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THE GOLDEN SNITCH: STATUS-SEEKING STRATEGIES OF SECOND-TIER STATES

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THE GOLDEN SNITCH: STATUS-SEEKING
STRATEGIES OF SECOND-TIER STATES, THE
CASES OF CANADA, SOUTH AFRICA, AND
INDIA

A Master's Thesis

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To My Father

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INDIA

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I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality,
as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.

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ABSTRACT

THE GOLDEN SNITCH: STATUS-SEEKING STRATEGIES OF SECOND-TIER STATES, THE CASES OF CANADA, SOUTH AFRICA, AND INDIA

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This thesis analyzes the status-seeking strategies of the second-tier states immediately below the Great Power Club. It seeks to answer who the second-tier states are, what strategies are available to them, and what may account for their choice of status-seeking strategies. It argues that what is thought as one category is comprised of three categories: rising powers, regional powers, and middle powers. It puts forth that we may locate countries in their respective categories by looking at their material capabilities in 5 dimensions: military expenditure, military personnel, economy, population, and technological development. Furthermore, considering their behaviors and recognition, it categorizes states. It puts forth that middle powers perform well in economy and technology, regional powers in population and military, and rising powers in multiple dimensions. After locating second-tier states in their categories, it argues that second-tier states seek status differently according to their material capabilities (their category) and identities. Employing three case studies on Canada, South Africa, and India, it looks into their power trajectory, foreign policies, and role identities evident in the discourse of the policymakers and

official papers. This thesis, borrowing from Larson and Shevcheko's (2014) work, puts forth that second-tier states choose social creativity and social mobility as their primary strategies and choose social competition as a last resort if continuous status denial occurs (Ward, 2017). While middle powers seek status through social creativity, turning negative attributes to positive, regional and rising powers seek it through social mobility, emulating the behavior of the higher club.

Keywords: Identity, Power, Status, Second-Tier States



ÖZET

ALTIN SNITCH: İKİNCİ KADEME DEVLETLERİN STATÜ ARAMA STRATEJİLERİ, KANADA, GÜNEY AFRİKA VE HİNDİSTAN ÖRNEKLERİ

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Mayıs 2024

Bu tez, büyük güç kulübünün hemen altındaki ikinci kademe devletlerin statü arayışı stratejilerini analiz etmektedir. Tez, ikinci kademe devletlerin kimler olduğunu, bunların ne tür stratejiler izleyebileceğini ve tercih ettikleri statü arayışı stratejilerinin neyin etkilediğini açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, genellikle tek bir kategori olarak düşünülen şeyin aslında üç kategoriden oluştuğunu savunmaktadır: yükselen güçler, bölgesel güçler ve orta güçler. Ülkeleri kendi kategorilerine yerleştirmek için materyal kapasitelerine (askerî harcamalar, askerî personel, ekonomi, nüfus ve teknolojik gelişim) dayanarak beş boyutta değerlendirir. Ayrıca davranışları ve tanınırlıkları göz önüne alarak devletleri kategorilere ayırır. Orta güçlerin ekonomi ve teknolojide iyi performans gösterdiğini, bölgesel güçlerin nüfus ve askerî alanda, yükselen güçlerin ise birden fazla boyutta başarılı olduklarını öne sürer. İkinci kademe devletlerin kategorilerinde yerlerini belirledikten sonra, bu devletlerin materyal kapasitelerine (kategorilerine) ve kimliklerine bağlı olarak statü arayışını farklı şekillerde ele aldıklarını savunur. Kanada, Güney Afrika ve Hindistan üzerine üç ayrı örnek çalışmayı kullanarak, bu ülkelerin güç gelişimini, dış politikalarını ve kimliklerini

resmi belgelere ve politika yapıcıların retoriğine bakarak incelemektedir. Larson ve Shevcheko'nun (2014) çalışmalarından esinlenen tez, ikinci kademe devletlerin temel stratejilerinin sosyal yaratıcılık ve sosyal hareketlilik olduğunu öne sürer ve eğer sürekli olarak statü reddiyle karşılaşılırsa sosyal rekabeti son çare olarak seçtiklerini belirtir (Ward, 2017). Orta güçlerin sosyal yaratıcılık yoluyla statü aradığını, olumsuz nitelikleri olumlu hale getirmeye çalıştığını, bölgesel ve yükselen güçlerin ise sosyal hareketlilik yoluyla, üst düzey kulübün davranışlarını taklit ederek statü aradıklarını öne sürer.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kimlik, Güç, Statü, İkinci Kademe Devletler

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
ÖZET	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	ix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. The Importance of the Research Question	3
2. Categorizations of Powers.....	7
2.1 Rising Powers	8
2.2 Regional Powers	9
2.3 Middle Powers.....	10
3. Hypotheses	11
4. Alternative Explanation.....	14
5. Methodology.....	14
6. Case Selection	16
7. A Roadmap of the Thesis	17
CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	18
1. Categorizations of Powers.....	19
1.1 Superpowers, Great Powers, and Small Powers	19
1.2 Second-tier Powers (Rising, Regional, and Middle Powers)	24
2. Visualization of Categorization by Material Indicators and Regions.....	34
3. Status and Social Identity Theory.....	40
4. Theoretical Argument.....	47
CHAPTER 3 CANADA: A ‘DO-GOODER’	54
1. Canada’s Trajectory Over the Years	55
2. Canada’s Interests and Foreign Policy	58
3. The Canadian Identity: The Pearsonian Legacy.....	64
4. What Does Canada Do?: Post-Cold War Era in Three Cases	72
4.1 Peacekeeping	72
4.2 Responsibility to Protect.....	73
4.3 Multilateralism.....	76

5. Public Opinion: Canada from Within and Outside.....	81
6. Conclusion.....	82
CHAPTER 4 SOUTH AFRICA: A PARAGON FOR AFRICA?.....	85
1. Introduction	86
2. Is It Great-Power-Like?: South Africa's Trajectory and Interests	87
2.1 South Africa's Trajectory	87
2.2 South Africa's interests.....	91
3. All in One with One Mission: South Africa's Post-Apartheid Identity	94
4. Big Dreams, Weak Muscles: What Does South Africa Do and What Kind of a Power It Is? 99	
4.1 Peacekeeping and Human Rights	100
4.2 Presence in the International Arena.....	104
5. Conclusion.....	107
CHAPTER 5 INDIA: THE ANCIENT GREAT CIVILIZATION, THE NEW FERVOROUS RISING POWER.....	112
1. Is It Great-Power-Like?: India's Trajectory and Interests.....	113
1.1 India's Trajectory in Tangible Power.....	113
1.2 Strategic Context of India in terms of Threats.....	119
1.3 India's Interests and Aspirations: 2 Strategic Cultures.....	122
1.4 Do we see a great power behavior?	126
2. India's Identity post-Cold War: 'The Great Timeless Unique Civilization'	127
3. What does India do?	133
4. Conclusion.....	139
CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION: SEEKING THE GOLDEN SNITCH.....	142
1. The Argument.....	142
2. The Findings.....	143
3. Implications	147
3.1 Theoretical Implications	147
3.2 Policy Relevance	149
4. Future Directions of Inquiry	156
REFERENCES	159

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: A ranking table of powers based on their most recent material capabilities in 5 dimensions (2016-2022).....	38
Table 2: The Second-Tier Powers separated by region	42
Table 3: Canada’s Military Personnel (in thousands)	61
Table 4: Canada’s Military Expenditure (% of GDP)	62
Table 5: Canada’s population growth	62
Table 6: Canada’s GDP	63
Table 7: South Africa’s Military Personnel Throughout the Years	96
Table 8: South Africa’s Military Expenditure (%GDP) Throughout the Years.....	97
Table 9: South Africa’s Total Population Throughout the Years	98
Table 10: South Africa’s GDP Throughout the Years	99
Table 11: India’s Military Personnel Throughout the Years	124
Table 12: India’s Military Expenditure (%GDP) Throughout the Years.....	126
Table 13: India’s Military Expenditure (Current USD\$) Throughout the Years.....	126
Table 14: India’s Population Throughout the Years	127
Table 15: India’s GDP Throughout the Years	128
Table 16: India’s GDP per Capita (US\$) Throughout the Years	128
Table 17: Military Expenditure of Türkiye (%GDP)	164
Table 18: Military Personnel of Türkiye	164
Table 19: GDP (Current US\$) of Türkiye	165

Table 20: Total Population of Türkiye	165
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on a subject that every human being can empathize with, even at the early stages of their being, and that is status. The day we engage with society, we grasp how the world works and what would get us to reach a ‘certain level’ to survive. This can be a membership to a popular friend group in your school, a title, a blood relation, or even an expensive handbag. Basically, it is a status symbol that lifts us higher and earns us prestige, honor, or pride. As I’ve said, this can be understood by even children. This significance of status is exemplified in the Harry Potter series through the character of Draco Malfoy, who consistently flaunts his family's wealth and pure-blood lineage as symbols of superiority over his peers, particularly the ‘mud-bloods.’ As Draco proudly declares, 'You’ll soon find out some wizarding families are much better than others, Potter. You don’t want to go making friends with the wrong sort. I can help you there' (Rowling, 2014). Draco's obsession with status symbols mirrors the broader human inclination to seek prestige and recognition in society, whether through personal achievements or affiliations with esteemed groups. States, in this sense, are not different from human beings. Soon enough, we’ll see that some states are ‘much better’ than others outside the wizard world. In the case of the muggle world, a pure-blood family can be a membership to the UNSC, an alliance with great power, the acquisition of nuclear weapons, the number of military personnel, space programs, and innovative patents.

In international relations terms, status, also called standing, refers to social ranking conferred by a social community according to several criteria, which may change over time (Larson et al., 2014a). It is a social, perceptual, and scarce resource

that plays an essential role in everyday politics for every state (Wohlforth et al., 2018). Even though it has been relevant since the establishment of International Relations, status, as a subject on its own, started to be studied relatively recently, at the end of the 2000s, thanks to publications of respective scholars like Ned Lebow and William Wohlforth, especially with a focus on rising/emerging and middle powers (Dafoe et al., 2014a; Larson et al., 2014a; Larson & Shevchenko, 2003, 2010; Lebow, 2010; Renshon, 2016, 2017; Ward, 2017b; Wohlforth, 2009a; Wohlforth et al., 2018). In this study, I argue that status is a part of everyday politics; all states seek it, and states compete for status, not as a means but as an end. *This study is about the status-seeking strategies of second-tier states that are immediately below 'the great power club' and aims to examine the second-tier states, how can we locate them in the international hierarchy of states, how they seek status, what strategies are available to them, and what accounts for their choice status-seeking strategy.*

This study will try to answer three main questions. In this study, I am interested in second-tier states placed immediately below 'the great power club.' There are great powers that have the capability to realize their interests outside of their regions thanks to their vast capabilities, small powers that have local interests and are restricted by their low capabilities, and those between these two categories in the international hierarchy. I refer to those as second-tier states, which also have many differences compared to each other. This study first examines the categorizations of states and aims to understand second-tier states immediately below the great power club in what capacity. I argue that what is thought of as one category, second-tier states, is indeed formed of three categories of states that perform well in different dimensions, which are economy, technology, military, and demographics. Therefore, it is vital to examine in which dimension these states are well off in order to categorize them below the great power club. Second, this study will examine whether these states seek status in a similar or different manner. I argue that different kinds of second-tier states seek status differently. Accordingly, this study will examine how these states seek standing differently and which strategies are available to them by borrowing from Social Identity Theory (SIT). Lastly, as the third question, this study will examine what might account for second-tier states' choices in different status-

seeking strategies. It will argue that the difference in choice of strategy results from their differences in capabilities and identities. I propose three hypotheses.

H1: Your capabilities will determine what kind of power you are and, therefore, the category you fall into.

H2: Rising and regional powers are more akin to seeking status through social mobility in accordance with their capabilities. In contrast, middle powers are more akin to seeking status through social creativity in accordance with their capabilities.

H3: The kind of identity will determine the choice of status strategy states will take by determining what kind of power the state in question want to become.

Given the first hypothesis, which helps us to locate states in their respective categories as the first question of this thesis, my independent variable is the kind of power, and my dependent variable is the category of power. Given the second and third hypotheses, which will help us understand which strategy will be implemented by whom and under what conditions, my independent variables are power and identity, specifically role identity. The independent variable is the choice of strategy of status-seeking.

In this chapter, I will first present the theoretical and practical contribution of the research question, followed by a section where I explain how I categorize powers and how I understand those immediately below the great powers and with which capacity. I will then present my hypotheses in detail. Lastly, I will give my methodology and discuss my case selection.

1. The Importance of the Research Question

In answering who the second-tier states are, whether they seek status differently compared to each other and others, and if they do, what may account for the difference, this study has both theoretical and practical importance. This study theoretically contributes to the literature by picking four main dimensions of material attributes that demonstrate tangible evidence of the ranking of countries and by providing an eclectic approach to how second-tier states seek status in the international hierarchy that aims to make status research more ‘global.’ This study

has a practical contribution by helping policymakers understand what is happening around them and make viable decisions for their own sake.

Two subjects hold significance in this study: categorizations of second-tier states and status. Firstly, this study contributes to identifying which power is located in which category. There is a consensus that the international system is anarchic; still, there is a hierarchy of states in terms of how they compare one another depending on capabilities and status in the world (Lake, 2009). There is an overabundance of categorizations of states. Yet, there still exists a lack of consensus and a great deal of confusion on where to locate certain states, especially when it comes to those in between powers. Taking BRICS countries as an example might show us the lack of consensus. Is Turkey a rising power, a regional power, or a rising regional one? Can South Africa be called a rising power compared to other BRICS countries, or do BRICS countries have differentiations between them? What are BRICS powers, and where do we locate them? These questions need to be settled since there are many states in the between area situated below the great powers and above the small ones. Therefore, this study aims to shed light on and clarify the distinction among states.

In this context, this study argues that what is considered a single category, second-tier states, is made of different categories, and it is possible to see a wide variety of states differing in their economic, military, or technological capabilities and demographics. This comprises the contribution of the study since I argue that second-tier states are comprised of rising powers, which perform well in multiple dimensions relative to both great powers and others; regional powers, which perform well demographically and militarily relative to middle and small powers; and middle powers, which perform well economically and technologically relative to both regional powers and small powers.

Secondly, this study is interested in how particular second-tier states choose their status strategies and what kind of status strategies are available to them. Various scholars have put forth the importance of status in international relations. According to Renshon (2016), status is a positional, social, and perceptual resource conferred by voluntary deference. In the current literature, status has two meanings: standing and identity (Renshon, 2016). This study uses the former by referring to status as

standing in the international hierarchy. As Dafoe et al (2014b). put forth, most scholars agree that policymakers and the people are concerned about their and their nation's status. Indeed, Renshon (2017) argues that status is even more than an everyday currency of international relations because it is an end goal of policymakers to the point where they are obsessed with it to some extent. Since it is a scarce resource, one's loss of status means another's gain of a higher standing; therefore, it is valuable (Larson et al., 2014a). People seek status for their self-esteem as it is one of the leading human drives associated with prosperity and well-being to the point where it has an effect on human psychology (Larson et al., 2014b, p. 18). Besides this psychological benefit, Renshon (2017) argues that status also has an instrumental benefit since it brings tangible benefits in security, wealth, and influence.

By borrowing from the Social Identity Theory framework and referring to this human drive as the spirit, Lebow (2008, pp. 122–165) argues that self-esteem is acquired not only by personal activities but also through the successes of a social group to which you belong, such as nation-states. In his book, '*Why Nations Fight?*', examining motives for war over three and a half centuries, Lebow (2010, pp. 171–172) finds standing to be the leading motive for 58 percent of the total of 94 wars. According to Lebow (2008, p. 20), introducing status as the primary motive for competition and war that manifests itself differently adds an irrational element to IR that inflames conflicts and tensions. Renshon (2017) argues that status affects international outcomes, from behavior in international organizations to humanitarian interventions. As Renshon (2017) put forth, by focusing on major powers, in general, the present literature could not theorize how status concerns work on a more general level that is common to all states from different levels, which is a critical step. Lately, there have been discussions on how rising or regional powers such as Brazil and India or middle powers are also motivated by status (Neumann & de Carvalho, 2015; Paul et al., 2014; Volgy et al., 2011; Wohlforth et al., 2018). Therefore, this topic is of increasing interest, and this study aims to theoretically contribute to the status literature by focusing on second-tier states and their bid for status. Specifically, it asks, '*How do second-tier states pursue various strategies regarding status, and what accounts for that?*' This study argues that second-tier states seek status differently depending on their capabilities and role identities; therefore, it

becomes essential to tell them apart and examine what accounts for their different status-seeking strategies.

As the world moves into an unstable phase, moving away from pax-Americana to some extent, it is essential to move beyond the great powers and examine the status-seeking strategies of those below the ‘great power club’ and the reason behind these. Lebow (2010, pp. 183–185) argues that the decline of the USA and the change in the world order gave a chance to states that are not great powers to claim recognition and standing through diverse claims such as nurturing the sciences or arts, participating in development aid and assistance, etc. It was argued that status could be the only source to be seen and get a ‘seat at the table for states that are below the ‘great power club’ since they lack resources compared to the higher group (Neumann & de Carvalho, 2015). As Renshon (2017) puts forth, status-seeking is a fundamental motive for leaders, as we can see from the benefits (psychological and instrumental) that status confers on individuals who have it. In practice, it is essential in foreign policy to understand the motives of leaders in order to decide on the next step and how to answer signals. As mentioned, Lebow (2010) finds status as one of the leading motivations behind conflict and war. According to Ward (2017b), if certain states that desire a higher place in the hierarchy are denied from the upper club, those states may resort to revisionism, leading to conflict. Therefore, this study provides a practical contribution to the policymakers by clarifying the diversity in the status-seeking manifestations, interpreting the everyday behaviors of others, and providing a roadmap to predict future claims in the status game or when to resort to accommodation and competition.

Furthermore, this study hopes to provide guidance for Türkiye’s policymakers regarding policy relevance. As a country that is seeking influence in world affairs and its region, this work on status-seeking strategies of powers can provide a roadmap for the policymakers on the grounds to answer questions such as who are we, what is our place in the world, how can we seek to change it, and what strategies lie ahead. It also aims to showcase potential policies taken by others in the system for policymakers, what may account for these, and how we may respond to them.

2. Categorizations of Powers

Since this study focuses on second-tier states immediately below the great powers, it is vital to understand how the categorization is made. Although power is the most used concept in international relations, there has yet to be a consensus on the categorizations of power as it changes depending on the theoretical stance of the scholars. It is still a contested concept, especially when identifying those below the great powers. Borrowing from Cline et al. (2011), this study pays attention to three main variables while categorizing states: material capabilities (opportunity), behavior in the international system (willingness), and recognition from others (status attribution). Although one might argue that these indicators are mainly for great power criteria, scholars show that these three indicators also apply to second-tier states and are essential for all categorizations of states (Onea, 2021; Parlar Dal, 2016; Volgy et al., 2011). This study approaches the concept of power by considering both the material and ideational factors.

Since the Great Power War has declined due to the emergence of nuclear powers, different criteria/ways emerged to get recognition on the international stage. Therefore, there is a need to consider the ideational understanding of power to understand who is narrowing the gap relative to great powers. Since the main focus of this study is on the second-tier states, this section will explain the second-tier states, and a detailed discussion on superpowers, great powers, rising great powers, and small powers will be given in the second chapter.

As mentioned, according to Lake (2009), an international hierarchy exists where states are compared to each other based on their power and status; therefore, we need to locate them in categories to understand where they stand and how they are likely to behave. This study refers to the states that lie between the great powers and small powers as **second-tier states** and argues that second-tier states comprise a variety of states with different capabilities that make them seated directly below the great powers and above the small powers; therefore, they are not only different from the great powers and small powers, but they are also different from each other in terms of capabilities they possess in several dimensions. While superpowers can affect the entire system thanks to their global interests, recognition, and higher capabilities in all dimensions, great powers can affect several regions due to their regional and

global ambitions; on the other hand, small powers lack influence or the will to do so due their lack of capabilities (Buzan, 2004). To understand in what sense second-tier states are below the great powers and above the small ones, this study proposes three sub-categories: **rising powers, regional powers, and middle powers.**

This study considers four main material dimensions while categorizing second-tier states regarding material attributes. It aims to show in what capacity these states are below the Great Power Club. Each category succeeds in different material dimensions that provide them the opportunity; therefore, it is vital to mention the four variables that form the material capabilities. These are the military dimension (military expenditure and military personnel), economy (GDP), demographics, and technology (technological progress and adoption). In this study, I argue that rising powers are those that perform well in multiple dimensions; regional powers are those that perform well in terms of demographics and military size; whereas middle powers perform well in terms of technology and are comprised of prosperous states (GDP and GDP per capita).

2.1 Rising Powers

Firstly, this study argues that *rising powers* are well off in several dimensions. These states may lack spheres of influence and may not have diverse capabilities, like great powers, for the time being; however, they may indicate expanding military capabilities, accompanied by their large population, economy, and territorial size. We may expect a rising power to have the capacity to affect regional security issues and the potential to affect global problems due to their significance in the international system. As Onea (2021) put forth, to rise is not to overtake but to narrow the gap. Therefore, one would expect a rising power to aim to narrow the gap in terms of several dimensions relative to the higher club, which is the great powers (Onea, 2021). To put it clearly, a rising power is a state that performs well in multiple dimensions (military, demography, economy, technology); therefore, its rise is multi-dimensional. As of 2022, India is the rising power, which sits in 5th place on the scale of military expenditure and 3rd in the Composite Index of National Capability v.6 based on the Correlates of War Project (Correlates of War, 2021). Regarding military expenditure, according to SIPRI data (2022a), as of 2022, India spends %2.43 of its GDP on the military, which places it higher than the UK and

China but lower than Russia and the USA. Furthermore, as the 6th top economy globally, India is part of the BRICS and G24 (The World Bank Group, 2022a). It is the second-largest state in the world, with a great likelihood of surpassing China (Correlates of War, 2021). Moreover, although it ranks 40th in the world according to the Global Innovation Index (2022), it sits at the top as the most innovative economy in its region; therefore, it is technologically sophisticated. The latest indicator of its rise is its recent launch of a submarine-launched ballistic missile, making India the 6th country in the world to possess it (Al Jazeera, 2022).

2.2 Regional Powers

Secondly, this study conceptualizes *regional powers* as those with latent power (good demographics) but do not transform that latent power into performance due to weak economies, and their area of action is limited to their region (for example, Iran, Indonesia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Argentina). Economically weak does not mean that these countries are poor; rather, it indicates that they fall behind great powers and are referred to as developing economies, compared to middle powers, which are generally comprised of developed economies. They mainly matter in their regional context, as they have the capability to affect regional security relations, thanks to their large population, military personnel, and geographical location (Kennedy et al., 1996). Regional powers may regard themselves as worthy of a higher rank and may be included in specific global issues; however, they need more diverse capabilities, spheres of influence, and recognition as great powers (Buzan, 2004; Onea, 2021). According to Kennedy et al. (1996), regional (referred to as pivotal states) powers have the capacity to affect regional and international stability to the point that their collapse would spill transboundary mayhem regionally and globally. Despite disagreements with the hegemon, they may resort to international institutions, one of the main reasons Jordaan (2003) calls them emerging middle powers.

This category includes countries like Türkiye, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, Indonesia, and South Africa. Taking one of the examples, Brazil, and looking at the material indicators of power is telling. Brazil is one of the ten most populous countries in the world. According to COW (2021), in terms of military personnel, it ranks 15th, and in terms of GDP, it ranks 12th (The World Bank Group, 2022a).

2.3 Middle Powers

Lastly, *middle powers* are those that are well in the technological dimension and comprise wealthy states that are well off in terms of prosperity measured in terms of GDP per capita. This study argues that even though middle powers are limited in their military capabilities, have relatively small populations, and have relatively fewer regional effects, they stand out thanks to their developed economies and technological capacities that allow them to ‘punch above their weights.’ When we look at the material indicators of power, we see that such countries can have relatively small populations, yet they are well off in terms of GDP, GDP per capita, and innovation. Norway, Canada, Australia, and Switzerland are examples of this category. These countries comprise the top 15 of the Global Innovation Index, the top 30 of GDP rank, and the top 25 of the wealthy economies in the world, measured by GDP per capita (*Global Innovation Index*, 2022; The World Bank Group, 2022a, 2022c).

Another indicator of middle powerhood can be understood when we examine the nature of domestic regime types. We can argue that middle powers comprise states ruled by democracy and the rule of law. According to the Polity V dataset conducted by the Center for Systemic Peace, all middle powers considered in this study scored 10 out of 10 in the democracy scores, which means that when we look into their patterns of authority, these countries are ruled by a fully democratic authority (Marshall et al., 2016). More specifically, middle powers are ruled by a liberal democracy.

