instance, prevented Syria from trading with its traditional oil buyers in Europe, including Italy, Germany and Spain. However, Syria's great power allies Russia and China have kept the regime going by trading with it and refusing the calls for multilateral, legally binding sanctions. A report by the Wall Street Journal, which was able to review Syrian government documents and correspondence between March and July 2012, describes well the efforts of Syrian officials to work around western sanctions with help from Russia. In a letter sent to then-prime minister Riad Hijab, high-ranking Syrian officials state that,

“Offshore companies are being formed in Russia and Malaysia and bank accounts are being activated in Russia in euro and Russian-ruble... [T]hen we would be able to pay for the value of the imports and receive the money for crude exports easily, while all concerned parties will take all the necessary actions to ensure the confidentiality of the proceedings in order not to open the way to the European Union and the United States to track the work of these companies and include them on the list of sanctions.” (Wall Street Journal, 14.8.2012)

In the case of Syria, it can be argued that the market, trade and financial institutions are actually harnessed as instruments in a struggle between the great powers. One reason for the struggle, as it has been argued above, is the legacy of the Libyan crisis, in which Russia felt that the western coalition violated the rules of the game of international politics, and infringed upon Russia’s prestige, as well as its strategic and economic interests. And in this way, the market institution seems yet again to become entangled with other institutions of international society, especially great power management and the balance of power.

The above discussion is interesting from the perspective of the market’s derivative institution, hegemonic stability, which refers to international stability induced by the influence of a single hegemonic power. While the case of Libya might suggest that the United States, backed by its allies in the western world, is able to “dominate the rules and arrangements ... [of] international political and economic relations” (Goldstein 2005, p. 83) Syria shows that these rules can be challenged quite effectively. In other words, an alternative version of the game of international politics, offered by Russia and China, is realistic and tangible. The case of Syria, moreover, has provided this alternative with a very visible platform. To some extent, Syria also challenges the underlying idea behind hegemonic stability that the world is unipolar with the United States as the sole super power, or hegemon. As has been argued above, traditional English school theorists would have been uncomfortable with this description in the first place. According to Bull, in a balance of power there could not be simply one great power. (Bull 2005, p. 194) Bull, perhaps, would have described the present state of affairs as a complex balance of power, which does not require equal parity in power:

“In a situation of three or more competing powers the development of gross inequalities in power among them does not necessarily put the strongest in a position of preponderance, because the others have the possibility of combining against it.”
(Ibid, p. 98)

4. CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have compared the reactions of the international community to the crises in Libya and Syria using the theoretical framework provided by the English school. At the centre of attention have been five institutions – great power management, diplomacy, sovereignty, equality of people and the market – through which the crises were analysed and compared. They were selected from a wider set of institutions of international society introduced by Barry Buzan. I have applied the English school methodological approach, which emphasizes the importance of Verstehen, or understanding achieved through judgment and intuition, in giving accounts about international events. This process has also been described as “explanation of what goes on in the social field, by penetrating the minds, and uncovering the assumptions and motives, of its relevant actors” (Linklater&Suganami 2006, p. 101) With the help of these tools, I have attempted to answer the research question, why have the reactions of the international community to the crises in Libya and Syria been so different.

Where management by the great powers is concerned, they reacted swiftly and decisively to agree on common policies to respond to the violent crackdown of Muammar Gaddafi’s regime in Libya. Sanctions were imposed and the crisis was referred to the International Criminal Court. As Gaddafi’s forces were closing in on Benghazi, Russia and China, the great powers that usually block interference by the international community into the internal affairs of states, chose to abstain rather than use their veto power over resolution 1973, which authorised all means to protect civilians. The local demand pull dimension of global to regional management was manifested in the Libyan crisis in that both the Arab League and the Libyan opposition called for intervention from the international community. This was an important justification of the military campaign, led by Western great powers, and made it difficult for Russia and China to block the Security Council mandate. The outside supply push dimension of global to regional management can be seen in the efforts of Western great powers to influence the course of the civil war in Libya. France and Britain – the engines behind the intervention – as well the United States, probably had the most to gain from helping the rebels to power. Their troubled past with Gaddafi’s Libya, and the fact that Gaddafi was sitting on the largest oil reserves in Africa, probably made the prospect of change appealing. President Dmitry Medvedev, on the other hand, came under heavy criticism in Russia for not using his power of veto, for betraying Russian interests in Libya, and in effect allowing western preponderance. The application of the institution of war as an instrument of great power

management drove wedges into great power relations, as the coalition seemed to wage war against the Libyan regime rather than just protect civilians, which was the stated objective of the UN mandate. The strong opposition to the military intervention is a reminder of the observation that, “in the twentieth century war became regarded more as the breakdown of international society than as a sign of its operation” (Buzan 2004, p. 173, quotes Mayall 2000, p. 19). War is a highly controversial institution, even when executed under a UN mandate. And the tensions the Libyan war caused in international society, it can be argued, also had repercussions for its reactions to the crisis in Syria. Finally, it was argued that Libya’s lack of allies, as well as the lack of a strong local balance of power around it, was a permissive factor in the intervention.

