Great Powers to the Left of Me, Small States to the Right…
Explaining the foreign policy behavior of states “stuck in the middle”

Aine Carolan
Haverford College
Political Science Department
Advisor: Dr. Barak Mendelsohn, PhD
27 April 2020
Dedicated to Barak, my family, and my friends, for everything.
# Table of Contents

Introduction.................................................................................................................................1

Definition: Middle Powers...........................................................................................................9

Literature Review........................................................................................................................11
  Middle Powers Revisited .........................................................................................................11
  The Logic ..................................................................................................................................21
  What motivates Middle Power behavior? ................................................................................27

Theory...........................................................................................................................................49

Methodology..................................................................................................................................52
  Violent Intrastate Nationalist Conflicts ..................................................................................52
  Operationalization of Variables to Fit VINCs .........................................................................57
  Methods ....................................................................................................................................67
  Universe of Cases ....................................................................................................................68
  The First Libyan Civil War .......................................................................................................69

Case Study: The First Libyan Civil War.....................................................................................70
  Background ............................................................................................................................70
  The Dependent Variable .........................................................................................................71
  Independent Variables ...........................................................................................................87
  Summary: Results ....................................................................................................................107

Conclusions....................................................................................................................................111

Works Cited ....................................................................................................................................116
Introduction

Canada recognizes one united Spain. We understand there are significant internal discussions that they are going through right now and we simply call for those discussions to be done according to the rule of law, according to the Spanish constitution, according to the principles of international law… But mostly that those conversations and discussions happen in a peaceful, non-violent way.

-Justin Trudeau1

Catalonia is an integral part of Spain. Indonesia will not recognize an independent Catalonia.

-Retno Marsudi2

Si Cataluña opta por independizarse de España, el Gobierno de México no lo reconocerá como un Estado soberano (If Catalonia chooses to become independent from Spain, the Mexican government will not recognize [Catalonia] as a sovereign state).

-Luis Videgaray3

Calling the issue an internal dispute between Catalans and the rest of Spain, a Foreign Ministry official told The Japan Times by phone that the government was not taking sides. He said, however, that visitors and residents of Catalonia should stay vigilant as the situation has yet to be resolved.

-The Japan Times4

On October 1, 2017, the government of one of Spain’s comunidades autónomas (autonomous community or province, as established in the 1978 Spanish Constitution),5 Catalonia, held a referendum vote for its independence. More than 90% of the Catalanians who voted were in favor of splitting from Spain, leaving Carles Puigdemont, the Catalan president, with 48 hours to declare

---

Puigdemont, however, stopped short of an official declaration, likely because he feared the referendum results would be thwarted in light of a 42% turnout rate. The low number was blamed on the brutality of Spanish police.\(^6\) Between October 1\(^{st}\) and 19\(^{th}\), Puigdemont and Spain made several public announcements: Puigdemont demanded the Spanish government agree to discuss increased Catalan autonomy; Madrid insisted Puigdemont make clear whether or not he had officially declared independence. On October 19\(^{th}\), the Spanish government invoked article 155 of their constitution, imposing direct rule over Catalonia.\(^8\)

International reactions flooded Twitter, with people from Ireland, Quebec, and Scotland voicing their support for Catalonia as others backed Spain. Canada, Indonesia, Mexico, and Japan, as quoted above, each issued a different response.\(^9\) No country condoned the referendum, and with the exception of Japan, state actors voiced explicit support for Madrid. The specifics, however, varied. Indonesia and Mexico directly rejected the referendum results. Canada called for decreased violence in a reference to the brutal tactics used by the Spanish police on voting day. Japan explicitly chose not to issue a formal statement, describing the matter as “internal.”\(^10\)

Why did these actors’ responses vary? Three factors make this variation puzzling. First, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, and Mexico are secondary states with comparably fewer capabilities than great powers. Second, the European Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom all

---


\(^7\) “Breakaway Blues; Charlemagne,” The Economist, October 14, 2017, Gale In Context: Biography; Soares, Cotovio, and Clarke, “Catalonia Referendum Result Plunges Spain into Political Crisis.”


\(^10\) Marsudi, “MoFA Indonesia”; García, “México anuncia que no reconocerá a una Cataluña independiente”; Osumi, “Tokyo Silent as Catalonia Moves toward Independence from Spain”; The Canadian Press, “Canada Recognizes One United Spain amid Catalonia Dispute, Trudeau Says.”
issued stringent statements in support of Spain.\textsuperscript{11} Third, Canada, Indonesia, and Japan have no social or cultural connection to Spain. Mexico and Spain share a language and some cultural elements, but the two have been independent entities since 1810. We expect a group of secondary states with no specific interest in a situation that received a uniform great power response to avoid involvement or, if involvement is necessary, to act as a uniform front.

Various theories of international relations, namely realism, stem from the expectation that state behavior is driven and limited by state capabilities. Resources define action. The great powers, with their almost endless wealth of material and non-material goods, exert their dominance over the international system. Other powers, in this case Canada, Indonesia, Mexico, and Japan, however, face resource limitations, and their actions are expected to be a reflection of such bounds. We do not expect these secondary powers to waste resources on conflicts that don’t involve them, and we have no explanation for why their responses might vary. Existing theories might posit responses should match those of great powers, or reject them as an effort to balance against them, but reactions to the Catalonian referendum were more nuanced than this dichotomy suggests.

If they have a comparable level of capabilities, and capabilities determine action, should their actions not also be similar? The inability of existing theories, which focus largely on great power actors, to provide any explanation why Canada, Indonesia, Mexico, and Japan issued varied responses to the Catalonia referendum is an example of the puzzle my paper seeks to address. In its most basic form, this research asks: “Why do the actions of secondary powers vary? What explains their foreign policy behavior?” It challenges existing realist theories that presuppose a uniform response based on comparable capabilities and seeks to explain the behavior of an understudied group: secondary powers.

\textsuperscript{11} Saeed, “How the World Reacted to Catalan Independence Declaration.”
The concept of ‘secondary powers’ is, as the following chapters elucidate, quite complex. Fundamentally, it describes any state who is neither a great nor a small power – definitional complications are immediately clear. Given a dearth of persuasive research about secondary powers as a group, I begin by defining them as broadly as possible. After reviewing several bodies of existing literature, I justify a further categorization of actors called “middle powers,” defining them as secondary states who, because of their limited capabilities, engage in international collective action. My thesis develops a theoretical framework that explains what motivates the foreign policy behavior of these Middle Powers.

Given the impossibility of reaching conclusive answers about the behavior of all middle powers and even of successfully identifying each middle power without the development of a quantitative database and an expansive set of case studies, both of which are outside the scope of my research, this paper’s focus is narrowed significantly by the utilization of two proxies. First, I pick a specific group of states – the G14, made up of the G20 without the EU or the permanent Security Council members – to represent “middle powers.” Second, I examine the behavior of the G14 only in cases of external violent intrastate nationalist conflict (VINC). I stipulate that the conflicts must be external to the G14 and must not be in states that directly neighbor any G14 states because being a primary actor in, or neighboring, a conflict involves obvious direct security interests. I seek to control for direct security interest to develop a unique framework that applies to all middle powers, regardless of the characteristics of an individual event.

The G14 and VINCs allow my paper to serve as a test probe for the theory developed in chapter three. Results about the primary motivators of G14 behavior in cases of VINC are carefully generalized to reach cautious conclusions about middle power action more generally. The question

this paper answers, then, in its most specific form, is: “Why do G14 middle powers respond differently in cases of external, non-neighboring VINCs?”

I argue the foreign policy behavior of middle powers, as they are defined in my theoretical framework, is motivated by existing alliance commitments and by status and future expectations of status. I tentatively conclude that existing commitments and status motivate the foreign policy behavior of all middle powers, regardless of the intrinsic characteristics and direct security considerations of individual conflicts and events. I also assert that these factors particularly affect middle powers. Though alliance commitments and status are also important for great and smaller states, they especially impact the behavior of middle powers – who rely on alliances for security, survival, and reputation, and who have a uniquely flexible status.

The proxy choices I make are not without limitation. For example, the G20 did not exist until 1999, so studying historical instances of middle power behavior proves difficult. Also, conclusions about one type of international event are rarely applied to other situations without committing logical fallacies or watering down results, rendering them vague or meaningless. These realities are, however, inherent to the structure of a theoretical probe. This research fills a gap in existing literature that provides little explanation of the behavior of any non-great power actors. It is a first attempt to understand middle power behavior systematically, not on a case-by-case basis. Its conclusions are, thus, limited, but provide a helpful and necessary guide for future research.

Relevance

Explaining middle power behavior is a relevant, important contribution for three main reasons: there is a dearth of comprehensive research on mid-level states; secondary states are important actors in the international system; and the small section of international relations theory that does engage middle powers posits they will act in unison.
First, post-World War II literature has largely focused on great powers. Much literature is, in fact, centered entirely on the US as the global hegemon of our current unipolar system, explaining the behavior of other great powers in relation to the US and in relation to the power balance the US holds in place. Prevalent international relations theories – namely structural realism – posit that the intricacies of the international order are the result of great power behavior and identity.

States are divided into Great Powers and “the rest.” This equates middle powers with states who have significantly fewer resources and capabilities (and thus a different security position). But, as James Manicom, Jeffrey Reeves, and Carsten Holbraad note, middle powers have taken on an increasingly important position, especially following the Cold War. After the break-down of the bipolar US-Soviet dynamic, the power of diplomacy was expanded: states no longer rely entirely on military and monetary capabilities for power. Middle powers are not just policy-takers, as so many theories assume, but rather mediators, managers of international stability, conflict-starters, active actors. They are, unlike the myriad small-power states they are often paired with, international agents, and their behavior must be studied.

There is also some value in the claim that middle powers must be understood as we (if we) move away from US hegemony toward a multipolar order. Over the last two decades, the previously rigid line between great and middle powers has begun to blur as rising powers

---


develop further and increase their capabilities. A multipolar system might enlarge the grey area between these categories. This gives us significant motivation to widen our antiquated focus on great powers, to test middle powers’ propensity to act as a bloc, and to examine what motivates their action.

Third, where middle powers are recognized as a distinct group of actors, existing literature assumes they will act uniformly. As Manicom and Reeves explain, realists and neorealists, like Stephen Walt and Kenneth Waltz, debate whether secondary states will balance or bandwagon, relegating them to reactionary foreign policy. Middle powers have little agency to strengthen their power position given their insufficient capabilities. Liberalism acknowledges the ability of mid-level states to improve their security through bandwagoning, but leaves little room for foreign policy variation. Constructivists argue middle powers act as an identity bloc that uses its middle power status to manage and mediate. These overarching theories do little to explain variation in middle power response to the same event.

My research fills the gap left by international relations scholars’ focus on great powers since World War II. It addresses claims that middle powers are increasingly important. And seeks to answer the questions left by existing theories that predict uniformity in middle power foreign policy.

**What’s next?**

This paper proceeds in seven chapters. In the second, I define secondary powers; in the third I review existing literature, justify study of a narrower set of actors, and examine five potential motivators of middle power behavior: existing commitments, economic concerns, regional interests, domestic factors, and status. The fourth chapter elucidates a theoretical

---

17 Claude, “The Balance of Power Revisited.”
framework that explains middle power behavior. In the fifth chapter, I explain my choice of VINCs as a test site for this behavior, operationalize my five independent variables to fit VINCs, and discuss potential cases. The sixth chapter is a detailed analysis of middle power behavior in the First Libyan Civil War, and the final chapter summarizes the conclusions and limitations of this research.
Definition: Middle Powers

The dependent variable my work seeks to explain is the response of middle powers to VINCs. VINCs are discussed in detail once a theoretical framework is laid out, but a basic definition of ‘middle power’ is necessary in order to proceed.

The term “middle power,” often used interchangeably with “mid-level” and “secondary” power, is highly complex as a result of the myriad ways it has been used. The term’s use in one newspaper, The New York Times, provides some indication. In the April 19, 1945 paper, James Reston describes Canadian, Dutch, Australian, and Brazilian attempts to gain concessions for “middle powers” in the Dumbarton Oaks security plan. The article discusses the plan of “middle powers” in detail, but gives no information to define them. 19 67 years later, in a 2012 op-ed, Bruce Gilley outlines the “rise” of middle powers. He names a few, but similarly makes zero attempt to define them. 20 This habit plagues international relations scholarship, policy, and popular media alike, and is likely the result of inherent difficulties to defining a secondary group of states.

Scholars seem clear about states who are great, or almost great powers. 21 Beyond these five or six states, however, chaos ensues. A full discussion of the ways existing literature has attempted to categorize remaining actors proceeds in the following chapter as part of my literature review because the questions posed by the different definitions are not purely semantic, like some other definitional queries. Each school of thought represents a different theoretical conceptualization.

---

I thus opt, until I have reviewed such literature, to identify an extremely broad set of actors. International relations and security is premised on the idea that states have different levels of power. These states exist in a relational system: power X is stronger than power Y. Power is, broadly speaking, correlated with capabilities. States with many capabilities have more power than actors with fewer resources. Different theories disagree about what constitutes a capability or resource. Such disagreements are outside the scope of this paper, so I include all possible capability markers in my definition. Capabilities are both material and non-material, non-tangible resources, like soft power.

The crux of my definition is relational. The great powers are the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council – the United States, the United Kingdom, China, France, and Russia. Secondary powers are states who have fewer capabilities than the great powers, but more than states who are small and underdeveloped. I could place a numerical barrier: secondary states are those whose capabilities fall above the 30th percentile on various markers (GDP, soft power index), as Manicom and Reeves do. Placing such limits may eliminate vagueness, but the bounds are arbitrary. The following chapter will both highlight the weakness of arbitrary bounds and provide clarity about who exactly a middle power is. For now, a relational notion of “secondary states” must suffice.

---

22 Bisley.
**Literature Review**

The following section reviews existing literature, investigating work on middle powers and on state action more generally to provide hypotheses which connect a motivation (independent variable) to middle power action (dependent variable). I begin by discussing the middle power ranking and provide evidence and motivation for studying a narrower group of states. I then elucidate five hypotheses which may explain what motivates the action of the countries within this group.

*Middle Powers Revisited*

As the above definitional overview makes clear, there is much disagreement about which actors qualify as middle powers. In the wake of World War II and leading up to the Cold War, there was little scholarly interest in peripheral states thanks to the realist and neorealist focus on the great powers and the balance between them.\(^{24}\) Between 1960 and the early 2000s, however, as many post-colonial states gained their independence, the Soviet bloc dissolved, and the terms ‘globalization’ and ‘global governance’ came into popular use, there was an influx of research on secondary, non-great-power states.\(^{25}\) According to David Cooper, “theorizing about how middlepowerness affects foreign policy behavior, along with the role that this class of actor plays on the world stage, [became] a thriving cottage industry.”\(^{26}\) In principle, this cottage industry is the result of worthwhile attempts to clarify and narrow the murky grouping of mid-capacity states to advance an understanding of how and when they act. In practice, these groupings are often tautological or unnecessary. Existing literature denotes four ways of classifying middle


powers: realist scholars maintain they should be ranked according to capacity; revisionist research takes a normative approach, postulating they are the moral overseers of the international system; constructivists include only middle powers who identify themselves as such; and a final body of literature combines elements of the previous three arguments to designate states who, in practice, form a group of actors engaged in multilateral, collective international agreements, institutions, and action.

Classical and Realist Rankings. The first body of literature is familiar to students and scholars of international relations: it is made up of the realist and neorealist theories that posit middle powers are inherently secondary states because they are smaller, have less material power, and have less capacity to obtain their goals than the great powers.\(^{27}\) This literature posits a causal link between state capacity and state behavior. Middle powers are considered positionally between small and major states, and their position is determined by their capacity.\(^{28}\) This research is considered ‘classical’ because many of the original middle power theorists base their arguments in this camp, which makes sense given the dominance of realist beliefs about hegemony and the balance of power. Because of their limited (but not zero) capacity, middle powers are heavily engaged in multilateral institutions both because these agreements offer them formal recognition and rights and because they give the middle powers a feasible option for exerting this capacity.\(^{29}\)


\(^{28}\) Some work in this body of literature, especially early realist theories, consider only material capacity when determining positionality. Later research urges the inclusion of “soft power” power measures of capability. Both arguments are reviewed here: when I speak about ‘positionality’ I wish to include any literature that seeks to establish a correlation between (material and non-material) capacity and behavior.

There are many valid critiques of this classical view of middle powers. Primarily, as David Cooper argues, there is little agreement about quantitative state rankings beyond the great powers and, even amongst research that ranks actors similarly, there are no clear divisions between middle and small powers.\(^{30}\) Many boundaries are suggested, for example Manicom and Reeves argue middle powers are those with GDPs between the tenth and thirtieth percentile, but their reasoning is not satisfactory: the cut-offs are arbitrary and often chosen to further certain arguments.\(^{31}\) Some groupings include ten states, while others include more than twenty. With no proof that a certain amount of capacity differentiates state behavior from another amount, these groupings are fruitless.

Second, this grouping is tautological. It classifies middle powers as such on the basis that they have mid-level capacity, defining one thing by using a slightly different wording of that same concept. As such, the classical “middle power” category says very little, predicts almost nothing, and cannot be empirically proven.

A subset of realist literature tries to separate itself from the muddiness of large-scale quantitative rankings by studying middle powers only in certain situations, specifically in certain regions and geopolitical environments.\(^{32}\) Secondary states are unlikely to have enough resources to make meaningful power gains on a global scale, but they can exert themselves on a more local – or regional – level. David Mares, for example, asserts that some middle powers are regional hegemons and have enough capacity to dominate all other mid-level and small states that surround them (their geographic region).\(^{33}\) Additionally, Donna Lee argues the United Kingdom

\(^{30}\) Cooper, “Challenging Contemporary Notions of Middle Power Influence.”

\(^{31}\) Manicom and Reeves, “Locating Middle Powers in International Relations Theory and Power Transitions.”


has more negotiating power in institutions and agreements that include the US because of its special relationship with the great power.34

This situational focus is grounded but unhelpful for generalizing about middle powers. Is the UK a middle power in some, but not all cases? Must we break the international system into its various geographic and geostrategic environments to understand middle powers? Perhaps we must face a new reality: there is no way to non-arbitrarily group mid-level states without considering direct security interest and situation-specific factors. The framework I develop throughout this chapter disagrees, however. I will, thus, postpone an extended discussion of this literature to the next section where I discuss motivators of variation amongst the actors I group together.

**A Normative Grouping.** A second body of literature posits middle powers “have an intrinsic impulse to act as good international citizens.”35 This work, sometimes called “revisionist” because of the way it revises classical theories, takes a normative stance. According to Andrew Cooper, Richard Higgott, Kim Nossal, Carsten Holbraad, and Brian Hocking, middle powers are those who are genuinely interested in the well-being of the international community and its citizens.36 Middle powers behave normatively, according to their role as facilitators of global governance. It is crucial to delineate this research from literature that argues middle powers act internationally to serve their own national interests, the fourth grouping discussed in this chapter. Normative literature instead argues middle powers act internationally because they should, because they have a responsibility to do so. Much of this literature is based on the

---

influence of middle powers over agreements like the Ottawa Treaty, or the Ottawa Mine Ban.\textsuperscript{37} Canada played a part in the prohibition of landmines because it had a \textit{moral} stake, posit revisionists.\textsuperscript{38}

The normative classification does not stand up to theoretical scrutiny. Why would a state act in a way that mostly serves others? It would make sense for middle powers to serve as international facilitators if personal gain was also at stake, but this body of literature does not make such a distinction. Normative research assumes middle powers do not care about self-interest and excludes the possibility that a mid-level state might have a moral commitment to nationalism or other domestic factors. It provides no explanation why middle powers are different from great or small powers: might a small power have a moral obligation to uphold the international order as much as a mid-level state does? And would we expect a middle power to be any less committed to self-interest than a more or less powerful state? Normative literature makes these assumptions without question or explanation.