Middle powers look different from each theoretical perspective, which is material, functional, and behavioral. This study does not look at middle powers from a hierarchical perspective since it disregards the recognition criteria. This study conceptualizes middle powers as powers that act in regional and global areas through international institutions with issue-specific interests and capabilities (Jordaan, 2003). Middle powers generally promote multilateral cooperation and coalition-building as they know they cannot influence the system alone; therefore, they adopt an activist style thanks to their diplomatic capabilities (Cooper, 1997; Jordaan, 2003). Middle power does not necessarily mean a ‘good power’ as some scholars refer to it since this term is subjective and carries a normative bias (Wohlforth et al.,

2018). As Cooper (1997, p. 7) argues, despite their claims of moral authority, middle powers are not ‘unblemished’ regarding international issues and may act in line with their domestic interests. They do not challenge the status quo, but this does not mean they always support the hegemon (Jordaan, 2003). Instead, they act as stabilizers and legitimizers that enable the system to function smoothly since they benefit from it (Jordaan, 2003). And the way to do this is to underline cooperation because that is where their strength comes from, and that is what they are capable of.

3. Hypotheses

In this study, the main question is why and which certain factors push the second-tier states in their choices for status-seeking strategies. Therefore, the independent variables are the factors that affect the status-seeking strategy – the category of power and role identity - and the dependent variable is the choice of status-seeking strategy.

This study's dependent variables are borrowed from the Social Identity Theory framework of psychology that many scholars have previously utilized in IR, particularly Larson and Shevchenko (2003), in their studies on the status that offers three main strategies (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Larson, Shevchenko (2003), and Lebow (2008) put forth that states can be thought of as a larger group of people; therefore, states showcase similar behaviors as people in a group in their status-seeking aims. In light of these points, states may pursue three different strategies: social competition, which aims to match or surpass the established power that may end up in conflict or war; status mobility, which means emulation of the great powers through conventional ways; and social creativity, which means identifying a new dimension to change the reward structure of the community (Larson & Shevchenko, 2019; Lebow, 2008; Paul et al., 2014).

Following the argument put forth by Ward (2017b), this study argues that status competition is forcing others to recognize you in a certain rank, and it is most likely to be pursued if there is status denial. Indeed, to an extreme point, not only conflict but war can occur due to status denial faced by states aspiring for a higher rank. In the case of the second-tier states, social competition is pursued as a last resort due to their lack of resources in many dimensions to match or outdo the great powers.

Therefore, while formulating the hypotheses of this study, I consider social competition to be the last resort of status-seeking. This study assumes that the status strategy of second-tier states will be one of social mobility or creativity.

As for independent variables, this study proposes a multicausal case with two independent variables: the category of power and identity. Firstly, as the argument above suggests, this study assumes that the status-seeking strategies will be affected by the power capabilities of states, which will determine in which category they fall. The more power a state has in terms of material indicators, the more likely it is to seek a higher status, mainly because it has the means to do so. Therefore, the first two hypotheses of this study are:

***H1:** The kind of capabilities a state has will determine what kind of power it is.*

***H2:** Rising and regional powers are more akin to seeking status through social mobility in accordance with their capabilities. In contrast, middle powers are more akin to seeking status through social creativity in accordance with their capabilities.*

This thesis argues that both regional and rising powers seek status through social mobility, meaning they emulate the behavior of higher-status groups. One might question the need to differentiate between these two types of powers if their methods for seeking status are the same. However, it is important to note that while both seek status through emulation, the hierarchies in which they seek this status differ.

Regional powers aim for improved status within their respective regions, whereas rising powers seek status on a systemic, global level. Given their differing capabilities, the impact they have and the hierarchies they influence are distinct. Rising powers aspire to join the great power club, which is comparatively more exclusive and comprises fewer states capable of influencing the international system. A change within the Great Power Club would result in a shift in the international system itself, whereas regional powers aspire to be regional leaders.

Moreover, as Ward (2017) states, social competition arises when there is consistent status denial. Aiming for the great power club involves higher stakes because status is a scarce resource (Larson et al., 2014). Adler-Nissen and Zarakol (2021) argue that great powers cannot afford to accept every emulating state into their ranks, as doing

so would dilute their status: "if everyone has high status, then no one does" (Hirsch, 1976). Therefore, rising powers, due to their ambition to join the stringent great power club, are more likely to face status contestation and, consequently, are more prone to engaging in social competition and violence. Given their significant capabilities, rising powers are more inclined to resort to social competition if status denial persists, leading to potential changes in the systemic dynamics. In summary, this thesis posits that rising powers are more likely to engage in competition and violence when facing status denial, in line with their capabilities and their targeted status club.

Secondly, this study argues that, given the multilayered characteristics of foreign policy and foreign policy behavior, power or changes in capabilities in relative power alone are not adequate to understand the factors of status-seeking strategies; therefore, we need to consider the identity of the state. The reasoning behind this argument is that capabilities might decide what type of power you are right now, but identity decides what kind of power you want to become. I argue that identity is formed by narratives put forth by policymakers in a specific time span, which is born out of historical experiences, cultural traditions, the nature of the regime, and the composition of capabilities in the system. In simple terms, it is the conception of self. These narratives help the nation determine who they are, where they stand in the world, and where they aspire to be. Regarding status-seeking, this study refers to identity as a role identity. Unlike personal identities, role identity is a social category (Fearon, 1999). Fearon (1999) defines it as a label put on someone that determines a set of expected norms, rules, behaviors, and functions. It is defined by membership rules and social context. Therefore, states choose their role identity in accordance with the narratives they put forth, then act accordingly with its role since it is associated with certain behaviors. The states who adopt the same role act in accordance with the behavior, norms, and functions that it brings with the role identity.

Certain narratives fit established powers' criteria better, while others are seen as threatening or assertive. According to Adler-Nissen and Zarakol (2021), established powers who put forth the norms and values in the current system have the power to recognize others into their group, and they put forth that the great powers

cannot afford to accept every emulating state into the higher order as it would mean that they would lose their status; therefore, they shift the criteria for emulation as soon as a latecomer is close to reaching the higher order. Following these points, the second hypothesis of this study is:

***H3:** The kind of identity will determine the choice of status strategy states will take by determining what kind of power they want to become.*

Overall, this study argues that capabilities alone are inadequate to explain status-seeking strategies; in turn, identity cannot explain them by itself. Therefore, this study aims to combine realist and constructivist explanations and argues that capabilities and identity together determine which status strategy they will pursue.

4. Alternative Explanation

In essence, this study argues that second-tier states immediately below the great powers seek status differently. Considering this, an alternative explanation – the null hypothesis – can be that every state seeks status the same way and opts for the same strategy; that is, the conventional way that great powers do, simply following their footsteps. In this case, the null hypothesis is the Rostowian strategy applied to status-seeking, meaning there is only one model, and if you apply the same stages, you will reach the same level (Rostow, 1959). The main aim of this study is to test the null hypothesis through case studies (George & Bennett, 2004).

5. Methodology

Since this study aims to understand whether there are differences in states' status-seeking strategies of second-tier states and what may have caused them, it will apply a comparative case study as methodology. "A case study is a research method in which one or a few instances of a phenomenon are studied in-depth" (Blatter, 2008). As for this study, I will use a "most-similar case comparison that aims to find cases as similar as possible in all but independent variable, and that differ in their outcomes" (Bennett & Elman, 2007). This study uses a comparative case study design because it argues that second-tier states choose different status-seeking strategies due to multiple factors, that are capabilities and identities. In light of the hypotheses, the **independent variables** of this study are the material capabilities and identities of the second-tier states, and the **dependent variable** is the choice of

status-seeking strategies. To test whether these indicators affect status-seeking strategies, this study will mainly utilize official reports on national strategies, official data on material capabilities, and policymakers' speeches.

To validate my hypotheses, in the case studies, I will look for answers to these four questions: what kind of capabilities do states possess? what do states say they will do? What are their proclaimed identities in a historical context, meaning how they perceive themselves and how they want to be perceived? What did they actually do, meaning their foreign policy post-Cold War? This way, I will collect evidence for the three hypotheses mentioned above. Since I've put forth that capabilities present what kind of power you are and identity will determine what kind of power you want to be, I will look for whether the effect of capabilities is reinforced or contradicted by identity.

Two main strategies will be resorted to by second-tier states; therefore, I will look for evidence that showcases social mobility or creativity. As for social mobility, the testable evidence is emulating what the great powers do, such as focusing on material capabilities and developing them (developing weapons, etc.), projecting power, taking part in the management of the system, intervening, seeking spheres of influence, or making references to being a central player or becoming a great power in rhetoric. On the other hand, testable evidence for social creativity emphasizes dimensions that are not priorities of great powers, such as being a 'good international citizen,' providing aid and assistance, taking action for or emphasizing cooperation-building and references to 'being and doing good' in rhetoric.

I take three cases, states from three categories positioned below the 'great power club,' compare and contrast them, and see whether there is any difference and what may account for the differences in their status-seeking behavior. In the case studies, compared to Large-*N* studies, one of the main concerns is to "pin down specific mechanisms and pathways between causes and effects rather than revealing the average strength of a factor that causes and effect" (Blatter, 2008). Since real life is complex in social sciences, multiple variables may affect the outcome or the relationship between the independent variable, and the outcome may not be immediately clear (Hancke, 2009). Therefore, while examining each case, this study

aims to do process tracing to present that the hypothesized independent variable that differs between the cases does, in fact, affect the outcomes (Bennett & Elman, 2007). In this study, as process-tracing case studies require and Hancke (2009) explains, I plan to start with the most parsimonious and minimalist version of my causal mechanism, that is, the relative power and the identity of second-tier states, then I will try to understand the deeper mechanisms.

6. Case Selection

In light of these points, this study takes Canada, South Africa, and India as the case studies of second-tier states. Canada stands out as a middle power as one of the wealthier countries ranked 15th in the Global Innovation Index (2022). On the other hand, **South Africa**, as a **regional power**, stands out mainly in demographics as it is the 24th most populous country in the world (Correlates of War, 2021). **India**, as a **rising power**, stands out in multiple dimensions, from military expenditure and personnel to GDP (Correlates of War, 2021; The World Bank Group, 2022c)

In the Polity V dataset, which examines the quality of democratic and autocratic authority in institutions, in 2018, Canada scored 10, while South Africa and India both scored 9 (Marshall et al., 2016). According to COW (2021), considering military personnel, Canada ranks 55th, India ranks 3rd, and South Africa ranks 53rd.

Looking at the SIPRI (2022a) that gives us the latest indicators, India ranks 4th, South Africa ranks 53rd, whereas Canada ranks 14th in military expenditure measured by current US\$. Lastly, looking at the 2021 indicators, India's GDP is 3,173,397.59 and ranks 6th, indicating its economic rise (The World Bank Group, 2022a). Canada's GDP is 1,990,761.61\$, and its GDP per capita rate was 52,051.4\$, while South Africa's GDP was 419,946.43\$, and its GDP per capita was 6,994.2\$, indicates that Canada is a wealthier country compared to South Africa; however, South Africa is mentioned as one of the fastest developing countries, is a part of the BRICS and a member to the G20 (The World Bank Group, 2022a, 2022c). Lastly, regarding population scores, as one of the most populous countries in the world, India ranks 3rd, South Africa scores 24th, and Canada ranks 38th (Correlates of War, 2021). This study will elaborate on the identifications of these cases with detailed tables on each variable in their respective chapters: Chapter 3 for Canada, Chapter 4

for South Africa, and Chapter 5 for India.

This study considers India, South Africa, and Canada but not the other states in their respective categories, and there are several reasons for this. Canada, India, and South Africa were part of the Commonwealth and did share a similar history to some extent; however, South Africa, later in 1960, left the commonwealth, whereas Canada and India remained commonwealth countries. Most importantly, both Canada and South Africa were part of the British dominions, which consisted of a total of six countries. Therefore, they had cultural commonalities. Considering this, these cases may help us to see what happens when the identity changes and if status-seeking strategies change alongside.

Moreover, they carry similarities in domestic political conditions due to having a multicultural society and their process of departing from British identity. While South Africa dealt with its history with Boers and apartheid, India is still dealing with the clash between Muslims and Hindus in the country, while Canada sought to develop a Canadian identity as it harbored a French-speaking minority other than the British.

7. A Roadmap of the Thesis

In the Second chapter, I will present and discuss the conceptualization in the literature concerning status, Social Identity Theory (SIT), and power to show the origins of my hypotheses. Then, I will present my hypotheses in detail. I will discuss my methodology and test my cases in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters. This will be followed by a sixth chapter where I will analyze my cases, compare and contrast them, and explain whether my hypotheses hold.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter aims to give an extensive literature review and its criticisms on the three main questions it seeks to answer: *who are the second-tier states, and how can we locate them in the international hierarchy? What kind of strategies are available for them in their status-seeking ambitions? What accounts for their status-seeking strategies?*

First, this chapter looks into the categorizations of powers because this study argues that we need to locate states in their particular categories to make sense of their status-seeking ambition, behavior, and foreign policy objectives. Although the focus is on the second-tier states, it also provides an explanation for other categories to make sense of the in-between powers (second-tier powers) and to whom they compare themselves. Following that sub-section, this chapter gives an extensive literature review and criticizes the current literature on second-tier states since I argue that what is thought to be a single category is comprised of 3 categories of diverse powers. Each literature review is followed by this study's understanding of certain powers and aims to give a relatively clear definition of rising, regional, and middle powers with examples.

The second section of this chapter aims to showcase, first, the rankings of powers based on their material capabilities in 4 dimensions (military personnel and expenditure, GDP, total population, technology) with an extensive table. Second, it aims to show the context of regions without considering the participation of the great and small powers. The third section dives into the second research question of this

study: what kind of strategies are available to the second-tier states? It gives a literature review on the status and how it has been studied in the field of IR. This section includes the literature on Social Identity Theory (SIT) and its criticisms, which outlines the three main strategies of status-seeking states and is borrowed from psychology. The section is concluded by this study's understanding of the three strategies, which comprise the dependent variables of the research, with examples.

The fourth and last section of this chapter focuses on the third research question of the study: what accounts for the choice of status-seeking strategy? It lays out the theoretical framework by explaining the independent variables. It puts forth the realist and constructivist arguments on the status. It argues that there needs to be an eclectic theory to understand what accounts for the status-seeking strategies of second-tier powers. Following the presentation of the hypotheses, this section takes the opportunity to dive into the second hypothesis of this study and gives a literature review on what is understood as identity.

1. Categorizations of Powers

This study is about the second-tier states; however, I would like to present a comprehensive categorization and showcase the entire spectrum of powers with examples so that the reader can have an idea of what the second-tier states are running against and what they seek in terms of a higher status. Therefore, this section will first include a discussion on superpowers, rising great powers, great powers, and small powers. Later, it will be followed by the categorizations of second-tier states.

1.1 Superpowers, Great Powers, and Small Powers

As outlined in the first chapter and as will be seen through the extensive literature review in this chapter, while categorizing all powers, borrowing from Cline et al. (2011), this study first considers three main variables: material capabilities (opportunity), behavior in the international system (willingness), and recognition from others (status attribution). Second, in terms of material capabilities, it looks into four main dimensions for which states compete: military dimension (military expenditure and military personnel), economy (GDP)¹, demographics (total

¹ (The World Bank Group, 2022a, 2022d) Here, it should be mentioned that when referring to GDP, this study takes GDP calculated by global exchange rates. World Bank explains that 'GDP at

population), and technology (technological progress and adoption). Therefore, in this chapter, a decisive categorization is being made through extensive research, and states are ranked in accordance with it.

1.1.1 Superpowers

Firstly, the concept of **superpower**, the highest rank in the system, was introduced in the field by Fox (1944), who considered the USA, the USSR, and Great Britain. While Levy (2014) categorized superpowers as ‘simply an elite within a broader class of great powers,’ Buzan (2004), on the other hand, separated them and argued that a superpower must not only have material capabilities (military, economic, technology) but also formulate the universal values and recognized by others ‘in rhetoric and behavior.’ When the Cold War ended, the USA was the sole superpower in the world, and this study, following Buzan (2004), Brooks and Wohlforth (2016) agree that the US remains the only superpower. Cooley and Nexon (2020) mention that the hegemony of the USA has faced several challenges and is, to some extent, declining; however, they agree that Russia and China, the primary challengers, have not replaced the USA as the sole superpower. In the *Shaper Nations*, Steinberg (2016) also concludes that the USA is currently the ‘global dominant power’ since none of the emerging powers has the ambition to replace the US. The USA possesses material capabilities that allow it to realize its global interests, enjoy recognition from others supported by the formal criteria provided by international organizations, and most importantly, even though there was a relative decline, it is the USA that provides the public goods (Buzan, 2004). As Legro (2016) put forth, no country seems willing to replace the US’s position in terms of public goods; moreover, the US still ranks higher in most domains in terms of material capability (Brooks & Wohlforth, 2016). Yet, almost most of the latest published works warn the USA to

purchaser's prices is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products.’ Another way to look at GDP is GDP measured by purchasing power parity (PPP), which was introduced by World Bank in 1993. World Bank explains that GDP per PPP ‘provides values for the gross domestic product (GDP) expressed in current international dollars, converted by purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion factor... PPP conversion factor is a spatial price deflator and currency converter that eliminates the effects of the differences in price levels between countries.’ When measured by PPP, one can see that China ranks 1st, while India ranks 3rd, and countries that are considered as regional powers in his study rank saliently higher (Indonesia ranks 8th and Türkiye ranks 12th). To not confuse the study further, this study utilizes the most utilized form of measurement in terms of economic dimension.

acknowledge the upcoming challenges, including the emerging powers in global governance and urge to take carefully calculated steps (Nye, 2022).

1.1.2 Great Powers

Second, the **great power** definition has been relatively easy and established in the IR literature, and most earlier works have focused on the material indicators of power (Posen & Ross, 1996; Waltz, 1979). While von Ranke and Rothstein (2010) have emphasized self-sufficiency in military power, Levy (2014) argued that it is inadequate; therefore, a great power has to have the ability to provide its own security, be invincible against the secondary states, although it can be hurt, and have the capacity to project its power beyond its borders (Rothstein, 1968). They not only have a lot more power and say in world politics related to security issues but also have more distinct interests, which they defend more aggressively. The last two indicators, according to Levy (2014), are related to recognition as great powers treat each other as equals and have been recognized as such and guaranteed exclusive rights within international organizations.

Onea (2021), similar to Levy, argues that material capacity is just one part of the story, emphasizes the recognition criteria, and puts forth three criteria to be a great power: higher power capabilities, a distinctive global role, and behaving in accordance with it and being recognized by other established and secondary powers. Bull (1977), Buzan (2004), Wohlforth (2009b), and Murray (M. Murray, 2018b) have emphasized the importance of recognition and standing, in addition to material indicators, and acquiring special rights and duties to be a great power in their works. Buzan (2004) emphasized the significance of geographic reach in the categorization of power, arguing that some may affect the entire system (superpowers), some several regions (great powers), and some may affect only their own region (regional powers). While acknowledging that great powers have control over more than one region and are consulted regarding international security issues, Buzan (2004) argues that they do not need the upper hand regarding capabilities in all significant sectors. Lastly, a different perspective is a neo-classical realism; Zakaria (1998) incorporates state power and politicians' perspectives on power as an indicator of being a great power. By adding a psychological dimension, Keohane (1969) mentions that great power is a state that its leaders consider to have the ability to impact the system by

acting alone.

In this study, great power is accepted as one that has regional and global ambitions, possesses the material capacity and willingness enough to project power, controls a sphere of influence, and is recognized by the community; however, superpowers affect the entire system by providing goods and determining the values, great powers affect other regions in addition to their own (Brooks & Wohlforth, 2016; Edelstein, 2017; Steinberg, 2016). Therefore, great power is a recognized state with the willingness and opportunity to project its global interests outside of its geography thanks to its distinctive economic and military capabilities (Volgy & Gordell, 2019). Currently, France, Great Britain, Japan, Germany, and Russia are the ones that are mainly categorized as great powers. Some scholars also take India as a great power; however, in this study, for the reasons that will be explained, I categorize India as a rising power that is 'banging on the door,' as Buzan (2004) puts forth, immediately below the great powers. The USA is not included in this category as I consider it to be a superpower above the great powers, which can affect the entire system. China is not included in this category as I consider it a rising great power, which will be explained in this section.

When we look into material indicators of power, we can see that these countries comprise the top ten economies of the world, measured by GDP, except Russia, which placed 11th (The World Bank Group, 2022a). When we look at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Military Expenditure Database (2022b) and the Composite Index of National Capabilities version 6 developed by the Correlates of War Project (2021), which measures military expenditure, military personnel, energy consumption, iron and steel production, urban population, and total population, we can see that these six countries are located in the top ten, The USA ranking first, in terms of military expenditure. Moreover, the USA, Russia, and Japan comprise the world's top 10 most populous countries, while Russia and the USA are the largest in territorial size (Correlates of War, 2021). Lastly, according to the Global Innovation Index (2022) - which looks at science and innovation investments, technological progress, technology adoption, and socioeconomic impact - the USA (2), the UK (4), Germany (8), and Japan (13) make the top 15 most innovative countries in the world.

1.1.3 Rising Great Powers

Today, China can be categorized as the only **rising great power**, as there are arguments that mention China is rising thanks to its growing economic ascent and deserves a class by itself above the current great powers (Brooks & Wohlforth, 2016). China is below the USA in certain ranks in terms of material capability. It has not received recognition from others as a superpower, yet as Onea (2021) put forth to rise is not to overtake but to narrow the gap by ‘increasing its military and economic power and globalizing its interests.’ Even though many scholars argue that China is yet to catch the USA, they agree that China is rising by being incorporated into the current order which provides it satisfying the recognition criteria (Cooley & Nexon, 2020; Deng, 2008; Edelstein, 2017). Not only have Chinese domestic elites perceived China as progressing upward in the international hierarchy and pursued policies for this aim, but there is also an ‘intersubjective expectation’ that it is rising, which can be best perceived by the latest National Security papers of the USA (Chestnut & Johnston, 2009; M. C. Miller, 2016). When we look at the material indicators of power, China is the second top economy measured in terms of GDP (The World Bank Group, 2022a), set at the top in the Composite Index of National Capability v.6 (2021), and second in military expenditure, confirmed by both SIPRI data (2022b) and the COW Project. It is the most populous country in the world and is ranked 11th in the Global Innovation Index (2022).

1.1.4 Small Powers

Lastly, one should know that the literature uses both **small power** and small state; however, this study exclusively uses the former to describe states at the last end of the hierarchical order. On the one hand, scholars argue that small powers are those that are weak states that cannot affect the system, and lack influence, power, or the willingness to do so (Handel, 2016; Keohane, 1969; Rothstein, 1968). On the other hand, some argue that small powers can also influence the system by developing niches and acting together, primarily through international organizations (Long, 2022; Neumann & de Carvalho, 2015; Neumann & Gstöhl, 2012; Wivel, 2021). In this study, a small power is a state that lacks material indicators of power relative to others, has limited interests and can have an impact on not the whole system but the parts of it that affect them, albeit less, if it can emphasize its niches and act within a

group such as international institutions. Small powers can be financially poor states such as most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Burundi), Central Asia (Afghanistan), or Latin America (Suriname). Yet, they can be rich and small, which can add to their influence in the system. Small powers are not just pawns or neutral elements in the global system; as Wivel (2021, p. 10) puts forth, “the “virtual enlargement” strategies of, e.g., Qatar, Singapore, and the Vatican City, show how even very small states can utilize their political economy potential, models of good governance, and diplomatic mediation to achieve a status that far exceeds material capabilities.” Moreover, they can affect the system through their ‘unexpected’ behavior in extraordinary situations facing great powers, taking Vietnam in the Vietnam War and Ukraine today as examples.

1.2 Second-tier Powers (Rising, Regional, and Middle Powers)

Although this study takes rising, regional, and middle powers as separate categories under second-tier powers since the literature is too intermingled, they will be discussed under the same sub-title. Later, the arguments will be summed up by emphasizing what each category is understood as in this study. One of the most contested categorizations of power makes up the rising and regional powers as scholars have used different terms to define them, from emerging middle powers, non-traditional middle powers, pivotal states, and shaper nations to second-generation middle powers or middle-range powers.

1.2.1 Rising and Regional Powers

Starting with more clear-cut definitions, while Nolte (2010), Wight (2002), Destradi (2010), and Prys (2012) define regional powers mainly in terms of material capabilities and ability to lead the neighborhood, Osterund (1992), Schoeman (2000), and Baldwin (2002) add willingness and acceptance as indicators to be a regional power. On the other hand, Kennedy et al. (1996) and Hitchcock et al. (2016) follow a different pattern. While Kennedy et al. (1996) define regional and rising powers as pivotal states whose downfall would affect the region, Hitchcock et al. (2016) call rising and regional powers as shaper nations that currently affect their region and global politics to some extent such as Israel, Brazil, India, China, and Türkiye.