Whereas in the Libyan crisis the great powers were initially able to make a concerted response, there has been next to no agreement at all on common policies to deal with the situation in Syria. One of the main reasons for the Security Council’s deadlock over Syria is the legacy of Libya, and the view of Russia and China that resolution 1973 was overstepped and taken advantage of by western great powers. In Syria, the most active source of global to regional management is Russia, a long-time ally of Syria. It was suggested that for Russia, Syria has represented a friendly foothold in the otherwise hostile Middle East region. Russia leases a naval facility at the Syrian port of Tartus, which gives the Russian navy its only direct access to the Mediterranean. It is also Syria’s traditional supplier of arms. It can also be argued that, by taking a hard line over Syria, Russia is able to bolster its own great power status and make up for the humiliation it endured in Libya. In Syria, the interests of Russia have clashed with those of the Western great powers, whose strategic interests would be served by the fall of president al-Assad, an ally of Iran, which is the main foe of western great powers in the region. The local demand dimension of global to regional management is manifested in the outright dependence of the Syrian regime on its great power allies Russia and China and the regional power Iran. This dependence has been deepened by bilateral sanctions imposed by the West. On the other side, the opposition group, the Syrian National Council, has called for a Libya-like intervention in Syria, and the rebel army for a no-fly zone. Military intervention, however, is a contested issue among the Syrian opposition, and it has not been called for by the Arab League. Furthermore, it was argued that the delicate local balance of power, the presence of regional great powers, and the complex web of alliances in and around Syria is a preventive factor in the application of the institution of war as an instrument of great power management. Martin Dempsey, a top-ranking US military officer and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, captures the complexity and potential explosiveness of the situation well:

“Syria is an arena right now for all of the various interests to play out. And what I mean by that is you’ve got great power involvement. Turkey clearly has an interest, a very important interest. Russia has a very important interest. Iran has an interest. And what we see playing out is that not just those countries, in fact, potentially not all of them in any case, but we see the various groups who might think that at issue is a Sunni-Shia competition for regional control.” (Martin Dempsey, CNN GPS
17.2.2012)

The situation is much more complex than in Libya, which is located in North Africa, at a distance from the inflammatory hub of the Middle East. With this in mind, it was argued that Syria serves as a reminder of Bull’s point that, in an area where a strong local balance exists, the great powers’ room to manoeuvre is limited, and they have to participate in it by way of alliances (Bull 1995, pp. 97-99)

As for diplomacy, it was argued that the bilateral relations between Libya and the great powers, as well as its relations with other Arab states, broke down at the very beginning of the crisis. Mind you, Libya’s relations, especially with western states, have been strained throughout Gaddafi’s rule because of his involvement in international terrorism. During the 2011 conflict, Gaddafi’s violent and sometimes irrational behaviour did not portray a picture of a man who was willing to negotiate with anyone. His regime was quickly cut off from the society of states and diplomatic relations were established with the opposition umbrella organization, the National Transitional Council. Multilateral diplomacy in the United Nations paved the way for Security Council resolutions that authorized sanctions and finally all means to protect civilians. In the eyes of the international community, Gaddafi, a leader who had always had a troubled relationship with the international community, and who now had decided to call in mercenaries to kill his own people, was a pariah.

It took much longer for the international community to respond to the actions of the regime of Bashar al-Assad, the well-spoken Syrian leader who, remember, US officials still perceived as a reformer in the beginning of the crisis in March 2011. It took several months for western great powers to start to amass pressure against the Syrian government and isolate it diplomatically. Multilateral diplomacy among the great powers in the Security Council, however, has been blocked because of the differing views of the great powers on how to handle Syria. Russia and China have provided diplomatic cover for Syria, vetoed three Security Council resolutions and refused to condemn or impose sanctions on the regime. UN and Arab League observer missions and the efforts

of two peace envoys have been in vain, as the two sides of the Syrian civil war refuse to settle the conflict at a negotiating table.