David Cooper also convincingly argues that the normative classification, like that of the realists, rests on circular reasoning: “middle power status is determinable mostly by whether a state \textit{behaves} like a middle power.”\textsuperscript{39}

There is also empirical evidence to refute the normative stance, which commits a fallacy in assuming a causal relationship between middle powers and the many humanitarian-focused multilateral agreements they have supported. J. Holmes and Australian foreign minister Gareth

\textsuperscript{37} Cooper, “Challenging Contemporary Notions of Middle Power Influence.”


\textsuperscript{39} Cooper, “Challenging Contemporary Notions of Middle Power Influence,” 321–22.
Evans, for example, stress that Canada and Australia did not label themselves internationalists as part of a “boy scout good deed.”

**Self-Identified Grouping.** Some existing research describes middle powers as actors who self-identify as such. They suggest a relatively small group of states that have outwardly labeled themselves as middle powers and who see this label as part of their national and international identity. Adam Chapnick and Manicom and Reeves argue Canada’s public declarations throughout the post-World War II and Cold War period made ‘middle power’ part of its brand. K.J. Holsti more generally explores states’ “role perceptions,” agreeing with Chapnick and Manicom and Reeves that states must perceive themselves as agents for them to behave in certain ways in the international system.

David Cooper argues this self-identification requirement is no more than a slight change to the normative grouping. Carl Ungerer, for example, characterize middle powerness as a “shorthand for a predefined and generally agreed set of foreign policy behaviors.” He and Richard Matthew make what is essentially a constructivist argument, saying a group of states that have fewer resources than the great powers have *constructed* an outward identity that serves their own interests. I agree with Cooper that this constructed identity does little to sidestep the

---

43 Cooper, “Challenging Contemporary Notions of Middle Power Influence.”
faults of the normative argument. It also assumes these middle powers behave in similar ways, so it fails to explain the variation this paper targets.

But, in contrast to the normative and constructivist literature, Chapnick, Alan Henrikson, Andrew Cooper, and Manicom and Reeves do not argue that middle powers must self-identify as middle powers and behave as such. Rather, they focus solely on the former stipulation, arguing middle powers may envision a certain type of action stemming from this identification or may use it to frame themselves positively as both capable and altruistic.46

This body of literature is weakened by the requirement that a middle power outwardly self-identify as such. This rarely occurs, and would leave us with n=2 (Australia and Canada). This doesn’t encompass the full picture: some states may consider themselves internationalists like Australia and Canada but fail to signal this position to the international community, as Jongryn Mo argues is the case for South Korea.47 This literature also fails to consider that self-perception is limited. States can see themselves as many things, but it isn’t clear how this dictates their behavior. In its focus on self-perception, this research ignores the importance of external classification. States are, after all, operating in a relational international system, the structure and hierarchy of which is largely shaped by how states see each other.48 Deborah Welch Larson, T.V. Paul, and William C. Wohlfarth, for example, discuss the increasing importance of “status” in determining world order and hierarchy. Status inherently depends on both internal and external

Seminally, Robert Jervis argues that psychology – the perceptions and misperceptions of states and leaders – plays a critical role in the international order. Self-perception may be a factor, but like status, Jervis highlights the signals and conceptions between states. A state is free to perceive itself to be a great power, but this perception doesn’t enable it to act like or be one. Its behavior is shaped by its capacity to act like a great power and the willingness of other states to see it as such. This body of literature is too limiting.

**Grouping in Practice.** A fourth body of literature speaks about how middle powers act in practice. Mark Beeson and Richard Higgott describe this research as a “behavioral approach,” but, critically, it isn’t tautological because it doesn’t seek to prescriptively define the grouping based on what states do: it focuses rather on “how they do it.” This body of literature weaves its way through all three of the previously discussed groupings. It starts, like the realists, with a wide group of positional middle powers. It then selects those which demonstrate a degree of collective action. Unlike normative literature, however, it does not prescribe the exact behaviors of middle powers, but rather argues they are the states who are repeat members, facilitators, and supporters of multilateralism and a complex, pluralistic international order. Middle powers are those who have “the functional resources to underwrite the technical and entrepreneurial abilities required to fulfill initiative-oriented roles.” Like the previous section, this body of work classifies middle powers as those who identify as such, but the focus is not on a public decree of middle status, it is rather on a certain collective membership and investment in multilateralism. In short, literature that groups middle powers together “in practice” defines middle powers by

---

49 Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, 6.
52 Holmes, “Is There a Future for ‘Middlepowermanship’?”
their shared proclivity for multilateralism and international collectivism, but doesn’t give one limited picture of their specific behavior or one uniform reason why middle powers engage in internationalism.

This body of work stems from assertions that we face (and have faced since the close of the Cold War) an altered system of ‘global governance.’\(^5^3\) I want to be clear: there are many disagreements and debates about whether the international order has significantly changed or globalized, and I do not seek to engage with these. Rather, I focus on arguments like those of Welch Larson and Andrew Cooper, who posit we face a more complex, pluralistic system born out of myriad multilateral agreements.\(^5^4\) Welch Larson argues that secondary states have, like the great powers, formed “clubs.” This conceptual innovation allows us to take into account the “more heterogeneous set of actors” than the US, China, and Russia that today exist and have considerable resources. Institutions like the G20, Welch Larson argues, are an attempt by these secondary powers to exhibit international influence.\(^5^5\)

Andrew Cooper highlights the hybrid nature of many of today’s multilateral institutions and agreements, which include both great and peripheral powers. Undoubtedly, great powers retain dominant influence, but, he argues, today’s complex multilateralism is built mostly from the bottom-up.\(^5^6\) Middle powers construct and join the agreements, later submitting them for others’ approval. This gives the secondary builders some – though not much – influence over their content.

---

\(^{5^3}\) Claude, “The Balance of Power Revisited.”


\(^{5^5}\) Larson, “New Perspectives on Rising Powers and Global Governance.”

Vincent Pouliot makes a similar argument, positing that the soft power required by today’s pluralistic system, for example as part of multilateral diplomacy, creates an international pecking order that doesn’t necessarily rank great powers at the top.57 Secondary states who are repeatedly involved in multilateralism are often experienced bargainers and negotiators, positioning themselves near the top of this pecking order.

Welch Larson and Ronald Behringer both argue that these “in-practice” middle powers are neither under the guise that they will become great powers, nor do they necessarily desire to do so.58 To some extent, I agree. Being *secondary* is inherent to this grouping of middle powers. But, also fundamental is the way it doesn’t place behavioral limits. If we determine that middle powers are only those who are happy with the amount of power they have, happy with the state of the international order, and participate in multilateralism solely to perpetuate the state of the system, we end up with a tautology. We are yet again attempting to define behavior with behavior. Middle powers can *practice* internationalism without one shared belief about the future of the international order. Perhaps some engage in it because they are ideologically committed to the existing international order; others might see it as a way to restrain the great powers; others might see it as a way to gain power to rise to a new rank. This grouping classifies states based on how they do what they do in practice, not why they do it.

The middle power grouping that this literature suggests, then, is the result of the increasingly pluralistic and international system. Such an international order has created new

ways for secondary powers to assert themselves without risking financial or material distress.
This crucially does not preclude variation because it does not require uniform behavior.

David Cooper rejects this “mélange” classification that attempts to avoid the faults of the three previous bodies of literature, arguing there is little empirical evidence to support it. I refute his position in two ways. First, empirical data shows there is a core group of states involved in multilateralism. Andrew Cooper, Welch Larson, Behringer and Emel Dal show that middle power “clubs” have emerged: MIKTA, the BRICS, the G20. There are many states who have fewer resources than the major powers but more than small states; only a few of them repeatedly support, fund, facilitate the pluralistic system of global governance.

Second, Cooper’s critique creates a place for the remainder of this work. It is true that few studies have been done to test the viability of this theory, and even fewer have sought to explain the reason the foreign policy behavior of these group members does vary. While I cannot contribute quantitative or decisively conclusive data, my study serves as a preliminary probe of this grouping.

The Logic

So far, this literature review has dealt with purely definitional questions. It has provided good reason to study a smaller group of states than initially defined. Before I progress to a discussion of what motivates behavior (what will ultimately be this paper’s independent variables), I’ll take stock.

---

59 Cooper, “Challenging Contemporary Notions of Middle Power Influence.”
I began with a positional definition: middle powers are those with a medium level of the things that grant them power in the international system: material resources (money, military, economic resources), soft power, astute perception of the existing environment. This definition is not without merit: as discussed, it allows an empirical, objective grouping. But, its upper and lower bounds are poorly defined, it depends on circular logic, and there is, as such, no agreed upon set of mid-level actors. A second, normative definition suggests middle powers are those who take on the role of international facilitator in service of a moral obligation to the international system, but, circular and unable to explain why states would do something that may not serve their own interests, it too fails. Third, this paper considered a self-identified group of middle powers, but this definition was unnecessarily limiting.

Finally, I reviewed literature that argues middle powers should be defined as those who engage in multilateralism and international collective action. It does not specify why states do so, but rather avoids circular logic by including states who want a higher status, who want to protect the international system for their own safety, who have an ideological commitment to multilateralism. The “in practice” definition depends on the recent increase of plurality and complexity in the international system, which the literature argues has created new roles perfect for secondary states. These middle powers may be motivated by various factors (the topic taken up in the remainder of this paper), but are grouped together based on their shared proclivity for engaging in global governance, international coalitions, and multilateral organizations and agreements. Grouping middle powers by how they do what they do is supported by evidence that there does emerge a group of secondary actors who are repeatedly present in international forums and “clubs.”

---

61 Larson, “New Perspectives on Rising Powers and Global Governance.”
This “in practice” definition, unlike the other options, avoids tautology and prescribes boundaries and limits that allow us to form a reasonable grouping of middle powers that is not arbitrary, but rather grounded in an observation of how these middle powers act. It is redundant to say “how they do what they do;” I use it to stress that this grouping does not define actors based on specific actions, but on how those actions are carried out (through multilateralism and collective action). This definition works because it encompasses the possibility of multiple motivators: some secondary states want to become great powers, others want to promote their regional interests. It identifies a group of states that, despite this variation in motivation, and because of their secondary capabilities and power, seek to achieve their goals through international collective action.

Instead of trying to understand the motivations of every non-great, non-small power, then, this paper proceeds with an analysis and study of only those powers who fit into the “in practice” definition. The former will produce murky results rife with confounding factors. The latter both tests a narrower group bounded not by arbitrary limits but by empirical evidence of a shared practice and provides an opportunity to test the feasibility of this grouping.

Who comprises this new grouping? Existing literature provides several options, including MIKTA and BRICS countries, the G20, and non-permanent Security Council members.\(^6^2\) MIKTA – Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey, and Australia – provides a platform for dialogue and “global governance.”\(^6^3\) Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa – the BRICS – are grouped based on their rapid economic growth and development.\(^6^4\) The MIKTA, BRICS, and other groupings like the International Monetary Fund will provide helpful guidance in

\(^{6^2}\) Cooper, “Testing Middle Power’s Collective Action in a World of Diffuse Power.”

\(^{6^3}\) Larson, “New Perspectives on Rising Powers and Global Governance.”

\(^{6^4}\) Larson.
exploration of independent variable #1, existing commitments. They aren’t a practical representation of the “in-practice” grouping, however, for two reasons. First, they have a limited scope: they are based on specific types of multilateralism (economy, global governance), unnecessarily excluding other potential middle powers who engage in other collective international action. Second, these groupings are informal, which makes them impractical for study. Informal groupings – the details of which usually aren’t public or well-reported – are often difficult to empirically track. Formal institutions, on the other hand, provide clear examples of multilateral, international action.  

As such, I focus on the United Nations and the G20, perhaps the two most formal international bodies. The UN has a wide actor set – all existing countries, with the exception of the Holy See and Palestine. It is explicitly formal. And it has a broad international mission: “the maintenance of international peace and security.” Although the G20 initially had a strictly economic focus (it started as a grouping of the twenty countries with largest economies), its work has expanded into security and peacekeeping realms. G20 countries practice multilateralism via their annual summit where they agree to coordinate country policies. The G20 initially threatened to supersede UN influence, but in practice it serves as a larger version of the Security Council. The two bodies are closely connected and they both weigh in on global issues, but the G20 includes a wider range of states. Both are treated as the primary overseers of multilateralism.

---

To glean a set of middle powers from the G20, we need to subtract the great powers. The expansive debate about who qualifies as a great power (largely centered on whether Germany and Japan should be included) is outside the scope of this paper.\textsuperscript{69} For ease, I include only the P5 – the five permanent Security Council members – under the “great power” classification.\textsuperscript{70} This doesn’t rule Germany or Japan out, but rather allows us to consider their actions alongside other middle powers who are similarly not permanent Security Council members. The G20 also includes the European Union; I do not because this paper is state-focused and an in-depth discussion of the EU as an actor is outside its scope. The remaining fourteen members of the G20 are: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the Republic of Korea, and Turkey.\textsuperscript{71} For ease, this paper treats these states as the ‘G14.’ Each of the G14 has fewer resources than the P5 and more capacity than other states.\textsuperscript{72}

We could narrow this list further by considering only the states who have made serious attempts to gain Security Council influence. Most actors agree the Security Council should be expanded to adapt to changes in the international balance of power, but Nadia Sarwar examines a division between states who strive for the addition of permanent members and those who want an increased number of non-permanent seats.\textsuperscript{73} The G4 – Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan – and their supporters believe they should become permanent members along with one African and one Arab country (presumably South Africa and Turkey or Saudi Arabia). To limit my search

\textsuperscript{69} Bisley, \textit{Great Powers in a Changing International Order}.


only to these six or seven countries is unnecessarily restrictive. It doesn’t include the many other states who engage in multilateralism and favors a realist perspective by choosing only the largest, most capable (resource-rich) countries.

Another group, Uniting for Consensus, want 10 additional non-permanent seats. Uniting for Consensus is led by Italy, Pakistan, Argentina, South Korea, and Mexico, but is made up of several other countries. Some of these additional countries, like Malta, fall outside of my primary definition which requires states to have mid-level resources and capabilities.

The G14, then, proves to be the most stable group of multilaterally-engaged middle powers. The choices made here – to rule out informal institutions, to select the G14 – are largely practical ones, and they have significant weaknesses. Informal groups, like MIKTA, engage collective action as much as the G14 do. The G14 unnecessarily rules out states like Nigeria and Egypt. The G14 involves prestige as a motivating (perhaps confounding) factor in ways more informal institutions do not. The G20/G14 has only existed since 1999; much multilateral action was undertaken before then. A more scientific approach might involve a dataset of all post-World War II informal and formal multilateral agreements, meetings, and institutions, comparing attendance of secondary states. Such an effort, while valiant and a possible step for further research, is outside the scope of this paper, which has focused on laying the theoretical groundwork for an “in practice” grouping.

The G14 will serve as a proxy group for middle powers who engage in multilateral and collective action. The remainder of this research examines the G14 and seeks to determine what motivates their behavior and the existence of a motivating factor unique to middle powers. The term “middle power,” “mid-level state,” G14/G14 member will be used interchangeably.

---

74 Sarwar.
75 Singer, Bremer, and Stuckey, Capability Distribution, Uncertainty, and Major Power War, 1820-2012.
What motivates Middle Power behavior?

We have, now, a group of fourteen states qualified as middle powers based on their collective participation in multilateralism, a proxy for all secondary states who repeatedly engage in internationalism. Despite their shared inclination toward collective action, the G14 exhibit varied foreign policy behavior. Australia and Japan, for example, joined the US “coalition of the willing” that supported removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq while Canada refused to stand with the US.76 During the 2013 South Sudanese civil war, South Africa responded by officially condemning Riek Machar’s attempted coup of Salva Kiir Mayardit’s government, while other G14 states contributed to the UN peacekeeping mission sent to help in Sudan, but issued no official statement (India, for example). 77 What explains these divergences in behavior? Are middle powers motivated by the same factors? Are those factors unique to being secondary powers? The remainder of this literature review seeks to answer these questions by examining possible explanations for what motivates middle power behavior. Some factors affect all states – great, middle, and small alike. Given the time and space restraints of this paper, and my focus on determining whether there is an explanation unique to middle powers, I review only literature I deem to be specifically relevant for secondary states.

I emphasize that this paper serves partly as a probe for the middle power grouping logic developed in the previous section. Each independent variable I glean from literature in the following section will ultimately be reframed to fit a much narrower research question: Why do

middle powers respond differently to violent intrastate nationalist conflicts (VINC)s? This reframing requires explanation and justification for my selection of VINCs as an appropriate test site for middle power behavior. Because it demands a detailed discussion of VINCs themselves, the specific framing of my hypotheses is excluded from this and the next theoretical chapter, but will follow in my methodological discussion. Thus, I ask for the reader’s patience. The remainder of my literature review is deliberately vague, and though I formulate hypotheses, they are purposefully abstract. I identify broad motivators of middle power behavior, explain their specific importance for secondary states, and examine the causal link between an independent variable (motivator) and the behavior it might drive. Five possible motivators (and thus hypotheses) of the G14’s behavior are elucidated: existing commitments, resource interests, regional interests, domestic factors, and status.

**Existing Commitments.** One body of literature suggests states act in accordance with their existing commitments: to formal and informal alliances, to coalitions, and to multilateral agreements (here, those beyond the G20). This literature is relatively straightforward: some middle powers are aligned with other states through existing commitments, others are not. Different commitments sometimes constrain certain middle powers, leaving others to act freely.

Bilateral (state-state) alliances feature prominently in this literature. As defined by Emerson Niou and Peter Ordeshook, many alliances are “collective security agreements;” members of an alliance pledge to defend the security of other members. Glenn Snyder stresses that while most formal alliances involve military commitment, today’s international order is also

---


defined by more informal agreements, or “alignments,” of one state with another.\textsuperscript{80} This literature posits if a middle power is aligned – formally or informally – with another middle power, a P5 state, or another country in general, they may respond differently than unallied middle powers \textit{because of} this commitment.

Niou and Ordeshook note that alliances are binding pledges; they usually do not, however, force states to commit to a certain type of action in defense of the other actor.\textsuperscript{81} This is an important factor for my analysis of state behavior: alliances are contractual, but behavioral responses motivated by them may vary. If a state is required, as agreed in an alliance, to support another state, exact behavior is often not specified. It can carry out this commitment via a statement of support, \textit{or} it could become militarily involved. In short: alliances often don’t prescribe an exact type of behavior.

A subset of bilateral commitment literature studies the relationship between middle and great powers.\textsuperscript{82} Ann Denholm Crosby examines the specific military relationship between Canada and the United States. Because Canada’s borders are hard to defend and because Canada has a limited military budget, it has developed a transnational, cooperative relationship with the US through which it allows the US to govern most of its military decisions.\textsuperscript{83} Canada lends its military to the United States who, in return, provides Canada security.\textsuperscript{84} Annette Baker Fox similarly delves into the relationship between major and peripheral powers.\textsuperscript{85} She argues peripheral powers are much more likely to be beholden to their great power commitments when

\textsuperscript{81} Niou and Ordeshook, “Alliances in Anarchic International Systems,” 168.
\textsuperscript{83} Crosby, “A Middle-Power Military in Alliance,” 40.
\textsuperscript{84} Crosby, “A Middle-Power Military in Alliance.”
their alliance is a “joint enterprise;” the states are close or not geologically impeded; the alliance is long-established; multiple channels of communication (e.g. political and military) are involved; when the alliance is “administrative” or bureaucratic, not politicized; and when the conflict/situation requires something specific of the peripheral power. These works suggest middle powers who have a close relationship with a great power may act differently from those which do not.