Onea (2021) defines rising powers as yet unrecognized powers that are closing the

gap with great power, while a regional power is one that occasionally behaves as a great power, yet the absence of capabilities and recognition prevents it from projecting its power outside of its region. Buzan (2004), like Onega, gives us a clear definition and mentions that regional powers matter within their regions as they ‘determine the local patterns of security relations,’ but they are ‘excluded from the higher level of calculation’ at the system level. Both give the example of Brazil and South Africa as regional powers, and Onega (2021) adds Türkiye and India to this calculation (Buzan, 2004; Onega, 2021).

Kahler (2013), an author who regards India, Brazil, and China as rising powers, puts forth that these powers may be rising, yet they pose no challenge or damage to international governance as they are risk-averse due to domestic political conditions. Larson and Shevchenko (2014), as well, argue that India, Türkiye, and Brazil have not passed the threshold yet, and they add that although they are not overall revisionist, they are seeking higher status and do not always act in alliance with the current order. Ward (2017b) adds that pessimism about the possibility of achieving status ambitions will act as a catalyzer and make a rising power act revisionist, and unlike others, he warns the West especially about China’s status ambitions, although it may not be revisionist, yet.

Volgy and Gordell (2019) propose that status matters in terms of categorizing a rising power because a state can be classified as ‘rising’ if it seeks membership in a high-status club, indicates an interest, and has the opportunity and competence (governmental effectiveness) in doing so. By conceptualizing Cline et al.’s (2011) threshold, which emphasizes opportunity, willingness, and recognition and categorizes states as regional powers and challengers by dividing the world into 6 regions, they argue that a regional power is a state that is ‘recognized and awarded with such status within their own regions’ thanks to their dominant capabilities in a particular region. (Cline et al., 2011; Volgy & Gordell, 2019) They conclude that ‘rising’ might mean different for each perspective and country. While China has arrived and Russia is declining from the major power club, Brazil and India are seeking status in the major power club. In terms of Türkiye and Iran, the trajectory is unclear as they lack the opportunity and competence to ‘rise;’ on the other hand, South Africa is categorized as a regional power (Volgy & Gordell, 2019). Dal

(2016), as well, conceptualizes a regional power threshold borrowed from Daniel Felemes, which takes claim to leadership, necessary power resources, employment of material, industrial, and discursive foreign policy instruments, and recognition as indicators, concludes that Türkiye can be classified as an emerging regional power, not a leader since it lacks acceptance/recognition by its neighbors in the region. Alden and Vieira (2005) as well, mention countries like South Africa, Brazil, and India as emerging regional powers recognized by the USA since there are obstacles for them to opt for multilateralism like middle powers and are yet to be regional leaders since they lack clear strategy and collectivity.

There is a general view on classifying rising or regional powers in relation to the middle powers, and they are termed as emerging middle powers, non-traditional middle powers, second/third generation middle powers, and so forth. Firstly, Wang and French (2013) use the term middle in their work, yet they broaden the concept and conceptualize middle powers by utilizing the relational approach. Therefore, they include rising and regional powers like China, Russia, India, and Brazil in the category of middle-range powers and aim to understand why middle-range powers behave as middle powers (Wang & French, 2013). They define middle-range powers as those that are ‘not so powerful to have a decisive influence and those that are not so powerless as to be unable to protect themselves,’ which leads them to categorize all second-tier powers as in one category of middle-range powers, which is the exact opposite aim of this thesis (Wang & French, 2013).

One of the works that called rising and regional powers emerging middle powers, separated and compared them to ‘traditional’ ones was Jordaan (2003), as he argued that they are different from the traditional ones (Canada, Australia) because they are reformist and legitimizing, relatively unstable and recently democratized, have a regional focus, eager for regional integration and cooperation. Therefore, they are not middle powers (in a traditional sense) nor great powers. Dal (2014, 2016), as well, utilizes the term emerging/rising middle powers to separate G20 countries from the traditional ones in her articles, sometimes also referring to them as rising powers, where she assesses the status-seeking policies of those states and appoints Türkiye as its ‘unique position’ since it has lower bargaining power compared to established rising powers such as China, India, or Brazil, yet it can affect policy outcomes

through its regional, economic, military and, political weight on geopolitical matters (Dal & Gök, 2014; Parlar Dal & Dipama, 2019).

Sandal (2014) uses the term second-generation middle powers and argues that developing states' 'middle power behavior' and 'assertive foreign policy' are a legitimization strategy toward the domestic and international audience. As Alden and Vieira (2005) do, she argues that multilateralism constitutes an obstacle for the second generation of middle powers and describe them as countries that are 'among the most sizeable economies in the region, has working democracies, and claimed leadership of a group of countries or defined a policy niche area' (Sandal, 2014). Therefore, she emphasizes 'markets, leadership, and regionalization' as the determinants of middle powerhood (Sandal, 2014).

Cooper et al. (1993) and Cooper and Dal (2016) provided the literature a detailed and historical work, where they categorized middle powers into 3 categories and classified rising and regional powers as second-wave and third-wave middle powers depending on their 'rise' in the historical context. According to Cooper et al. (1993), the first wave of new middle powers consisted of countries from non-aligned movements, such as India and Yugoslavia, and the second wave consisted of countries from the South, like Nigeria and Mexico, which also were critics of the norms rather than supporters as in the case of traditional middle powers. They emphasize that these powers also carry middle powers activism within them; however, they change in intensity (combative and accommodative) and target (multilateral or regional) (Cooper et al., 1993). They conclude that the potential third wave and the role of other putative powers, such as Türkiye and South Africa, further complicate the picture (Cooper et al., 1993). Later, Cooper and Dal (2016) argue that second-wave middle powers are the non-traditional middle powers that have risen post-Cold War thanks to the formation of informal groupings, mainly the BRICS. They call the third-wave middle powers the 'missing middle within the G20 but outside the G7', which have come to the world stage thanks to the post-global financial crisis era, and they pinpoint to the MIKTA countries (Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Türkiye, and Australia) (Cooper & Parlar Dal, 2016).

Indeed, scholarly works on emerging middle powers, which this study takes as rising

and regional powers, mention G20, BRICS, and MIKTA countries and define the new ‘middle powerhood’ around these cases. Schweller (2011) argues that there are emerging powers in this ‘age of disorder,’ yet all have different multiple identities. While China does not have a fixed identity yet, India is seen as a likely supporter (of the USA) and Brazil as the rising spoiler as it is seen as the ‘most revisionist of all the emerging powers’ (Schweller, 2011). Cooper (2013), in his article that re-examines the diplomatic styles of the ‘secondary powers in a world of diminished hegemony,’ argues that the ‘emerging middle’ has the economic and activist behavior of middle powerhood, yet they lack the middle power ‘identity’ as they select a few niche areas to manage and discuss them in the context of their formal or informal groupings such as G20 (Cooper, 2013). While Cooper (2013) argues that these emerging powers use activism in the hub of global governance to enhance their status, Røren and Beaumont (2019) test the status performance of BRICS countries quantitatively, where they look at the wealth (material attributes) and embassy count (status recognition) and qualitatively through case studies. They conclude that while China and India achieved status recognition throughout the years, South Africa has a status surplus, Brazil is a status underperformer, whereas Russia is a dissatisfied overperformer (Røren & Beaumont, 2019). Öniş and Kutlay (2013). aim to understand to what extent regional powers' assertive foreign policies and pro-activism are sustainable by accounting for both agent and structure. They look into MIKTA countries, specifically Türkiye, which they call near-BRICS countries. In conclusion, they put forth that while there are greater advantages for near-BRICS countries to have an influence in the global arena, they experience an ‘expectations-credibility gap’ as they risk overestimating their leverage (Öniş & Kutlay, 2013). Later, in 2017, they term the same countries as second-generation emerging powers and put forth four conditions for these countries to punch above their weight in regional and global governance: the ability to serve as a role model, the capacity to build effective coalitions, having a match between expectations and capabilities, and the capacity to identify niche areas (Öniş & Kutlay, 2017). They conclude that to assess emerging middle powers, one has to consider domestic political and economic conditions, recognition, and contextual aspects of the region (Öniş & Kutlay, 2017). Jongryn (2015) also mentions that MIKTA countries can be termed as regional and middle powers with global influence if they contribute to governance through

organizations and G20 processes.

As we can see from the above, there is an overabundance of definitions and terms to classify regional and rising powers, yet there has yet to be an agreement on criteria. Scholarly works that look into the same category of states go on and create their own terms depending on the needs of their own study. In light of these points, this study considers opportunity, willingness, and recognition, as Volgy et al. (2011) and Cline et al. (2011) do, to classify second-tier states and uses clear-cut terms such as rising and regional powers to not blur the water further.

This study argues that a **rising power** is a country that is not overtaking but narrowing the gap in many dimensions thanks to its capabilities (material attributes), willingness (behavior), and recognition (from the established power). Unlike the other second-tier states, in the case of rising powers, the rising is multi-dimensional. As they rise in terms of multiple capabilities, they seek a higher status. Rising powers may indicate a willingness to expand military capabilities, increase population, project its power, and influence the system's management. Following this definition, this study takes only India as a rising power as it surpasses others with its economic and military capabilities, plus demographics.

When we look into the material indicators of power (Table 1), comparing India with a potential rising power, we can see that India ranks 4th, surpassing some great powers, in military expenditure, while Brazil ranks 12th. Regarding GDP, India is 6th; on the other hand, Brazil is 17th (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022b). Looking at technological capacities, India ranks 40th, and Brazil ranks 54th, which shows that both countries lag, yet Brazil is clearly behind India and many more (2022). Lastly, the only category they are close to is demographics, where India ranks 2nd, and Brazil ranks 5th (Correlates of War, 2021). India has a latent power with its vast population and increasing military capabilities; it is also one of the few countries with nuclear weapons. Currently, 9 countries possess nuclear weapons, and 7 out of these 9 countries are great powers.

Furthermore, it has been stated that India has recognition from the established powers, especially the USA, whereas Brazil, another state that was mentioned as a rising power, despite its growing capabilities and activism, lags behind major powers

and India in terms of all dimensions (The White House, 2010). As Herz (2011) argues, Brazil can be a confident regional power, but its acceptance and capabilities in the global sphere are questionable. This does not mean that India has no obstacles, yet as it has been said to rise is not to overtake but to narrow the gap, and India has been acting more strongly to do so despite its obstacles (Basrur, 2011; Paul & Shankar, 2014).

The same goes for the regional powers, and this study considers **a regional power** as a country that exceeds the others in the region in terms of capabilities (military size and demographics), attempts to lead, and, in turn, is accepted by the regional and global actors. A regional power has latent power yet lacks the ability to project this power outside of its region due to some obstacles. For example, it can be the economy that drags such regional power to act more assertively in the global sphere. While some regional powers attempt to have more assertive policies, such as Brazil or Türkiye, and have a global reach to some extent, some can only have latent capabilities, are stuck in their region, and do not oppose more due to a lack of acceptance or lack of resources to do so such as Nigeria and Egypt.

1.2.2 Middle Powers

In the traditional sense, the definition of middle powers could not escape from contestation and can be summarized under three perspectives: material, functional, and hierarchical. However, one might add geographical and normative perspectives to this list. One of the earlier works on middle powers, written by Wood (1988), put forth that middle powers tend to favor multilateral cooperation and gravitate towards the middle as mediators or moderators in conflict. In his work, Wood (1988) conceptualizes both functional and material approaches as he ranks countries by aggregate GNP first and then takes into account behavior by assigning roles such as regional/sub-regional, functional, stabilizer, and negative (free-rider, etc.). Another work that considers two approaches, material and geographical, is Holbraad (1984), as he categorizes the countries first by looking at their GNPs, then by dividing the world into regions to create a hierarchy within regions. As he does not appoint a behavioral characteristic to the categorization, he concludes that the ‘great powers’ can be called upper middle powers, while the other countries are a mixed group (Spain, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Nigeria, etc.) that should be considered within their

regions (Holbraad, 1984).

Cooper et al. (1993), in their works on Australia and Canada, identify four perspectives to identify middle powers, which are geographic, normative, positional, and behavioral (catalyst, facilitator, and manager). Yet, they mainly emphasize the behavioral approach and elaborate on that through case studies (Cooper et al., 1993). Later, in his work of 1997, Cooper (1997) elaborates on this middle power behavior, again around Australia and Canada, which Cooper et al. (1993) terms as the first ‘followers’ of the principal ally, the USA, post-WWII. Cooper (1997) puts forth that the principle theme for the middle powers is that they all emphasize coalition and cooperation building and are catalysts or facilitators within a given time on selective issues. Therefore, they have their niches in which they stand out; however, they change in the form of operation and the scope of activity (Cooper, 1997).

De Bhal (2023) simply argued that to understand a middle power, one might ask what middle powers are but should ask what actors do in terms of practice; therefore, he concludes that a middle power is simply a self-identifying category in an attempt to distinguish from oneself from the small states. He calls the middle power category a ‘category of practice’ (De Bhal, 2023). While Chapnick (1999), by evaluating all three conceptualizations, takes the hierarchical route and even calls India a middle, in fact, a small power that occasionally behaves as a middle power does, Neack (2017), after evaluating a vast literature, concludes that any state at any given time can behave as a middle power does by pursuing multilateralism for political reasons. Such works can be at most called gibberish, as calling India not only a middle power but also a small power is not currently corresponding to reality, and never did. One could argue that during the 1990s, when Chapnick published his piece, India was not where it is today; however, even then India had a significant population, therefore, latent power, plus it was a nuclear power. Moreover, Neack (2017), by arguing that anyone can become a middle power at any time, clearly ignores the importance of recognition and opportunity when locating power in a certain category. A state may mediate a conflict in its region or provide coalition building in international organizations, yet, indeed, this is where recognition comes into play. An act of multilateralism does not indicate becoming a middle power without others’ recognition and acceptance. Therefore, willingness is not the only determinant of

middle powerhood.

Patience (2014), like Chapnick (1999), mentions three conceptualizations for middle powers: the nineteenth-century Concert of Europe, regionalist, and neo-Kantian conceptualization with a constructivist overtone. According to Patience (2014), in the nineteenth-century Concert of Europe conceptualization, authors follow a realistic perspective and argue that small powers, by allying with great powers, imagine a middle power role for themselves and influence world politics through such shelters; on the other hand, in the regionalist approach, authors argue that middle-sized countries can influence arrangements on especially transnational threats through regional groupings (Patience, 2014). According to Cooper (1997), which Neack (2017) calls a Neo-Kantian concept, middle powers can act together with like-minded states through institutions and have an influence regionally and globally. This view carries a normative approach within itself; however, unlike Wohlforth et al. (2018), which takes middle powers as ‘good international citizens’, Cooper (Cooper, 1997) emphasizes that middle powers may have an ‘implicit claim of moral superiority, yet they do not have an unblemished record with respect to international issues.’

The latest works on middle power categorizations have emphasized the behavioral aspect of middle powerhood. They argued that middle powers support coalition and cooperation building, opt for multilateralism, and emphasize niche areas in which they are good to stand out and have an influence. While some authors have concentrated on the normative aspect, arguing that middle powers tend to carry a moral authority over issues such as international law and human rights, thanks to their working democracies and sizeable economies, others emphasized their diplomatic capabilities by respecting the existing order and acting as legitimizers to play international roles and claim a higher status of middle power, despite their smallness in terms of population size or military capabilities. Yet, almost all authors from earliest to latest agree that middle power activism is a strategy to claim influence in international politics, and while some have turned that to their identities, others are attempting to do so but face some obstacles, especially recognition (Buzan, 2004; Cooper & Parlar Dal, 2016; Jordaan, 2003; Neack, 2017; Neumann & de Carvalho, 2015; O’Neill, 1999, pp. 193–215; Öniş & Kutlay, 2017; Sandal, 2014;

Wohlforth et al., 2018).

Another agreement, to some extent, on middle powers comprises the nature of the domestic regimes of these states. As Jordaan (2003) puts forth, ‘traditional middle powers’ have been democratized early and are still ruled by democratic regimes. Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter 1, middle powers that are considered in this study score ten out of ten in the Polity V dataset (Marshall et al., 2016), showcasing that they are full democracies, specifically liberal democracies, and have been for a long time. On the other hand, ‘non-traditional middle powers,’ or ‘second/third generation of middle powers,’ which this study takes as mainly regional powers, are mixed and diverse in terms of their domestic regimes (Marshall et al., 2016).

In this study, I argue that **middle powers** perform well economically and technologically. They emphasize their niches, such as pointing towards multilateralism and cooperation-building, and are recognized as being ‘middle powers,’ and those that stand out, relative to small powers, in terms of higher military capabilities, technological developments, economic well-being, and prosperity (GDP and GDP per capita), and the nature of their domestic regimes (liberal democracy). In terms of theoretical stance, this study takes the behavioral approach following other works on middle powers. Middle powers opt for multilateralism as they lack the resources (opportunity) or the willingness to act alone in the global arena. Middle powers stand out regarding diplomatic capabilities in issue-specific areas and do not challenge the status quo as they know they would be hurt by it in terms of influence. This does not mean they always support the hegemon since they also have working democracies, wealthy populations, and growing technological capabilities, which allow them to punch above their weight and influence the hegemon to some extent. However, these powers know that international arenas, such as alliances, organizations, and regimes, allow them to have their strengths. As mentioned above, middle powers stand out regarding economic well-being and prosperity, technological advancements, and democratic regimes relative to small powers or other second-tier states. In short, not only multilateralism but a combination of all these elements creates a middle power in the international system.

2. Visualization of Categorization by Material Indicators and Regions

This section provides two tables on categorizations of states. In the two tables, red color represents rising powers, green represents regional powers, and blue color is used for middle powers. First, there is **Table 1**, a ranking table to show how some states stand out in the four dimensions mentioned above and the role played by the material indicators besides willingness and recognition. In the first table, I am not presenting interranging within the category, rather, it is a presentation of ranking relative to other categories. In addition, the first table is not a comprehensive table since the comprehensive list will be followed in Table 2.

The material indicators from the Correlates of War project (military personnel and total population) are taken from National Material Capabilities version 6 (2021), which was last updated in 2021; however, the dataset covers the 1816-2016 period for all countries. Since this study aims to categorize powers in the current system, the figures in Table 1 are from the year 2016. Regarding military expenditure, the indicators are taken from Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's Military Expenditure Database (2022b), which was last updated in 2022. In accordance with the aim of the study, the GDP values of the World Bank (2022a) are taken from the most recent year, 2021. The indicators for the technological dimensions are from the year 2022 (*Global Innovation Index*, 2022). **Table 2** includes all the second-tier states and in which region they are located to get a sense of the regional context.

Table 1 – A ranking table of powers based on their most recent material capabilities in 5 dimensions (2016-2022)

Power Categorization	Countries	Military expenditure (in thousands of US dollars) (rank)	GDP(in billions of dollars) (rank)	Demography (total population) (rank)	Technology (innovation index rank)	Military Personnel (in thousands)(rank)
Great Powers	China	145039000 (2)	17,734,062.65 (1)	1403500 (1)	11 th	2333 (1)
	The USA	604452000 (1)	22,996,100.00	322180 (3)	2 nd	1381 (2)

			(2)			
	Russia	46626000 (3)	1,775,79 9.92 (11)	143965 (9)	47 th	798 (5)
	Germany	38281000 (7)	4,223,11 6.21 (4)	81915 (16)	8 th	179 (27)
	The UK	52498000 (6)	3,186,85 9.74 (5)	65789 (21)	4 th	155 (34)
	France	47201000 (8)	2,937,47 2.76 (7)	64721 (22)	12 th	209 (22)
	Japan	47342000 (10)	4,937,42 1.88 (3)	127749 (10)	13 th	247 (18)
Rising Powers	India	51052000 (4)	3,173,39 7.59 (6)	1324171 (2)	40 th	1346 (3)
Regiona l Powers	Brazil	23545000 (17)	1,608,98 1.22 (12)	207653 (5)	54 th	335 (15)
	Indonesia	8171000 (27)	1,186,09 2.99 (16)	261115 (4)	75 th	396 (13)
	Türkiye	8764000 (23)	815,271. 75 (19)	79512 (18)	37 th	511 (9)
	Mexico	5060000 (28)	1,293,03 7.87 (15)	127540 (11)	58 th	277 (17)
	South Africa	3090000 (53)	419,946. 43 (32)	56015 (24)	61 st	67 (53)
Middle Powers	Canada	13162000 (14)	1,990,76 1.61 (9)	36290 (38)	15 th	66 (55)
	Sweden	5828000 (32)	627,437. 90 (22)	9838 (80)	3 rd	30 (78)

	Norway	5968000 (29)	482,437. 02 (27)	5255 (117)	22 nd	26 (85)
	Switzerland	4720000 (35)	812,866. 93 (20)	8402 (99)	1 st	21 (93)
	Australia	322298 (13)	1.445.76 (19)	24126 (53)	25 th	57 (60)
Small Powers	Tajikistan	103.5 (127)	87462 (104)	8735 (97)	104 th	125 (9)
	Rwanda	88000 (121)	11,070.3 6 (130)	11918 (77)	105 th	33 (75)
	Honduras	477.5 (93)	629195 (105)	9113 (95)	113 th	11 (116)

**(Correlates of War, 2021; *Global Innovation Index*, 2022; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022b; The World Bank Group, 2022a)

According to the table above, we can locate India as a rising power as it is well off in 3 dimensions. India is doing well in especially the military dimension, as indicated by the military expenditure since it exceeds some of the great powers and all the other second-tier states by ranking the 4th. Its exceeding position is also indicated relative to other second-tier states since it is well off in 3 of the dimensions compared to regional powers and middle powers, which do well in 2 dimensions at most. When we look at the regional powers, one can see how they are well off in terms of population compared to the middle powers, and they outweigh the middle powers in terms of military personnel, as middle powers do not make up the top 50 of the ranking. Moreover, they are up there in military expenditure, following the middle powers (a larger GDP indicates larger means to spend on the military). It may seem as if they also stand out in terms of the economy when measured by GDP; however, when measured by GDP per capita, the economic weakness of regional powers, or the richness of the middle powers, stands out more since Switzerland ranks the 6th, Norway the 7th and Canada the 23rd. At the same time, the regional powers mentioned above do not even enter the 50 prosperous economies in the world (The World Bank Group,

2022c). Furthermore, the middle powers stand out in the technology dimension by ranking in the top 15 countries next to the great powers – except Norway (22nd) – in the Global Innovation Index, with Switzerland ranking 1st, Sweden 3rd, and Canada 15th. In sum, the material indicators of power tell us which dimensions of second-tier states stand out compared to small powers and each other and how they are indeed three categories of power that do well in different dimensions.

To summarize the categorization of power, this study takes rising power as a state, narrowing the gap in terms of material indicators, and succeeds in many dimensions out of five (military expenditure, GDP, total population, technology, and military personnel). Besides material indicators, this study considers behavior and recognition while categorizing states and argues that rising powers show a willingness to rise, and their willingness is recognized by others, albeit in a good or bad sense. Regional powers are those that surpass others in the region in latent power, mainly military expenditure and total population, yet they lack the necessary means (e.g., economic obstacles) to project their power outside of their region. They show a willingness to affect the regional context and are recognized, thereby consulted, by others in regional affairs. Regional powers may show a desire to affect the entire system and seek a higher status; however, they may experience an expectations-credibility gap due to overestimating what they can achieve and are rejected for higher status by others in the system. Lastly, this study considers the middle powers as states that are prosperous, democratic, economically well, and technologically developed in terms of material capabilities. Yet, they lag behind in terms of military and demographic dimensions. Therefore, they emphasize multilateralism, cooperation-building, and coalition-building in the system. Due to their lack of resources, they underline their niches and diplomatic capabilities in issue-specific areas. They do not emulate or show a willingness to do what the great powers do, overtake or narrow the gap relative to great powers. They usually refrain from assertive policies instead emphasize activist policies and are recognized as ‘stabilizers’ in the system.

Table 2 showcases the complete list of second-tier states separated by

region, considering the material (GDP, GDP per capita, demographics, military size, and technology) capabilities (details in Table 1), behavior in the international system, and recognition from the other states in the global and respective regional area. As mentioned, the rising powers are written in red, regional powers in green, and middle powers in blue.

Table 2 – The Second-Tier Powers separated by region

Indo-Pacific	Sub-Saharan Africa	Europe	Americas	The Middle East
India Indonesia South Korea Australia Taiwan (?)	South Africa Nigeria	Denmark Finland Sweden The Netherlands Switzerland Norway Italy Spain	Brazil Argentina Mexico Canada	Egypt Iran Saudi Arabia Türkiye Israel

Looking at the above table, we can see that Europe mainly consists of middle powers, whereas the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa are comprised of regional powers. In contrast, the Indo-Pacific and America are diverse regions. In light of these points and tables, four regions are multipolar, and only the Sub-Saharan Africa region is bipolar with two regional powers. I should emphasize that this is without consideration of great powers, superpowers, or small powers within the region and only considering the second-tier states.