The internal sovereignty of Libya was strongly challenged by the rebel forces, which gained a considerable amount of territory already at the outset of the crisis. The political face of the opposition, the National Transitional Council, viewed as a credible alternative to Gaddafi's government by many, challenged the regime as the legal representative of Libya. There were also notable defections from the army and government to the rebels' side. The United Nations Security Council's decisions to slap sanctions on Libya and authorize an intervention to protect civilians further downgraded the sovereignty of the Libyan government. Although at the start it was specifically denied that regime change was the objective of the military mission led by France, Britain and the US, western leaders soon began to openly argue that Libya could not be perceived as a sovereign nation with Gaddafi in power after the civil war:

“It is impossible to imagine a future for Libya with Gaddafi in power... It would condemn Libya to being not only a pariah state, but a failed state too. Gaddafi has promised to carry out terrorist attacks against civilian ships and airliners... Any deal that leaves him in power would lead to further chaos and lawlessness.” (David Cameron, Barack Obama, Nicolas Sarkozy, BBC News 15.4.2011)

The change in the objective of the military operation, and the fact that the bombing campaign seemed to pave the rebels' way to Tripoli, came under harsh criticism from Russia and China. Naturally, Gaddafi's eventual death at the hands of the rebels only fuelled the protestations. At the critics' forefront was Russia's then prime minister Vladimir Putin, who accused the military coalition of overstepping their mandate and breaking international law.

The feeling that Russia and China were deceived in Libya certainly had an effect on their reactions to the crisis in Syria. Sovereignty, now a matter of principle, is used by Russia and China to shield any kind of interference in the internal affairs of Syria. The view falls in line with the English school pluralist conception of international society, which holds that the interplay between sovereignty and non-intervention is established simply by logic: if sovereignty, the non-intervention. Any principle of intervention, for allegedly humanitarian reasons, will issue a license for all kinds of interference, and simply open a door to the use of armed intervention as an instrument of foreign policy. (Vincent, 1986, p. 113-114) This inherently legal argument is captured

well in president Putin's view that the manner in which the Syrian crisis is resolved will largely determine the model the world community uses to respond to future internal conflicts. (Vladimir Putin, Kommersant quoted by Middle East Online 17.7.2012) It can be argued that much of the attitude of Russia and China stems from internal reasons, as they are themselves vulnerable to criticism for suppressing domestic dissent. Where the internal sovereignty of Syria is concerned, the Syrian opposition has been much more divided and factious than the Libyan opposition. Also, al-Assad's regime has not suffered as much from defections to the opposition's side as Gaddafi's regime in Libya. The Shia Alawites (al-Assad's religious sect), Christian minorities and many of the members of city elites have largely stuck with Assad because the alternative – a Syria led by the Sunni Islamist rebel fighters – is threatening.

As for the equality of people institution, the violence committed by Muammar Gaddafi's forces was by far the worst the world had yet seen during the Arab Spring. The great powers responded to the grave violations of human rights quickly by condemning Gaddafi's regime and slapping sanctions against it. A month later, as Gaddafi's forces were closing in on the rebel stronghold city of Benghazi, the Security Council passed resolution 1973, which authorised all means to protect civilians. The result was the first military application of the Responsibility to Protect Norm adopted by the UN in 2005. The would-be massacre of Benghazi was the main justification of Western leaders for carrying out the humanitarian intervention. For some, Libya might serve as evidence of the fact that equality of people and its derivative institutions, human rights and humanitarian intervention, are established institutions of international society. This falls in line with the English school solidarist conception of international society, in which humanitarian intervention to stop human rights violations can be seen as a systematic procedure. As Donnelly points out, in a solidarist society, the global community has at least a right, and perhaps even a responsibility, to act in cases of fundamental human rights violations. In fact, the burden of proof is largely reversed, requiring a strong argument for non-intervention in such cases (Donnelly 1993, pp. 619-620)

The Syrian case, however, has shown that the equality of people institution is still very much contested. Up to now, the international community has not intervened in Syria even though the death toll of the conflict, a staggering 38000 at the time of writing this thesis, has far exceeded the death toll in Libya prior to the military intervention there. It seems that the struggle between the great powers, their strategic interests, strict (pluralist) interpretations of sovereignty, considerations for the local balance of power, as well as whole bunch of other matters, have overridden human suffering. Obviously, this shows that the position of equality of people, human rights and

humanitarian intervention as institutions of international society is still very much contested. The requirement for equality and consistency is a tall order in the world of international relations, in which moral principles are applied according to the situation. The reality of things is well captured by president Barack Obama and American political scientist Zbigniew Brzezinski, who have argued that,