Alliances between more than a few countries are known as multilateral commitments or, when they apply only to a limited goal or context, coalitions. Multilateral agreements and coalitions affect middle power behavior in similar ways as bilateral alliances, but they are often more complex because of the many actors involved. States who are party to such agreements pledge to align themselves with the security interests of all members.

Formal multilateral institutions, like NATO, are even more complex and, argues John Ikenberry, more heavily binding than other types of alliances. They involve a more formal pledge, and thus more definite consequences for failing to protect the agreed upon security interests than agreements, coalitions, and bilateral alliances. Also, the many members of such institutions make them dangerous to disobey because they subject states to the backlash of more than one actor.

86 Fox.
87 I reemphasize that the remainder of this paper focuses on non-G20 multilateral agreements to avoid tautological conclusions.
There is a trend here: as alliances become more formal and involve more actors, states are increasingly dependent on each other for security. Interdependence via alliances and institutions makes up part of Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye’s theory of “complex interdependence.”\textsuperscript{90} Keohane and Nye argue that as military conflict becomes less frequent, state security relies on peacetime relationships with other states.\textsuperscript{91} Their argument underscores the importance of this independent variable: if middle powers make alliance commitments as a matter of state security, these pledges may be the defining motivator of their behavior.

Mancur Olson and Richard Zeckhauser posit collective action theory – the idea that weaker powers free-load when they can – as a problem of middle powers in international institutions.\textsuperscript{92} They argue mid-level states can glean the security benefits of being part of multilateral agreements without themselves contributing to the burden of defending other states. Olson’s and Zeckhauser’s theory would render mid-level state alignments with other actors somewhat less important because it would predict that middle powers do little (lack of observable behavior) to uphold their existing commitments.\textsuperscript{93} Benjamin Zyla, however, shows middle powers often bear the brunt of the multilateral agreement burden.\textsuperscript{94} He argues France, the UK, and the US gained the most from NATO, noting middle powers benefited less than they contributed to it. This finding suggests mid-level states do not freeload, instead taking active part in multilateral agreements.

\textsuperscript{91} Keohane and Nye, 3–6.
\textsuperscript{93} Olson and Zeckhauser.
Jennifer Mitzen hypothesizes that states construct their identity in relation to their routines with other states. She argues routine relationships create “ontological security.” States rely on the safety of their routines to such an extent that they act irrationally in order to sustain them. Mitzen provides us with a constructive view of alliance literature: perhaps some mid-level states act based on alliances and alignments because such relationships define their identity. According to Mitzen’s argument, middle power behavior varies based on existing commitments not because alliances are binding, but because states use them to define themselves.

It is true that much existing research on alliances and existing commitments applies to all states and speaks generally about any relationships in the international order. With the exception of Denholm Crosby, Baker Fox, and Zyla, alliance literature – like most existing research in international relations – focuses on great powers and paints other states with a broad brush. I stress, however, that alliance commitments may weigh more heavily on secondary states than on great powers. Great powers are great by virtue of their immense capability. They are more likely to be able to disobey an international commitment without risking their security than a state who cannot finance its own military or depends on another state for financial assistance. Middle powers are likely to place greater emphasis on fulfilling their commitments because not doing so might directly risk their security. It is important to remember the basis on which the “in practice” grouping used here stands: middle powers, because of their limited material and nonmaterial capabilities, are forced to find a different kind of balance than major powers. Middle powers must also be concerned about their reputation: if other states see them as a weak partner, they are unlikely to enter into new alliances, which may be crucial to the middle powers survival.

And we expect a middle power to make smart commitments. For example, a G14 state with a well-trained and well-funded military but limited access to energy sources is, if this hypothesis holds true, more likely to join an alliance that allows it to import oil and fuels than an alliance that provides arms and troops. This helps us separate great powers who are committed to their alliances from their secondary counterparts. While they might both form alliances to increase their soft power, middle powers are more likely to make commitments out of necessity: a need for a resource or capability the state is lacking because of its secondary status.

The literature reviewed in this section suggests middle power behavior is driven by states’ various formal and informal commitments. This research presents a very abstract first hypothesis. If a middle power has existing alliance commitments, its actions will be governed by the behavior these commitments prescribe. This is especially true for middle powers because they may depend on alliances for crucial resources and to maintain their reputation for fulfilling their commitments. This hypothesis will be more specifically fleshed out in the next chapter.

Resource/Economic Interests. While the heading for this body of literature is rather vague, its arguments are straightforward: some research suggests that an actor may have higher stakes in a conflict, relationship, or other international event if it involves a country where the actor has direct resource or economic interests. Robert Gilpin, for example, highlights the economies of developing states (which many of the G14 are). These states are focused on expanding trade and increasing their imports and exports. If a state’s economic expansion depends on exports, such as natural resources, particular to a certain country, it has a heightened interested in the security and stability of that resource-provider.

---

97 Gilpin.
Also, even middle powers without direct resource interests in other countries may be economically interdependent on other states, argue Henry Farrell, Abraham Newman, and Dale Copeland.\textsuperscript{98} As the international system becomes complex and pluralistic, trade and the well-being of the economies of individual states increasingly depend on the well-being of the larger global economy. The World Trade Organization is a manifestation of the reliance of states on one another: despite the fact that state economies are individual, global regulation is necessary due to interdependence. Farrell, Newman, and Copeland suggest interdependence can be weaponized to coerce states into action: perhaps middle states whose economic security depends on a state experiencing a conflict will be pushed to act in support of that state.\textsuperscript{99} Even when mid-level states are not coerced, however, economic dependence on the stability of external states may encourage them to act differently than middle powers who are less tied-in to the global economy.\textsuperscript{100} Some of the “situational” literature briefly mentioned in the first section of my literature review fits here. Randall Schweller, for example, argues that “economic conflict” has become increasingly relevant as the prevalence of typical interstate war wanes.\textsuperscript{101} The international system is governed today by what he calls “geo-economics,” the complex system of intertwined state economies.\textsuperscript{102} Middle powers, concerned with turning the geo-economic balance in their favor, must keep their economies afloat, and thus may either depend on geo-economic stability or on the stability of individual actors.


\textsuperscript{99} Farrell and Newman, “Weaponized Interdependence.”

\textsuperscript{100} Mark J. C. Crescenzi, \textit{Economic Interdependence and Conflict in World Politics}, Innovations in the Study of World Politics (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005).


\textsuperscript{102} Schweller.
All states have an interest in economic stability, but middle powers are more likely than stronger powers and weaker powers to be externally dependent. The great powers have much larger economies than mid-level states. Their economies may well be interdependent on those of other states (we see global markets consistently respond to each other, for example China’s and the Dow), but they are more financially stable than middle powers. Their economies have long been developed, and while trade is a major part of most P5 economies, they trade largely as a measure of cost-effectiveness. For example, the US may choose to import foreign manufactured goods to reduce their cost of production, but not because it doesn’t have the capacity to make them at home. Middle powers, especially underdeveloped ones, however, have limited resources. Many of them have no access to oil and gas, so their economic interests in the stability of another state are not just direct, but paramount, essential to state security and survival.

Middle powers also have different direct resource/economic interests than small powers. Small powers, many of which have yet to industrialize, have less demand for industrial goods, energy supply, and other external resources. Certainly, like middle powers, weak states are unlikely to have their own oil and gas or the ability to exploit their natural resources. But, small powers may not experience the same demand for such resources. Their behavior, thus, is less likely to be motivated by such interests.

In sum, the literature presented in this section suggests that middle powers have particular interests in other states and/or in the balance of the global economy. It is important to note that while direct resource interests may affect the behavior of all middle states, they won’t do so uniformly because some middle powers will have different interests than others. One G14 middle power may behave differently than another if a conflict or event occurs that endangers or otherwise affects these particular interests. This body of literature posits a second general
hypothesis: If a middle power has particular, resource-based interests in a certain country or group of countries, it will act to promote the stability and safety of that actor(s). It may also act to maintain the stability of the economic system when a conflict or other situation threatens it, though we expect to see more uniform reactions from middle powers in such a case because they all depend on such stability.

Regional Interests. A third body of literature highlights interests intrinsic to a middle power’s geographic location instead of resource-based motivators.

Andrew Cooper argues middle states carve out “segmented areas of attention” in which they specialize and lead. Middle powers, unlikely to become global hegemons or great powers, can lead in their own regions, suggest Mares, Schweller, David Meyers, and Tom Long. As leaders of smaller state networks, individual middle powers have an increased interest in the stability of certain regions and, by carving out a local role for themselves, can increase influence and power over their surrounding area.

This point is central to the work of Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, who coin the term “Regional Security Complex,” inside which local leaders are crucial to the security of the many smaller systems of states. When conflicts happen within their own region, middle powers who are regional hegemons and leaders may feel responsible for regional defense and security. They

---
103 Cooper, Niche Diplomacy, 21. He terms this motivation “niche diplomacy,” which fails to encapsulate the idea of state-specific security interests. His idea is relevant nonetheless.
106 Buzan and Wæver, Regions and Powers.
may, thus, act differently than mid-level states who either don’t have a regional stake or who entrust the local leader to act on their behalf.

Mares specifically studies the relationship between middle power regional hegemons and the great powers. ¹⁰⁷ He identifies two possible situations. First, a great power might recognize the control of a middle power over its own region. In this case, the great power and the regional hegemon are likely to be allied. The great power benefits from the support of the middle power and the other states within its region, and the middle power’s sovereignty (national and regional) is protected. Second, a middle power might be the de facto leader in a region under control of an existing great power hegemon. In this configuration, the middle power is not a true regional hegemon because its actions are still largely commanded by the great power. Its primary concern “will be to safeguard its sovereignty vis-à-vis the greater power.” ¹⁰⁸ Thus, even though the given middle power lacks serious influence over its region, we expect it to act to promote its own sovereignty, to push back on the great power.

Gil Merom, similarly to Mares, addresses regional power in the existing international order, which is defined by great powers (“global hegemons”). ¹⁰⁹ He notes the inability of realism to predict peace and conflict in various regions because of the way it largely ignores the unit and regional-level parts of international order. Merom makes several important contributions. ¹¹⁰ First, he argues, like Mares, that only some middle powers are likely to strive for regional power. Where a region is ‘captive’ of a global hegemon, middle powers (whether they are local leaders or not) in the region are generally unlikely to resist the great power. Regions that are (1)

¹⁰⁷ Mares, “Middle Powers under Regional Hegemony.”
¹⁰⁸ Mares, 457.
¹¹⁰ Some of his work touches on the status of individual states within a region; I save this for a future discussion on middle power status.
“intractable” – difficult for a global hegemon to control because of geographic, economic, or other factors, (2) “drifting” – unwanted by global hegemons, or (3) “contested” – where regional powers are emboldened to fight attempts by global hegemons to capture their region – may experience increased conflict.\footnote{Merom, “Realist Hypotheses on Regional Peace,” 114–17.} For middle power behavior, this means the effect of regional factors on middle power behavior depends on what region the state is a part of, and if that region is captive of a global hegemon.

Second, Merom notes that the chance of having an emboldened middle power to contest a global hegemon depends on the identities of regional and great powers and on the social/cultural history of the region.\footnote{Merom, 122–28.} If a global hegemon is keen to enforce order, and if regional powers are not likely to stand up to such a great power, regional factors will have limited effect on middle power behavior. If the hegemon is weak and/or if the regional powers are likely to stand up to a great power, middle power behavior will be defined by a regional desire to push back against attempts to capture the region.\footnote{This includes a range of behaviors that would undermine the hegemon generally, not just behaviors that relate to the region.} Merom also argues that a region that shares a social history, culture, and language is more likely to act as a unit: its members will see regional peace, but will resist systemic capture.\footnote{Merom, “Realist Hypotheses on Regional Peace,” 127–28.}

This body of literature, specifically Merom’s work, suggests that complex regional factors may affect middle power behavior. Middle powers are specifically affected by this hypothesis because small powers are too weak to strive for regional dominance. Middle powers have some ability both to be emboldened enough to act out against a great power and to help secure the stability of their region. Regional anxieties are of limited interest to great powers,
whose expansive capabilities allow them to play on a larger, global stage (except, perhaps, as regional stability affects their own security, but this applies to all states). The above research provides a third general hypothesis. If a middle power is a regional hegemon or leader, it will act to ensure the stability of the region; if a middle power is a regional hegemon, it will act to ensure its dominant control of the actors in the region; if a region is contested, drifting, or intractable, middle powers within the region, if emboldened by their identity as revisionist powers or by their social cohesion, will be motivated to resist global power (as outlined by Merom).\footnote{115}

Note this independent variable does not suggest middle powers only act when a conflict or event occurs within their region. Middle powers can respond to extra-regional events to signal to their neighbors or to global great powers.

**Domestic Factors.** A fourth body of literature suggests that middle power behavior is affected by differing domestic factors. Despite their collective multilateral membership, states are essentially unit-level actors who face domestic pressures and constraints on their behavior. James Fearon notes that domestic policy is conceptualized in multiple ways across the study of international relations, but key to all definitions is the idea that unit-level factors, not just the inner workings of the international system, matter.\footnote{116}

One domestic factor – “diversionary war theory” – has been written about prolifically. It suggests states engage in foreign policy behavior to distract from unrest, economic difficulty, and leader dissatisfaction domestically. Domestic leaders, suggest Kyle Haynes and Jaroslav Tir, can engage in foreign conflicts to induce a rally around the flag effect and to increase support for

\footnote{115} I recognize the weaknesses of this hypothesis in its abstract form, but emphasize that it will be further clarified in the following section.  
and trust in their regime. M. Taylor Fravel summarizes the findings of Edward Mansfield, Jack Snyder, and Quincy Wright, who argue that foreign policy behavior, specifically war, is a direct remedy to internal tension. Mansfield and Snyder use the diversionary hypothesis to suggest that democratic/democratizing states are more prone to war as a domestic palliative because the survival of democratic regimes depends on the trust of their constituency.

Fravel and Jack Levy, amongst others, however, demonstrate the weakness of the diversionary hypothesis, noting the overwhelming lack of empirical evidence that would support such a claim. Levy hypothesizes that the concept is too broad and lacks a causal mechanism that would tie certain domestic unrest to certain types of behavior. Levy is right to remind us that lack of support for a hypothesis does not allow us to categorically reject it, but given significant empirical and logical weaknesses and the limited scope of this paper, diversionary war theory will not be considered in the hypothesis developed in this section.

Democratic peace theory suggests regime type may be a factor. Democratic peace theory asserts that two democratic, or liberal, states will not engage in conflict with each other because of their shared domestic regime. With some exceptions, this concept, theorized by Michael Doyle, explains well the lack of conflict between states that structural theories – relying

---


119 Fravel, “The Limits of Diversion,” 308; Mansfield and Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War.”


on state capabilities – fail to explain.\textsuperscript{123} Azar Gat stresses that democratic peace turns not only on states’ regime type but also on their status as industrialized, developed countries. Industrialization raised standards of living, reduced hardship, and made states “far less belligerent.”\textsuperscript{124} Thus, middle powers that are ruled by democratic regimes and that have highly developed, industrialized economies are unlikely to engage in conflict with other like countries, and more likely to support their democratic counterparts.

Norrin Ripsman, in his book \textit{Peacemaking by Democracies}, similarly makes an argument about the connection between state structure and foreign policy.\textsuperscript{125} He recognizes previous findings that show sovereign dictatorships are less indebted to domestic pressures than democracies, but primarily stresses that “treating democratic states as a homogenous group represents a fundamental misapprehension by the international security literature.”\textsuperscript{126} This is especially important for the G14 middle powers, most of which are democracies. Some democracies, specifically those with autonomous foreign policy executives, are able to largely ignore domestic pressures, whereas “stronger” democracies (those in which the people hold deliberate power over the foreign policymaking body) must behave in accordance with the people’s desires. Ripsman notes that the strength/weakness of a democracy and of its foreign policy executive is not static, but changes between regimes.\textsuperscript{127} This is crucial for my work: each democratic middle power cannot be ruled “weak/strong” before the case studies begin. I must analyze the structure of the state over the specific time each case study spans.

\textsuperscript{126} Ripsman, 5.
\textsuperscript{127} Ripsman, \textit{Peacemaking by Democracies}. 41
Both Doyle’s and Ripsman’s work make important contributions, but they leave us with a gap. Are authoritarian and other non-democratic states – unconstrained by democratic peace theory and Ripsman’s scale of strong and weak democracies – not affected by domestic factors? Jessica Weeks, in her research on authoritarian regimes and domestic politics, provides some helpful answers.\(^\text{128}\) Though Weeks specifically studies authoritarian states, she uses the term authoritarian broadly, so her work provides a framework for non-democratic states more generally. Weeks argues that the domestic constituency/audience that non-democratic leaders answer to is likely not to be the popular public. Non-democratic regimes face the domestic constraints of their bureaucracy, elite, and/or military. She identifies four types of non-democratic regimes – personalist, non-personalist, civilian-led, and military-led – and posits that each experiences different types and extents of domestic pressures.\(^\text{129}\)

In personalist regimes, argues Weeks, leaders are unlikely to face strong domestic constraints. Personalist leaders are more likely than constrained leaders to become involved in various conflicts because of the potential gains and limited punishment that can be inflicted on them. “Non-personalist” leaders are constrained by the opinions and desires of bureaucratic elites. Military-led regimes are much more likely than their civilian-led counterparts to become militarily involved in conflicts.\(^\text{130}\) A table best sums up Weeks’ argument:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chances of initiating involvement in conflict</th>
<th>Constrained civilian regime</th>
<th>Constrained military regime</th>
<th>Personalist civilian regime</th>
<th>Personalist civilian regime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Highest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Domestic Factors and Non-Democratic Regimes\(^\text{131}\)


\(^\text{129}\) Weeks, 17–19.; This is imperfect, but with caution is the best way to analyze domestic factors for other regime types. Additionally, there are relatively few remaining monarchies and non-authoritarian/non-democratic middle powers, thus this solution should have minimal effect.

\(^\text{130}\) Weeks, chap. 1.

\(^\text{131}\) Note: this table is modeled off a slightly different version that appears in Weeks’ work (page 35).
Weeks’ research is easily applied to middle power behavior. The behavior of non-democratic middle powers whose leaders are responsible to a domestic elite will be governed by the desires, goals, and economic circumstances of those elite. The behavior of non-domestic middle powers with personalist leaders will not be driven by domestic factors. This does not mean some middle powers are excluded from this section. Rather, the domestic factor affecting personalist regimes is the increased likelihood of response to any international situation.

Domestic factors affect all states. But, many of the world’s developing and newly democratized states are middle powers, so there is some reason to believe domestic pressures weigh especially on middle powers. Developing middle powers are less likely than great powers to have a highly developed, autonomous foreign policy body. Non-democratic middle powers with underdeveloped bureaucracies may be more prone to coups than more capable, long-established authoritarian regimes. This reasoning is, however, weak. It doesn’t apply universally to all G14 states, and it doesn’t distinguish middle powers from small powers. As such, this independent variable provides limited support for the idea of a motivating factor unique to middle powers.

This multi-layered body of literature on domestic factors makes it somewhat difficult, at least for now, to articulate one ruling hypothesis. Until it can be specified and reframed to fit VINCs, it can be stated as: middle power behavior depends on domestic regime type. If a middle power is not a democracy, it will be beholden to bureaucratic and military elites. If it is specifically a dictatorship, it will not face domestic constraints, but rather will be more likely to engage in international conflict and other situations to gain prestige, popularity, and potential spoils. If a middle power is a democracy, it will be beholden to domestic pressures. If a democratic middle power has an established and independent foreign policy body that is
insulated from domestic pressures, however, domestic pressures will be a limited driver of behavior. Democratic middle powers will not engage in violence with other democracies.