I should mention that there are certain countries, such as Vietnam, Philippines, or Democratic Republic of Congo, who are fairly big but in the small power category since they are not yet at the level of being in the same categories as the others in the table. In the above table, six countries deserve special attention: Israel, Indonesia, Pakistan, Taiwan, Italy, and Spain. Firstly, Israel is a tough case when we look at its capabilities, demographics, relations, and narratives. This study takes Israel as a regional power, given the context and security of its region, its behavior following it, and recognition from the established powers such as the USA and Germany. Looking at the material indicators, it is ranked 15th in military expenditure (current US\$), its overall CINC score is 40, and it is placed 100th in the population index (Correlates of

War, 2021; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022a).

A tougher and more ambiguous case is Taiwan, with its material capabilities relatively similar to those of regional powers. It ranks 21st in military expenditure and 55th in the total population (Correlates of War, 2021; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022a). As an unrecognized state, it isn't easy to locate in a particular category; however, given its relations with the great powers and its behavior within the international context, it has to be taken into account when ranking states in the global hierarchy. I could argue that it is, first and foremost, not a small power with its capabilities, behavior, and special attention given to it due to its importance against China. It is not a middle power per se since it does not particularly emphasize its niches in the diplomatic arena, and it is much more capable than that. Indeed, it is a democracy and ranks 26th out of 100 in the Global Innovation Index – innovation at the national level (*Global Innovation Index*, 2022; Marshall et al., 2016). However, I would argue that a country that is constantly under threat of being occupied can not become a middle power due to its regional context. It is undoubtedly not a rising power since it is not narrowing the gap relative to great powers and has no intention to do so. This leaves us with the category of regional power. Taiwan lacks a vast population relative to other regional powers and lags behind in terms of military expenditure. However, I argue that it has the willingness to affect regional affairs due to its context and receives special attention from the great powers. Therefore, if we had to decide on a particular category of ranking, even though it will indeed be contested, one can claim that Taiwan is a regional power in the Indo-Pacific.

Thirdly, Indonesia and Pakistan's placement can be confusing to some. In the case of Indonesia, this study takes it as a regional power, especially given its latent power. Its demography ranks 15th, its GDP is 16th, and it ranks 27th in military expenditure. On the other hand, Pakistan may have latent power with its demography, 7th in the world, and military spending, ranking 24th; however, I do not take it as a regional power since it is, to clearly put, a bankrupt state (Correlates of War, 2021; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022a; The World Bank Group, 2022c). Regional powers may be dragged by

their economic situation and cannot achieve higher status, yet Pakistan is an extreme case that cannot be compared to other regional powers such as Türkiye or Brazil in terms of economy (Nazar, 2023).

Lastly, this study gives special attention to Italy and Spain to emphasize that they are not the middle powers of Europe. When we look into their material indicators, they are up there with the other regional powers; moreover, they are willing to impact their region through institutions they are involved in. Italy ranks 8th in GDP, 12th in military expenditure, 23rd in total population, and 29th in military personnel, while Spain ranks 16th in GDP, 16th in military spending, 30th in total population, and 41st in military personnel. They are also up in the rank in the technological dimension, Italy ranking 28th and Spain 29th. They are not great powers in the current system, well-off relative to other regional powers, yet they can not be termed middle powers with their GDP, total population, and military expenditure. Therefore, this study considers them regional powers, even though they are relatively well-off.²

3. Status and Social Identity Theory

In the literature, status is referred to as either membership in a club of actors or standing in a hierarchical order, also called an aspirant or recognized identity. This study takes status as a social ranking in the hierarchy conferred by a community according to several criteria which may change over time (Dafoe et al., 2014b; Larson et al., 2014b; Larson & Shevchenko, 2014, 2019; Ringmar, 2015; Wohlforth, 2009b). Even though it has been studied relatively late in the IR field, there have been works on it by established scholars, referring to status as prestige. Previously, scholars such as Gilpin (Gilpin, 1981) and Morgenthau (Morgenthau, 1948) stressed its importance by referring to status as prestige and claiming it as the ‘everyday currency of international relations’ or ‘an intrinsic element of relations.’ However, they both saw prestige as a means of power. Recently, some scholars, such as Mercer (2017), dissented from the argument that prestige matters and argued that prestige was an illusion; moreover, it did

² This study does not take the EU as a whole unit and chooses to categorize each state within the EU since the EU is not a state but an organization comprised of diverse powers. (Correlates of War, 2021; *Global Innovation Index*, 2022; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022a; The World Bank Group, 2022c)

not bring the state any increased power. In the end, these scholars could not explain conflicts that occur to gain status for the sake of status. Lebow (2010) argued that status had been neglected in the literature; however, one might describe what has been deemed ‘irrational’ if it considers status since it takes the lead as the leading motive for 58 percent of the total wars over three and a half centuries.

Wohlforth gave us a detailed definition later in the extensive volume edited by Paul, Wohlforth, and Larson (Larson et al., 2014b). They put forth that status is a social, psychological, cultural, and positional good that is scarce since “if everyone has high status, then no one does” (Hirsch, 1976). Therefore, the more it is shared by everyone, the less valuable it is. Moreover, it is collective, subjective, and relative, which should be agreed upon by the actors in the international system; therefore, for someone to enjoy the status, it should be accepted by the other actors, and one cannot claim it by itself, which is referred to as voluntary deference (Larson et al., 2014b; Wohlforth, 2009b).

One might confuse status/standing with other concepts such as reputation, honor, prestige, power, or authority. Scholars put forth that prestige, unlike status, does not point to a hierarchical position in the ranking. Following Weber, while status points to a ranking, prestige is the respect that is being awarded according to this rank (Neumann & de Carvalho, 2015). Furthermore, status does not provide states with a guarantee to exercise their authority, or power does not guarantee a state a particular standing as it is generally defined as material attributes, and it can be inadequate to acquire status. Wohlforth (2009b) also emphasizes that one can translate material capabilities into status resources. Dafoe et al. (2014b) and Renshon (2017) put forth that while reputation can be seen as someone’s credibility to do something that is often in control of an actor, status is a rank that is in control of a community. Although all these terms are closely related, only status refers to standing in a social rank (Larson et al., 2014b; O’Neill, 1999, p. 194).

Neumann and de Carvalho (2015) and Duque (2018) argued that recognition is the non-negligible part of status as it is what status depends on. According to

Duque (2018), status goes from being only about material attributes to being about the ‘systemic social processes.’ That means actors compare themselves to one another to understand their status, and this comparison is not only on material attributes but is multidimensional. Larson et al. (2014b) mention that status is about collective beliefs on the state’s ranking on valued attributes such as ‘wealth, coercive capabilities, culture, demographic position, sociopolitical organization, or diplomatic clout.’ Therefore, for a state to rank higher on social status, it must be relatively robust in all of these dimensions; otherwise, its argument regarding its status may not be persuasive and recognized. There are multiple ranks in which a state must compete (Larson et al., 2014b).

Although there are scholars such as Mercer (2017) who argue that status should be worthless because it does not bring the actors increased power, scholarly consensus holds that status matters in world politics since one can understand behavior, withdrawal from certain institutions or treaties, arms race, foreign aid, and the causes of specific wars or crisis in the world by considering the effect of status on human beings and groups (Dafoe et al., 2014b; Freedman, 2016; Lebow, 2008, 2010; M. Murray, 2018b; Renshon, 2017; Ward, 2017b; Wohlforth, 2009b). Indeed, lately, scholars emphasize that status is not only a valuable good for the great powers but also the smaller states as it can be the only game in town for them to influence world politics, unlike great powers who have influence thanks to a tremendous amount of resources (Neumann & de Carvalho, 2015; Wohlforth et al., 2018). It not only helps us to understand the motive of great powers to compete without reasonable causes but also when and why rising powers turn to revisionism, in which ways, and why even the smaller states try to take the lead in certain aspects of world politics. Therefore, it helps us to understand the diversity of actions in everyday politics.

Scholars who work on the subject of status have benefited from multiple analytical and theoretical frameworks; however, the most borrowed and utilized one was the Social Identity Theory framework from the psychology field, mainly thanks to Larson and Shevchenko’s (2019) extensive work on Chinese and Russian quest for status. Larson and Shevchenko (2019) argued that the choice of strategy for status-seeking depends on the openness of the status

hierarchy (permeability of the elite club) and the values of the group. According to Ward (2017a), since 2014, at least 11 out of 40 articles have adopted and applied the framework, and it is the only framework to have such an influence. While the most utilized framework was the direct application of Larson and Shevchenko's work, these two authors borrowed their theoretical framework from the scholars of psychology, mainly Hogg et al. (2004) and Tajfel and Turner (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

According to Hogg et al. (2004), groups who share a common identity compete for social distinctiveness, and this competition later became known as the Social Identity Theory. Turner (1984) argues that group memberships determine our actions toward others (the out-group) to the point where they define our values, norms, and roles. He puts forth that while group members desire positive self-esteem for the in-group, they also discriminate and appoint negative attributes to the out-group, thereby defining the 'us' vs. 'them' and acting per these stereotypes (Turner, 1984). Tajfel and Turner (1986), first in 1979 and later in 1986, laid the details of group behavior, the most used framework in IR. They put forth that belonging to two different social groups, which they define as being a member of the same social category, triggers social discrimination in favor of the ingroup and provokes competitive responses (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). They conclude that individuals strive to achieve positive social identity through the groups to which they belong and make favorable comparisons for the in-group; in fact, individuals strive either to leave or make their in-group positively distinctive if the social identity is unsatisfactory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

This is where the convenience of the SIT comes into play for the IR scholars, as some argue that the nation-states make up the largest in-groups, which the individuals, the citizens, internalize 'as an aspect of their self-concept' (Lebow, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). As they argue, status brings the individual various satisfaction from material resources to psychological satisfaction that boosts our ego and self-esteem (Onea, 2014). Scholars put forth that decision-makers in the state value status and favor their nation-state (Dafoe et al., 2014b). Wohlforth (2009b, p. 37) says, "if those who act on behalf of a state (or those who select

them) identify with that state, then they can be expected to derive utility from its status in international society.” This understanding of groups, membership, and decision-makers thus supplies the connection between status and International Relations. States can be considered larger groups who assume status in the international system; therefore, we tend to favor our state as relevant to others (Lebow, 2016).

Tajfel and Turner (1986) mentioned that when social identity is unsatisfactory, individuals have several strategies to be content with their status. Still, status is not regarded as a scarce good but as an ‘outcome of the intergroup comparison’(Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 19). They lay out three strategies, social mobility, creativity, and social competition (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Those strategies are adopted by the IR scholars as the state’s (the group) status-seeking strategies and will be utilized as dependent variables in this study.

Firstly, individuals may try to leave or disassociate themselves from the group to join a higher-status group at the individual level to achieve a personal solution (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, pp. 19–20). Secondly, group members may redefine or alter the elements of comparison to benefit themselves and seek positive distinctiveness. This can be done in 3 ways: creating new dimensions for contrast, changing the values attributed to the groups from negative to positive, and changing the out-group to which the in-group is compared (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, pp. 19–20). Unlike the first, the social creativity strategy is seen as a group strategy. Lastly, another group strategy is social competition, in which group members seek positive distinctiveness compared to out-group through direct competition (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, pp. 19–20).

These are the three strategies adopted by Larson and Shevchenko (2010) and those who followed them in the IR field; however, there has been some criticism by Ward (2017a) on how the strategies were adopted, which he calls the ‘flattened application of SIT.’ In his article called ‘Lost in Translation,’ Ward (2017a) criticizes the way Larson and Shevchenko adopted the SIT in international relations, and he puts forth that the authors misread the framework, which was multi-dimensional in the first place; moreover, he argued that the

‘flattened application of SIT’ assumed that denied status ambitions could turn into geopolitical competitions, yet the original framework has no such thing. Therefore, he aimed to show two downsides of the mostly-used framework in the research on status (Ward, 2017b).

To be specific, Ward (2017a) first criticized that scholars who adopted the framework have treated social mobility as a group strategy, which was indeed an individual strategy to make it fit their work; therefore, they blurred the lines between mobility and competition and flattened the framework. According to Ward (2017a), in the original framework, social mobility is an individual strategy for a person in a group, and it can be solved by the person merely disidentifying himself from a low-status group and moving to a higher-status group. Therefore, it requires nothing from the other in-group members and does not alter the in-group status hierarchy (Ward, 2017b). Yet, the flattened version assumed all three strategies were collective and are pursued on behalf of the group to reach a higher status (Ward, 2017b). Following that, his main criticism is reflected in the theoretical claims, the independent variables, of Larson and Shevchenko. He second puts forth that SIT can not explain geopolitical rivalries (Ward, 2017b). Indeed, it does not explain what happens when a group is consistently denied recognition for its status ambitions. Furthermore, through his assessment of the adopted framework with two case studies (Wilhelmine Germany and Imperial Japan), Ward (2017a) argued that Larson and Shevchenko's main theoretical claims, that elite club permeability causes states to adopt geopolitically competitive forms of status-seeking is problematic and questionable. Therefore, he concluded that we should accept the limits of SIT, and future research should combine SIT with other theoretical traditions (Ward, 2017b).

Acknowledging Ward’s criticisms, this study adopts Larson and Shevchenko’s version of SIT since, overall, the vast majority of criticisms by Ward were directed at the causes of choosing a particular status strategy and aggression (Ward, 2017a, p. 832). Rather than adopting Larson and Shevchenko’s independent variables as they are, the elite club permeability and values of the club, this study proposes different independent variables and

chooses to borrow the three strategies as dependent variables.

Therefore, in this study, social mobility refers to emulating the values of the established club to gain acceptance and achieve a higher status. In terms of states that seek upward social mobility in the status hierarchy, they may emulate the values and institutions of referent status superiors, such as taking responsibility for preserving the international order (Wohlforth et al., 2018, pp. 530–532). The primary examples in the IR literature of pursuers of social mobility are Germany and Japan after World War II. After the war's end, both states sought to be admitted to the 'civilized states' by accepting liberal democracy and becoming members of multilateral organizations such as GATT or IMF (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010). These are indicators of imitating the social norms and lifestyle to get accepted into the higher group.

Social competition refers to forcing others to recognize your aspired higher status, aiming to equal or outdo the dominant group to claim superiority in the dimensions that are valuable (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010). In the international scene, social competition can be indicated by arms racing, rivalry over spheres of influence, or military intervention. Currently, the actions of the Russian Federation, from the annexation of Crimea to testing weapons, can be indicators of a social competition strategy to match or outdo the higher group. Even though Russia attempted social creativity and mobility strategy in the early Putin area, its desire to make a comeback on the world stage and the USA's reluctance to recognize its aspirational status has led to a change in the status-seeking strategy of Russia, which brought us to the point where we are today with Russia pursuing a full-fledged social competition strategy (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010). Furthermore, it is possible to say that China combines social mobility – with its 'peaceful rise' policy – with the social competition strategy today. According to Deng (2008), China's foreign policy and drive for status have adopted several status-seeking strategies, and China, in particular, refrained from being pro-Western or confrontational. Deng (2008, p. 39) argued that China's strategy in its quest for great-power status involved both power growth and participation in the international society for international recognition. What is certain is that social creativity definitely does not work for these actors as they

are chasing a superpower and aiming for the highest group that succeeds in all dimensions.

Lastly, social creativity refers to seeking status in a different area by creating new dimensions or altering the negative characteristics as positive ones (Larson & Shevchenko, 2010, 2019). In the international system, for example, Wohlforth et al. (2018) put forth that the Netherlands stands out as a provider of international law and Canada as a mediator, while Norway is a do-gooder in the system by providing foreign aid or troops to humanitarian interventions. These are indicators of launching new dimensions to stand out since they differ from classical indicators of power, such as acquiring weapons or having a vast territory.

When we talk about geopolitical competition and conflict, indeed, this study adopts Ward's (2017b) argument in his book called 'Status Challenge and Rising Powers.' He puts forth that persistent status denial and status immobility – 'the appearance of obstacles that originate within the political, normative, or institutional structure of the status quo order' - lead to radical revisionist claims and produce advantages for the policymakers that advocate aggressive policies in domestic politics (Ward, 2017b). There emerges the adoption of a social competition strategy, merely forcing others to recognize your claimed higher status, aiming to outdo the dominant group through assertive claims and behaviors. The social competition differs from social mobility since it resorts to conflict; if the denial continues, it may lead to geopolitical competition and even war. Therefore, considering the focus of this study, the second-tier powers, I argue that social competition is pursued by states as a last resort, as a plan B, given their lack of resources relative to great powers. Due to the social competition being a plan B, this study emphasizes the other two strategies (social creativity and social mobility) when formulating its hypotheses.

4. Theoretical Argument

This study argues that there should be an eclectic approach that combines both realist and constructivist arguments to understand the choice in status-seeking strategies of states because otherwise, one would miss the important

elements (Lake, 2013). Before I move on to my argument, let me briefly mention what realists and constructivists would say about status and why they are inadequate by themselves.

Realism alone would say that the main aim of states in world politics is to acquire power and security. For example, Morgenthau (1948) would consider maximizing power as the main human drive rather than recognition and self-esteem. Even though he stresses the importance of prestige in international relations by saying that what others think of us, 'the image in the mirror of our fellow's minds,' determines who we are, he still regards the struggle for existence and power as 'the raw material of the social world' (Morgenthau, 1948). Gilpin (1981) also emphasizes prestige by claiming it the 'everyday currency of international politics;' however, he goes on to say that prestige is the 'mere manifestation of power.' Therefore, realists would expect a state to give the utmost importance to power and material attributes rather than intangible resources such as status. They would further argue that the greater asymmetric the distribution of power, the more likely war becomes. The rising would seek power, and the more powerful it gets, the more it would seek changes in the system, whereas the powerful would fight to keep its resources and gain more to remain at the top (Gilpin, 1981; Morgenthau, 1948). These authors, in the end, would not have an answer to crises or wars that did not occur to acquire power, cases where an established power left its status to another rising power, or could not explain why a rising power would not ask for a change in the system even though it acquired adequate power to do so. Furthermore, as Parlar Dal (2019) argues, capabilities alone would be inadequate to explain one's standing in the international hierarchy as a state with relatively low capabilities may have a higher status due to its closeness with great powers; therefore, one might consider social relations while talking about status.

On the other hand, constructivism alone would stress culture, identity, and its formation through socialization with interaction. By emphasizing the importance of agency, Wendt (1999) would argue that state leaders socialize through discourse and practices; following that, they would develop and justify foreign policies with identity and socialization with other states. Lebow (2016), in

National Identities and International Relations, mentions that national identifications can build self-esteem directly and indirectly by boosting claims of superiority and positive distinctiveness; however, he concludes that states, like individuals, have multiple identities that can be used per the context, 'based on their roles, affiliations, and relationship to their bodies'(Lebow, 2016). By reformulating Giddens's ideas, Lebow (2008) puts forth that states form a sense of self through foreign policy routines embedded in narratives. Murray (2018b) also argues that the public becomes attached to those narratives. Lebow (2008) says that policies at odds with the narrative, thereby the identity, would disgrace officials; therefore, one can conclude that a state may justify its foreign policies to acquire higher status with its identities and narratives. Lately, Parlar Dal (2019), following Larson's point, argued that status aspirations go beyond material attributes and are mostly related to historical identities and leaders' national role conceptions.

In light of these points, narrative and rhetoric matter when acquiring standing, and their effect is not only one-way (Lebow, 2008). Godard (2018) argues that the ways the rising powers justify their aims (the legitimization strategies) are essential for others to evaluate the rising power's intentions; if the rising power's aims are seen as legitimate, then it will prevail without conflict. Moreover, Adler-Nissen and Zarakol (2021) put forth that in the current Liberal International Order, which was built according to the rules of the West, the non-West, as latecomers or outsiders, stigmatize their attributes and changing their norms and values to fit the current order and move up the international hierarchy. They argue that even if the material indicators of power (military expenditure, personnel, population, or GDP) match that of the established powers, the non-West are still outsiders; therefore, to move up in the international social hierarchy, they correct their "stigmatizing attributes and by joining the clubs of the West; that is by assimilating into the 'Western order'" (Adler-Nissen & Zarakol, 2021). One could argue that an order which includes Asian powers such as China and Japan cannot be named a Western order; however, the emphasis is on the establishment of values and norms. Those that were outside of the Western civilizations have adopted the norms and values

which were incorporated into the international arena; therefore, the emphasis today is not on the location or culture of the country at hand but on the determiners of the values and norms, which can be termed as the Global North.

Furthermore, some constructivist scholars also put emphasis on norms and norm compliance to have influence. While O'Neill (1999) mentioned that those who abide by the past norms acquire normative prestige through status symbols and get more influence on deciding the new norms, Miller et al. (2015) put forth that status also is dependent on norm-consistent behavior; however, only if that norm is uncontested.

These realist authors, in the end, would not have an answer to crises or wars that did not occur to acquire power, cases where an established power leave its status to another rising power, or could not explain why a rising power would not ask for a change in the system even though it acquired adequate power to do so. However, constructivism alone would fall short of explaining obstacles in front of acquiring higher status due to material attributes.

To sum up, this study argues that we need an eclectic theoretical framework that combines realist and constructivist arguments to avoid missing important elements. You might have a narrative about what you want and aspire to be; however, you might not realize it due to the asymmetry between your status, aspirations, and capabilities. As an example, one might give pre-WWII Poland. On the other hand, you might have the means to achieve a higher status yet not have the narrative or the intention to do so by not spending on the military as a higher established power would do, not having an assertive policy, or by not taking steps to enlarge your population to have latent power. As an example, one might give today's South Korea. Therefore, we need a theoretical framework combining material attributes and the narrative of status-seeking states. At this point, I should remind you that this study considers social competition to be the last resort of second-tier states in their ambition to seek status, following Ward (2017b), who argued that revisionism and competition occur after status denial. Therefore, I did not include the third strategy (social competition) as a dependent variable since I expect second-tier states to first

resort to other status-seeking strategies, and if denied, they may resort to social competition. As mentioned in the introduction, however, this thesis puts forth that it is still important to differentiate between regional and rising powers because they are not only seeking improved status in different hierarchies (regional vs. systemic), but we are also expecting to see rising powers to be more likely to resort to social competition since they have the necessary capabilities to engage in violence and target the great power club that is more stringent and elite.

Following this, the hypotheses of this study are:

***H1:** Your capabilities will determine what kind of power you are and, therefore, the category you fall into.*

***H2:** Rising and regional powers are more akin to seeking status through social mobility in accordance with their capabilities. In contrast, middle powers are more akin to seeking status through social creativity in accordance with their capabilities.*

***H3:** The kind of identity will determine the choice of status strategy states will take by determining what kind of power they want to become.*

Therefore, I argue that one state's status-seeking strategies will be determined by its material power and identity. Although material indicators of power and its effect on status-seeking are relatively straightforward, this study takes this section as an opportunity to elaborate on identity. This study considers identity as narratives with four main elements: historical experiences, its capabilities, the regime's nature, and cultural traditions. National identities are formed by narratives that are put forth by policymakers at the time determined by these four elements. First, a state may have historical experiences of being a great power or an empire in the past that still carries that part of its identity to its narratives. For example, we can look at today's Russia, China, Iran, or Türkiye. In turn, this narrative will have an effect on the status-seeking strategies of those states. Second, a state may compare its capabilities and composition on several dimensions to those below, above, or on the same level as them. This may explain why certain middle powers seek status by developing niche areas, emphasizing them, and opting for social creativity through their narratives in the

international hierarchy. Alternatively, this may explain why some regional powers that have latent power, such as demographics, seek higher status through assertive policies. Third, one might argue that the regime's nature will affect the status-seeking states' narrative and their strategy choice. For example, Larson and Shevchenko (2019) put forth that Russia opted for social creativity to seek a higher status when it was democratizing during the Gorbachev era. Lastly, cultural traditions transmitted through literature or any form of art can be reflected in states' narratives, which in turn can affect states' status-seeking policies. For example, we can mention the USA's 'manifest destiny,' which translates into being the chosen nation. For a country to answer the questions of 'who are we,' 'what is our place in the world,' and 'where do we want to be,' these four elements are essential to form a national identity.

A national identity is a form of collective identity. Turner (1984) defines collective identity as a part of an individual's sense of self, driven by a membership in a group (Turner, 1984). Social Identity Theory presents that a social group allows the individual to have an identity and gives them an understanding of who we are (us) and others (them) (Hogg et al., 2004). In turn, the individual tends to favor their group, be proud of the achievements of their group, and feel shame or humiliated for the group's failures (Turner, 1984). What is certain is that individuals crave higher groups and desire to be a member or for their group to rise higher. Any group can provide this vehicle for self-esteem; however, nation-states can be the most contemporary and large-scale example because, in the international system, we talk about the 'self' not in terms of individuals but in terms of 'collective actors' (Buzan, 2004; Lebow, 2008).