“America cannot use our military wherever repression occurs... [and] we must always measure our interests against the need for action”. (Barack Obama, The White House 28.3.2011)

“You know, let’s have a sense of proportion here. This is a neurologic part of the world in which all of a sudden if we are not intelligent about it we can create a nexus between a difficult [Syrian] internal problem which has not assumed huge proportions yet and a regional problem and a global problem which involves our relationships with the other major powers, particularly Russia, but also the negotiations with Iran over the nuclear problem.” (Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Daily Caller 30.5.2012)

This explains why western leaders have emphasized the uniqueness of the Libyan situation in relation Syria. The uniqueness has also been underlined by the British military think tank Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies which argues that,

“The Libya intervention took place in a singularly unique moment where the international stars, as it were, were aligned in a set of propitious circumstances.”
(Walt, Time World 18.3.2012)

Where the market is concerned, it was argued that Libya’s wealth certainly affected the way the international community reacted to the crisis in the country. At stake in the civil war was not only Libya’s territory but also the country’s plentiful oil and gas reserves. According to analysts, the engines behind the international coalition’s military intervention – Britain and France – had the most to gain from siding with the rebels and helping them to victory. Under Gaddafi’s regime, the production of their oil companies Total SA and BP was lagging far behind their German and Italian rivals. (Stratfor, Forbes 29.3.2012) If Britain and France have emerged as the economic winners from the Libyan civil war, in Russia the feeling has been totally opposite. In August 2011, as the

rebels were gaining ground in Libya, Aram Shegunts, director general of the Russia-Libya Business Council, professed

“We’ve lost Libya completely. Our companies won’t be given the green light to work there. If anyone thinks otherwise they are wrong.” (Aram Shegunts, Deutsche Welle 31.8.2011)

Here, it was argued that the market manifests itself as a zero-sum, anarchical environment rather than an institution based on rules, open competition and the law of supply and demand. It was also argued that the Libyan situation clearly shows how the interests of governments and transnational companies intertwine, and how the market intermingles with other institutions of international society, such as great power management, war and sovereignty.

In Syria, market considerations probably have not played as significant a role in the reactions of the international community as in the Libyan crisis. This is due to the fact that Syria does not possess significant oil reserves. It is possible to assert that the very lack of resources is one reason for the international community’s passivity towards Syria. However, even if Syria were rich in oil, there are not many factors, such as Russian and Chinese resistance, which would make outsiders think twice about intervening. It was noted that Russia’s arms trade with the Syrian regime is probably as much about great power politics as it is about profit. Russian arms, at least for the moment, keep the Syrian regime – Russia’s long-time ally in the Middle East – in power and shield it from outside interference. As for money, the loss of the Syrian market would cost the Russian arms industry 4 billion dollars worth of contracts. The way the global market is divided into two blocs over Syria is reminiscent of the cold war setting. Western powers have cut Syria off from banking institutions and trade, while the great powers of the East, Russia and China have kept the regime going by refusing to accept sanctions. In this way, it was argued, the market, trade and financial institutions have become instruments in a struggle that is bigger than Syria. One reason for the struggle is the legacy of the Libyan crisis, in which Russia and China felt that the western great powers violated the rules of the game of international politics.

4.1 Ideas for further research

As it was noted in the methodology chapter, one of the most striking features – in Libya, Syria and the rest of the uprisings of the Arab spring – has been the rise of citizen journalism, which has to

some extent compensated for the media's lack of access to information. As governments have severely restricted the access of traditional media to conflict areas, citizen journalists have filled the gap by posting videos, still photos and reports from the scene. In many ways, it can be argued, citizen journalism has changed the landscape of international communication.

The cases of Libya and Syria present a great opportunity for the study of wartime citizen journalism. An especially interesting area of study is the dynamic between media corporations and citizen journalists. Several questions come to mind. What is the relationship between the media and citizen journalists? How big a role has citizen journalism played in the reporting from Libya and Syria, and how has it affected our overall understanding of the crises? How do traditional media process the information coming from citizen journalists, which are often members of opposition groups? How have citizen journalists organized themselves? How reliable is the information coming from citizen journalists?

Related to this, it would be interesting to study the relationship between citizen journalists and the governments whose atrocities they report. In what ways do governments control citizen journalism and social media? How have the governments in Syria and Libya used traditional and social media as their own propaganda tools?

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