Given the difficulty in finding a hypothesis that fits all middle powers and the weak evidence that domestic factors particularly affect middle states, this independent variable has limited merit. I maintain it, and test it, however, because of the existing wealth of research on domestic factors.

**Status.** A final body of literature incorporates the importance both of how states see themselves and how they are perceived by others. I call this section *status* because it relates to whether states see themselves and each other as, for example, perpetuators of the status quo, as “rising” powers, as system protectors, as nationally focused. Research on status posits that middle power behavior is driven by a state’s status and by its future expectations of status. For example, a rising power that aims to increase its status will behave in ways that maximize prestige, honor, and the way other states see it.

Status is two-part. It first considers how states see themselves. Welch Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth argue a state estimates its own status based on its “interpretation of the behavior and speech of others.” Jervis’ work on perception underscores their argument: the first step in a state’s reaction to another, or to a non-state threat or entity, is the *perception* of such external stimuli. Jervis argues we must understand the cognitive psychology of states and their decisionmakers. Although political psychology and an in-depth analysis of how states think is outside the scope of this paper, Jervis points us to the importance and complexity of state perceptions.

---

133 Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics.*
Neoclassical realism provides a persuasive framework for understanding these perceptions. Though it does not focus on cognition, neoclassical realists suggest that states process foreign policy incentives through their domestic and unit-level identity. Norrin Ripsman, Jeffrey Taliaferro, and Steven Lobell argue that states act only after external stimuli have been processed through their national identities:

All people possess a set of core values, beliefs, and images that guide their interaction with the outside world and their understanding of it. These “images” are highly personalized, as they are informed by the individual’s prior experiences and values. Moreover, to the extent that they represent core beliefs, they are not easily altered. Once formed, they act as cognitive filters that inform how leaders process information…

Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell outline four main filters through which external stimuli are processed: the “master beliefs” of leaders, society as a whole (strategic culture), the state-society relationship, and established institutions. Leaders, society and culture, and a state’s formal foreign policy institutions develop certain learned beliefs about the international order and their state’s role in it. It is through these filters that states understand and respond to the international system. These beliefs necessarily determine how a state sees itself. How states see themselves as players in the international system, argue Ripsman, Taliaferro, Lobell, and the wider body of literature on status, partially defines how they respond to and act within it.

A second factor that determines a state’s status is how other states see it. Welch Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth define status as “collective beliefs about a given state’s ranking on valued

---

135 Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, 58–79.
attributes (wealth, coercive capabilities, culture, demographic position, sociopolitical organization, and diplomatic clout). Together, state self-perceptions, perceptions of how other states see them, and collective beliefs about a state determine its status.

Welch Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth designate some states as “rising” powers who seek increased status, in opposition to states who are happy with their status in relation to other states in the international order. Status-seekers want to increase their prestige, power, authority, and honor in order to rise above their current international ranking; Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko argue there is a set of “rising” middle powers who aim to gain admittance to the “great power club.” Welch Larson and Behringer also identify certain middle powers who do not strive to change their status and are happy with the status quo and their middle power ranking. Another group of states seeks to maintain both their ranking and the overall status quo of the international order. Such states see the protection of the existing liberal order and its current ranking as part of their international role and status.

Paul and Mahesh Shankar stress that there are multiple reasons a state may or may not be a status-seeker. Some status-seekers may be taking advantage of a convenient increase in capabilities and power; these states are acting on immediate perception of an opportunity. Other rising powers may strive to change their status as part of a more deeply rooted ideology to become a great power. The same holds true for states who do not seek to increase their status.

---

137 Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, 17.
140 Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal, Relocating Middle Powers.
If their ideology strives for a unipolar international system, they might be pleased with the status quo of the international order. In his study of bandwagoning, Schweller designates two types of states: ‘wolves,’ who want to increase their status, and ‘lions,’ who are happy with what they have and want to maintain it. His work applies largely to great powers and is somewhat reductionist, but it is nonetheless a helpful conceptualization of the ways state motivations might differ based on perception of their role, external status, and interests.\footnote{Merom, “Realist Hypotheses on Regional Peace,” 122; Randall L. Schweller, “Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In,” International Security 19, no. 1 (1994): 72–107, https://doi.org/10.2307/2539149.}

This logic suggests that members of the G14 may be driven by their different statuses and by different future goals. Some strive to increase their status, others do not. The G14’s shared propensity for collective (multilateral) action may be motivated by different impetuses which may drive the variation in foreign policy behavior.

This body of literature seems to provide little hope for a motivating factor unique to middle powers. All states have status; all states perceive external stimuli and process them through their learned identities. But, middle powers are more likely to be driven by the possibility of increasing their status than great powers. Great powers have, inherent to their definition, achieved the top status ranking; they thrive within the existing system. It is true they can aim to become regional and global hegemons, but, more so than for middle powers, their behavior maintains their already high-ranking status. Also, middle powers are more prone to motivation fluctuation than other powers. Small powers are unlikely to change their status unless their capabilities suddenly increase (which would make them mid-level states). Middle power capacity is in constant flux, with developing states improving their ability to seek increased status while other states face economic and political unrest that can quickly decrease their chance
of changing their international ranking. Argentina, for example, was once a burgeoning rising power, but several years of political strife and an economic downturn proved significant setbacks to its rise and may have thus changed future expectations (its own and those of other states) of its status.¹⁴³

Despite the complexity of some of the literature reviewed here, its findings are quite simple. Middle powers are perceived differently by the collective international order and have different perceptions of themselves and how others see them; these differing perceptions result in different statuses. Some of this variation is short term: a state may see a recent increase in a certain capability as a chance to advance its status. More fundamental variation is also possible: some states desire to become great powers, others do not, whether because of their realistic evaluations of their capabilities or for other, likely self-serving reasons. The literature reviewed here presents a fifth hypothesis that explains middle power behavior: middle power actions are motivated by status and future expectations of status. In the following section, this will be broken into several more specific hypotheses (e.g. “if a middle power is a status-seeker, it will behave to increase its honor, prestige, authority”).

Theory

To summarize, the previous chapter examined literature on two separate theoretical points. First, it discussed who middle powers are and how they should be grouped. Four schools of thought were considered: classical/realist work that centered almost exclusively on capabilities; a normative approach which argued middle powers are those that have a responsibility and a moral obligation to act as internationalists; literature that included only states who have outwardly self-identified as middle powers; and a fourth, “in practice” grouping which stems from the observation that there emerges a group of middle powers who participate in international collective action and multilateralism.

The literature in the final grouping proved most persuasive. It correctly identified secondary states as those who are forced to carve out a new role for themselves, a new balance in the international system because of their limited capabilities and power. It avoids tautology because, while it does stem from an observation of a shared action, it doesn’t strictly limit behavior or motivations for such behavior. The “in practice” literature led us to a group of states who all participate in international forums, agreements, and institutions. I made a practical methodological assertion in selecting the G14, the 14 non-P5 and non-EU members of the G20, to serve as a proxy for this grouping. The remainder of the paper centers on the action of this proxy group.

The dependent variable of this paper, thus, is the behavior and actions of: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and Turkey.144

144 “About the G20.”
The second part of the previous chapter sought answers to the question posed by variation in middle power (G14) behavior. Motivating factors were identified, and I reasoned whether each served as a unique factor for middle powers. Ultimately, five independent variables were identified and stated in deliberately abstract terms as hypotheses that drew a causal link between motivation and behavior:

1. Middle power behavior is motivated by existing commitments. This includes formal and informal bilateral alliances, coalitions, and official alliance institutions. While any state is likely to have alliance commitments, it was determined they may weigh particularly on middle powers. Inherent to our definition and categorization of middle powers is their secondary level of capabilities. Alliances and commitments may be crucial to middle power survival because they provide security, access to resources, and a way to ensure a positive reputation.

2. Middle power behavior is motivated by direct economic and resource interests. Middle powers have different economies, and import/export different products and resources. Because of the inherent limit on their capabilities as secondary states, these direct resource interests may be the primary driver behind their action.

3. Middle power behavior is motivated by regional interests. If a middle power wants to assert regional hegemony, or if it wants to retain or take back power from a global hegemon or great power, it will act to serve these interests. This motivating factor, too, is specific to middle powers. Small states are unlikely to contain the capabilities to assert regional desires, and great powers generally seek dominance that expands beyond regional interests.

4. Middle powers are motivated by domestic factors, specifically regime type and regime strength. First, democratic states will be more responsive to domestic pressures than non-democratic middle powers. Second, regimes that are insulated from public opinion via a
personalist dictatorship or – in democratic governments – a strong foreign policy body are likely to be less influenced by domestic pressures. This hypothesis gives weak support to the idea of a unifying middle power-only motivator. Middle powers may be less likely to have an autonomous foreign policy body and may have unstable regimes, making them more prone to domestic pressures, but these statements are not universally true for the G14.

(5) Middle powers are motivated by their status and their future expectations of status. Their status depends both on how others see them and how they see themselves. They will act (1) to confirm or further their status, and (2) to maintain the status quo of the international order or change it to carve out a more powerful role for themselves. Middle power status is more flexible than that of great and smaller powers. Great powers have generally reached the highest attainable status, and so are unlikely to want to change it much. Small powers are unlikely to have the capacity to increase their status. Middle powers, on the other hand, have sufficient capacity to increase their status and are prone to political/economic events that quickly change their status.

The arguments made in the previous chapter constitute a testable framework. I have adopted and developed a theory about middle powers as an “in practice” grouping, and elucidated five possible explanations for the remaining variation in this group’s behavior.

The theory and potential explanations summarized above will be reframed in the next chapter to fit a specific international situation: violent intrastate nationalist conflicts. VINCs serve as a testing site for my theory. Responses to VINCs act as a proxy for broader middle power behavior.
Methodology

The framework developed above is extensive, but abstract. In order to test my theory about middle powers and possible explanations for what motivates their behavior, they must both be reframed to fit real-world conflicts, threats, and situations. Attempting to abstractly consider a state’s ‘behavior,’ and, especially, to compare it to that of other states, is futile. The following section, then, converts my theory into a set of testable hypotheses. It does so by selecting one event type – violent intrastate nationalist conflicts. The dependent variable, middle power behavior, and each independent variable will be restated more specifically as responses to a narrower research question: “Why do G14 middle powers respond differently to violent intrastate nationalist conflicts?” The G14 serve as a representative sample of all middle powers, and VINCs act as a probe, a proxy test for broader middle power behavior.

The following chapter first explains and justifies my choice of event. Second, it operationalizes each variable to fit VINCs specifically. Third, it discusses the specific research methods this paper utilizes. Fourth, it presents the universe of possible cases and explains my selection of one case: the First Libyan Civil War.

Violent Intrastate Nationalist Conflicts

I utilize Violent Intrastate Nationalist Conflicts to test the framework developed in the previous chapter. A clear definition of VINCs is a necessary first step toward understanding this choice. Scholars and policymakers usually distinguish between two types of conflict: interstate and intrastate violence.\footnote{Kathman, “Civil War Contagion and Neighboring Interventions”; Aysegul Aydin and Patrick M. Regan, “Networks of Third-Party Interveners and Civil War Duration,” European Journal of International Relations 18, no. 3 (September 1, 2012): 573–97, https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066111403515; Thomas Szayna et al., What Are the Trends in Armed Conflicts, and What Do They Mean for U.S. Defense Policy? (RAND Corporation, 2017), https://doi.org/10.7249/RR1904.} Interstate wars are relatively straightforward, involving conflict
between two or more state actors. If we can broadly think about a war as a fight between side A and side B, interstate war involves side A – country X, and side B – country Y. Interstate wars can, and often do, involve more than two state actors.\(^{146}\)

Intrastate wars, on the other hand, occur between side A – country X, and side B – a non-state belligerent group within country X.\(^{147}\) In theory, intrastate wars, more commonly known as civil wars, involve only one state and do not have an immediate effect on other actors in the international system. In the post-Cold War era, however, third-party (external state) intervention into intrastate wars outside their immediate territory is increasingly common.\(^{148}\) Intrastate wars, thus, often involve more than two players.\(^{149}\)

There are significant efforts to break intrastate conflict into further, more descriptive categories. Ted Gurr, for example, designates five types of intrastate conflicts based on the identity of side B, the belligerent: “ethnonationalists,” “indigenous peoples,” “ethnoclasses,” “militant sects,” and “communal contenders.”\(^{150}\) Ernest Gellner, Kathleen Cunningham, Daniele Conversi, and Walker Conner use multiple terms to characterize the same thing: an “organizing and a legitimizing” principle shared by members of an group based on the claim that “rulers should belong to the same… group as the ruled.”\(^{151}\) Some authors group certain terms together,


\(^{147}\) Aydin and Regan, “Networks of Third-Party Interveners and Civil War Duration.”


\(^{149}\) This dichotomy is undeniably reductionist. Conflict can involve states and non-state belligerents in non-civil war contexts. This is, however, relatively rare: almost all conflicts involving non-state actors begin as intrastate unrest.


\(^{151}\) Daniele Conversi, ed., *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World: Walker Connor and the Study of Nationalism*, Routledge Advances in International Relations and Global Politics (London: Routledge, 2004), 7; Richard English, “Nationalism and Terrorism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Terrorism*, ed. Erica Chenoweth,
focusing on “ethnonationalist and secessionist” belligerents, or nationalist and self-determined groups. Walker Connor describes the loose, unquestioned use of different concepts and names to delineate different types of intrastate conflicts “terminological chaos.” Specification makes sense for scholars whose central focus is the variation among belligerents. For this paper, however, such delineations generate confusion.

A broad term is more useful. This allows the inclusion of a broad range of topics and avoids unnecessary and arbitrary exclusions. I opt for the term “violent intrastate nationalist conflict,” or VINC, as conceptualized by R. William Ayres. According to Ayres, VINCs have three characteristics. First, they involve nationally-driven belligerents: “groups of people who give their primary identity to the group and who think their group can and should have a sovereign status.” This encompasses ethnonationalist, separatist, and other subgroupings alike. Second, VINCs must occur within a state. This is crucial for eliminating as many confounding variables as possible in my study. Third, the conflict should either be violent or should have a history of violence. This is important for two practical reasons: first, external actors are unlikely to respond to small, non-violent tensions. Second, violent conflicts are best studied and provide a wealth of collectible information. Utilizing Uppsala University’s Conflict Data
Program, conflicts are considered violent if more than 25 conflict-related deaths are recorded in a year (conflicts experiencing a lull in violent activity qualify if they previously recorded 25 deaths in any year).¹⁵⁷

**Why VINCs?** What makes VINCs an appropriate proxy test that allows generalization about middle power behavior? Three main reasons are outlined below: they are one of the most common types of modern conflict; they don’t directly involve external middle powers and thus allow us to exclude multiple confounding variables; and they allow this paper to contribute to an existing gap in literature about *why* external states intervene in intrastate conflicts.

According to Kathleen Cunnigham, “wars within states are much more common than wars between them;”¹⁵⁸ Andreas Wimmer similarly notes that “ethnonationalist conflict has become the dominant form of mass political violence” in recent years.¹⁵⁹ Both positions are supported by RAND’s 2017 report on trends in armed conflict.¹⁶⁰ The prominence of VINCs makes them not only worth study, but also a valid test for middle power behavior because current G14 members are likely to have seen multiple instances of VINCs since 1999. Unlike certain events that occur only once every few years – interstate wars, the formation of new states – choosing VINCs increases the likelihood that many members of the G14 will be affected by them in some way.

Also, and perhaps most importantly, VINCs decrease the possibility of confounding variables. Controls and designated treatment groups are used in randomized control trials

---

¹⁵⁷ Pettersson, “UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset Codebook v 19.1.”
¹⁶⁰ Note: though this report finds that absolute numbers of intrastate conflicts have decreased, but it remains, relative to interstate wars, the most common type of war. Szayna et al., *What Are the Trends in Armed Conflicts, and What Do They Mean for U.S. Defense Policy?*
because results are most meaningful when they aren’t affected by underlying, confounding variables. This is especially important for the research presented here: because the case studies that follow are only a test probe for my framework, reducing confounding variables increases confidence in the generalizability of results. Most overarching theories of international relations, especially realism, provide no obvious reason why a third-party state would intervene in an external conflict in which it is not directly involved. A state who intervenes on behalf of the state threatens norms and laws about self-determination, and a state who intervenes neutrally or on behalf on the ethnonationalist group risks breaking norms of state sovereignty.\footnote{Regan, Civil Wars and Foreign Powers.}

There are a few exceptions that center on middle power’s direct security which, as previously noted, I aim to control for in order to determine the existence of and analyze a unique logic for middle state behavior. If an intrastate conflict rages in a neighboring state, it makes sense for a third party to intervene to protect its own stability; if the external state shares an ethnicity, religion, or other fundamental identity characteristic with either side, the state might intervene for the safety of its own identity.\footnote{Kathman, “Civil War Contagion and Neighboring Interventions.”} As such, to rule out the influence of direct security interests, I exclude conflicts in G14 states and in states that directly neighbor any G14 power. I do not argue that direct security interests and other characteristics that are unique to conflicts/events have no influence on middle power behavior, rather I focus on the elucidation of a broad framework that explains middle power action regardless of these intrinsic characteristics.

Otherwise, however, it appears to be in the best interest of non-parties to intrastate conflicts not to become involved. Involvement means money, time, and other resources spent, potential enemies made, and the upsides are not clear. For middle powers, who have limited resources, involvement is even more puzzling.
Finally, VINCs allow this research to contribute to an existing gap in literature about third-party intervention. Because of the recent influx of civil wars and of external involvement in them, there are myriad studies on the effect of third-parties on intrastate conflict, the ways third-parties can insert themselves, the risks of third-party involvement. There is, however, a dearth of research about why a third-party would intervene at all. Existing literature works on the assumption that third-parties intervene when it benefits them, but they don’t examine this point or determine what benefit means or when it accrues. The following chapters will contribute to filling this gap.

In sum, VINCs are a functional test for middle power behavior because they are frequent, middle power participation in them is surprising, and they address a missing piece of existing research. I assert middle power responses to VINCs are representative examples of middle power behavior more generally. They show how middle powers act and are helpfully unconstrained by the many confounding variables of other international conflicts and events. Nonetheless, a significant limitation of this research is its inability to test a non-VINC event due to its scope. Because I test middle power response in only one type of event and in only one VINC, conclusions are drawn cautiously. Future research should include additional VINC case studies and should analyze and compare middle power behavior in non-VINC cases.

*Operationalization of Variables to Fit VINCs*

An admitted limitation of the framework developed in this paper is its abstract nature. Without a specific behavior or situation to explain, causal links demanded vague articulation. Armed with two proxies – the G14 for middle powers, VINCs for a testing site – more explicit

hypotheses can be elucidated. The following section restates the dependent and each independent variable in terms of the G14 and VINCs. Several testable implications – how support for each hypothesis is determined – are then explained.

**Dependent Variable: Response to VINCs.** This paper seeks to determine what motivates middle power *behavior*. State actions are, themselves, the dependent variable. In the specific setting of violent intrastate nationalist conflicts, the action I aim to explain is the response, the behavior in response to VINCs, of the G14 powers. This includes any form of official or unofficial response to a non-neighboring, external VINC, ranging from unofficial statements, to agreeing to allot troops to UN peacekeeping missions, to direct military involvement with the middle power’s own troops. Behavior and response will be characterized along a spectrum, as show in Figure 1. The spectrum primarily enables comparison across actors and cases.

![Figure 1. Response Spectrum](image)

This spectrum is purposefully vague and will be informed by the specific responses of states, which may fall in-between labeled points or may be made up of multiple actions. Military response, for example, may involve a full-fledged occupation with ground troops. However, offering military funding or infrastructure (arms, transport, etc…) would also be considered a military – and thus a strong – response. The response spectrum is used to connect the independent variables discussed below with the dependent variable without unnecessarily

---

limiting states to a certain type of response. For example, we might expect states who have direct economic interest in a VINC state to issue a \textit{stronger} response than a middle power who does not, but we would not expect it to act so strongly that it might create further economic unrest. We do not know what form, exactly, either response will take, but using the spectrum, comparative bounds (stronger, weaker, strongest) can be established.