States are certainly not people, yet, they are also not that different from individuals (Lebow, 2008; M. Murray, 2018a; Ringmar, 2015). Indeed, states do not have a unified consciousness, a single memory, or a subjective will; however, state identity formation is similar to that of individuals. As Murray (2018a) argues, thinking of a state as a total coherent being in IR makes it possible not to reduce it to the sum of its parts, and like individuals, states are physical and social actors; therefore, they also crave ontological security.

According to Murray (2018a), an essential element of state identity is a self-understanding generated domestically from domestic discourses and historical experiences. States sustain these identities through foreign policies embedded in narratives that government officials and elites develop and use to justify foreign policy behavior. These narratives are used to create identities and mobilize public support, which the public becomes deeply attached to. At that point, standing and status become essential to the people and the leaders. And the search for status is culturally determined since its manifestation depends on the understanding of shame, justice, and honor and differs across cultures and epochs (Lebow, 2008).

State identities are relational as well as self-claimed. As Ringmar (2015) states, “we let other people know whom we believe we are, and they let us know whether or not our account is reasonable.” Therefore, groups and nations that feel they are denied respect may pursue different behavior, and the state manifests behavior through state leaders, elites, or intellectuals responding to the populations' needs (Lebow, 2010). Indeed, leadership can change, which brings a volatile characteristic to the identity of the states, and according to Buzan (2004), this change in identities underlies a great deal of foreign policy. With the changes in identity comes a shift in status-seeking behavior.

CHAPTER 3

CANADA: A ‘DO-GOODER’

This chapter comprises the first case study of this thesis and focuses on Canada post-Cold War as a middle power. As a long-time player in the international system, Canada is considered a middle power in this study, indicating that it opts for multilateralism due to a lack of resources and stands out regarding economic well-being, technological advancements, and liberal democracy. The author of this study expects Canada to choose social creativity as the status-seeking strategy based on its material power and identity. Therefore, this study aims to see whether Canada showcases superiority in different dimensions from the ones valued from a conventional perspective. Canada should play at its strengths, such as “doing good” in the world through diplomacy, foreign aid, and multilateral channels.

Firstly, the chapter examines Canada’s trajectory over the years, focusing on its capabilities. This part includes tables of Canada’s military personnel and expenditure by GDP, GDP, and population to see where Canada is in terms of tangible power and whether there is any intention to increase them and compete.

Secondly, the sub-section looks into Canada’s interests and foreign policy aspirations. Specifically, this sub-section examines whether Canada is a wannabe great power regarding capabilities and foreign policy. It discusses Canada’s strategy, agenda, and role in military interventions and international management. **Thirdly**, the chapter dives deep and examines the formation of the Canadian identity by examining two significant issues and one major contribution by touching upon the post-WWII years. This sub-section aims to see how Canada perceives itself, where

the current narratives in Canadian identity come from, and how these shape Canada's current status-seeking agenda. **Fourth**, the chapter looks into what Canada does in world politics by examining Canada's role in three cases: peacekeeping, responsibility to protect, and multilateralism. This sub-section discusses the post-Cold War years and analyzes the prime ministers' foreign policies, rhetoric, and behavior. **Lastly**, the chapter contains public opinion by examining polls on Canada's role in the world to see how Canadians view world politics and their country's place.

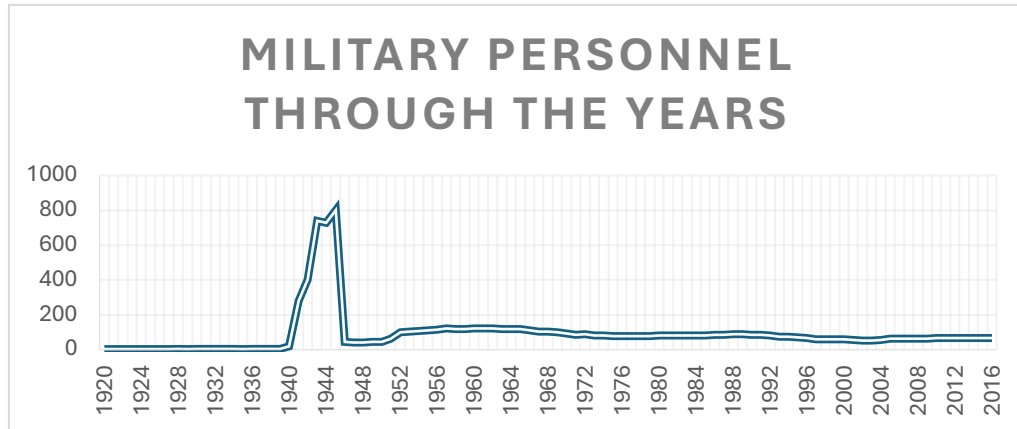
1. Canada's Trajectory Over the Years

Great power in the international system is indicated by its material capabilities, power projection, the scope of its interests, and the privileges it receives. Accordingly, a country that desires to rise to a great power status will most likely seek higher material capabilities to project its power, such as weaponry, spheres of influence, or a significant population, as latent power. Besides, it will assertively define its interests outside of its region and seek privileges within the international system; most simply, it will have its fingers in different areas, a seat at the UNSC, and a veto power.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, this study identifies Canada as a middle power. First, let's quickly view the material indicators of Canada that indicate why this study identifies it as a middle power, mainly looking at its military personnel, military expenditure by GDP, population, and GDP. We aim to see the trajectory of Canada's tangible power to see if it has the opportunity to move upward in the system.

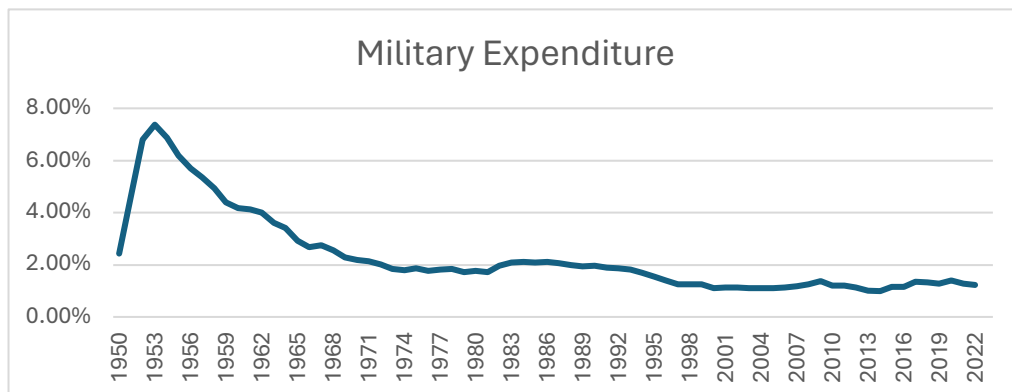
As Chapters 1 and 2 mention, Canada ranks 66th regarding military personnel, well behind the great powers, rising powers, and the identified regional powers in this study. When we examine the trend in military personnel as another indicator of assertiveness and competition, one can observe that there has been no apparent increase or intention to increase it for the last 30 years (2016-2021 not included), and the only upward trend can be seen during the World War II years (**Table 3**) (Correlates of War, 2021).

Table 3 – Canada’s Military Personnel (in thousands)



Regarding military expenditure, in 2022, Canada spent %1.24 of its GDP on the military (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022b). Compared to a rising power such as India (%2.43), it is relatively low and shows a downward scale (**Table 4**). The data is obtained from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute’s Yearbook, and it puts forth that the data “includes all current and capital expenditures on the armed forces, including peacekeeping forces; defense ministries and other government agencies engaged in defense projects; paramilitary forces if these are judged to be trained or equipped for military operations; and military space activities” (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022b). We should also note that the defense budget ceiling is and has been for a long time %2 of GDP for Canada, and there seems to be no upward trend or a change in policy in that regard (Bland & Macdonald, 2012).

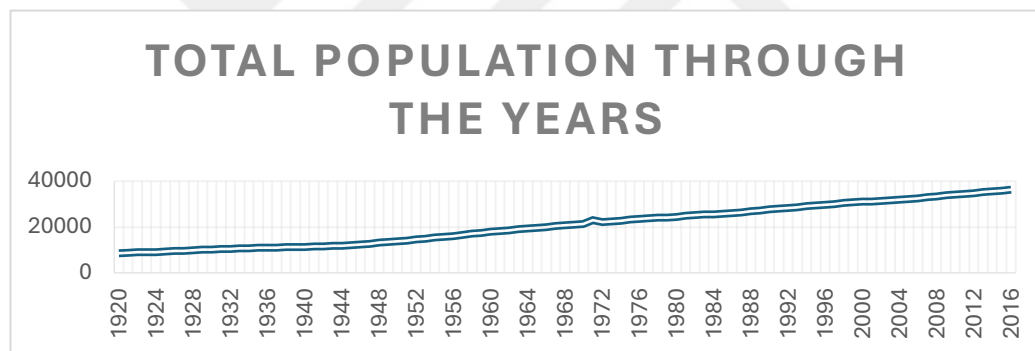
Table 4 – Canada’s Military Expenditure (% of GDP)



A higher population supplies a country with latent power and more people to

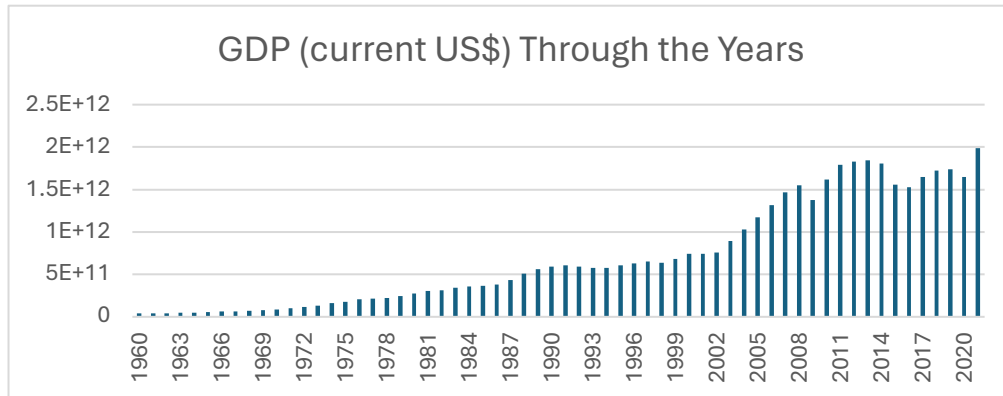
produce, consume, and fight. Canada ranks 38th in terms of population compared to others and lags behind the rising and regional powers. Indeed, when we look at what part of acknowledged rising and regional powers Canada actually represents, we see that Canada represents a third of the population of Türkiye, 5th of the population of Brazil, approximately half of South Africa, and 35th of the population of India. Data on Canada's population showcases regular and expected population growth; therefore, we can not see a desire to rise in rank through demographic changes (**Table 5**) (Correlates of War, 2021). We know that Canada has accepted immigrants and refugees through the years, especially in the Justin Trudeau era today; however, the acceptance has been controlled and in consideration with the demography of Canada (Gilmour, 2018). Therefore, there has been little to no ambition to increase latent power through immigrant policies, as well.

Table 5 – Canada's population growth



Lastly, when we look at its GDP, Canada ranks 9th with 2.161 trillion US\$, which makes it the only variable that rises over the regional powers, yet this shows us that Canada barely makes the top ten list (The World Bank Group, 2022a). Canada has achieved GDP growth through the years, yet it has been relatively stable and followed a higher path in the 2000s (**Table 6**). It can be argued that Canada ranks higher than many regional powers, and therefore, it should have a higher status. However, it is important to look at what Canada does with its GDP rather than its pure ranking.

Table 6- Canada's GDP



The material indicators show us that while Canada lags behind in terms of military expenditure and personnel relative to great powers and rising powers, it stands out in terms of GDP (The World Bank Group, 2022a). Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 2, we know that Canada ranks 15th in terms of technological dimension (*Global Innovation Index*, 2022). Regarding GDP per capita, Canada ranks 21st with 55,522.4\$ (The World Bank Group, 2022c). The only great power ahead of Canada in terms of GDP per capita is the USA; therefore, we can conclude that Canada is one of the most prosperous countries in the world. All these indicators, combined with it being a functioning liberal democracy, tell us that the first hypothesis is confirmed and Canada fits in the middle power category as a country performing well in economy and technology.

To understand whether Canada behaves like a great power, let us look at Canadian interests in world affairs, precisely its security agenda and strategies and its role in military interventions and international management, by examining the official papers published by the latest governments and utilizing secondary resources.

2. Canada's Interests and Foreign Policy

Canada's latest defense strategy paper, 'Strong, Secure, and Engaged,' was published by the Justin Trudeau government (Government of Canada, 2019). It outlines three priorities: strong at home, secure in North America through a partnership with NORAD and the United States, and engaged in the world 'with the Canadian Armed Forces doing its part in Canada's contributions to a more stable, peaceful world, including through peace support operations and peacekeeping' (Government of Canada, 2019). The defense strategy explicitly put forth that

Canada's main priorities and strategic interests are its security and prosperity, which can be achieved through 'global stability, the primacy of the international rules-based order, and the principle of collective defense' (Government of Canada, 2019). The strategy paper also mentions three defense diplomacy efforts of the Canadian Armed Forces: 'exchanges and assignments with Canada's important allies - the USA and Five Eyes, which is an intelligence alliance comprised of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA - active involvement in multilateral organizations, and military representation in missions worldwide' (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 93). Therefore, the paper emphasizes maintaining the rules-based order with coalitions, regional partnerships, and multilateral channels. Although the document also mentions that Canada is willing to foster new partnerships and engage with emerging powers, the main priority is to promote peace and maintain the international rules-based system.

Moreover, the Canadian government promotes the maintenance of rules-based order as its primary strategic interest in its defense paper and the Departmental Plan of 2022-23 and 2023-24 published by the Global Affairs Department (2022a, 2023). According to these plans, Canada's priorities in its foreign affairs will be 'shaping the rules-based international system, promoting democracy and human rights, deepening Canada's global engagement, supporting rules-based trade and Canadian exporters, and lastly eradicating poverty' (Global Affairs Canada, 2022a, 2023). These reports also emphasize engagement with international organizations and partnerships and maintaining the rules-based system (Global Affairs Canada, 2022a, 2023). They also precisely indicate the Canadian values: 'protecting democracy, inclusivity, human rights, gender equality, peace and security, the rule of law, rules-based international trade, and strong and resilient supply chains' (Global Affairs Canada, 2022a, 2023). The 2022-23 report also mentions another critical mission of Canada in its global affairs, which is the Feminist International Assistance Policy, which aims to eradicate poverty, underscore human dignity, defend the rights of women and girls, and build a more prosperous and inclusive world in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (Global Affairs Canada, 2017, 2022a).

The 'Canada in the World' report published in 1995 emphasizes the same priorities from the international rules-based order to eradicating poverty

(Government of Canada, 1995). Therefore, we can argue that the main principles of Canada have remained the same more or less in the last three decades (Government of Canada, 1995). It shows us that Canada's post-Cold War priorities and strategies have remained the same despite the fact that there have been changes in governments and the actions toward these principles have followed, which will be explained in the upcoming sub-sections (Government of Canada, 1995). One of the few changes happened in terms of regions to which the Canadian government paid attention, which can be seen in the latest published Indo-Pacific Strategy.

The latest published Indo-Pacific strategy mainly emphasizes building partnerships to create business opportunities and prosperity for Canadians (Global Affairs Canada, 2022b). First and foremost, the paper presents that the Indo-Pacific region is becoming a crucial dynamic region in terms of economic opportunity and strategic competition; moreover, Canada is engaging in this region in coordination with its allies, and the main priorities are building economic ties and promoting peace and stability in line with its allies (Global Affairs Canada, 2022b). When it comes specifically to China, the report again emphasizes building economic ties and dialogue, yet it does not refrain from saying that Canada will promote human rights, a rules-based system, and democracy no matter what; therefore, it will challenge China on issues like arbitrary detention and economic coercion through multilateral channels (Global Affairs Canada, 2022b). The reports put forth that Canada is aiming to be more engaged in Asia by seeking membership in the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus in 2023 (Global Affairs Canada, 2022a).

All this information indicates that while Canada is seeking engagement and influence in the international arena by getting involved in surrounding regions, it is doing so through multilateral channels, partnerships, institutions like the UN, and allies. And even though Canada claims to make the world a better place by promoting democracy, human rights, and gender equality, their way of doing that is way different from those of great powers such as the United States. This can be seen in Canada's military interventions and missions worldwide. Yes, indeed, Canada, with its Armed Forces, has its fingers in different parts of the world far from the Canadian mainland; however, all missions are conducted in coalitions with closest allies such as the US, United Nations, and NATO. The military interventions in

which Canada takes part are done under the auspices of the UN or other institutions, and they are not done in order to generate a greater sphere of influence in terms of Canada. Canada currently has 44 operations and military exercises, which the Canadian Armed Forces takes part in worldwide (Government of Canada, 2013, 2022). There are 11 types of missions comprised of protecting Canadian sovereignty in its territory, emergency response, search and rescue operations, assistance to law enforcement, peace support, counter-insurgency, training and assistance with partner forces, international security and stability, fisheries patrol and surveillance, disaster assistance response, and non-combatant evacuation operations (Government of Canada, 2013, 2022).

This study pays attention to operations conducted under peace support, counter-insurgency, and international security and stability. All these operations are conducted through multilateral channels such as the United Nations or NATO and coalitions such as Operation IMPACT against ISIS implemented with Global Coalition or Operation CALUMET under Multinational Force and Observers (Government of Canada, 2013, 2022). What is more, the Government of Canada puts forth that the Canadian Armed Forces abroad missions are conducted through Operational Support Hubs (OSH), which exist through 'pre-negotiated arrangements with partner nations to facilitate the movement of personnel, materiel, equipment, and supplies in strategic locations around the world;' thus, are not military bases (Government of Canada, 2021).

Most importantly, what separates Canada from the others is its initiatives related to human security through multilateral channels in the late 90s and early 2000s. With the leadership of Prime Minister Chrétien and Foreign Minister Axworthy, by taking lessons from the major events of the 90s, such as the Rwandan Genocide and Kosovo, Canada has been the initiator in the establishment of the International Commission of Humanitarian Intervention and the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which aimed to set up a structure and put human security at the forefront (Axworthy, 2001, 2016a). The details of Canadian initiatives will be mentioned in the following sub-sections; however, the aim is to argue that Canada's missions should be reviewed from this perspective and legacy. We can understand the remnants of this legacy from Canada's inclusion in the

Afghanistan War, yet refusal to join the coalition in the 2003 Iraq War, and the lack of a United Nations Security Council resolution as a reason for this. Chrétien (2003) put forth in one of the House of Commons debates:

“From the beginning, our position has been very clear: to work with the United Nations to achieve the goals we share with our friends and allies; disarming Saddam Hussein; strengthening the rule of law and human rights, and working toward enduring peace in the region... We argued that a multilateral approach through the United Nations was key to enhancing the legitimacy of military action and would have made it easier after the war was over... The decision on whether or not to send troops into battle must always be a decision of principle, not a decision of economics, not even a decision of friendship alone... Close friends can disagree at times and still remain close friends.”

Lastly, in this sub-section, let me briefly touch upon Canada's interests and roles in the international management channels, such as the international and regional organizations. Canada defines itself as an Arctic, North Atlantic, and Asia-Pacific country dedicated to promoting its values with like-minded states through engagement (Global Affairs Canada, 2023). In the Departmental Plan of 2023-34 (2023, p. 4), it is put forth that ‘Canada will contribute its expertise and leverage its influence in multilateral forums to help advance key issues such as democracy, inclusion, human rights, gender equality, inclusive economic growth, and sustainable peace and security.’ By multilateral forums, the reports mention ‘the United Nations, the Group of Seven (G7), the Group of Twenty (G20), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Commonwealth, La Francophonie, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Arctic Council, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Organization of American States (OAS), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Energy Agency (IEA), the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and a wide range of bodies and entities created under international treaties to which Canada is a party.’

In accordance with its actions in the UN, Canada is an active participant in multilateralism and an initiator in many of these forums; however, the Departmental Plan shows us that Canada is active as much as its power allows it (Global Affairs Canada, 2023). This means that while Canada tries to increase engagement and influence, it focuses on multilateral channels and aims to make reforms in these forums as a leading country in line with its own principles and promote like-minded states' values. Yet, when it comes to peace and security, it puts emphasis on coalition-building, close cooperation with its allies, and acting through multilateral organizations, especially underlining NATO. By itself, it creates sturdy plans and takes concrete actions on issues related to economics, trade, human rights, and the environment; however, on bigger issues where the great powers hold the bigger hand, Canada does not aim high nor is taken into account by others (meaning the great powers).

Overall, the strategy papers and the narratives may indicate a progressive approach and a 'do good' strategy; however, it should be understood that Canada comes out as a conservative when it comes to preserving the status quo. During the Cold War years, Nossal et al. (2015) say, "Canada was a firmly committed member of the Western alliance, and much of Canada's mediatory diplomacy was directed at disputes within the Western bloc." Post-Cold War, we see in every report published by the Canadian government that Canada's main priority and strategy is to keep the rules-based order intact and stable (Global Affairs Canada, 2022a, 2023; Government of Canada, 1995, 2019). Unless someone supports and backs it up, especially its closest ally, the USA, Canada does not move by itself but rather moves with a group of like-minded states. What is more, Canada has always promoted its interests with the USA in mind. As Hart (2009) says

Neither Pearson nor Mulroney bowed to any US policy with which they disagreed, but they generally sought to influence such policy in directions more amenable to Canadian interests by making sure that Washington was receptive to Canadian concerns...Canada's ability to play a constructive role in the world is enhanced when it has a mature and productive relationship with the United States and good access to its most important decision-makers. Canadians' desire to make a difference in the world is often rewarded when their government works in tandem with the sole government that, in fact, can make a difference.

Therefore, we should first state that Canada's progressive rhetoric based on change for the good remains in rhetoric. Canada's strategy papers are telling in terms of their choice of status-seeking strategy. The fact that it stands out in its mediatory efforts mentions challenging those that distort status-quo (China) through 'arbitrary detention and economic coercion through multilateral channels' and mentions time and time again that it is determined to 'make the world a better place' shows us that Canada follows a non-conventional path to stand out in the international arena. Following a non-conventional path, as Larson et al. (2014) say, indicates social creativity. Rather than expanding its sphere of influence, it focuses on its region; if it does, it moves through the multilateral channels. These indicate that Canada is limited by its material power, and in most cases, the only exception could have been the 2003 Iraq War, which made the world a better place through allies, multilateral institutions, and soft efforts. These lead us to conclude that Canada chooses social creativity as a middle power limited by its material capabilities.

3. The Canadian Identity: The Pearsonian Legacy

Those niches have become a part of the Canadian identity over time. Indeed, Canada's activist foreign policy and its internationalist identity have been on the agenda for a long time. Especially after the Second World War, with the emphasis on the functionalist approach and introducing the 'middle power' concept in alliance with Australia, Canada's policymakers have pushed the multilateralist approach since then (MacKay, 1969). According to Nossal et al. (2015), as a nation restricted due to its material capabilities, Canada secured a seat at the UN table by accepting being a middle power; then, it was time to define what it means to be a middle power. Here emerged the multilateralist tradition in Canada's foreign policy, and over time, this tradition came to define what it means to be Canadian (Nossal et al., 2015). Following the Pearsonian legacy, this dedication to multilateralism, functionalist approach, and middle powerhood led to a 'peace-loving' national identity (Axworthy, 2001). Of course, it has been challenged and criticized until today by multiple governments, such as Stephen Harper (2006 – 2015); however, most of the challenge has remained in rhetoric as a domestic policy to get the electoral votes, and the behavior, the national narrative, and contribution in the international system continued along the same lines (Hart, 2009). This sub-section

will examine what the Canadian narratives about itself are, how certain mottoes became embedded in the Canadian nation's identity, and will explain how Canada became a country that is perceived as a 'warm-hearted nation, peace-loving nation, human rights supporter, etc.' by its own and outside nations. In this subsection, we will mention three main issues that led to the current identity formation for Canada: the Pearsonian legacy, an effort to prove that Canada is different from the USA, and the Quebecois identity, thus the multiculturalism.

As Hart (2009) puts forth, no government starts with a clean slate in its mission. To understand the current national identity formation and Canadian narratives, it is sensible to go a bit backward and mention the previous policies that affected the current foreign policy-making and status-seeking policies. Before WWII, Canada had emphasized its British roots as it is a British Dominion; however, following the war and Canadians' efforts, the 'middle power' identity started to be at the forefront. One of the main reasons for this was previously foreign minister (1950s) and then Prime Minister (1960s) Lester Pearson and his legacy.

Post-WWII, Canada was already claiming recognition and a seat at the table in the formation of the United Nations with a functionalist approach by arguing that there are states that deserve a concrete place in the status as a middle power since they can do more in the international arena as they've done during the WWII (Cooper, 1997; Cooper et al., 1993). What this middlepowerhood meant was precisely defined during the Suez Crisis and Pearson's clever and cautious thinking. In the 1950s, the Atlantic Alliance was on shaky grounds due to Nasser nationalizing the Suez Canal to the point where US President Eisenhower administration condemned the invasion and soured relations with Great Britain and France after attempted diplomatic settlements failed (Nossal et al., 2015). Concerned that its closest allies would go into a conflict and trying to find a way to make France and Great Britain retreat without the West losing face, Pearson proposed to the UN that a troop should be sent to ensure that the French and British troops would withdraw. Indeed, it was a face-saving solution that worked for all parties, but mostly Canada on its mission to create a middle power identity.

His mediatory efforts and determination to keep the rules-based international

order stable (meaning that there would not be direct conflict/war between the great powers), indeed, planted the first seed of the classic peacekeeping and UNEF, which earned him a Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 (Holloway, 2006; Nossal et al., 2015, pp. 60–96). From then on, this emphasis on mediation, peacekeeping, and stability through international organizations has become the core of Canadian foreign policy-making, which we will see in Axworthy's words. Indeed, Canada under Pearson quickly moved on to be involved in another crisis which led to the formation of United Nations Forces in Cyprus during the 1964 crisis (Holloway, 2006). In the 80s, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau showed what it meant to be a middle power by being firmly in the middle of superpowers with his peace initiative for managing regional conflicts to keep the superpowers apart (Nossal et al., 2015). This so-called golden age of internationalism has been reborn post-Cold War, by Prime Minister Chrétien and Foreign Minister Axworthy, in a mission to create a core identity rather than British and Quebecois separate identities, but let's first mention another indicator in the Canadian identity formation before we dive into deep in the reminiscence of Pearsonian legacy.

The second contribution to the Canadian identity formation was the ambition to separate Canada from the USA but emphasizing that it is a close ally, important for the peace and stability of Canada. As its only border neighbor, Canada is engaged with and tied to the USA not only in terms of territorial security but also for its economic well-being. According to Nossal et al. (2015, pp. 19–52), the Second World War demonstrated that Canada's security was indeed tied to Europe, and the Cold War proved that it was connected to the USA; however, they put forth that for Canadians, the North Atlantic Alliance was more than just a military alliance. NATO provided Canada with a security umbrella that allowed them not to spend more on their defense than was needed for the sake of national security, but also it was a step to deepen economic linkages (R. W. Murray & McCoy, 2010; Nossal et al., 2015, pp. 19–52). This fact has been reflected in Canada's foreign policy-making for decades, even when they disagreed. Hart (2009, p. 55) argued that Canada could not pursue an anti-US strategy as it would be a death wish since Canada is “dependent on trade with the USA for a third of its economy and reliant on the US military and intelligence as the mainstay of its security, productive relations with the United

States are not a luxury but a necessity.”

However, this close and necessary relationship was not more than a friendship, and the Canadian nation made its mission to emphasize that ‘they are not the United States.’ The Canadian author and the president of the Environics Group of Marketing Research and Communications, Micheal Adams, becomes an interpreter of what many Canadians fear in his book ‘Fire and Ice.’ Adams (2009) says,

In my nightmares, I may see the American fire melting the Canadian ice and then dream of the waters created by the melting ice drowning the fire, but this will not happen – at least not in our lifetimes. The two cultures will continue side by side, converging their economies, technologies, and now their security and defense policies, but they will continue to diverge in ways that most people in each country, I believe, will continue to celebrate.

By claiming to be different from the USA, the baseline for the self-definitions as a peace-loving nation and warm-hearted nation becomes more profound. This is a way for Canadians to create a ranking based on identity in which they place themselves higher than the USA. Horowitz (2001) explains that ethnic groups create a hierarchical nature through identity. There are superordinate and subordinate groups, and in this case, being warmer puts Canadians in the superordinate group above the Americans, which, in turn, adds another layer to Canada’s preferred status-seeking strategy. We see that Canada, through its identity formation, adopts social creativity that puts them in a higher place in the ranking by being warmer, peace-loving, cooperative, and do-gooder. This acclaimed role identity shows us what kind of power Canada wants to become, which emphasizes soft values, such as being a ‘peace-loving’ and ‘warm-hearted’ nation. These role identities again indicate that Canada chooses social creativity as a status-seeking strategy since they alter the negative characteristics as positive ones (Larson et al., 2014b).

The third and largest issue that affected the Canadian identity formation was the two separate identities arising from the core populations of the country: British/Anglo-Saxon and French/Quebécois, which specifically became apparent in the 1960s. After WWII, urbanization and modernization reached Québec, which led the Québécois to tremble in of losing culture, heritage, and language to the point where it reflected in the domestic - formation of a racial group called Front de Liberation du Québec (FLQ) – and the international arena (Holloway, 2006). In 1967

on his visit to Montreal, the President of France, Charles de Gaulle, announced ‘Vive la France, Vive le Quebec, and Vive le Quebec libre’ (Long live France, Quebec, and the free Quebec), which could be interpreted as he assumed that the Quebecois were under the Anglo-Saxon occupation and that Quebec should be independent (Vintage Broadcasting System, 2019). The seeds of the separation movement of independence and nationalism were thrown, which led to two referenda, the first in 1980 and the second in 1995; however, both times, the proposal for separation was defeated.³ This dualism and ethnic division ensured that Canada could not play the nationalism card in their national identity; however, they could not afford to do what the USA did. Ultimately, these experiences led the policymakers to think creatively and sensibly, in line with the country’s capabilities and niches, in bringing the nation together around a common belief and identity: a peacebuilder middle power.

As Pearson planted the seeds, with Lloyd Axworthy the new identity blossomed. Axworthy became the foreign minister of Canada right after Canada in the World Report was published by the Department of Foreign Affairs (Government of Canada, 1995). The report clearly defined a separate Canadian identity. The report (1995) says, “Canada's history as a non-colonizing power, champion of constructive multilateralism and effective international mediator, underpins an important and distinctive role among nations as they seek to build a new and better order.” The report also pays attention to the ethnic division between the Anglo-Saxon and Quebecois identity, and here, we can see clearly that the shared values – democracy, human rights, and overall the ‘do-gooder’ values – have laid the basis of the common Canadian identity that brought the two ethnicities together. Multiculturalism ultimately was celebrated around the ‘peacemaker’ identity. The report (1995) says, “In countries like Canada, unity springs from pride in the civic nationality - based on shared values and tolerance, respect for the rule of law, and thoughtful compromise - that its citizens share.” Moreover, the report, like all the official reports of Canada discussed, puts forth that since Canada is not an island, it can be affected by the international environment; therefore, the rights of the people abroad should be protected for Canadians to be safe at home (Government of Canada, 1995). This

³ (Élections Québec, n.d.-b, n.d.-a; Holloway, 2006) In the 1980 referendum, 1,485,851 people voted yes, 2,187,991 people voted no (59.56%). In the 1995 referendum, 2,308,360 people voted yes, and 2,362,648 people voted no (50.58%).

sentence alone laid the grounds for Axworthy's and Canada's humanitarian security foreign policy initiative (Government of Canada, 1995; Holloway, 2006). In Axworthy's own words (2001, p. 8),

Lester Pearson first took Canada onto the world stage as an independent actor in a sustained way in the 1950s and 1960s — a time of critical realignment in international relations. He crafted a distinct Canadian foreign policy identity and utilized the newly emerging postwar multilateral infrastructure to promote an agenda of international peace, security, and development. He saw the UN as the preeminent vehicle to drive this agenda, and he used it to successfully promote new ideas and practices, most famously peacekeeping... At the Cold War's end, we are attempting, as Pearson did at its beginning, to place Canada in a strong leadership position. The human security agenda is a basis for a new way forward. It attempts to deal with new and newly transformed threats to the lives and safety of individuals, both at home and abroad. This agenda is crucial not only for the security of individuals but also to maintain Canada's role as a leading voice on the world stage.

The new prime ministers such as Paul Martin and Stephen Harper challenged this middle power identity, who were conservative and less supportive of the do-good rhetoric, even though both failed to break with it. The prime minister of 2003-6, Paul Martin, expressed in the report *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World* (Government of Canada, 2005),

the traditional notion of Canada as a middle power is outdated and no longer captures the reality of how power is distributed in the 21st century. If Canada stands idle while the world changes, we can expect our voice in international affairs to diminish. Instead, we will reach out to these emerging powers, both by developing new bilateral ties and by reforming how countries work together across regions to accommodate their needs... Our old middle power identity imposes an unnecessary ceiling on what we can do and be in the world. Canada can make a difference if it continues to invest in its international role and pulls its weight.

However, this assertiveness in Canadian foreign policy was not realized. Firstly, although Martin wanted to be more influential, he verbally accepted that Canada had limited resources when asked about its participation in Iraq (CBC News, 2004). Moreover, his ambition to create new alliances, such as L-20, a summit of 20 countries among rich and poor spread around geographically, did not receive attention from the US government or other countries. Hart (2009, pp. 84–103) argued that the 'talk was cheap' as there was a lot to admire in Martin's words but little to

get excited about since he lacked the leadership and ambition to realize what he said in the IPS report in 2005, mentioned above.

The subsequent conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, like Martin, was also not a fan of the ‘middle power’ identity. Yet, there was a dilemma in Harper’s premiership. He refrained from the middle power identity and certain internationalist principles, such as the commitment to the UN. During his 11 years of premiership, Harper (2006) addressed the UNGA once in 2006 and said,

This Organization must become more accountable and more effective. Management reform must continue at an accelerated pace. The taxpayers of Member nations, Canadians among them, make significant financial contributions to this Organization. They have the right to expect stronger, more independent oversight mechanisms, more robust accountability for how funds are spent, and human resources practices that are based on merit.

He, then, never stepped foot in the UN nor gave a speech, which, according to Nossal et al. (2015), indicated the Harper government’s stance on the UN. In 2010, Canada lost the bid for a non-permanent member seat at the UN Security Council; indeed, the decision to be a candidate for the seat was taken in late (Charron, 2018). Following that, Harper announced in 2011 that Canada no longer wanted to ‘please every dictator with a vote at the United Nations.’⁴ In line with the premier, the foreign minister Baird stated that “Canada does not just ‘go along’ in order to ‘get along.’ We will ‘go along’ only if we ‘go’ in a direction that advances Canada’s values: freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law” (Wherry, 2011). On the subject of climate change, Harper insisted that the Kyoto Protocol was not in line with the Canadian national interest, and in 2011, Canada withdrew from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN News, 2011).

However, this distance from international organizations can be read from another angle. He was indeed not a fan of the middle power identity; however, he kept insisting on the core Canadian liberal values, continued to negotiate trade with other states, signed liberal trade partnerships, and kept sending troops to Afghanistan for War on Terror (Nossal et al., 2015, pp. 135–180). Besides, Harper was

⁴ (Nossal et al., 2015, pp. 135–180) (Unfortunately, the original speech is not accessible at the Conservative party’s website.)

determined to turn Canadian foreign policy back to a more grounded and realistic one, especially when it comes to Afghanistan. He was determined to support the CAF mission in the NATO-led mission; therefore, he set his mind on increasing the budget of the CAF (Hart, 2009, pp. 84–102). The official defense strategy paper published during Harper's premiership, 'Canada First Defense Strategy,' mainly emphasized the increase in budget to create a modern military and diminish the death of soldiers (Government of Canada, 2008). Therefore, the core Canadian values were still intact, and peacekeeping was still on the agenda, meaning that the challenge to the middle power identity mainly remained in rhetoric but was not reflected in the foreign policy behavior.

Justin Trudeau has attracted attention by adopting the Pearsonian legacy and criticizing the Harper government with respect to anti-multilateralist policies. The moment he came to power, he signed the Paris Climate Accord and emphasized that economic prosperity and the protection of the environment can go hand in hand (Government of Canada, 2015; Hillmer & Lagassé, 2018). On the subject of refugees, even though it took longer than they anticipated, Canada accepted 25,000 Syrian refugees, and it proved to be a major success in terms of Canada's credit in the world. Following that, when Trump announced a ban on travelers from certain countries, Trudeau welcomed them with a tweet saying, 'To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith' (WION, 2017). In 2018, while addressing UNGA, Trudeau (2018) also stated that

Canada will continue to call out the unfair treatment of racial and ethnic minorities, women and girls, and indigenous peoples. We will continue to speak up for the Rohingya refugees, the Yazidis of northern Iraq, and the people of Venezuela. Canada will always stand tall for democracy, the rule of law, and human rights at home and abroad.

Last but not least, even though he faced the Trump obstacle especially in the peacekeeping mission in Mali, he was much more ambitious in his rhetoric and determined in his peacekeeping plans (Blanchfield & Berthiaume, 2017).⁵

⁵ The peacekeeping mission that Trudeau wanted to carry out to African countries, especially Mali, under the UN umbrella, coincided exactly with the period when Trump was newly elected. During this period, Canada also wanted to get the opinion of its closest ally, the USA. Trudeau's

In conclusion, we can say that even though it was challenged occasionally, the Pearsonian legacy, which essentially defined what middlepowerhood is, became embedded in the Canadian identity. Not only did this 'peace-loving nation' identity spare Canada from the USA, but also it helped keep the nation intact around a common belief. Holloway summarizes the Canadian identity within five sub-headings that are the core values mentioned in this study: peacekeeping, multilateralism, good global citizenship, bilingualism and biculturalism, North American society, and 'Canada the Good' (Holloway, 2006). This role identity that has been adopted since the end of the Cold War indicates that Canada, for so long, followed social creativity as its status-seeking strategy, albeit being challenged by conservative governments. Being a 'warm peace loving' nation not only sets Canada apart from other nations but also places it higher in the international hierarchy.

4. What Does Canada Do?: Post-Cold War Era in Three Cases

This sub-section will examine what Canada did and does that led to seeking its current status on the international stage with three cases: peacekeeping, Responsibility to Protect (R2P), and multilateralism.

4.1 Peacekeeping

In this study, Pearson's legacy was discussed a lot in determining the Canadian national identity; also, the foundations and solid grounds of peacekeeping started again in Pearson's period, specifically during the Suez Crisis of the 1950s. Lester Pearson was the Secretary of External Affairs of Canada at that time, and when two great powers (Great Britain and France) engaged in an all-out attack on Egypt with Israel, which made the USA furious, led Canada to fear an outbreak of conflict between the Western bloc (United Nations, n.d.). Before the crisis turned into a major fire, it was extinguished thanks to Pearson's mediatory efforts and proposal to establish a peacekeeping force (United Nations Emergency Force – UNEF) to ensure the withdrawal of forces from Egypt, which laid the foundations of today's peacekeeping. Through a number of UN resolutions, the guidelines of classic peacekeeping, specifically for the UNEF at the time, were defined: not a fighting force and can only use force for self-defense, acts as a neutral buffer zone, can be

Mali mission was disrupted and stalled after a while due to Trump, who was not keen on issues such as multilateralism as he cut funds to the UN, which is Canada's main mission.

authorized by the UN Secretary-General, needs the consent of the host state, and with the full acceptance of the sovereignty of the belligerents (Holloway, 2006; UN General Assembly (1st emergency special, 1956a, 1956b; United Nations, n.d.). Canada's peacekeeping efforts continued, as we can see from Martin's efforts in creating the United Nations Forces in Cyprus during the 1964 crisis (Holloway, 2006) and their contribution to missions in Afghanistan in the 2000s (Government of Canada, 2016). According to Murray and McCoy (2010), the mission in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2011 cost Canada approximately CDN\$11.3 billion.

Today, the terms of peacekeeping did not change dramatically and function to facilitate the transition from a state of conflict to a state of peace, which rests on three principles: maintain the consent of the host state and immediate parties to the dispute, act impartially, behave in a non-violent and non-threatening manner (Dawson, 2004). Through time, new concepts emerged. While peacebuilding refers to reinforcing preventive diplomacy or buttressing diplomatic peacemaking to establish sustainable peace that may include a long-term approach through institution-building, human rights initiatives, and economic and military capacity-building, peacemaking refers to political mediation to achieve a ceasefire or a peace settlement that also requires the consent of the belligerents (Dawson, 2004; Pugh Micheal, 2008). In sum, peacekeeping includes military or police force with the host state's consent, whereas peacemaking and peacebuilding mainly include diplomatic efforts. After the Cold War, the increase in civil wars and intra-state conflicts and the failure of the peacekeeping forces under the UN led the states to take the regional initiative and carry out peacekeeping missions through other organizations such as NATO (Pugh Micheal, 2008). Bothered by the disorderly efforts, Canadian policymakers, mainly Axworthy, have begun their works to make peacekeeping more structured and return those missions under a multilateral umbrella, that is, the United Nations. This opened the way for creating the concept of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) today.

4.2 Responsibility to Protect

Just as the 60s were Pearson's years, the 1990s and 2000s were Lloyd Axworthy's years, who initiated many treaties and reports for the humanitarian

security agenda. Axworthy (2001) puts forth that the human security term was not created by Canada, but the United Nations Development Program introduced it; however, it was indeed Canada that popularized it in the world. The road that led to the creation of the concept of Responsibility to Protect has been a long-time coming, and the first attempts to introduce it was made by Axworthy and his Human Security Initiative, which defined five pillars: protection of civilians, peace support operations that support peacekeeping functions, governance and accountability that put the basis of peace and law, and public safety from organized crime, illicit drugs to terrorism (Holloway, 2006).

From then on, humanitarian security became one of the core pillars of Canadian foreign policy, which was also appreciated by the international actors that opened up the way for structured humanitarian initiatives and earned Canada a seat at the UNSC in 1999. Now, one can argue that Axworthy's initiatives and reliance on soft power and human security through multilateral channels were due to cuts in the Department of Foreign Affairs budget since he was left with no choice other than playing on soft niches (Hart, 2009; R. W. Murray & McCoy, 2010). Even so, these policies have been so successful that it is undeniable that these creative steps by Axworthy were very sensible, balanced, and aligned with Canada's identity and capabilities.

In 1998, Axworthy and Norwegian Foreign Minister Vollenbaek signed the Lysoen Declaration, which led to the formation of a network that worked on pushing humanitarian issues. Of course, the events occurring in the world, such as the intervention in Kosovo, provided one of the most solid grounds for the launching of the Commission on Intervention and State Intervention (Axworthy, 2016b). The report mainly emphasized that it is the world's responsibility to protect the people when the states are unwilling or unable to protect their citizens from harm (ICISS, 2001). The report presented R2P as more than a military intervention with multiple responsibilities, and these are responsibilities to prevent, react, and rebuild. (Bellamy, 2008; ICISS, 2001). Axworthy (2016b) stressed that the report saw military intervention as the least desirable option and a last resort and mostly promoted prevention. The commission and the report called UNSC to play a leading role in preventing issues that have political, economic, legal, and military roots.

Specifically, on humanitarian intervention, it introduced the responsibility to react and proposed multiple principles for the governments and observers to measure whether the intervention would be legitimate. To name a few, the report emphasized that there should be a large scale of loss or ethnic cleansing, a right authority (UNSC), clear objectives and common military approach, right intentions, and last resort (ICISS, 2001). Lastly, the responsibility to build was introduced to ensure that the societies in the host state were transformed from a state of war to peace.

As we've said, Canada's main aim in setting up networks, launching initiatives, and publishing such reports was to redirect peacekeeping under the umbrella of an international organization and create more structured guidelines. Therefore, the report clearly expressed that, after the host state, the primary responsibility to act was on the UNSC. It also proposed to create a pool of unrestricted development funding that might be used for root cause and direct prevention and the centralization of efforts at UN headquarters, making it a 'repository of best practice tools and strategies' (ICISS, 2001, p. 26). The report faced some objections from mainly the great powers, which led the report to be revised to emphasize the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty (Bellamy, 2008). It was until the 2005 high-level UN World Summit that member states accepted the principle of R2P, with changes in references to making conflict prevention the main pillar and criteria on military intervention to cover only governments that fail to act and give UNSC a choice not to act (*United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect*, n.d.).

In his later writings, Axworthy (2016b) argued that there are still muddy waters around the principle of R2P, and he specifically says the responsibility to rebuild is not implemented perfectly. Besides, "one of the recommendations—dropped in the 2005 World Summit—was to create a 'code of conduct' among the permanent members that would specify refraining from using the veto on initiatives that are designed to protect people and apply R2P principles," which adds to the questioning of the credibility of the UN and the R2P model for action (Axworthy, 2016b).

Canada has participated in many peace support operations pre and post-Cold

War. Murray and McCoy (2010) stated that Canada's middle power identity and its use of armed forces as a tool had benefitted it from being a minor but respected military power to being a 'blue helmet' light peacekeeping force to a practitioner of counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. By 2009, Canada ranked 50th of 120 countries in military and police contributions to UN operations; by 2022, it is ranked 68th out of 126 countries ranking (United Nations, 2022). Canadians support peace operations since they view them as 'peaceful;' however, these missions leave thousands of Canadians to be wounded, disabled, or even killed. Nossal et al. question and explain this willingness to put Canadians at harm in overseas operations. According to Nossal et al. (2015, pp. 60–96), Canada was deemed a 'peaceable kingdom' as a country that was last invaded by a foreign force in the 19th century, yet, this peaceable kingdom has been at war ten times since then. The main reason for this was the use of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) as an indirect foreign policy instrument 'to defend or maintain a particular international order, and thus indirectly the security of Canada. It is for this reason that the CAF has always been used overseas in a multilateral context (Nossal et al., 2015, pp. 60–96).

In sum, through Axworthy's efforts, Canada has taken concrete steps aligned with its role identity as a peace-loving nation. Therefore, we may conclude that Canada's status-seeking strategy does not remain rhetorical but is realized. However, we should mention that although the creation of R2P is transformative and progressive, it is technically just a guideline that, as Newman (2013, p. 238) put forth, promotes and assists states in implementing existing legal obligations and human rights, and it still requires the voting of the UNSC, the great powers. Therefore, we may argue that the concept of R2P is not as revolutionary as it sounds.

4.3 Multilateralism

This sub-section will focus on other initiatives of Canada through multilateral channels to explain Canada's commitments to multilateralism, as R2P was not the only one. With the end of the Cold War, Canada has been a front-runner in the creation of the Ottawa Treaty, which prohibited the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction; International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), the concept of Responsibility to Protect

(R2P), and International Criminal Court (ICC) (Axworthy, 2016a; Cohen & Deng, 2016; Nossal et al., 2015). According to Axworthy (2016a), the Ottawa Process led to the creation of new ways of doing foreign policy with the leadership of middle powers that signaled a bottom-up process rather than a top-down one with the leadership of the P-5. It showcased the potential success of soft power elements and cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations in foreign policy making and norm creation (Axworthy, 2016a). Moreover, according to Axworthy (2001), these soft power elements, bottom-up approach, and new networks led to a new form of multilateralism. Therefore, Axworthy not only built the Canadian foreign policy on its niches but also implemented these in the international arena by providing new forms of norm creation (Axworthy, 2016b). Canada's commitment to multilateralism can also be seen in its refusal to join the Iraq War alongside its closest ally, as there were no UNSC resolutions (Chrétien, 2003). It proved itself to be a country not only an initiator of humanitarian norms but also a follower of them. Axworthy (1997) says,

Canada is well-placed to succeed as a leader in a world where soft power is increasingly important. Canadian 'middle power' diplomacy has always stressed the importance of coalition-building and has provided Canada with valuable experience in fostering consensus. We are active members of a wide range of international and regional organizations, including the G-7. Canada is both an Atlantic and an Asia-Pacific nation with strong links to Latin America. In all of its international relationships, Canada is free of the latent distrust which sometimes undermines the efforts of those countries carrying the baggage of colonialism.

Here, there is strong evidence that Canada is committed to multilateralist channels and proud of its leadership in this arena by promoting its niches and values. The same conclusion was also made in the 'Canada in the World' report, which is still the baseline of Canadian foreign policy today (Government of Canada, 1995).

As we are mentioning soft power and niches, another contribution by Canada in terms of multilateralism and "doing good" to secure the people of the world and Canada is its aid policy through Canada's Official Development Aid (ODA). According to Holloway (2006), there are multiple motives for providing aid for Canada, and these may be traditional reasons built mainly on religious values, opposition to inequality, and empathy toward human suffering. The Official

Development Aid program has been a part of Canadian foreign policy for so long and today, eradicating poverty is still one of the main principles of Canada (Global Affairs Canada, 2023). Scholars viewed this policy as a tool to win goodwill and influence in the world. Indeed, this is what soft power is used for all countries, and Canada has done it well for a long time (Holloway, 2006).

As mentioned, the multilateralist approach in foreign policy was criticized and challenged by prime ministers after Chrétien, namely conservative Stephen Harper. However, Nossal et al. (2015, pp. 135–180). put forth that the Harper government's action was not that different from the previous governments in behavior as the decline in the military budget and cautious policies show. Again, Hart (2009, pp. 320–335) also said that his actions “are barely distinguishable from those of the Harper government's predecessors. This is not surprising. As indicated earlier, changes in government in Canada rarely result in a radical reorientation in foreign policy.” Indeed, Paris stated that Canadian prime ministers contributed to the internationalist legacy, and even Harper, who questioned it, launched a successful global initiative on maternal, newborn, and child health that is still significant today (Roland, 2018).