The first step in determining support for any independent variable is examining and analyzing the dependent variable. In each case, the response of every G14 state to the VINC will be explicitly discussed and categorized by strength: weak, medium, strong, strongest. These categorizations are only markers, and a full, detailed discussion of each response is of course crucial, but they enable comparison. Because this paper cannot engage in a quantitative analysis of state behavior, comparison of G14 responses by strength provides the best, most systematic form of analysis.

\textbf{Independent Variable \#1: Existing Commitments.} The first motivator gleaned from existing literature centered on alliance commitments: middle powers with existing commitments will act to uphold their alliances and relationships. Variation emerges from the different commitments of each G14 power. In the case of VINCs, there are three likely considerations. First, a middle power may have an alliance, official or otherwise, with side A, the state experiencing conflict. Second, and similarly, it may be part of an economic or security coalition with side A. Third, it may have an alliance with a state that directly neighbors side A. We can thus formally restate the previously developed abstract hypothesis:

\textit{H1: If a G14 power has an alliance commitment to side A, to a coalition of which side A is also a partner, or to a state that directly neighbors side A, it will respond in accordance with the requirements of these existing commitments.}
I hesitate to assert that the G14 middle power will always respond in support of side A. If it is allied with a neighboring state, and that state supports the belligerent, the G14 power will similarly support the belligerent. Nor can I decisively assert that a G14 power with existing commitments to a state involved in a VINC will issue a ‘strong’ response. The strength of the response depends on the nature and intensity of the alliance. If the existing commitment between a G14 power and a VINC state is security focused and guarantees the support of the other actor when one side is embroiled in conflict, we expect the G14 response to be only as strong as necessary for the protection of the other state. If required, it would be willing to send troops, but if economic sanctions, or an official condemnation of the belligerent, are sufficient, it will not waste more time and capabilities than necessary. If a G14 power is one of many members of a coalition with side A, response is expected to be quite weak. The broader the coalition, the more diluted the commitment requirements, and thus the easier buck passing and free riding becomes.

A trend emerges: if alliance commitments are the motivating factor of middle power behavior in cases of VINC, their response will be only as strong as is required by their existing agreement. They will not risk more than is necessary or agreed upon. If a middle power has no existing commitments to the state of the VINC, any states who become involved in it, and any states neighboring the VINC, it will issue no response.

To test for support of this variable, the existing commitments of each G14 power with the VINC state and its neighbors should be traced. Commitments should be categorized, for example: strong response required, official statement of support required, troops required. Each commitment must be investigated and compared to the response of the G14 states. If a state has no existing commitments, we expect no response. If a G14 state has a commitment that makes it responsible for the security of the VINC state, we expect as strong a response as is required to
protect it. The more alliances a middle power has, and thus the further entrenched in obligations for action, the stronger we expect its response to be.

**IV #2: Direct Economic and Resource Interests.** A second body of literature argued middle powers will be motivated by direct resource and/or economic interests. In the case of VINCs, this means G14 responses will be governed by whether, and to what extent, the state’s economy and capabilities rely on the stability of side A. It can be formally stated as:

\[ H2: \text{If a G14 state has direct economic and/or resource interests in state } A, \text{ it will respond in support of the stability of side } A. \]

As in IV #1, we expect a state’s response to be only as strong as is necessary to protect its own interests; response strength also depends on the value of the G14’s direct capability interest. Keohane and Nye’s distinction between sensitivity and vulnerability dependence are key to understanding responses motivated by IV #2.\(^{165}\) A state whose economy depends on good X, which is exported from side A of a VINC, is sensitive to the stability of side A. Its sensitivity depends on how important good X is for the middle power’s economy. If a middle power’s economy can easily survive without good X, it isn’t very sensitive to the VINC and the stability of side A, and will thus issue a weaker response than a middle power who is highly sensitive to good X.

A state whose economy is sensitive to the import/export of good X may nonetheless not have a vulnerable dependence on side A. If good X can be produced elsewhere – if there are viable, accessible alternatives to exporting it from side A – the middle power is not vulnerable. It will issue a weak response and obtain good X from elsewhere. If side A is the exclusive exporter

---

\(^{165}\) Keohane and Nye, *Power and Interdependence.*
of good X, we expect the G14 power to respond in accordance to the good’s worth (the sensitivity of the economy to good X).

Thus, a middle power whose economy is not sensitive to an import/export of a certain good from side A will issue the weakest response. A middle power who is sensitive to the production of the good, but not vulnerably dependent on side A because good X can be produced elsewhere will also issue a relatively weak response. A middle power who is both sensitive to the production of good X and vulnerably dependent on side A for its production will issue the strongest response.\textsuperscript{166}

If H2 accurately explains middle power behavior, a G14 state with no economic interest in a VINC state will not respond to the conflict.

Evaluating support for IV #2 depends on a comparison of G14 responses with their economic and resource interests in the state of each VINC. The amount a middle power exports from and imports to the VINC state will be examined. Middle powers whose economies are more reliant on side A will have a stronger response than G14 states who have little or no economic stake in the outcome of the conflict or the stability of side A.

IV #3: Regional Interests. Other research identified regional interests as motivating factors: if a middle power wants to assert regional hegemony, or if it wants to retain or take back power from a global hegemon or great power, it will act to serve these interests. Literature on this variable highlighted that regional interests do not limit middle powers to action within their own region. If states aim to balance against a global great power, they could do so by asserting themselves anywhere the great power is also engaged. In the case of a VINC, regional

\textsuperscript{166} Keohane and Nye.
interests could be a motivating factor for all G14 powers, not just those in the region surrounding the VINC. A third hypothesis can, thus, be dually stated:

\[ H3a: \text{If a G14 state seeks to increase or protect its regional power, its response to a VINC in its region will be stronger than non-regional responses and will be an outward attempt to assert its regional dominance.} \]

In many regions, VINC states and G14 states may be direct neighbors. As I have noted, the motives of states neighboring the conflict are often affected by this closeness, and are not studied in this paper. H3a is, then, unlikely to be supported. It will nonetheless be tested, and if left unsupported, easily disproven.

\[ H3b: \text{If a G14 state seeks to protect its region from being captured or dominated by a global hegemon or great power, it will respond to extra-regional VINC}s to balance against, and signal to, the great power.} \]

This hypothesis, like H3a, has limited merit. The ability of global hegemons to capture new regions is quite limited, and states can balance against great powers in ways that do not require them to waste resources and time on an extra-regional conflict.

G14 states who neither have regional goals nor want to unseat the balance of power created by a global hegemon in their reason should issue no response. G14 states who seek either or both end will have the strongest responses. Response strength depends on specific aspects of the VINC and on the risk a G14 power assumes in pushing back against a great power.

To test hypotheses H3a and 3b, a qualitative analysis of the region of each G14 power and of the VINC is necessary. Such an analysis must determine if the region is under the control of a great power, if the region is contested, or if great powers have no interest in it. It should also ascertain the role of the G14 power within its region. Regional alliances, culture, news media,
and official statements (from all countries in the region) must be closely examined. Conclusions will be compared with strength of response.

Unlike the first two variables, response may not be only as strong as necessary. A G14 power who wants to dissuade a great power from attempting to capture its region might display a stronger response than would seem a necessary contribution to a VINC as a signal to the great power. Equally, a G14 power who wants to assert its dominance over its own region may issue a strong response to flex its capability muscles.

**Independent Variable #4: Domestic Factors.** A fourth body of literature underscores the role of domestic factors as motivators of the G14’s foreign policy behavior. It asserts middle power action is driven by regime type and regime strength. Democratic states will be more responsible to domestic pressures than non-democratic middle powers; regimes that are insulated from public opinion – either via a personalist dictatorship or an autonomous foreign policy body/institution – are likely to be less influenced by domestic pressures. By reframing this literature to fit the case of VINCs, two hypotheses can be elucidated:

**H4a:** If a G14 power is democratic, its response to a VINC will align with the desires of its domestic audience in relation to the specific conflict and to involvement in external conflict generally. The extent to which G14 response reflects its domestic audience depends on the existence of an insulated, autonomous foreign policy body. A state with no independent body will be forced to honor the wishes of its public; a state with insulated control over its foreign policy will act according to the opinions of the leader and the body itself.

**H4b:** If a G14 power is non-democratic, its response to a VINC will not be motivated by the desires of its public. Rather, action will be defined by the pressures of a strong bureaucratic elite or, in the absence of such a body, by the opinions of a personalist leader.
Apart from Turkey and Saudi Arabia, the Economist’s democracy index rates all G14 states as democracies.⁶⁷ Turkey is rated as a “hybrid regime:” it has an elected president, but elections are sometimes carried out undemocratically, and the parliament structure does not directly represent the Turkish population. Turkey will be considered a democracy with a strongly autonomous foreign policy body because, while its government operates largely independently from domestic opinion and Turkish citizens have little democratic power, it still has a distinctly democratic structure and it would be incorrect to categorize it as non-democratic.⁶⁸

As such, thirteen states will be subjected to testing of the strength of their foreign policy body. This will be evaluated through a historical comparison of the public’s desires and a state’s foreign policy behavior. In states with no independent foreign policymaking institution, the pressures of domestic audiences in relation to specific VINCs (and external conflict generally) will be compared with G14 responses. We expect a weaker response from states whose publics dissuade participation in the conflict.

Where autonomous foreign policy bodies do exist, responses should align with the aims of this body. Scholarly analysis of state foreign policy behavior and state department/foreign ministry documents and websites will provide helpful data. If, for example, a state with a strong foreign policy body has stated a commitment to non-intervention, we would expect a weak response.

Saudi Arabia’s regime will be closely examined to determine accordance between the opinions and aims of its regime and its response to VINCs. The lack of variation in regime type of the G14 is a significant limitation of this proxy choice; it does not allow comparison between two or more non-democratic states. Support for $H4b$ must be considered cautiously.

⁶⁸ “Democracy Index 2019.”
Independent Variable #5: Status. Literature on status posits state actions are driven by their status and their future expectation of status. Rising states who seek more power will act to further this interest; states who envision themselves as protectors of the international order and its current hierarchy will act to stabilize it. In the case of VINCs, this variable can be elucidated as:

**H5a:** If a G14 state sees its status as rising and/or wants to increase it, its response to a VINC will be an attempt to accrue authority, power, prestige, and honor.

Note this hypothesis places no necessary constrictions on the type of response issued. If many other middle powers are involved in a VINC, a rising G14 state might see staying out of a conflict as an opportunity to maintain its capabilities as other states bleed theirs. On the other hand, it may make significant attempts to support side A to flex its capabilities and increase its prestige amongst other international actors. The expected action is highly dependent on the VINC itself:

**H5b:** If a G14 state wants to maintain its status, it will respond to a VINC only to ensure the stability of its ranking in the existing order.

**H5c:** If a G14 state sees maintenance of the existing, liberal international order as part of its status and role, it will respond to a VINC to maintain the status quo.

Generally, states who want to maintain the status quo will respond in support of side A. There are a few exception, for example in cases where side A is culpable of egregious and publicized human rights violations.

Note that there is overlap between the expected behavior of states who want to maintain their status (satisfied states) and states who see themselves as responsible for the stability of the existing order. The response spectrum is key here: we expect a much stronger response from
middle powers who see the stability of the order as part of their status than from states who merely seek to ensure the stability of their own ranking. Unless a satisfied state’s status is in question, which is unlikely to be the case in an external, non-neighboring VINC, it will not issue a strong response. It may contribute a statement condemning violence, but we do not expect its response to go beyond what is necessary for its own status stability. A state who oversees the stability of the international order, however, will issue a stronger response, especially when other external states respond to/become involved in a VINC. We expect these states to act as strongly as necessary to end the conflict and to return the international order to its pre-conflict stability.

Testing for support of this independent variable is complex. A state’s status and future expectations of status are not easily identifiable. I thus rely on existing literature, which has already characterized most G14 powers as either rising or status quo states, and statements from states themselves about how they see their role. States will be identified as satisfied or dissatisfied with their current status and as status quo or ‘revisionist’ states that want to change the existing liberal order hierarchy and structure. Support for IV #5 will depend on a comparison of each state’s G14 response with its current status to determine correspondence. Examination of IV #5 will also be, as in analysis of the other variables, partly relational. For example, states with rising expectations of their future status will issue stronger responses than states who are satisfied with their rank.

Methods

To carry out the research laid out above, I examine qualitative case studies using process tracing. Qualitative analysis is preferable to a quantitative study because it allows me to break down one case into its individual parts. This method entails an analysis of the way each variable is at play. Relying on the characteristics parsed out in the previous section, I will determine
whether the relationship between each IV and the DV is the same as – in the same direction as, and with the right factors as – the relationship outlined in each hypothesis. If an IV leads to the DV as outlined above, the hypothesis will be supported.

Qualitative analysis of one case study, as is performed here, is appropriate for an initial probe of my theoretical framework. It allows me to compare all fourteen states with more nuance than a quantitative approach offers. I am limited to one case study due to space constraints. Each case study involves methodological analysis of a conflict, all fourteen states, their alliances, statuses, economic and regional interests, and regime-type. I favor one comprehensive study over several shorter, less detailed analyses. As a result, however, my conclusions are loosely drawn. The intent of this paper is to provide a theory and broad results. The conclusions reached should be considered cautiously and retested in future research.

Universe of Cases

My case-study analysis begins with the universe of all testable VINCs. Because the G20 was not established until 1999, for clarity I include only VINCs that began in 2000 or later. Utilizing Uppsala University’s Conflict Data Program, whose UCDP/PRIO dataset includes all conflicts with more than 25 battle-related deaths in a year (“violent”), I narrowed the set of conflicts between 2000-2020 to include only those between a state actor and an intrastate belligerent (“intrastate nationalist”). The remaining decisions were practical ones. First, I wanted to choose a conflict that was well-reported to ensure collectability of information. Second, I removed conflicts that neighbored any G14 states to minimize the influence of direct security interests. Third, I considered only terminated conflicts. States can (and do) change their response: an analysis performed based only on what has happened so far in a conflict is not as strong as historical research. Fourth, I selected a case based on conflict duration. This was a
practical consideration for this paper’s scope: a one year war is much easier to analyze than one that spans an entire decade and is laden with changing state responses.

*The First Libyan Civil War*

These considerations led me to the First Libyan Civil War. The first Libyan civil war, also referred to as the 2011 Libyan Civil War, the Libyan Crisis, the 2011 anti-Gaddafi uprising, and the 2011 Libyan revolt, began in February of 2011.\(^{169}\) Military operations and conflict ended on October 27, 2011, and the transitional government that was established handed power back to the official national congress in August 2012.\(^{170}\) Casualty estimates range from 10,000 – 50,000.\(^{171}\) No G14 state directly neighbors Libya, and only Saudi Arabia falls within the same UN-defined region as Libya, though Turkey and Italy are also considered in my discussion of regional states to avoid arbitrary boundaries.\(^{172}\) The conflict was short, well-reported, and ideally located.

The following chapter presents a qualitative case study analysis of the First Libyan Civil War. It gives further background information, reframes the dependent and independent variables to fit the specific case, and examines the relationship between motivation and behavior and thus support for individual hypotheses.

---


Case Study: The First Libyan Civil War (2011)

Background

In February 2011, protests began in Libya as part of the larger Arab Spring movement which had started months earlier in Tunisia. The Arab Spring uprisings were popular attempts to take back states in the Arab world from their increasingly authoritarian leaders. Protests broke out in Benghazi, where Libyan citizens called for revolution against the regime of Muammar Gaddafi (sometimes Qaddafi or Gadhafi), who had been the country’s leader since 1969. They accused Gaddafi of humanitarian abuses and mistreatment of political prisoners. Resentment reached a head when Gaddafi’s government arrested the lawyer seeking justice for a 1996 prison massacre: when prisoners complained about brutal conditions and treatment, 1,200 of them were rounded up and executed. The baseless arrest of Fethi Tarbel and the protests happening in neighboring countries led Libyans to urge revolution.173

Information about the “17 February Revolution” was disseminated on Twitter and Facebook, with users insisting: “#Gaddafi is going DOWN!” Gaddafi blocked social and non-governmental network media and attempted to quell protests by authorizing police and military to use force against civilians. The rebelling protestors began to organize, forming the National Transitional Council led by Mustafa Abdul Jalil. The NTC was made up mostly by bureaucratic and previous government officials exiled by Gaddafi. Members of Gaddafi’s government, the Libyan military, and the foreign service began to defect, and by February 25th, Gaddafi had lost control. The UN froze Gaddafi’s assets and established a no-fly zone over Libya to prevent the government from carrying out strikes against its citizens. Fighting continued until the National Transitional Council assumed power.

---

Council took the capital city of Tripoli in August and, backed by NATO, killed Gaddafi in October. After it agreed to hold democratic elections, the NTC was recognized by the UN as the official transitional government of Libya.\footnote{Cole and McQuinn, \textit{The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath}; “Libya in Crisis – as It Happened.”}

The first Libyan civil war was not, however, as simple as the above summary makes it sound. It was rife with foreign intervention, sanctions, and supranational treaties. It was also deadly: estimates record between 10,000 and 50,000 people killed from February to November 2011, depending on who is counted. As its name perhaps suggests, remaining tensions between ethnic and national rivalries resurfaced in 2014. The Second Libyan Civil War rages on.\footnote{Cole and McQuinn, \textit{The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath}, 63–67; Micheline R. Ishay, \textit{The Levant Express: The Arab Uprisings, Human Rights, and the Future of the Middle East} (Yale University Press, 2019), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvmd854g; Robert Gregory, “Spring in Libya,” in \textit{Clean Bombs and Dirty Wars}, Air Power in Kosovo and Libya (University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 149–74, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1d988hr.13; Christopher S. Chivvis, \textit{Toppling Qaddafi: Libya and the Limits of Liberal Intervention} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139649704; Vandewalle, “Reconciliation, Civil War, and Fin de Régime, 2003–2011”; Milne, “If the Libyan War Was about Saving Lives, It Was a Catastrophic Failure.”}

\textit{The Dependent Variable: G14 Response}

How did the G14 middle powers respond to the First Libyan Civil War? Before support for any independent variable can be tested, I provide a summary of each middle power’s response. The following summaries provide objective overviews of G14 behavior and characterize their response (strong, weak) according to a reframed response spectrum (Figure 2).

An important consideration for middle power response in Libya is the “responsibility to protect” (R2P) agreement that was reached at the September 2005 UN World Summit. The agreement requires states to intervene in other states to protect against atrocious human rights violations.\footnote{United Nations Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, “Responsibility to Protect,” \textit{United Nations} (blog), accessed April 24, 2020, https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.shtml.} R2P requires states to protect all world citizens as they would protect themselves.
Some argue R2P permits imperialist intervention, especially for Western powers. The first Libyan civil war was the first time R2P would be used to pass a Security Council resolution allowing third party states to intervene in an intrastate conflict. The implications of R2P are examined in addition to a discussion of Security Council resolutions 1970 and 1973.