The multilateral approach and the Pearsonian legacy have been adopted by the Trudeau government the most, and in fact, one could argue that Justin Trudeau has come to where he is today by criticizing the Harper regime's ignorance of that legacy. ‘We are back’ and ‘We are Canada, and we are here to help’ were Trudeau's greatest announcements to the world when he came to power (AUSTEN & COWLES, 2016; National Post, n.d.). In 2015, the new plan (party propaganda) ‘Strong Middle Class’ (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015) stated,

Unfortunately, under Stephen Harper, our influence and presence on the world stage has steadily diminished. Instead of working with other countries constructively at the United Nations, the Harper Conservatives have turned their backs on the UN and other multilateral institutions while also weakening Canada's military, our diplomatic service, and our development programs... Our plan will restore Canada as a leader in the world. Not only to provide greater security and economic growth for Canadians but because Canada can make a real and valuable contribution to a more peaceful and prosperous World.

Here, it should be mentioned that what Trudeau meant by being a leader was not in the sense of being a global power but being a ‘moral leader,’ as can be understood from the emphasis on a peaceful and prosperous world. The plan also indicated Canada’s recommitment to peacekeeping missions ‘neglected’ during Harper’s premiership, increase in the military budget, ending the mission in Iraq, not purchasing F-35, and fully committing to Central and Eastern Europe. Trudeau (2020, p. 39) later stated, when addressing UNGA, “Canada was there at the beginning, and Canada will continue to be there. Because we know that we can accomplish more together — united as nations, communities, and people.”

One of the main steps Trudeau took to make Canada reengage in global affairs was to run as a candidate for the non-permanent seat at the UNSC for the 2021-2022 session (Nossal, 2018). This is an essential indicator of status-seeking ambitions and internationalism; as Pouliot (2014) put forth, countries bidding for the UNSC seat are essentially engaging in status competition in an international setting since it provides a country with instrumental benefits, influence, and prestige. Indeed, he also states that status claims should align with the normative order, and the current order’s main values are “democracy and its varied interpretations” (Pouliot, 2014). This is telling for Canada’s status-seeking aims since, as a middle power, this is one of the few and consistent ways to gain prestige in world affairs. Even though Canada has lost its bid for the seat, Trudeau has shown visible interest in status-seeking through multilateral ways. Here, it should be mentioned that Canada tried to get a seat at the UNSC table temporarily, unlike the rising or regional powers who claim a permanent seat and revision of the management of the international system, which will be explained in the next chapters.

In the last meeting between Trudeau and Biden in March 2023, Trudeau emphasized the rules-based system, partnership in many areas from refugees to climate change, support for Ukraine, and promised an additional 100 million dollars to provide police support to the National Police Force in Haiti. Even though the rhetoric is promising, Trudeau faces many criticisms regarding his promises in terms of the UN and peacekeeping. According to Dorn (2022), Canada, and specifically Trudeau, has yet to match its promises with its deeds since it ranks the lowest in terms of personnel contribution as it was in previous years. With the withdrawal

from Mali, Canada is at a record low; it has yet to keep its promise regarding women in peacekeeping, with only 19 women uniformed personnel, and it lacks leadership and service contrary to its pledges. Canada's only success and contribution to the UN are on financial terms as it is the 9th largest contributor, making up %2.7 of the UN budget (Dorn, 2022). Canada's inadequate international assistance was also receiving criticism and was blamed as a hypocrite, just like its military efforts; however, Holloway puts forth that even Japan and Germany could not reach their aid goals due to less political and security competition in the Third World due to the collapse of the USSR, the common fiscal crisis of expanding budget deficits, and intellectual form of aid fatigue (Holloway, 2006).

This sub-section examined what Canada does in the international arena with three small cases: peacekeeping, Responsibility to Protect, and multilateralism. Overall, in the post-Cold War years, although there were changes in rhetoric, especially during the Harper government, the internationalist legacy of the post-WWII years have presumed. The multilateralist tradition found a way to continue itself either by rhetoric or behavior. Throughout the years, Canada has pursued a multilateralist yet cautious foreign policy despite the changes in governments and rhetoric. The underlining priorities remained unchanged: the importance of the USA as a neighbor and a superpower, partnership with the 'like-minded' states, cooperation-building, and status-seeking within an internationalist setting. Indeed, there was a change in rhetoric from activism to caution with the conservatives; however, the difference was still along the lines of Canada's self-claimed and defined middle-power identity. As Chapnick (2005) says "There is nothing inherently wrong with Canada's conservative tradition in foreign policy. The country is small, wealthy, and relatively safe. It is distinguished by a particularly diverse citizenry that encourages a brokerage politics approach to national governance." Furthermore, through the years, this multilateralism has become not only the 'country's' identity, but also the public has embraced it and made it part of their identity. Consequently, the call for continuing multilateralist tradition has been not only top-down but also bottom-up.

5. Public Opinion: Canada from Within and Outside

Even though we know that the public can have limited effect and interest with regard to the foreign policy of a country, it is an essential aspect to be studied when researching a state's identity and strategy. As Nossal et al. (2015, pp. 97–134) stated, “At this most general level, society can, in theory, define the bounds of acceptable policy actions.” Canadians have seen their country as a helpful fixer, a bridge-builder, a peacekeeper, or a do-gooder in the international system for so long, and their demand from their governments have been along the same lines (Hart, 2009, pp. 56–83). Furthermore, Nossal et al. (2015, pp. 97–134) also put forth that although it should not be exaggerated, Canadians take an interest in human rights violations and, as a well-fed, healthy, and wealthy public, express their empathy toward others. They also emphasize that Canadians show a general willingness to accept refugees, starting from the acceptance of Jews fleeing from the Nazis during WWII (Nossal et al., 2015, pp. 97–134).

According to the Annual Foreign Policy and International Affairs Survey, published by the Macdonald-Laurier Institute based in Canada in 2022, %77 of Canadians believe that Canada should be influential on the world stage and think positively about international organizations, with Five Eyes taking the lead (%55) followed by NATO (%37) and The United Nations (%35) (Devlen et al., 2022). The report also states that shared history and values play an important role in shaping Canadians' perception of other countries, as Australia is the one that is viewed positively the most (%58). In terms of relations, Canadians believe that Canada-Europe relations are the most important (%92). Following that, authoritarian regimes that undermine the rules-based order are viewed negatively the most (%37), with China taking the lead. Besides, out of all the countries, China is perceived as the main threat to Canadian interests (Devlen et al., 2022).

In general, according to the report (2022), Canadians largely support a strong, well-defined, interest-driven foreign policy that stands up for democracy and human rights and that works together with other like-minded democratic states and international organizations. In the interview, Balkan Devlen (Devlen et al., 2022) says, “Canadians, particularly well-informed Canadians, appear to be strongly in

favor of foreign policy priorities that leverage our status on the global stage and align our values and interests in pursuit of national interest.”

It is not only the Canadians themselves that view their country positively and influence the world, but also the foreigners (*Canada's Reputation Shines Internationally and at Home*, 2021). According to a survey conducted through 28 countries by Ipsos, 80% feel that Canada will have a positive impact on world affairs, and this view had not changed for the last six years since when Trudeau was first elected. This indicates that views on Canada have remained positive and stable. Out of the 28 countries, Mexico (90%), Columbia (91%), and Peru (89%) presented the highest positive impressions of Canada, while Turkey (70%), Saudia Arabia (63%), Russia (60%), and China (53%) provided lower scores (*Canada's Reputation Shines Internationally and at Home*, 2021). Positive views, however, do not translate to being respected or admired, but, indeed, it points to being liked. This directly speaks to status-seeking through social creativity, which this study argues from the start. This shows us that leaders like Trudeau and his predecessors like Pearson achieved their goals and that Canada is a positive moral force in the world, confirming this study's argument that Canada is trying to achieve status by highlighting its distinctive features compared to great powers. Canada claims its particular status by emphasizing its niches, ‘doing good in the world.’ In turn, this influences and gets accepted by people all around the world.

6. Conclusion

This chapter looked into what Canada's interests and capabilities are, what it aspires to do, what it perceives itself to be, and lastly, what it actually does. In conclusion, Canada, as a self-identified middle power, has been conscious of its limited capabilities and has pursued its interests and aspiration in line with them during the post-Cold War years. As Hart put forth, “Canada is a middle-sized power committed to specific interests and imbued with certain values, neither of which can be ignored by the government of the day.”(Hart, 2009, pp. 56–83) Besides, as a democratic nation, the Canadian public has adopted this self-identified middle power identity and pushed their governments to the activist road to some extent. Therefore, this multilateralist tradition has been continued by the governments in behavior, regardless of the change in rhetoric, which also received positive feedback from the

foreign public.

First, as we can see from the first subsection, Canada is a middle power that performs well in economy and technology, which confirms the first hypothesis. Based on its material capabilities, as we can see from the second sub-section, Canada, in its principles, values, and interests, does not behave like a great power nor show the intention to become one. If we look at all the steps the great powers have taken to gain power in time, we can clearly see that Canada is not doing them today. Its intentions and interests are in line with its capabilities. It is not expanding its interests nor projecting its power outside of its region. Indeed, Canada focuses on its regions more as the day goes by (Bland & Macdonald, 2012). What is more, when we look at the acknowledged status claims of great powers, Canada also does not show any intention in that realm, meaning that Canada does not have a nuclear or space program, not even at the level of declaration. Canada does not have the effort to take part in the management of the system, in the sense that it does not have a claim for a permanent seat in the UNSC, unlike some regional or rising power like India or Türkiye. It takes initiatives and takes part in the management of system; however, it does so through coalitions, institutions, and rules. Therefore, based on what Canada does, what it says, and its capabilities, Canada is not pursuing great-power-like behavior. Indeed, it stands out in the international hierarchy by emphasizing its niches and unconventional ways. It alters the negative soft power elements and attains new meaning to them.

Canada's main aim for the last decades, first, has been shaping the rules-based international system; therefore, keeping the status quo, if not making sure that it is predictable, thanks to global institutions. The second aim has been promoting peace, democracy, and human rights, again through multilateral channels, by taking an initiator role in making the UN a more effective organization or contributing with Canadian expertise and assistance, which indicates a "doing good" approach, creating Canada's separation point with the great powers. Indeed, by promoting its values yet through non-extensive interests and plans, Canada draws a path based on its own capabilities. As we can see from the second and third sub-sections, in all instances, Canada moves in coalitions or alongside its allies, mainly the USA. Therefore, we can say that Canada, throughout the 20th century and post-Cold War,

developed and built on its niches, which, in turn, provided Canada to be recognized by these niches and acquire a certain status. As a middle power that is limited by its material capabilities, as we can see from its over-reliance on the USA in many issues, one of the most apparent being the Mali peacekeeping effort, Canada has emphasized soft elements and got recognized through these efforts, which leads us to conclude that the second hypothesis of the thesis is also confirmed. This indicates that Canada, for decades, has sought status through social creativity, which is done by turning negative aspects, such as limited capabilities, into positive ones and turning them into an asset.

In the third and fifth sub-sections, we can see that Canada's self-perceptions, as indicated by its role identities (peace-loving nation, warm-hearted nation), create a new dimension to stand out among others. These are telling of what kind of Canada aspires to be perceived. It seeks to stand out among the middle powers and in the international arena, in general, by turning its negative attributes into positive attributes. This can be seen in its adopted role identity and behavior in the systemic management of the international arena.

In sum, the first case of this study puts forth solid support for the three hypotheses that were brought up in the first two chapters. Canada not only sought status in consideration of its capabilities as a middle power and highlighted its niches, but also it sought that status in line with the role identities it claimed. Therefore, we can conclude that Canada, especially post-WWII, sought status through social creativity by playing on its strengths and niches aligned with its material and discursive capabilities.

CHAPTER 4

SOUTH AFRICA: A PARAGON FOR AFRICA?

This thesis will focus on states' status-seeking strategies post-Cold War. In the case of South Africa, that particular time coincides with a significant turn of events, the dismantling of the apartheid regime in 1994. As an already economically sound country relative to others in its region, meaning the Southern part of Africa, South Africa set sail to be a regional power and a 'good international citizen' with its historical legacy of overcoming the apartheid regime, seeking attention from both the North and the South. Throughout this chapter, when we mention South Africa's region or Southern Africa, we particularly mean these countries: Angola, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zambia, Swaziland, and Malawi (see the map below). This study portrays South Africa as a regional power since it has reasonable resources, in terms of economics, military, and population, compared to that of others in the region, and since the scope of its foreign policy is region-tailored, and its role identity is African and Southern oriented, which will be explained in detail in this chapter. Therefore, it expects South Africa to seek status through social emulation.

Firstly, the chapter introduces why South Africa was chosen as a case study and how I expect it to behave. **Secondly**, the chapter examines South Africa's trajectory regarding the four criteria (military personnel and expenditure, population, GDP) and interests. Specifically, this subsection first examines the capabilities of South Africa to explain why it is accepted as a regional power. Then, it moves on to discuss its foreign policy goals to see its interests and whether they are similar to those of a great power. It discusses South Africa's strategy and agenda world affairs. This part

includes four tables of South Africa's military personnel, military expenditure by GDP per capita, total population, and GDP to see whether there is any intention to increase them and compete. **Thirdly**, the chapter looks into the identity formation of South Africa post-apartheid by focusing mainly on the influence of Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki. This subsection aims to see how South Africa perceives itself, which role identities it claims, where the current narratives in South African identity come from, and how these shape South Africa's current status-seeking agenda. **Fourthly**, the chapter looks into what South Africa does in world politics by examining South Africa's role in two cases: peacekeeping and human rights and presence in the international arena with a focus on the BRICS. This sub-section mainly discusses the post-Cold War years and analyzes the prime ministers' foreign policies and behavior to see whether South Africa keeps its promises and meets its expectations.

1. Introduction

As a heavily condemned and isolated state during the apartheid regime, South Africa became a regional power in the post-Cold War era with its human rights, 'African Renaissance,' and North-South facing foreign policy. It not only became part of the BRICS as a fast-developing economy but also made its aim to shift attention to the African continent and led the way to the formation of the African Union, consequently claiming regional leadership. Whether it has been accepted as the leader of Sub-Saharan Africa is open to discussion. I argue that even though South Africa aspires to be a regional leader in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is not yet recognized by its peers. Currently, we could argue that South Africa is a recognized regional power in Southern Africa,

mainly the countries around it (see the map for the countries) (Boye, 2022), yet contested in Sub-Saharan Africa and the African continent in general. The next step for South Africa would be to claim regional leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa



and the African continent, meaning expanding its influence. This is particularly the reason why this thesis argues that South Africa seeks status through social emulation,

following conventional ways.

Currently, as a country that is ruled by democracy, attempting to lead its region by assuming the responsibility to provide peace and development to its region, with more latent power relative to others, it has been recognized by the world as a developing and attention-grabbing country. Given its history as a British dominion and a Commonwealth country, also as a long-time white-ruled country, South Africa had been in contact with the Global North till the voices rose to end the apartheid regime. After the apartheid regime was dismantled, South Africa made its mission to act as a bridge between the Southern and Northern Hemisphere, make moral claims, yet seek regional leadership in the whole continent by contradicting its moral claims. By moral claims, what I mean is that South Africa flirts with social creativity, as we can recall from the Canada chapter, by making claims of being a mediator, a bridge, and a supporter of human rights and democracy, especially during the Nelson Mandela era; however, as we delve deep, we'll see that the language they use may be indicative of social creativity, but the behavior reveals that there are pure regional claims that align with other regional powers' behavior, which is indeed indicative of social emulation.

In the post-apartheid era, this study argues that South Africa emulates the steps of the conventional examples of other regional powers to seek higher status and attention. It may seem as if it is following the path of post-WWII Japan and Germany by becoming a democracy and adopting liberal values; however, its actions suggest that it is more or ends up behaving like Iran or Brazil.

2. Is It Great-Power-Like?: South Africa's Trajectory and Interests

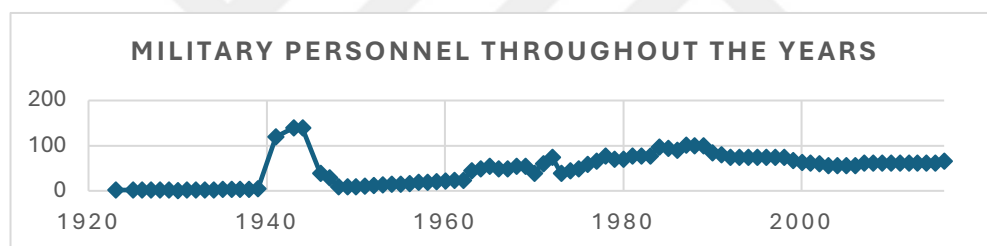
2.1 South Africa's Trajectory

This section will view the material indicators of South Africa that indicate why this study identifies South Africa as a regional power and can indicate upward mobility in tangible power, mainly military personnel, military expenditure by GDP per capita, population, and GDP. These can increase a country's ability to project its power outside its region.

First, South Africa ranks 53rd in the world regarding military personnel, which does not exceed others in Sub-saharan Africa, such as Nigeria or the Democratic

Republic of Congo; however, it exceeds that of middle powers and potential competitors, such as Kenya (Correlates of War, 2021). This shows us that South Africa is a regional power in Southern Africa (explained above). Considering its military personnel through the years, we can observe that South Africa shows fluctuation up until the 1990s. Since then, it has remained constant in the number of military personnel, which tells us that it does not show an upward trend either because it does not want to since the threat of the Cold War has waned or simply because it can not afford to. Wyk (2012) puts forth that, post-apartheid, South Africa shifted from a defensive posture to that of peacemaking, which may also explain the plateau in its military personnel. As of 2022, According to the Department of Defence, South Africa has 71.235 active military personnel (Department of Defence, n.d.).

Table 7 – South Africa’s Military Personnel Throughout the Years

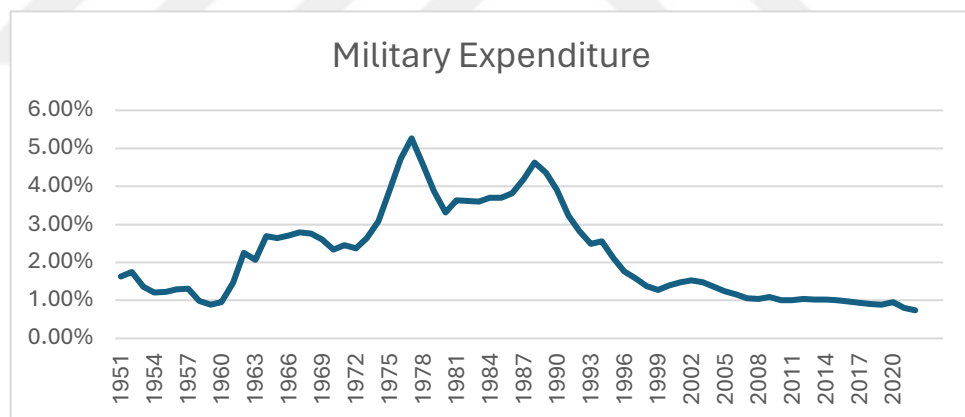


**The years 1920, 1921, 1922, 1924, 1940, and 1942 are deducted from the graphic as there were missing values in the dataset.(Correlates of War, 2021)

One of the significant indicators of a country’s power and assertiveness is the military expenditure per GDP. In the case of South Africa, we can observe that it fluctuates in how much it spends on its military in the apartheid years; however, the post-apartheid era shows a significant downward trend with a plateau in the following years. In the post-apartheid era, with Mandela, South Africa made promoting human rights and democracy its main foreign policy and mentioned that it would start emphasizing defense and peace diplomacy in its military policy (van Nieuwkerk, 2012). These foreign policy goals will be explained in the following paragraphs, but this information helps us make sense of the trend in the graph below. Additionally, the fact that the Cold War was over and there was no need to intervene anywhere due to the threat of communism may explain the drop in military spending since there was no need to spend as much.

As of 2022, South Africa ranks 53rd and spends 0.74% of its GDP on the military, which is considerably low compared to a rising power such as India (2.43%) but close to its other regional power peers such as Mexico (0.61%) or Indonesia (0.7%). Compared to middle powers such as Canada, which spends %1.24 of its GDP on the military, South Africa remains low. South Africa is positioned close, considering its potential competitors in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, such as Kenya (1.00%) and Nigeria (6.4%) (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022b). As of 2022, South Africa spends 2995.33 US\$ on its military (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022b). Looking at its region as Africa, South Africa ranks sixth in terms of military expenditure per GDP, following Algeria, Nigeria, Morocco, Egypt, and Libya. However, if we look at Sub-Saharan Africa, which is the focus of South African foreign policy, South Africa is number 2 in military spending, which shows us that South Africa is a strong state in its respective region.

Table 8 – South Africa’s Military Expenditure (%GDP) Throughout the Years

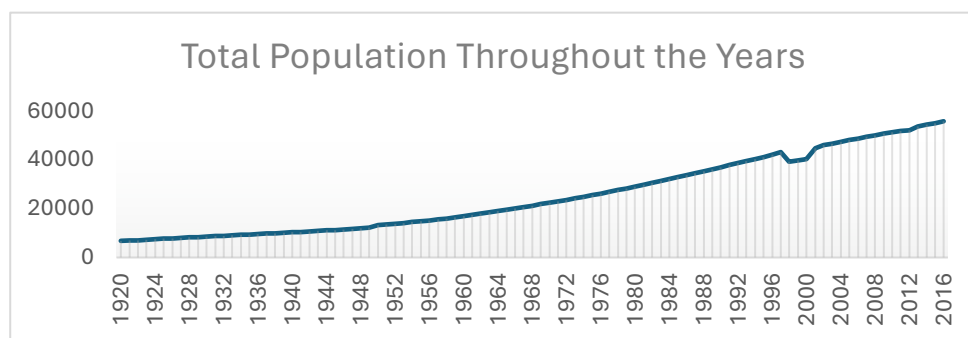


When it comes to the total population throughout the years, we see that South Africa has a gradual incline every year, except in the immediate aftermath of the end of the apartheid, which coincides with the AIDS/HIV epidemic. However, in those respective years where there is a decline, it is still remarkable for South Africa to keep its population high and experience a gradual incline in the following years in population, given the incidence of AIDS/HIV, which 20% of the population has suffered. In addition, the research suggests that South Africa does not compensate for the lose of the population through immigration. It reveals that South Africa attracts

migrants thanks to mining industry; however, it does not purposefully endorse immigration and has a tight ‘Immigration Act’(Moyo, 2021). Indeed, the research shows that the augmentation of AIDS/HIV patients in South Africa has been attained to the increase in the immigrants coming for labor (Crush et al., 2005).

The total population provides a country with latent power, and South Africa ranks 24th in the world, which is significantly higher than the rest of the world (Correlates of War, 2021). Even though it lags behind that of great or other regional powers, it is considerably in front of the middle and small powers. When we look at the graph, we can observe that South Africa has a regular incline, which shows that it does not increase its population visibly through a policy such as increasing births or the number of immigrants. Therefore, there is no desire to rise in rank through demographic changes. The CIA World Factbook estimates the number of people in South Africa to be 58,048,331 million in 2023, while Statistics South Africa estimates it to be 60.14 million in 2021 (CIA, 2024; South African Government, n.d.-b).

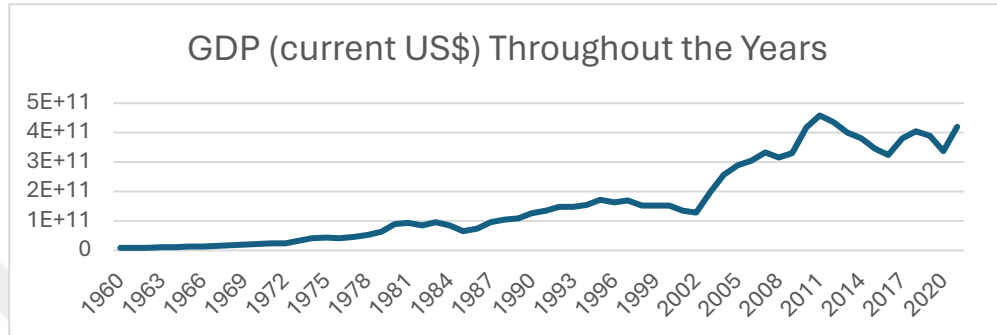
Table 9 – South Africa’s Total Population Throughout the Years



Lastly, looking at its GDP, South Africa ranks 32nd globally, showing us that it lags behind the great and middle powers and the other regional powers (The World Bank Group, 2022b). Therefore, South Africa is an average regional power considering its peers. However, when we look at the graph and the fact that it officially became part of the BRICS in 2010, it is a fast-developing economy that also received attention from the rest of the world, particularly the so-called Global South countries as the continent’s leading economy (Hervieu, 2011). Considering the below graph, we can observe that, post-Apartheid, South Africa struck a blow in its

economy, and even though it fluctuated in its GDP, it made its mission to develop economically, which will be more apparent when the chapter explains its interests in the following paragraph. As of 2022, South Africa's GDP is calculated as 405,869,718.46 US\$ (The World Bank Group, 2022b).