The analysis below elucidates eight possible state responses to the first Libyan civil war. Middle powers responded with one, or a combination, of the following: (1) issue of a statement condemning Gaddafi; (2) approval of United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1970; (3) sending humanitarian aid; (4) approval of UNSCR 1973; (5) issuing an explicit approval or disapproval of military intervention; (6) aiding the Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC), (7) recognizing the NTC as the formal interim Libyan government; (8) recognizing the NTC before or during the UN General Assembly (GA) vote to recognize the NTC; (9) contributing to military intervention. It is important to note that no middle power did not respond, so a lack of response is not considered. Similarly, no middle power issued only an unofficial comment, so the weakest response is an official statement. The response spectrum operationalized in the previous chapter (Figure 1) can be amended to fit this specific case:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condemnation of Gaddafi</th>
<th>Approve UNSCR 1970</th>
<th>Humanitarian Aid</th>
<th>Approve UNSCR 1973</th>
<th>Statement on intervention</th>
<th>Aid NTC</th>
<th>Recognize NTC</th>
<th>Early rec of NTC</th>
<th>Military Aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weak Response

**Figure 2. Response Spectrum for Libyan Civil War**

Strength/weakness of response is judged in two ways. First, a state’s response is weaker than that of another if its action falls to the left of the action of the other state on the spectrum.

---


178 This aid could take the form of monetary help or regime/government-building efforts, advice, and help.
Second, however, we must consider that responses to the Libyan crisis rarely took one form, and were often incremental. States who offered humanitarian aid usually also condemned Gaddafi and approved Security Council resolution 1970 (though this was not always the case). As such, the strongest possible response here would not only be a contribution to the NATO military intervention, but military contribution and all the other responses. I will summarize each middle power’s response below by characterizing their action according to the above criteria.

**Argentina.** The Argentine government released an official press statement on February 22, 2011 that read: “The Argentinian government expresses its profound worry about the grave situation in Libya. We lament the loss of life and the violent acts that have occurred during confrontations. Argentina vows for a quick, peaceful solution within a democratic and constructive dialogue that respects human rights and the sovereignty of the Libyan people.”

Argentina complied with UNSC resolution 1970’s requirements for an arms embargo and asset freeze on Gaddafi. In March, then-president Cristina Kirchner told reporters: “When you consider that these so-called civilized countries are trying to solve problems by dropping bombs, it makes me proud to be South American.”

There is no evidence that Argentina provided humanitarian aid to the NTC or the Libyan crisis in general. Argentina also did not supply forces or military aid to the NATO and US-led military intervention into Libya in support of UNSCR 1973. The Argentinian government did, however, recognize the National Transitional Council

---


on August 23rd via a statement from their Libyan embassy and again when they voted in favor of NTC recognition at the UN General Assembly vote on September 16, 2011. They did not aid the NTC in state-building efforts.  

In sum, Argentina did condemn Gaddafi, and did comply with UNSC resolution 1970. It also offered explicit, early recognition of the NTC. Argentina spoke out against resolution 1973 and refused to send aid or contribute to a military intervention. They also did not supply humanitarian aid.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement condemning Gaddafi</th>
<th>Approve 1970</th>
<th>Humanitarian aid</th>
<th>Approve 1973</th>
<th>Statement on military intervention</th>
<th>Aid for NTC</th>
<th>Recog. NTC</th>
<th>Approve NTC pre or during GA</th>
<th>Military aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Summary of Argentinian Response

Australia. On March 18, the foreign minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, told reporters he hoped the UN Security Council would enact a no-fly zone over Libya (resolution 1973), lamenting Gaddafi’s treatment of citizens. The statement came after Australia agreed to economic sanctions and a freeze of all Gaddafi’s assets, carrying out resolution 1970. Prime Minister Julia Gillard urged military intervention in the North African state. She and Rudd, however, said that despite supporting the no-fly zone, Australia itself would not contribute to military intervention.  

On April 27th, Rudd reaffirmed his earlier statement saying Australia

---


would provide humanitarian – instead of military – help. He told reporters that Australia was the third-biggest supplier of relief funds, and said Australia funded a relief ship which would send aid and evacuate refugees from Libya. Rudd expressed official support for the National Transitional Council on June 9, two months before the UN General Assembly vote. Australia was also a part of the Libya Contact Group (later known as the Friends of Libya group) that supported and funded the NTC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement condemning Gaddafi</th>
<th>Approve 1970</th>
<th>Humanitarian aid</th>
<th>Approve 1973</th>
<th>Statement on military intervention</th>
<th>Aid for NTC</th>
<th>Recog. NTC</th>
<th>Approve NTC pre or during GA</th>
<th>Military aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3. Summary of Australian Response**

**Brazil.** Brazil, which held a non-permanent Security Council seat in 2011, was one of five Security Council members to abstain from voting on UNSCR 1973, which established a no-fly zone over Libya. It voted in favor of UNSCR 1970, but said resolution 1973 went too far. It urged humanitarian aid, but told the Security Council that military intervention would not work. Brazil also wanted the Security Council to take into account the desires of the League of Arab States (LAS), who asked for economic and humanitarian aid, but did not explicitly request military intervention into Libya. At a Security Council meeting on May 4, 2011, the Brazilian

---

ambassador asserted Brazil’s position on Libya, citing Gaddafi’s actions as unacceptable: “The referral of the Libyan case to the ICC, mandated by resolution 1970 (2011), underscores the concerns of the international community at the aggression committed against the civilian population in Libya.” Six days later, the ambassador stressed force should only be used to protect civilians when absolutely necessary; she underscored the importance of caution in the use of force in foreign interventions. While Brazil did not provide direct funding to the NTC, it was an observer of the Friends of Libya contact group and voted to approve its UN seat at the General Assembly vote.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement condemning Gaddafi</th>
<th>Approve 1970</th>
<th>Humanitarian aid</th>
<th>Approve 1973</th>
<th>Statement on military intervention</th>
<th>Aid for NTC</th>
<th>Recog. NTC</th>
<th>Approve NTC pre or during GA</th>
<th>Military aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Summary of Brazilian Response

Canada. Canada enthusiastically supported military intervention into Libya. It urged support for UNSC resolutions 1970 and 1973, and was one of eighteen countries who agreed to commit armed forces to the Libya intervention. Canada was so heavily involved that its contribution to the NATO mission received its own name: Operation Mobile (Canada also contributed to the US-led mission, Operation Odyssey Dawn). According to the Canadian National Defense, Canada contributed: “655 members of the Canadian Armed Forced, seven CF-18 Hornet jet fighters, two CF-150 Polaris refuellers, three Hercules and two CP-140 Aurora

---

maritime patrol aircraft from the Royal Canadian Air Force.\textsuperscript{194} Canada provided humanitarian aid in addition to its military contributions.\textsuperscript{195} Canada was part of the Friends of Libya Contact Group and thus supported the NTC and aided them directly. They recognized the NTC before and at the UN GA vote.\textsuperscript{196}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5. Summary of Canadian Response**

Germany. Germany, like Brazil, was a non-permanent member of the Security Council at the time. It abstained from approving UNSC resolution 1973, but supported UNSCR 1970. The foreign minister, Guido Westerwelle, said that a no-fly zone was dangerous, and might risk a full-fledged war in Africa. Westerwelle and the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, urged caution.\textsuperscript{197} Merkel suggested strengthened sanctions, arguing for the exhaustion of diplomatic measures before military intervention.\textsuperscript{198} Germany provided over nine million euros in humanitarian aid and offered to aid the NATO military intervention with surveillance.\textsuperscript{199} As a member of the Friends of Libya group, Merkel agreed to help the National Transitional Council


set up institutions like a democratic police force after the NTC was recognized by Germany as the official interim Libyan government.200

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement condemning Gaddafi</th>
<th>Approve 1970</th>
<th>Humanitarian aid</th>
<th>Approve 1973</th>
<th>Statement on military intervention</th>
<th>Aid for NTC</th>
<th>Recog. NTC</th>
<th>Approve NTC pre or during GA</th>
<th>Military aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Summary of German Response

India. Similarly to Brazil, India condemned Gaddafi and the atrocities committed by his government, voted in favor of resolution 1970, and abstained from UNSCR 1973.201 The state deemed military intervention in Libya unnecessary, imperialistic, and inconsistent with other similar conflicts where Western powers opted not to intervene.202 India, like Brazil, cited a desire to obey the wishes of the Arab League. The Ministry of External Affairs stated: “India views with grave concern the continuing violence, strife and deteriorating humanitarian situation in Libya. It regrets the air strikes that are taking place. The measures adopted should mitigate and not exacerbate an already difficult situation for the people of the country.”203 India offered humanitarian (about $2 million total), but not military aid.204 India offered the NTC assistance rebuilding the Libyan government and, like most other states, issued support for the NTC at the UN GA vote.205

Indonesia. When fighting broke out in Libya, Indonesia urged the UN “to take action and reduce the intensity of the problem in Libya.” They complied with resolution 1970, but did not express explicit approval of resolution 1973. In April 2011, alongside Turkey, Indonesia called for a ceasefire. It pushed the UN to monitor a truce agreement and requested that violence stop on all sides. Indonesia did not offer humanitarian aid for the crisis, and did not sit on or observe the Friends of Libya group. Indonesia expressed some support for the NTC before the UN vote, but abstained from the vote itself. Indonesia didn’t issue official support until late 2011.

Italy. Unlike most other states, Italy did not issue an immediate condemnation of Gaddafi. When news of unrest broke, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said he had not

---

Table 7. Summary of Indian Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement condemning Gaddafi</th>
<th>Approve 1970</th>
<th>Humanitarian aid</th>
<th>Approve 1973</th>
<th>Statement on military intervention</th>
<th>Aid for NTC</th>
<th>Recog. NTC</th>
<th>Approve NTC pre or during GA</th>
<th>Military aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Summary of Indonesian Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement condemning Gaddafi</th>
<th>Approve 1970</th>
<th>Humanitarian aid</th>
<th>Approve 1973</th>
<th>Statement on military intervention</th>
<th>Aid for NTC</th>
<th>Recog. NTC</th>
<th>Approve NTC pre or during GA</th>
<th>Military aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

207 “Turkey, Indonesia Call for Ceasefire in Libya,” Jakarta Globe, April 5, 2011.
been in contact with Gaddafi because he did not want to “disturb” him; after global uproar, however, Berlusconi quickly changed his tune.\textsuperscript{210} One day after UNSCR 1970 passed, Italy suspended its special partnership with Gaddafi and the Libyan government.\textsuperscript{211} Berlusconi contributed naval and air support to Operation Odyssey Dawn, but admitted he had agreed to the NATO intervention despite doubts about its efficacy.\textsuperscript{212} Italy contributed four million euros in humanitarian support during the crisis, and was also a member of the Friends of Libya group, thus supporting and recognizing the NTC prior to the UN vote.\textsuperscript{213}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement condemning Gaddafi</th>
<th>Approve 1970</th>
<th>Humanitarian aid</th>
<th>Approve 1973</th>
<th>Statement on military intervention</th>
<th>Aid for NTC</th>
<th>Recog. NTC</th>
<th>Approve NTC pre or during GA</th>
<th>Military aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>✓ /-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ /-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Summary of Italian Response

Japan. The Japanese government spoke out against violence perpetrated by Gaddafi in Libya. The Japanese Minister for foreign affairs issued a three-part statement. First, he condemned Gaddafi and agreed to strengthen sanctions against his regime. Second, he stated: “the Government of Japan affirms that Member States of the United Nations take measures according to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in Libya.” Third, he pushed for democratic efforts: “At the same time, the Government of Japan believes that all diplomatic efforts should be exerted for immediate ceasefire in Libya and hopes that the efforts by Mr. Abdel-Elah Al-Khatib,

\textsuperscript{211} Wester, “The Libyan Uprising and the International Response, February 26–March 17, 2011,,” 143.  
\textsuperscript{213} “Humanitarian Response to the Libyan Crisis - (February – December 2011 Report) | IOM Online Bookstore”; “Humanitarian Aid in Libya”; “World Powers Agree to Set up Contact Group to Map out Libya’s Future”; “UPDATE.”
Special Envoy of Secretary General of the United Nations and the African Union will bear fruits.

In addition, the Government of Japan attaches importance to the role of the Arab League for peace and stability in the region.”214 Japan did not send military forces, but did contribute $1 million in humanitarian aid.215 Japan was a member of the Friends of Libya group and an early supporter of the NTC.216

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement condemning Gaddafi</th>
<th>Approve 1970</th>
<th>Humanitarian aid</th>
<th>Approve 1973</th>
<th>Statement on military intervention</th>
<th>Aid for NTC</th>
<th>Recog. NTC</th>
<th>Approve NTC pre or during GA</th>
<th>Military aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗ /-</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. Summary of Japanese Response

Mexico. Mexico offered full public support of UNSC resolutions 1970 and 1973. The Mexican president, Felipe Calderón, joined Barack Obama at a press conference to condemn Gaddafi’s violence and treatment of Libyan citizens.217 Calderón told the media he supported the UN-sanctioned solution to the Libyan crisis, as laid out by Obama, as long as it fit within the bounds of international law.218 Mexico did not offer humanitarian or military aid.219 Mexico was not a member of the Friends of Libya group and did not offer the NTC additional support, but did vote in favor of its recognition at the September UN General Assembly vote.220

---


215 International Organization for Migration, “Humanitarian Emergency Response to the Libyan Crisis.”

216 “World Powers Agree to Set up Contact Group to Map out Libya’s Future.”


219 International Organization for Migration, “Humanitarian Emergency Response to the Libyan Crisis.”

Table 11. Summary of Mexican Response

Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia strongly supported UNSCRs 1970 and 1973. Although some members of the League of Arab States did not approve of a no-fly zone, it is thought that Saudi Arabia’s strong stance in favor of resolution 1973 pushed the LAS to accept it. It was not one of the eighteen countries to provide military support to US-led efforts, but there is evidence that Saudi Arabia provided military and financial support to anti-Gaddafi rebels throughout 2011. Saudi Arabia did not offer humanitarian aid. The state abstained from the UN vote to recognize the NTC, but later acknowledged their control of Libya and re-instituted ambassadorships in both countries.

Table 12. Summary of Saudi Arabian Response

South Africa. South Africa spoke out against Gaddafi as soon as protests began in Libya. It issued its own statements, as well as joint statements on behalf of the African Union and the United Nations Security Council, of which it was a non-permanent member at the time. South

---

221 Glanville, “Intervention in Libya.”
223 International Organization for Migration, “Humanitarian Emergency Response to the Libyan Crisis.”
Africa supported, and voted in favor of, both resolutions 1970 and 1973. The African Union established a specific council to confront the Libyan crisis. The AU did not approve of military intervention in Libya, and sought an “African solution to an African problem.”

As chairman of this council, South Africa was forced to decide between its UN and AU positions. It claimed its vote in favor of resolution 1973 was a response to the R2P doctrine, and it saw its vote as a protective action of Libya and the entire LAS. Later, South Africa condemned military intervention and occupation of Libya. It did not contribute military or humanitarian aid. South Africa acknowledged the NTC as the official interim Libyan government and voted to approve an NTC seat in the AU on September 20, 2011, the same day the UN held the NTC recognition vote.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓/-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓/✓</td>
<td>✓/✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13. Summary of South African Response

The Republic of Korea. South Korea issued an extremely limited response to the Libyan crisis. It evacuated its own nationals and allotted $300,000 to humanitarian aid, which pales in comparison to Australia’s nearly $7 million, Canada’s $12+ million, and Germany’s $9

---

millions. At a UN human rights meeting on March 1, South Korea condemned Gaddafi’s human rights violations and said it would “faithfully carry out” UNSC resolution 1970. The country also expressed support for resolution 1973, but did not contribute any military forces. South Korea expressed early support for the NTC on August 24, 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Korea</th>
<th>Statement condemning Gaddafi</th>
<th>Approve 1970</th>
<th>Humanitarian aid</th>
<th>Approve 1973</th>
<th>Statement on military intervention</th>
<th>Aid for NTC</th>
<th>Recog. NTC</th>
<th>Approve NTC pre or during GA</th>
<th>Military aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 14. Summary of South Korean Response

**Turkey.** Turkey condemned Gaddafi’s actions in Libya and evacuated its nationals. Initially, Turkey strongly opposed the no-fly zone imposed by resolution 1973 in hopes that Libya would confront the crisis internally. The prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, urged Gaddafi to allow his citizens to pick a new, democratic ruler. Turkey supported resolution 1970 and froze Libyan assets, but it frowned upon Western military intervention, telling the UN and NATO such action had only ever deepened past problems. The Turkish Foreign Minister,

---


Ahmet Davutoglu, underscored the power of peaceful change. Nonetheless, Turkey caved to NATO’s demands. Despite holding out – it was the last of twenty-eight NATO nations to oppose intervention – Turkey, under significant pressure, eventually changed its mind. Erdogan offered limited military support, offering the NATO mission several naval vessels. After the intervention had begun, Turkey was an early proponent of a ceasefire, claiming foreign militaries were only causing more carnage. Turkey was part of the Friends of Libya group, and offered $300 million to the NTC to aid their regime-building efforts. Turkey did not offer explicit humanitarian aid (it did not contribute money for human rights purposes), but it did fund the rebels and offer fuel and food to Libyans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement condemning Gaddafi</th>
<th>Approve 1970</th>
<th>Humanitarian aid</th>
<th>Approve 1973</th>
<th>Statement on military intervention</th>
<th>Aid for NTC</th>
<th>Recog. NTC</th>
<th>Approve NTC pre or during GA</th>
<th>Military aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓/-</td>
<td>✓/-</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓/</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15. Summary of Turkish Response

Summary: Dependent Variable. The above information is summarized in Table 16. Note every middle power issued an official condemnation of the Gaddafi regime. Although Italy was

---

235 “Member Countries,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization (blog), March 24, 2020, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm; Watt, “Libya.” Note: There are now thirty members of NATO, but in 2011 there were only twenty-eight.
237 “Turkey, Indonesia Call for Ceasefire in Libya.”
initially hesitant and urged Gaddafi to surrender himself to the protests, Berlusconi changed his
mind several days later. All G14 middle powers also formally recognized the National
Transitional Council as the official interim Libyan government. Only three countries contributed
to the US-led NATO military intervention, and only two states did not offer a comment about the
operation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statement condemning Gaddafi</th>
<th>Approve UNSCR 1970</th>
<th>Approve Humanitarian aid</th>
<th>Approve UNSCR 1973</th>
<th>Statement on military intervention</th>
<th>Aid for NTC</th>
<th>Recognize NTC</th>
<th>Recognize NTC pre or during GA</th>
<th>Military aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ (limited)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16. Summary of State Responses

The information in Table 16 is reorganized below to rank state response from strong
(top) to weak (bottom). It is important to note that rankings here don’t give as full a picture as the
nuanced descriptions above. For example, Germany did not approve UNSCR 1973, but its
response is stronger than Japan’s because it contributed much more aid and because even though
it didn’t approve of resolution 1973, it did offer a strong rebuke of it (much stronger than Japan’s
lukewarm approval of the resolution). Table 17 is, thus, helpful for quick comparisons, but
should not overshadow in-depth analysis.

Table 17 shows the states who intervened militarily did have the strongest overall
responses because they also responded in each of the other eight ways. It also shows that, with
the exception of Indonesia, most states issued relatively strong responses. No state issued a
single-action response, and most responses were made up of four or more types of action. The
following section will use Table 17 to discuss support for each of the independent variables considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>(continue)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

IV #1: Existing Commitments. I previously posited middle powers would respond to VINCts in accordance with their existing commitments. If a commitment or alliance required their participation or otherwise specified how they should react, then the middle power’s response would be guided by these requirements. The G14 middle powers have myriad alliance commitments, several of which are relevant in the case of the Libyan Civil War.

First, we must consider their membership in the United Nations. United Nations membership requires states to act in accordance with international law, treaties, General
Assembly votes, and the resolutions passed by the Security Council. For Libya, resolutions 1970 and 1973 are of note. Resolution 1970 is multi-faceted. It called on Libya to stop human rights violations and violence, referred Gaddafi to the International Criminal Court, and established a sanctions committee. Importantly for UN member states it: (1) instituted an arms embargo on the transfer or sale of any weapons to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (Gaddafi government); (2) asked states to evacuate their foreign nationals from Libya; (3) required a travel ban on selected individuals (e.g. Gaddafi) from entering member countries; (4) required a freeze on all assets controlled by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; and (5) called on states to provide humanitarian support where possible. In short, it required member states to place sanctions and an arms embargo on Libya. All the G14 middle powers abided by the requirements of resolution 1970.

Resolution 1973 reinforced the provisions set out in resolution 1970 with two major changes. First, it instituted a no-fly zone: “a ban on all flights in the airspace of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in order to help protect civilians.” None of the G14 powers objected to a no-fly zone, and many (Australia, Saudi Arabia, Canada) urged it. Second, resolution 1973 “[authorized] Member States that have notified the Secretary-General, acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, and acting in cooperation with the Secretary-General, to take all necessary measures, notwithstanding paragraph 9 of resolution 1970 (2011), to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.” By allowing states to take all necessary measures, the UN permitted military intervention in Libya.

---

240 United Nations, “What We Do.”
Italy, Turkey, Japan, and South Africa had some qualms about this clause, and Germany, Brazil, India, and Indonesia outright rejected it.

This rejection, however, does not upend support for IV #1. Importantly, resolution 1973 authorized, but did not require, military intervention. Mexico, Japan, and South Korea each offered statements which expressed their support for resolution 1973 without committing themselves to any certain action. Japan, for example, affirmed its commitment to carry out the requirements of UNSCR 1973, but cited its deliberate choice not to intervene or contribute its forces. Italy stated a belief that military intervention was a dangerous tactic, but nonetheless contributed to military efforts. A theme emerges, UN member states recognize their commitment to UN resolutions. Each is permitted their own opinion of the agreements, but when the resolutions require action, member states act. When they do not, member states can respond based on their own strategic opinion. Like UNSCR 1970, R2P required states to intervene to stop human rights violations, but it did not specify a response type. Thus, it makes sense that many middle powers issued statements/humanitarian aid, but usually did not intervene; they were able to satisfy the requirements of R2P without strong action.

Second, four of the middle powers – Canada, Italy, Germany, and Turkey – are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO began Operation Unified Protector (OUP) in March 2011. OUP required member states to assist it in its three-pronged goal: enforce the arms embargo; enforce the no fly-zone; carry out military strikes of government forces who committed violence against civilians. Canada, Italy, and Turkey, three of the eighteen states worldwide to contribute forces, acted in accordance with their NATO membership. Turkey provides an explicit example of support for IV #1. Erdogan did not want to intervene militarily in

---

243 Wester, Intervention in Libya.
Libya: he feared intervention was a losing strategy and faced complaints from his Islamic public about Western military imperialism. Nonetheless, Turkey caved to NATO’s demands, a move that was widely considered to be predestined. One Turkish political commentator said: “Joining the game was inevitable. It could not have stood against its NATO allies.”

Germany may appear to have shirked its responsibilities – it did, after all, refuse military intervention. I argue, however, that Germany’s NATO membership still factored into its behavior. Though it did not provide armed forces, Germany did provide other militaries with surveillance. Germany disagreed with military intervention on strategic grounds, calling it dangerous, but nonetheless acted in at least partial support of this intervention.

The European Union, African Union, and the League of Arab States must also be considered. The European Union failed to reach a unified stance on Libya beyond humanitarian efforts, so EU commitments played little role in the behavior of Germany and Italy.

The African Union did not approve of UNSCR 1973 or Western military intervention in Libya. South Africa, as a member of the AU, the UN, and a non-permanent Security Council member, was torn between alliances. Ultimately, as suggested by John Ikenberry, its actions were driven by the most formal, most behavior-prescribing commitment: the UN. The AU did not define precise action that needed to be taken, and its committee on Libya was far more informal than the passing of a Security Council resolution. South Africa’s indecisive behavior – first in favor of resolution 1973, then against – fits with its conflicting commitments.

---

245 Agence France-Presse, “Turkey Reluctantly Joins NATO Operations against Libya.”
246 Borger, “Libya No-Fly Resolution Reveals Global Split in UN.”
248 Africa and Pretorius, “South Africa, the African Union and the Responsibility to Protect.”
There is some disagreement about how much military action was agreed upon by the LAS, but Saudi Arabia generally acted in accordance with the no-fly zone and allowed the Western intervention agreed upon at the LAS’ emergency meeting in Cairo in March 2011.249

Some of the middle powers who disagreed with military intervention and with UNSCR 1973 had existing alliances with states who perpetrated it. Argentina and Brazil, for example, are both designated Major non-NATO Allies, and they are both members of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, or RIO treaty.250 Importantly, however, the requirements of these (and other commitments between middle powers and states who acted differently) are limited. Many of them are only economic, like BRICS, and those that involve security are mostly “mutual defense” treaties: they only effect partner behavior when another partner’s security and/or sovereignty is in question.251 In short, they did not place limits or requirements on state behavior in the 2011 Libyan Crisis.

Middle power commitments to the UN, NATO, the AU, and the LAS were relevant during Libyan Civil War. Unlike resolution 1970, UNSCR 1973 did not require further behavior, though multiple middle powers expressed their support for it despite rejecting military intervention. NATO obligations, which required support for military intervention, were more strictly binding. Even when Germany disagreed with intervention as a strategy, it provided support to the NATO mission. Generally, state behavior was consistent with support for IV #1. States with the strongest responses – Canada, Italy, and Turkey – had multiple alliance

commitments that urged (required, even) a strong response from them. Australia cited compliance with the Security Council resolutions as partial reasoning behind its strong response. Middle powers who were not NATO members, and thus were not obliged to contribute to OUP, did not contribute militarily. All the states, however, regardless of their location and interest in the Libyan crisis, fulfilled the requirements of UNSCR 1970.

The Libyan crisis supports my assertion that states will respond to alliance commitments only to the extent that is necessary. When response is required, middle powers act. When it is not, they avoid extensive involvement.

I cannot determine with certainty a causal link between alliance and action without both examining every commitment of the middle powers and without controlling for each other variable. While the real world of international relations makes a controlled environment highly unlikely, further quantitative research should advance a detailed analysis of every commitment. Evidence from the First Libyan Civil War does, however, determine a correlation and a cautious causal relationship between existing commitments and middle power response.

IV #2: Direct Resource and Economic Interests. The second hypothesis gleaned from existing literature suggested middle powers would act based on their direct economic interests in a VINC. In this case, Libya’s main exports are crude petroleum, petroleum gas, and refined petroleum. In 2018, Libya was the 13th largest exporter of crude oil (petroleum). In 2010, before the civil war broke out, Italy and France were the primary importers of Libyan exports (Italy received 42% of its exports, while France received 15%), and Libya imported mainly from Turkey, China, Italy, and South Korea.

\[252\] Thompson, “Rudd Prays No-Fly Zone Comes in Time.”
We might, thus, expect Turkey, Italy, and South Korea to act based on economic interest, and we would expect Italy to have the strongest response as the receiver of most Libyan oil. In 2010, Libyan oil made up 28% of Italy’s total oil imports.\textsuperscript{254} We would expect the other middle powers to issue a limited response. We can, thus, rule out support for IV #2 quite quickly: Italy had a weaker response than Canada. More noticeably, Canada, Australia, Germany, and Japan, some of the countries we would expect weak responses from, issued the strongest responses.

The literature review and framework of this paper question IV #2 as a middle power-specific behavior-driver, and this case study provides limited support for its general merit. States with no serious economic interests responded to the Libyan crisis strongly. Italy’s, Turkey’s, and South Korea’s actions varied, and they did not express economic worry or focus. It is possible that the role of direct economic interests cannot be accurately measured in this case. Once resolution 1970 was passed, states may have had very little access to the Libyan economy and its exports. Even if this is true, however, it emphasizes the role of IV #1 and discredits the ability of IV #2 to drive middle power behavior. As such, we can tentatively discard IV #2.

IV #3: Regional Interests. The previous chapter elucidated two possible ways regional interests could drive state behavior. First (H3a), I posited middle powers may seek to protect or increase their regional power. If this is true, we expect: (1) regional middle powers to issue a stronger response than non-regional states; and (2) regional middle power response to reject or oppose attempts by great powers to assert control or dominance over the region. In the Libyan case, Italy, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia can be considered regional actors. Italy and Turkey indeed issued strong responses. Although they were two of only three states to intervene militarily in Libya, both were initially hesitant about military action. Berlusconi and Erdogan urged Gaddafi

to take charge of the crisis internally, citing a desire for regional stability. This makes sense: the Libyan protests were part of the much larger Arab Spring movement that threatened instability and political upheaval. Italy and Turkey, because of their closeness to the crisis, sought first to placate in hopes the crisis could be quickly quelled. When it was not, both states took strong action.

Saudi Arabia, however, issued one of the weakest responses. It did not offer any aid and it did not make much public commentary about the crisis. This is confusing not only because Saudi Arabia is a regional power that should seek regional stability, but also because Saudi Arabia was especially threatened by the Arab Spring uprisings. These revolts threatened the authoritarian rule of most middle eastern states, so we expect Saudi Arabia to have taken especially strong action to quell violence and placate the rebels.

Support for $H3a$ is weakened by the failure of regional middle power response to reject or oppose attempts by great powers to assert control or dominance over the region. Italy, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia acted in accordance with the US, UK, and France. They each approved of resolution 1973, which granted – in no uncertain terms – the great powers the right to military intervention. Turkey and Italy participated in the military intervention led by the US, France, and the UK (all great powers). $H3a$ would be supported if the strong responses of these regional powers opposed great power action and rejected great power intervention in the crisis; in practice, in this case, Italy, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia explicitly permit great power dominance over the Libyan Civil War.

Second, Hypothesis 3b posits middle powers may respond to VINCs outside their region that great powers are involved in to balance against the great power. $H3b$ expects middle powers
to oppose great power action to dissuade the great power from assuming control of the middle power’s own region. Response here is a signaling strategy.

Some state responses provide support for $H3b$. Argentina and Brazil both rejected military intervention and specifically cited an aversion to Western interventions as imperialistic attempts by the United States to expand its dominance. This response could feasibly be a signal to the US that military intervention in South American conflicts is unwelcome.

But, other states who potentially seek to avoid great power dominance over their own region issued weak responses. Indonesia opposed military intervention in Libya, but unlike Brazil and Argentina, its response was decidedly weak. Support for $H3b$ must demonstrate an attempt by middle powers to communicate their aversion to the expansion of great power dominance. Indonesia issued no statements against military intervention and was generally uninvolved in the Libyan crisis.

India similarly opposed military intervention. Its focus, however, was on the inconsistency of Western intervention. The Indian government argued it made little sense for NATO states to intervene in some Arab uprisings but not in others. It also stressed that military intervention was often a futile tactic, citing ineffectual past conflicts.\textsuperscript{255} India and South Africa are both members of the BRICS. Welch Larson identifies the BRICS as a group united by almost nothing except their shared opposition to continued and attempted US dominance of their regions.\textsuperscript{256} South Africa also outwardly urged an “African solution to an African problem.” Nonetheless, it voted in favor of UNSCR 1973 and thus permitted intervention. These responses suggest motivation to push back against the great powers was not enough to drive action.

\textsuperscript{255} Beckford, “Libya Attacks Criticized by Arab League, China, Russia and India.”
\textsuperscript{256} Larson, “New Perspectives on Rising Powers and Global Governance.”
Canadian, Australian, Japanese, Mexican, and South Korean responses were generally aligned with those of the US, the UK, and France, and certainly did not oppose them. If response is driven only by a desire to signal opposition to the great powers, these responses undercut support for $H3b$.

Thus, neither Hypothesis 3a or 3b is supported in the case of the First Libyan Civil War. $H3b$ receives some tentative support, but it is refuted in the cases of Indonesia, India, and South Africa. It also cannot explain the strong responses of Canada, Australia, Japan, Mexico, and South Korea. While further analysis should quantitatively examine great power influence and dominance over each of the world’s regions, because of a lack of support for $H3b$ and its inability to motivate the behavior of all middle powers, we can tentatively reject the viability of IV #3.

IV #4: Domestic Factors. A fourth independent variable suggests middle power action is beholden to domestic pressures. The extent to which states are driven by their public’s ideas about foreign policy depends on regime type. Hypothesis 4a applies only to democratic states, and suggests democratic states are obliged to respond to domestic pressures to a greater extent than non-democratic regimes. It also posits that democratic states with an autonomous, established foreign policy body will act based on the desires of the regime and that body, while states without such an institution will act in response to the public’s desires. Thirteen of the G14 middle powers are democracies, with the exception of Saudi Arabia. It is somewhat difficult to prove support for this hypothesis. Several countries – Brazil, Argentina, Germany, India – took action that coincided with their domestic audiences’ protests against the NATO intervention.\(^\text{257}\) Turkey, too, experienced protests against intervention but, as earlier noted, Turkey’s foreign

policy decisions are almost entirely autonomous from its electorate, so the contrast between state behavior and domestic pressures seems also to uphold support for $H4a$. How can we determine a causal link between domestic pressure and state behavior?

Luckily, we don’t have to. The opposition between domestic pressure and state behavior in South Africa and Canada disproves $H4a$ as a unifying motivator of state behavior. The South African public was vocal about not wanting to allow Western military intervention, and it urged its government, which had the power to abstain from voting in favor of UNSCR 1973, to do so.\textsuperscript{258} Eusebius McKaiser notes that South Africa is not an authoritarian country with a foreign policy body that necessarily rejects domestic pressures outright.\textsuperscript{259} Why did South Africa vote in favor of resolution 1973 then, in the face of so much domestic pressure? $H4a$ cannot explain their action.

Canada also experienced waves of protests from vocal pacifists who urged the government to cut back on military funding of the NATO operation in Libya.\textsuperscript{260} The protests represented only a small portion of the Canadian public, however, in opposition to the widespread public desire of South Africans not to intervene. Nonetheless, Canada is ranked the eighth-most democratic nation in the world by the Economist.\textsuperscript{261} The ranking is based both on government structure and on the ability of the government to incorporate public opinion. In such a democratic country, why was pro-peace public opinion ignored; what explains why Canada exhibited the strongest middle power response? Again, $H4a$ provides no answer.

Saudi Arabia is the only non-democratic G14 middle power. Saudi Arabia is ruled by the al Saud family, or the House of Saud. There is no strong bureaucratic elite in Saudi Arabia: the

\textsuperscript{258} McKaiser, “2011 Annual Ruth First Memorial Lecture, University of the Witwatersrand.”
\textsuperscript{259} McKaiser.
\textsuperscript{260} “Libya Conflict.”
\textsuperscript{261} “Democracy Index 2019.”
House of Saud makes nearly all important decisions.\textsuperscript{262} Hypothesis 4b posits if a G14 power is non-democratic, its response will not be motivated by domestic pressures, but rather by the desires of the leader. Like the autonomous foreign policy body in democratic states, if a non-democratic state has a powerful bureaucratic elite, the desires of this elite will control foreign policy. In the case of Saudi Arabia, then, if $H4b$ is supported, the Saudi Arabian response should be based on the desires of the House of Saud and Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the king of Saudi Arabia from 2005-2015. King Abdullah and Gaddafi had a sour relationship, and each would frequently publicly shame the other.\textsuperscript{263} Saudi Arabia was reportedly keen to see Gaddafi fall. Perhaps Saudi Arabian support for military intervention and a no-fly zone was driven by King Abdullah’s insistence on ousting Gaddafi permanently.\textsuperscript{264}

$H4b$ fits well with the Saudi Arabian response. By expressing approval of UNSCR 1973 and of military intervention, Gaddafi was forcibly removed. It makes that the country failed provide humanitarian aid or initial support for the NTC. Saudi Arabia was, itself, at risk of an Arab uprising. King Abdullah may have disliked Gaddafi, but he likely also disliked the idea of a democratic rebellion in his own state. His response set Saudi Arabia up perfectly to maintain domestic stability, avoid investing resources in the rebel cause (which Abdullah likely disagreed with), and oust an enemy.

Because this case study can provide an analysis of only one non-democratic idea, support for $H4b$ must be expressed with sincere caution. We are also unable to test the assertion of $H4b$


\textsuperscript{264} Bellamy and Williams, “The New Politics of Protection?”; Glanville, “Intervention in Libya.”
that a non-democratic state with a powerful bureaucratic elite would be beholden to the opinions of this body. Saudi Arabia is a non-democratic state, but it is also a regional actor of this VINC. The Middle East is an undeniably complex region, and an entire book could be written about LAS ruler relationships. Future research should test Saudi Arabia’s action in other VINCs, as well as work to identify a non-proxy group of middle powers that includes more than one non-democratic state.

IV #5: Status. Status, a fifth and final independent variable elucidated by my framework, drives state behavior based on states’ current and future expectations of themselves and their role in the international order. I posit three possible statuses and, thus, three distinct hypotheses: (H5a) a middle power who wants to increase its status or sees itself as a rising power will respond to the Libyan Civil War in a way that increases – or attempts to increase – its power, prestige, and honor; (H5b) a middle power that wants to maintain its status will respond to the Libyan Civil War in a way that maintains the status quo hierarchy of states; (H5c) a middle power who sees maintenance of the existing international order as part of its status and role will respond to the Libyan Civil War to maintain the status quo. Existing literature is operationalized to place the G14 middle powers in their appropriate status group – those who want more power, those who want to maintain power, and those who want to maintain the international order.

Welch Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth show the BRICS and Turkey are the main group of contemporary rising powers.\(^\text{265}\) They have large, growing economies and have sought inclusion in international trade forums and even the Security Council. There is some disagreement about whether South Africa has a large enough economy to be considered a rising power, but Thies and

Nieman, Klingebiel, and Welch Larson persuasively argue that it sees itself – and is increasingly seen by other states – as a rising power.\(^{266}\) I include, also, Argentina and Mexico as rising powers. Mexico, a member of MIKTA, has a large economy and is well-positioned as an ally of the US to increase its status.\(^{267}\) Past decades have seen domestic political strife rule out the possibility that Mexico realizes this increase, but literature shows that Mexico nonetheless sees its status as rising.\(^{268}\) Argentina is often considered a failed rising power: it had the potential to rise to the status of countries like Germany and Japan, but because of internal and economic problems, it failed to do so. Nonetheless, Argentina sees itself as a rising power, especially as a power who can, alongside other rising South American countries like Brazil, counter US dominance.\(^{269}\) In sum, Brazil, India, South Africa, Turkey, Argentina, and Mexico will be considered states who were vying to increase their international status in 2011.

Brazil, India, South Africa and Argentina appear to envision their rising status as part of a push-back against the US. As noted, Paul and Welch Larson note that the BRICS alliances was formed out of dissatisfaction with the current economic system and its ability to incorporate and accommodate newly industrialized and developed states.\(^{270}\) Welch Larson states the BRICS “have divergent interests and political systems” and “nothing in common—apart from their


\(^{268}\) Gómez Bruera.

\(^{269}\) Beattie, “Argentina.”

opposition to the West.”  

We expect for their response to exemplify this effort to balance against the US and other Western powers.

Brazil, Argentina, and India gave explicit statements condemning the military action of NATO and the US. The Argentinian president explicitly called out the Western alliance, saying their actions made her proud to be South American. Brazil and India, both non-permanent members of the Security Council, abstained from allowing military intervention. India questioned US-led tactics of fighting violence with violence. Argentina and Brazil both issued fairly ‘weak’ responses according to the scale I developed, but these responses were not weak out of a lack of interest or inability to participate. The statements issued by each state clearly set themselves apart from the NATO mission. India’s response was in line with its status as a rising power even though it issued a stronger response. Its response focused on humanitarian and NTC aid, perhaps appealing to the international order to show its commitment to stopping human rights violations.

South Africa did vote in favor of UNSCR 1973, but its subsequent emphasis on an African solution to an African problem, its calls for ceasefire, and its public statements condemning NATO military actions reflect an important change in its strategy. Initially, argues McKaiser, South Africa saw an opportunity to increase international status by acceding to the Security Council’s desires. After realizing, however, that many countries chastised UNSCR 1973, South Africa changed its tune.  

South Africa appears to have engaged in a bad performance of a status dance. It thought the international community would grant prestige for

---

272 McKaiser, “2011 Annual Ruth First Memorial Lecture, University of the Witwatersrand.”
its vote for resolution 1973; upon realization that the vote was a misstep, it reversed its response. 273

The responses of Turkey and Mexico were, however, driven by slightly different status incentives. Both were unequivocally willing to respond in ways that fit with the US response. Mexico made no comment on Libya until a joint press conference alongside Obama. Obama spoke for several minutes, outlining the American plan for Libya; when asked what Mexico thought, President Calderón offered up a meager reply: “in terms of Libya, I recognize and applaud the efforts undertaken by President Obama, as I said previously, to seek a solution in line with international law for this situation.” 274 Turkey seemed, similarly, to view its response through the requirement to act as a good NATO partner. Despite resisting military action, it eventually caved to the US and its other allies. Alex Ward argues Turkey, until the Trump presidency, saw its status attached to NATO and to that of the United States, 275 so this response does fit with $H5a$.

Brazil, India, South Africa, Turkey, and Mexico share an important attribute: they see themselves as rising powers, and they want to increase their role and impact on the international stage. They don’t do so in a uniform way: some states seek status by underscoring and pushing back on the United States’ imperialistic behavior. Others see Western powers as important players in their status-seeking mission. The actions of each of these states in the case of the Libyan civil war support Hypothesis 5a.

---


274 Obama White House, “Remarks by President Obama and President Calderón of Mexico at Joint Press Conference.”

I group Italy, Japan, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia as actors who are content with their status, want to maintain it, and thus want to maintain the status quo. Italy and Japan are part of the G7, an economic organization of the seven largest world economies (Canada and Germany are also in the G7, but will be discussed in the following section). Most contemporary works on status consider these three countries to have an already high status, a high rank in the international hierarchy.\textsuperscript{276} They are states that have already risen (their rise is generally considered to be post-World War I and II), and who seek thus to maintain their high rank. Welch Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth posits that these states understand the static nature of the international order. There is some room for status change, but status is inherently sticky, and new states are unlikely to join the P5 as great powers except, perhaps, over a long period of time. Germany, Italy, and Japan may hope to eventually become great powers, but they are also realists. They know they are smaller, less capable than the great powers by a wide margin.\textsuperscript{277} They thus seek not to make a new great power claim, but rather to maintain their current prominent ranking.

South Korea and Saudi Arabia also appear to want to maintain their current status. Terence Roehrig, Uk Heo, and Scott Snyder argue that South Korea’s status has long been tied to the United States. Despite an increasing urge to side with China to increase its own power, this change is too risky for South Korea, who relies on the US for survival and protection. As such, South Korea seeks to maintain its current status in the international order.\textsuperscript{278} According to Ala’ Alrababa’h, Saudi Arabia’s strategic vision is based on “maintaining sovereignty and regime

\textsuperscript{276} Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, “Status and World Order.”
\textsuperscript{277} Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth.
stability.” It seeks to maintain the legitimacy of their state and regime, and thus wants the status quo ranking of powers to remain.

Indonesia is also included in the following discussion because, as Evi Fitriani argues, Indonesia simply doesn’t have enough capacity to become a rising power. It has increased its status since Yudhoyono became president, but because of its limited capabilities, its only option is to seek to maintain this status.

We expect Italy, Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia to respond in ways that maintain the status quo of the liberal international order. South Korea, Italy, and Japan appear overtly to do so. They issued a commitment to undertaking actions that were necessary to upholding international law and human rights. Despite disagreeing with the extent of UNSCR 1973 and military intervention, these three states chose to issue blanket agreements instead of going against the grain established by the resolution. They also all issued humanitarian aid and agreed to help the NTC to establish and reconstruct a new government to reinstate order in the state and region.

Saudi Arabia did not provide aid, but it did not resist UNSCR 1973 or military intervention. The state did delay recognition of the NTC, but this is probably the result of its desire for Khalifa Haftar to assume control of the Libyan government. Its response was decidedly weak: it made no outlying efforts to change the status quo decision of UNSCRs 1970.

---


and 1973 or to comment on intervention. Indonesia issued a similarly weak response, perhaps due to the limited capabilities identified by Fitriani. When the majority of the international community began to call for a ceasefire, Indonesia joined in. When the Friends of Libya group recognized the NTC, Indonesia followed soon after. Both Indonesia and Saudi Arabia expressed a lack of interest in upending any of the decisions made by the Security Council.

*H5b* expects the actions of Italy, Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia to promote the status quo. Each state responded either in accordance with the actions of the great powers and the Security Council resolutions, or very weakly. Both types of response served to uphold the current international order, and thus provide support for the hypothesis.

I consider Germany, Canada, and Australia as middle powers who see themselves as responsible for the maintenance of the status quo international order, and thus test support for *Hypothesis 5c* by analyzing their responses. They not only want to retain their status within the existing order, but seek to promote the hierarchy’s stability. Much literature characterizes Canada and Australia as self-identified overseers of the liberal order. Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal, as well as Chapnick, Hocking, and Ungerer, all identify these two states as having carved out a niche for themselves.282 By adopting responsibility over the stability of international order, they seek not only to maintain their own status, but also to protect against changes to the system. I posit the inclusion of Germany in this group, too. Rainer Hillebrand and Valerio Bruno and Giacomo Finzi persuasively argue that Angela Merkel’s long tenure as leader does not make her, or Germany, a candidate for a new great power. Rather, it renders her the figurehead of stability. Through years of instability, Arab uprisings, economic meltdown, and even Donald Trump,

---

Germany has managed a strategy of stability, one that it seeks to promote to the EU and beyond.  

Canada, Australia, and Germany had wide-ranging responses, all of which were relatively strong, to the Libyan Civil War. Canada contributed more than $12 million in humanitarian and NTC aid, offered military support, and advocated for UNSCRs 1970 and 1973. Its response aligns with its statements, in which it urged peace and protection of civilians. Canada stressed the importance of international law and underscored the importance of the International Criminal Court in managing Gaddafi’s proceedings. According to Richard Mayne, the Canadian response allowed the country to demonstrate itself as a “potent force for good.” Canada sought to diffuse the Libyan situation so the world could return to its pre-conflict state.

Australia took a similar stance to Canada, but did not contribute to military intervention. Australian government officials repeatedly emphasized the time pressure of an international reaction to the Libyan crisis. They urged states to act quickly to stop human rights violations before Gadaffi’s actions were unfixable. Australia’s invocation of R2P also fits with H5c. R2P, which was at least partially written by Australia’s foreign minister, allows states to intervene in other countries in the case of humanitarian crises. By invoking R2P, Australia signaled its commitment to protecting the international order as a whole and those living in it.

285 Mayne, 247.
Germany’s response was also similar to those of Canada and Australia, with one marked difference: Germany actively spoke against military intervention. Germany’s reasons were largely strategic: Merkel suggested the intervention would not work and she worried what would happen if air strikes were to fail. It might force foreign militaries to send ground troops in, and thus start a large-scale interstate war. Her worries were grounded in maintaining stability: why take a dangerous action that might upend a cautious peace in an oft volatile region? The German response, thus, also fits with H5c. Germany’s response and the ways it differed from Canada and Australia were based on the importance of maintaining stability.

In summary, state responses offer tentative support for hypotheses 5a, 5b, and 5c. State behavior in the First Libyan Civil war does appear to be driven by status and future expectations of status. Rising powers responded to increase their status, either by pushing back against the US or going along with it. Status quo powers acted in ways that promoted their existing ranking, and states who see themselves as responsible for the maintenance of the international order acted to protect it.

**Summary: Results from the First Libyan Civil War**

Table 18 sums up the results of my analysis of the First Libyan Civil War. G14 responses to the 2011 Libyan crisis provide tentative support for hypotheses 1, 5a, 5b, and 5c. When existing commitments required action, middle powers responded as strongly as was required. The only states who offered military intervention and aid, for example, were Turkey, Italy, Canada, and – to an extent – Germany. These four states are the only members of the G14 that are also members of NATO, and NATO was the only alliance that required military commitment from its members in its Libyan intervention. All G14 states approved of resolution 1970 and carried out its requirements. Resolution 1973 reaffirmed the previous requirements of resolution
1970 and allowed, but did not require, military intervention. Because the commitment did not oblige states to respond, all non-NATO states did not intervene militarily.

*IV #5*, status, was well-supported by state action in response to the Libyan crisis. State status, which was gleaned from existing literature, corresponded with their action: states who wanted to increase their status issued strong responses. Some responded by countering US action, others did so by agreeing with great power action. States who wanted to maintain their own status also responded as expected in ways that were sufficiently strong to avoid shame, but did not otherwise require use of time or capabilities. States who see themselves as protectors of the existing international order – Canada, Australia, and Germany – acted quite strongly and voiced their concern with maintaining stability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H1: Existing Commitments</th>
<th>H2: Direct S Interests</th>
<th>H3a: Regional interests, internal</th>
<th>H3b: Regional interests, external</th>
<th>H4a: Democratic states</th>
<th>H4b: Non-democratic states</th>
<th>H5a: Rising powers</th>
<th>H5b: Status quo states</th>
<th>H5c: Order protector status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18. Results of Libyan Case Study

A major limitation of my results is the potential overlap between *IV’s 1 and 5*. Did Canada issue a strong response both to maintain the status quo of the international order *and* to respond to NATO requirements. Or was its response primarily driven by requirements? Did Australia voice its support for a no-fly zone because it wanted to uphold support the UN *and* because it thought a no-fly zone would protect the international order? There is little hope that a state’s own
rhetoric will clarify this potential overlap. It would be surprising, for example, if Canada issued a statement in which it admitted it only intervened militarily because NATO required it to do so. Such a statement makes the power appear weak and furthers conceptions of Canada as a US puppet. This overlap, then, must be the focus of additional research.

The first Libyan civil war also provided very tentative support for $H_{4b}$, which posits a non-democratic state will not face domestic pressures. Its foreign policy behavior will, by virtue of its regime type, be an expression of its leader’s desires and opinions unless there is a bureaucratic elite that controls decision-making. This hypothesis was supported in the Libyan case by Saudi Arabia, whose leader had a sour relationship with Gaddafi and thus wanted him removed. He seemed to ignore regional pressures to quash the Arab uprising in Libya and instead acted on his own dislike of Gaddafi. However, we were unable to test the assertion that a bureaucratic elite in a non-democratic state would act as an autonomous foreign policymaking body. Further, Saudi Arabia provides only one instance of non-democratic state response, so the Libyan case gives very weak support to hypothesis $4b$.

The Libyan civil war outright rejects hypothesis $2$, which suggested states would act on economic motivation. Countries with no clear economic interests issued the strongest responses, and the actions of states who were sensitive to the Libyan economy and its exports varied widely. While regional interests were correlated with the responses of some middle powers, hypotheses $3a$ and $3b$ failed to act as a unique or uniform motivator of G14 behavior. States with no regional interest and no clear desire to signal to great powers issued some of the strongest responses, while the responses of states who had a stake in regional stability varied. The failure of South Africa and Canada, two democratic states without particularly strong foreign policy bodies, to respond to domestic pressures ruled out hypothesis $4a$. 

109
These results will be generalized to consider the action of middle powers more broadly in my concluding chapter, and their limitations will also be discussed.
Conclusion

What motivated G14 middle power behavior in the First Libyan Civil War? Can these conclusions be generalized and applied to middle power behavior more generally? Who are the middle powers? Why does middle power behavior vary? To answer these questions, I have developed a theoretical framework that both elucidates a narrow middle power grouping and presents five testable motivators of middle power behavior.

I argue middle powers are those who engage in international collective action: multilateralism, coalitions, international agreements and institutions. This grouping is logical and not arbitrary. It correctly identifies secondary states as those who are forced to carve out a new role for themselves in the international order because of their limited capabilities and power. It avoids tautology because, while it does stem from an observation of shared action, it doesn’t strictly limit behavior or motivations for such behavior. The “in practice” middle power grouping identifies states based not on why they act and not on one specific type of action, but on how they do what they do: through participation in international collective action, agreements, and institutions.

Using the G14 – the G20 without the P5 and the EU – as a practical proxy for this narrower group of middle powers, support for five independent variables operationalized in nine hypotheses was tested in the case of the First Libyan Civil War (2011). This conflict was chosen as an external, non-neighboring Violent Intrastate Nationalist Conflict, which I used as a test site for middle power behavior because VINCs rule out direct security interests as a confounding variable, are common, and are understudied.

Existing literature suggested (1) alliance commitments, (2) economic concerns, (3) regional interests, (4) domestic factors, and (5) state status as possible motivators of middle
power response. The Libyan case study ruled out support for hypotheses that posited a causal link between economic concerns and regional interests and middle power behavior. Hypothesis 4b suggested that non-democratic states, less prone to domestic pressures, would act based on the opinion and foreign policy desires of their leader and – potentially – their bureaucratic elite. The Libyan civil war provided support for this hypothesis in the case of Saudi Arabian response, but because only one G14 state is non-democratic, Saudi Arabian response could not be compared. Also, Saudi Arabia does not have a strong bureaucratic elite, so this clause could not be tested. Thus, a link between non-democratic regime and foreign policy behavior cannot be firmly validated. Future research should examine additional non-democratic middle power behavior.

Even if my proxy group enabled analysis of multiple non-democratic states, domestic factors could still be eliminated as a unifying motivator of middle power behavior. If only non-democratic states are affected by IV #4, it does not satisfy my framework’s search for a motivator of middle power behavior that affects all middle powers and supersedes direct security interests and other characteristics that affect only some states and some conflicts and events.

My analysis of the First Libyan Civil War provides tentative support for independent variables 1 – existing commitments – and 5 – status. Hypothesis 1 posited a relationship between a middle power’s alliance commitments and its behavior. Middle powers respond to external, neighboring VINCs only when their alliance commitments require them to do so, and only to the extent that these commitments stipulate. In the Libyan crisis, states whose commitments specified obligations – sanctions, military intervention – always fulfilled these requirements. Middle powers who were not, for example, required to intervene militarily in Libya did not.

The Libyan case also presented tentative support for the three hypotheses that examined the way status motivates state behavior. States who were seeking increased status responded in
stronger ways than states who merely wanted to maintain their ranking in the international order. States who wanted to maintain only their own ranking issued weaker responses than states whose status is tied to their role as protectors of the existing liberal order.

Both existing commitments and status affected all G14 states. Analysis of the First Libyan Civil War supported both independent variables as unifying motivators of middle power behavior. As noted in my literature review, both variables are – to an extent – unique to middle powers. Existing commitments weigh especially on middle powers whose survival, security, and reputation depend on their fulfillment. Middle powers are more likely than smaller states to have the capacity to change their status or to assume a status as liberal order- protector; middle power status is more likely to fluctuate than the statuses of great powers who have generally assumed the highest ranking.

I assert, then, that G14 middle power behavior in cases of VINC is motivated by existing commitments, status, and future expectations of status. Because the G14 are a representative sample of middle powers and because VINCs provide a test site that is insulated from confounding variables, this conclusion can tentatively be generalized to apply to the broader foreign policy behavior of all middle powers, as defined in my theoretical framework. Regardless of direct security interests and other characteristics intrinsic to certain states and certain events, this initial probe of the framework I have developed suggests all middle power foreign policy behavior is motivated by existing commitments and status.

Limitations and Calls for Future Research

The conclusions reached in this paper are tentative. The analysis of the First Libyan Civil War serves only as an initial probe of my framework. Results are limited in several ways. First, only one case study was analyzed. As such, there is no way to control for the influence of
variables intrinsic to the Libyan conflict that may have affected my results. Second, only one type of event – a VINC – was analyzed. While I justify instances of VINC as practical test sites for my framework, results may, again, be impacted by event type-specific factors. Third, only some of the middle powers my framework groups together are tested. This proxy selection does, I argue, serve as a representative sample, but all the foreign policy behavior of all middle powers must be analyzed before firm conclusions can be drawn. Fourth, because I opted for the nuanced analysis of a qualitative study, I was unable to perform large-scale analyses of all relevant factors, for example existing alliances and economies. Fifth, scope constraints rule out a full analysis and discussion of how IVs 1 and 5 interact and overlap.

Future research should utilize the framework developed in this research to further test my conclusions. It should study all middle powers – as defined in my theory – from the post-World War II period to present. It should analyze a wide range of foreign policy events. Individual qualitative analyses of each independent variable should be performed; for example a careful examination of each middle power’s economy and the ways they are interconnected should proceed a conclusive elimination of IV #2. This paper was limited in many ways by scope: quantitative research can move past these limits to further test the framework presented.

I stress that this work serves only as a preliminary probe of a theory that argues the foreign policy behavior of middle powers – a smaller group of secondary states categorized not by arbitrary definitions but by their states shared proclivity for international action – is driven by the states’ existing alliance commitments, status, and future expectations of status.
Clowns to the left of me
Jokers to the right
Here I am
Stuck in the middle with you
-Stealers Wheel

Perhaps being “stuck” in the middle isn’t a useless categorization: it might suggest a unique and cohesive set of capable actors.
Works Cited


“‘Friends of Libya’ Converge on Paris.” CNN, August 31, 2011.


Haynes, Kyle. “Diversionary Conflict: Demonizing Enemies or Demonstrating Competence?” 

Henrikson, Alan. “Middle Powers as Managers: International Mediation Within, Across and 
Outside Institutions.” In *Niche Diplomacy: Middle Powers after the Cold War.*, edited 

Heo, Uk, and Terence Roehrig. *South Korea’s Rise: Economic Development, Power and Foreign 

Higgott, Richard A., and Andrew Fenton Cooper. “Middle Power Leadership and Coalition 
Building: Australia, the Cairns Group, and the Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations.” 

Hillebrand, Rainer. “Germany and the New Global Order: The Country’s Power Resources 
Reassessed.” *E-International Relations* (blog), September 22, 2019. https://www.e-
ir.info/2019/09/22/germany-and-the-new-global-order-the-countrys-power-resources-
reassessed/.

Hocking, Brian. “Finding Your Niche: Australia and the Trials of Middle Power.” In *Niche 
Diplomacy: Middle Powers after the Cold War.*, edited by Andrew F. Cooper. London: 


Holmes, J. “Is There a Future for ‘Middlepowermanship’?” In *Canada’s Role as a Middlepower*, 

Holsti, K. J. “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy.” *International Studies 

Hufbauer, Gary Clyde, Jeffrey Schott, Julia Muir, and Milica Cosic. “Case Studies in Economic 
Sanctions and Terrorism. Case 2011-1: Australia, Canada, EU, Japan, NATO, United 
Kingdom, UN, US v. Libya.” *Peterson Institute for International Economics*, February 
2012.

humanitarian-aid-by-country.

———. “Recent Books on International Relations: Political and Legal: Liberal Peace: Selected 
Essays.” *Foreign Affairs; New York*, June 2012.

“India Formally Recognizes Libya’s TNC, Offers Rebuilding Assistance.” *Firstpost*, September 
rebuilding-assistance-86156.html.


International Organization for Migration. “Humanitarian Emergency Response to the Libyan 
Crisis.” MENA, September 2011. https://publications.iom.int/books/humanitarian-
response-libyan-cisis.

Ishay, Micheline R. *The Levant Express: The Arab Uprisings, Human Rights, and the Future of 

“Italy’s Shame in Libya.” *The Economist*, February 25, 2011. 


“Turkey, Indonesia Call for Ceasefire in Libya.” *Jakarta Globe*, April 5, 2011.