Table 10 – South Africa's GDP Throughout the Years



These indicators reveal South Africa's overall tangible power and rank as a regional power. As we recall from Chapters 1 and 2, this study argues that regional powers perform well in terms of latent power, meaning population and military size that are generally comprised of developing economies. The above-mentioned figures confirm this and the first hypothesis of this thesis. Considering its population and military expenditure compared to its competitors in Sub-Saharan Africa, we conclude that South Africa is a regional power.

The figures, however, only give us one side of the coin as they do not tell us what, where, how, and why South Africa uses its power. Therefore, to understand whether South Africa behaves like a great power or how it seeks status, let us look at South African interests in world affairs, precisely its foreign policy agenda and strategies, by examining the official papers published by the latest governments and utilizing secondary resources.

2.2 South Africa's interests

Firstly, looking at the latest Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025 published by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (formerly Department of Foreign Affairs), there are five main foreign policy issues that are emphasized: human rights, economic and social development, African agenda, South-South cooperation, and beneficial relations with the Global North through strategic

formations or multilateral organizations (DIRCO, 2020). Indeed, the current president Ramaphosa (2018-present), follows the path of his predecessors and continues the blueprint of foreign policy post-apartheid set by mainly Mandela (1994-1999) and Mbeki (1999-2004). However, we are interested not in the promises, but in whether they are kept or not, so we are looking into the substance to understand the status-seeking strategies behind the pretty words.

Post-Apartheid, from the moment the African National Congress (ANC, the ruling party still today) came to the government and Nelson Mandela became the president, the above-mentioned issues have been the priority of foreign policy in South Africa. Drawing from the historical legacy of dismantling apartheid, Nelson Mandela put forth the blueprint of South African foreign policy in his article published in 1993 (Mandela, 1993). He set six pillars of foreign policy that are still mentioned in every foreign policy report: human rights are central to international relations, only true democracy can solve the problems, peace is the goal that can be achieved through respect for international law and non-violent mechanisms, African concerns should be reflected in the world, and economic development can be achieved through regional and international cooperation (Mandela, 1993). The main emphasis in Mandela's narratives and foreign policy goals was indeed compliance with universal morality and promoting human rights and democracy. He believed that cooperation with the world and integration into the world forum was important. However, these goals did not come from merely a moral ground. Mandela knew that an isolated country could not recover economically after the sanctions (Olivier, 2012). Therefore, this blueprint was not purely altruistic but came from a wise calculation.

He also drew attention to the North (developed) – South (developing) divide and argued that the UN is the primary mechanism to solve these, yet the organization must be restructured to reflect the concerns of the developing world (Mandela, 1993, p. 89). Lastly, he emphasized that the South African destiny is linked to that of Africa, not because of pure geography but also due to their history and economic development (Mandela, 1993, p. 90). Overall, this blueprint has been resumed by the subsequent presidents, albeit giving emphasis to one or other pillars and adding specifically the South-South cooperation.

The primary foreign policy pillar during the Mbeki years was the African agenda, specifically named the ‘African Renaissance.’ One can argue that the more humane and neutral Mandela was, the more ideological, African-oriented, and non-Western Mbeki was. From 1999 to 2008, according to Gqiza and Ogunnubi (2019), emphasis was on socio-economic development and the African agenda, which aimed to make South Africa a regional leader of Sub-Saharan Africa through diplomacy. The attention was given to Africa as it made sense for altruistic and economic reasons since Africa’s economy and peace recovery would also serve South Africa (Gqiza & Ogunnubi, 2019). Besides, helping the continent of Africa through aid came from a sense of security to prevent immigration and the likelihood of people's flow to South Africa.

However, Mbeki’s Pan-African foreign policy was a cautious quest for leadership since he did not want to be perceived as imperialist or rejected by his African peers (Flemes, 2007). The attention to South-South cooperation, the second priority of Mbeki, should be viewed in this context. The White Paper on Foreign Policy emphasized Mbeki’s cautious policy of being a non-hegemonic leader and said, “the 1995 Bandung Conference shapes our understanding of South-South cooperation and opposition to colonialism as a natural extension of our national interest.”⁶ His aim was to economically develop South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa through South-South cooperation and North-South dialogue without being perceived as a hegemonic giant in the region. Therefore, one can say that Mbeki formed a thin thread that he had to balance while walking on it.

Later on, during Zuma’s years, the Strategic Plan of 2011 outlines that the Enhanced African Agenda and Sustainable Development is the first priority of the South African foreign policy, which aims “to promote socio-economic development, contribute to the resolution of conflicts, and the building of an enabling environment in which the development of the Continent can take place. (DIRCO, 2011, p. 10)”

⁶ (South African Government, 2011, p. 3) The Bandung Conference of 1955, also called as Asian-African Conference, is the first large scale conference that gathered newly independent states of Africa and Asia with the leadership of Indonesia, China, and India. Here, the 29 countries signed the Bandung principles, which underlined the opposition to colonialism and, most importantly, the principle of peaceful co-existence that underlined the non-interference in others’ domestic affairs. The principles were essentially a product of China and India in 1953.

Additionally, the White Paper on Foreign Policy published in 2011 states that “South Africa recognizes itself as an integral part of the African continent and therefore understands its national interest as being intrinsically linked to Africa’s stability, unity, and prosperity” (South African Government, 2011, p. 3). We can say that the African agenda has remained in its place in foreign policy priorities and South-South cooperation. However, when it came to the human rights pillar, although it remained a priority, the actions were showcased differently, which created ambiguity in Zuma’s foreign policy (Gqiza & Ogunnubi, 2019). Through the decades in South African policy, the narrative, one might say, changed from cooperation, human rights, and democracy to national interest, economic and social development, and South-South cooperation (Landsberg, 2012).

In light of these points, we may say that South Africa, albeit flirted with social creativity in its rhetoric, showed its real hand rather quickly with ‘African Renaissance’ and ‘South-South Cooperation’ foreign policies. Not only did the rhetoric change from ‘do-gooder’ to ‘regional spokesperson,’ but also the concrete actions proved that the main orientation was regional and aimed toward regional leadership, which we will see in the upcoming sections. Therefore, we can conclude that the rhetoric was rather a tool to present themselves as the whole region's spokesperson in the West's eyes and to play to the domestic audiences.

This section presents that South Africa’s foreign policy is primarily region-tailored. It is clear that what we are seeing is not a middle power nor a rising power but a regional power that utilizes the tools at hand, which occasionally may be confused with that of middle powers.

3. All in One with One Mission: South Africa’s Post-Apartheid Identity

South Africa’s identity has gone through a total reconstruction after the apartheid regime was dismantled, and some of the above-mentioned foreign policy goals became part of the South African identity or disappeared over time. Generally, those that became sticky and part of the South African role identity can be summarized as African and a developing Southern nation. Let me discuss how these identity formations were constituted and their effects on the status-seeking strategy of the Republic of South Africa.

As was mentioned, the building of post-apartheid South Africa coincided with the end of the Cold War and, essentially, the East-West divide. Not only was South Africa changing, but the world order was also changing alongside it. That meant that South Africa got an opportunity to redefine itself in a new world order. In his speech at the UN in March 1995, Nelson Mandela (1994) said, “The irony of democratic South Africa’s late entry into international affairs is that we can reap the fruits of a world redefining itself.” Rebuilding the nation was also part of Mbeki’s narrative; however, rather than building a nation from scratch, he made references to incorporating the old with the new as he (Mbeki, 2006) once said,

We cannot create the new without negating the old. We cannot create a truly democratic, non-racial, and non-sexist South Africa without eradicating the legacy of centuries-old colonialism and apartheid... As we do this, it is inevitable that our panoply of heroes and heroines will change, our memory of ourselves will alter, and our view of what we have been, and therefore the history we teach the young will change... But, equally, I believe this to be true as we create the new; we would lose our way if we have no constants, no fixed points of reference, no lodestars, confronted only by a fluid situation in which everything is temporary and relative. It is for this reason that for us not to lose our way as we engage the complex process of rebuilding ourselves as a nation, we need reference points.

Once a pariah, it set sail to become an example setter, a human rights advocate, a mediator, a diplomat, and a bridge-builder between North and South (Landsberg & Monyae, 2006). The aim was to introduce the new democratic South Africa as a ‘good international citizen’ like a middle power (K. Smith, 2012). Yet, it was a way to establish good relations with the rest of the world, enhance international prestige, and get support from the domestic audience rather than being an established middle power. As was mentioned, it was primarily a tool. According to Smith (2012), Mandela and Mbeki’s administrations particularly relied on soft power, the ideational power; however, their emphasis when defining South African identity was relatively different. While Mandela underlined democratic, humanitarian, and cooperative South African identity, Mbeki put emphasis on the African and Southern parts of South Africa. The common central theme in both of these administrations was utilizing the post-apartheid regime as the ‘other’ in the identity formation process (Serrão & Bischoff, 2009).

When the ‘other’ is the apartheid regime in the identity formation process, being African became the main pillar of the role identity of the Republic of South Africa.

Although it did not become a part of the South African identity immediately and took a little process to be embedded, it was and still is the main priority of the ANC, which has ruled the government since the apartheid regime's end (Olivier, 2012). Mbeki's famous 'I am an African' speech in 1996 was the evidence that most clearly reveals this narrative. Mbeki (Mbeki, 1996 as cited in SABC News, 2017) says,

I am an African. We are assembled here today to mark their victory in acquiring and exercising their right to formulate their own definition of what it means to be African. The constitution whose adoption we celebrate constitutes an unequivocal statement that we refuse to accept that our Africanness shall be defined by our race, color, gender, or historical origins. It is a firm assertion made by ourselves that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white. It gives concrete expression to the sentiment we share as Africans, and will defend to the death, that the people shall govern... I am born of the peoples of the continent of Africa. The pain of the violent conflict that the peoples of Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, Burundi, and Algeria are a pain I also bear. The dismal shame of poverty, suffering, and human degradation of my continent is a blight that we share... This thing that we have done today, in this small corner of a great continent that has contributed so decisively to the evolution of humanity, says that Africa reaffirms that she is continuing her rise from the ashes.

Now, what we can interpret from his overall speech is that he puts emphasis on Africanness not in terms of race but in terms of those who live on the land of Africa. Africanness is not about being black or related to religion and ethnicity, but it is about being from the same region, meaning the African continent. Here, we can see the definition of the region and the scope of South African foreign policy, its regional orientation, and the proto-claim of a sphere of influence. It is clear that for South Africa, the region is not the Southern Africa region or sub-Saharan Africa but Africa as a whole, including the Arab people. Therefore, this indicates regional leadership and claiming an enlarged sphere of influence. There is a tinge of non-westernism and refusal to accept Western political and cultural hegemony and a point to the aspiration of making Africa get the attention it deserves (Olivier, 2012). He points to the struggles of African people from all over the continent by touching upon colonialism, oppression, injustice, crimes against humanity, segregation, underdevelopment, and poverty. From his proto-claim of regional leadership and criticisms of Western imperialism to adopting the role of identity as the spokesperson of Africa, we see indicators of social emulation that emulates the behaviors of the regional leaders. We see that South Africa, for the time being, emulates the other

regional powers, not the great powers.

This ties in with the 'Southern' pillar of the South African identity. The underdevelopment of South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa is emphasized in the narratives put forth by Mandela, Mbeki, and Zuma. Therefore, the role that South Africa adopted post-apartheid era is being a spokesperson for a better Africa and a better South (Landsberg & Monyae, 2006). Mandela (1993) says, "Southern Africa commands a special priority in our foreign policy. We are inextricably part of Southern Africa, and our destiny is linked to that of a region, which is much more than a mere geographical concept." Then, he proceeds to discuss the economic importance of southern Africa and the need to develop better relations with its neighbors for development purposes. Again, the emphasis is on a 'better Africa.' Indeed, the main theme of the Strategic Plan of DIRCO (2011-2015) is a better South Africa, a better Africa, and a better world (DIRCO, 2011).

Zuma made 'Africa First' its main foreign policy aimed at championing the cause of the South, which again emphasized developmental goals but also mainly Africa, the single most important objective for South Africa (Landsberg, 2012). Again, here, we see a proto-claim of a sphere of influence. In sum, the African and Southern parts of the South African role identity should be understood, considering a proto-claim of being the spokesperson for the whole African continent.

According to Olivier (2012), the 'African Renaissance' policy is a personal ideology of Thabo Mbeki, and he even proceeds to call him 'Africa's super salesman.' Here is a good place to explain South Africa's claim of a 'non-hegemonic big brother' identity. Given its historical legacy of dismantling the apartheid regime, South Africa, especially seen in Mbeki's African Renaissance policy, wanted to lead Sub-Saharan Africa as an example setter and call for African countries from all different levels to initiate change (Bischoff, 2003). This quest for regional leadership was carefully pursued, as it feared resistance from the region; therefore, the quest was being covered by narratives such as 'we/us, better together, and a faithful ally' (Flemes, 2007; Gqiza & Ogunnubi, 2019). However, due to its fast economic expansion, it could not escape being deemed a 'sub-imperialist power, which was indeed what they feared (Landsberg & Monyae, 2006). Particularly, the academic

communities utilized this expression of sub-imperialist power to put forth that South Africa acts as a 'proxy' for the West's (particularly the USA) interests by "adoption of neo-liberal policies and implementation of the American imperialist agenda across the continent" (Samson, 2009, p. 96).

Finally, it is necessary to talk about the identity of the 'human rights advocate,' which has been given great importance and tried to be a part of the South African identity after the immediate end of apartheid, mainly by Nelson Mandela. The foreign policy discussion document (South African Government, n.d.-a) explains,

The advancement of human rights and promotion of democracy are pillars on which South Africa's foreign policy rests... Many governments expect South Africa's adherence to these principles and values to be an example to other countries in Africa and elsewhere, inspiring them to democratize and to improve their human rights record.

Thanks to apartheid lessons and this 'unique experience of being a Southern African,' Mandela, who refers to the anti-apartheid campaign as a human-rights crusade, wanted to turn this experience into a comparative advantage and a special niche (Landsberg & Monyae, 2006; Mandela, 1993, p. 87; Monyae, 2012). But after certain alarming steps were taken, such as intervention in Lesotho (see below for detail), it could not stick to South African identity.

At first, it took promising steps to be an example by becoming part of global human rights institutions and initiatives such as the Landmines Treaty, being one of the first African countries to submit itself to be reviewed by the African Peer Review Program, and being the only country to achieve a nuclear weapon capability and voluntarily relinquish it (Friedman, 2017; K. Smith, 2012). However, today, we see that this identity and role put on South Africa by others did not hold up. Smith (2012) explains that this international image did not hold up for multiple reasons: arms sales to human rights abusers such as UAE and Saudi Arabia, who continue their intervention in Yemen, failed quiet diplomacy in Zimbabwe, military intervention in Lesotho, denial of visa to Dalai Lama, close and favorable relations with China and Russia, decisions taken during its non-permanent membership to UNSC, and its own poverty, unemployment, education, and crime problems. Furthermore, Olivier (2012) puts forth that hopes of returning to Mandela's morally

based foreign policy during Zuma's presidency were doubted due to South Africa's voting behavior in the UNSC, especially with regard to Syria and Ukraine as the voting shows that South Africa in both of the occasions abstained, therefore, came over as siding with Russia (S. Adams, 2011; Mureithi, 2022), which showed that opposition to the West overrode the concerns over human rights and international morality was interpreted as being an instrument of Western interests. Serrao and Bischoff (2009) argue that South Africa experiences a foreign policy ambiguity; however, as explained above, South Africa flirts with social creativity as a tool to play to domestic and foreign, mainly the Global North, audiences.

In conclusion, after South Africa dismantled apartheid, it could punch above its actual weight, meaning its tangible power, by firmly claiming regional leadership. This indicates that the ideology during apartheid was a weight tied to its legs as it quickly turned from a pariah to a paragon. Southern and African narratives became the main pillars of South Africa's identity. Here, we can see the importance of material power and ideology/role identity, which will be shown with two counterfactuals.

First, to understand that capabilities matter, let's ask this question: would a country with less material power, say Lesotho, and the same history, be a 'paragon' for Africa after it dismantled the ideology? I argue that a country with less material power and the same history as South Africa could still be a pariah or, at most, be congratulated and then forgotten. However, in the case of South Africa, we see a praised and encouraged country that is seeking even more status in the hierarchy. Second, let's ask, would South Africa be where it is today if it never ended apartheid? I argue that it would not be recognized or seen in the current world of events. It would not be able to get into BRICS, let alone get attention by taking Israel to court in the Palestine issue.

4. Big Dreams, Weak Muscles: What Does South Africa Do and What Kind of a Power It Is?

This sub-section delves into what South Africa does on the international stage to rise to a certain rank and will help us understand why certain international images did not hold up and what South Africa actually does. As was mentioned, in the immediate post-apartheid period, South Africa sought to actively participate in the

multilateral international system as a good global citizen by participating in peacekeeping efforts, as an advocate of human rights, and as an example setter. However, its actions throughout the decades showcased a more ambitious image as a regional power wanting to lead and be a spokesperson for Africa through multilateral tools, but also one that is stroked by the realities of the African continent regarding promoting peacekeeping and human rights.

4.1 Peacekeeping and Human Rights

In the Future South African Foreign Policy article, Mandela (1993, p. 97) claimed,

South Africa's future foreign relations will be based on our belief that human rights should be the core concern of international relations, and we are ready to play a role in fostering peace and prosperity in the world we share with the community of nations.

With this ambition, South Africa adopted a morally superior attitude and claimed itself as a diplomat/mediator who pursued preventive diplomacy and settlement of disputes through negotiation, especially in Africa (Landsberg & Monyae, 2006; van Nieuwkerk, 2012). However, this over-ambition of a previously isolated and proactive state proved more difficult and short-lived.

During the apartheid era, South African foreign policy and its actions were pretty much proactive, as we see from the examples of developing secret nuclear weapons, its involvement in Angola and Rhodesia, and its intervention in Namibia. South Africa feared the Soviet Union as it supported the liberation movement in South Africa and its neighbors, and South Africa experienced a sense of threat as it believed that without a deterrence weapon, it could not endure a 'communist onslaught.' Furthermore, the liberation movements triggered South Africa, especially in Angola, and it resorted to sending troops to fight Cuban troops. It was not only limited to Angola, but South Africa took an active part in Namibia and Rhodesia, as well, with troops in guerilla warfare (Paul, 2000). In light of this information, the adopted morally superior attitude post-apartheid was foreign to the South African regime, and the new government's rhetoric was short-lived, as we see from the Lesotho incident.

In 1998, in Lesotho, the ANC advocated for mediation and peacemaking efforts

to end the constitutional crisis; however, these efforts did not bring the expected results when the peace talks brokered, and South Africa, alongside Botswana, sent troops (C. Williams, 2019). The incident was born out of the elections in Lesotho, which resulted in the success of the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, which bothered many opposition groups to the point where it led to protests and civil unrest. King Letsie III called on Mandela to help resolve the situation. At first, Mbeki, alongside officers from different countries, went on to investigate the elections and recount the votes, which showcased that the elections were corrupted in a report. As the days passed, waiting for the publication of the report, the Lesotho Defence Force was divided into two camps, and younger officers who supported the opposition rebelled against their commanders, led to a crisis in the military, yet not a coup. On the day that the Langa report was released, revealing that the elections were rigged, the South African troops entered the territory of Lesotho, and mediation efforts failed (C. Williams, 2019). Operation Boeleas proved that quiet diplomacy, meaning waiting to release the report and calm the unrest till then, did not hold up.

The specific case of Lesotho contradicted what Mandela had envisioned for South African foreign policy; as Monyae (2012) summarizes, “sending troops to Lesotho was in direct contradiction to the peaceful and multilateral approach which South Africa had been advocating in the resolution of the DRC conflict.” The Lesotho case proved that it was indeed hard to walk on a slim rope, which aimed to both calm down the military crisis and mediate between the opposition and the government. As the crisis evolved quickly, South African Defence Forces had to plan a complex operation in little time, which eventually led to a political disaster, as some would say (C. Williams, 2019). This also demonstrated South Africa’s willingness to use force where it perceived its interests to be under threat.’(Monyae, 2012)

This signaled a policy shift to a more realistic one in South Africa or revealed their actual aims behind pretty words, which also happened while the government shifted from Mandela to Mbeki. Indeed, van Nieuwkerk (2012) divides post-apartheid into two phases: the first period, where South Africa went on a human rights crusade, which ended with the military deployment to Lesotho in 1998, and the second phase, which South Africa realized the limits of the unilateralism and

pursued such ambitions under the umbrella of multilateralism. He puts forth that South Africa was stroke with a reality check regarding the “realities of the African continent” (van Nieuwkerk, 2012).

This does not mean that South Africa completely changed its mission on peacekeeping and human rights. During Mbeki’s term, the mission to demonstrate South Africa as the new peacemaker, facilitator, and diplomat in its region continued and even stretched to the Middle East (Landsberg & Monyae, 2006). Mbeki sought mediation and conflict settlement through negotiation in DRC, Burundi, and Nigeria and created a so-called ‘peace camp’ where authorities from Israel and Palestine could negotiate in the 2000s (Landsberg & Monyae, 2006). According to van Nieuwkerk (2012), South Africa participated in peacemaking or post-conflict reconstruction in 17 African countries. Additionally, according to Flandes (2007), Mandela and Mbeki successfully used diplomatic efforts to end conflicts or crises in Angola and Burundi. However, there are many examples where South African efforts offered little to no help, such as in the case of Nigeria during the Abacha regime, Zaire in the Mobutu regime, Zimbabwe, and Swaziland (Flandes, 2007). In some of these cases, the failures were caused by sides calling South Africa biased; for example, in the case of DRC, Kabila accused the ANC of allegedly siding with Rwanda (the main opposite side) and Uganda. In the case of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the same accusations were made as the Israeli side charged South Africa for allegedly backing Palestine (Landsberg & Monyae, 2006).

South Africa demonstrated a lack of leadership or unsettled actions in other efforts. In such occurrences, South Africa resorted to using multilateralism as a tool for peacekeeping, as we can see from its putting SADC accountable for peace enforcement operations, initiating the African Union’s Peace and Security Protocol, and setting up the Peace and Security Council (Flandes, 2007). Although such initiatives were well-thought-out and aligned with the South African foreign policy vision, South Africa repeatedly revealed its actual intentions. In 2011, in the Libya case, when South Africa was one of the non-permanent members of the UNSC, it voted in favor of the Resolution 1973 ‘to take all necessary actions to end Qaddafi’s wrongdoings and protect civilians’ led African countries to be disappointed and showed that Africa countries could not speak with one voice under the umbrella of

the African Union (Kasaija, 2013; van Nieuwkerk, 2012).

Moreover, when we look at its stance on human rights, as this chapter already mentioned, the vision of Mandela has faded throughout the years, especially during the Zuma regime; there were many setbacks in the country's 'moral leadership.' South Africa consistently refrained from condemning Zimbabwe, which is a major human rights violator, and even called for the lifting of economic sanctions on Zimbabwe 'for better progress in resolving the political crisis' (Digital, 2023; Elgood, 2010). Following the election of President Mnangagwa in 2017 in Zimbabwe, citizens have disputed the corrupt election results, fuel price hikes, and corruption, yet the government's response was to kill the civilians, limit the civil society and press, and suppress all those who stand against him, from political parties to citizens (Khumalo, 2020). The failing of South Africa to condemn Zimbabwe and take concrete actions present that stepping into and supporting human rights and democracy stop when an alliance is at stake.

In 2009, South Africa denied the visa of Dalai Lama, who was visiting for a peace conference (K. Smith, 2012). In 2015, South Africa failed to arrest the Sudanese Leader Omar al-Bashir while he was in Johannesburg, as he was charged with genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes due to his actions in the Darfur region. The International Criminal Court heavily criticized South Africa and argued that South Africa was obligated under the Rome Statute to arrest him; however, the ANC defended itself by saying that they were focused on national interest, which was essentially economic prosperity at that point, and that it was not their responsibility to interfere in domestic affairs of others (Gqiza & Ogunnubi, 2019). Moreover, continued arms sales to human rights abusers, such as Saudi Arabia and UAE - who are conducting one of the world's largest humanitarian crises in Yemen (Human Rights Watch, 2023) - and decisions siding with Russia and China in UNSC votings against ending human rights violations in Myanmar or sanctioning Iran have sent alarming signals to others considering South Africa's commitment to human rights and democracy (Kisla, 2021; Olivier, 2012; K. Smith, 2012).

To sum up, these examples show us that although the moral rhetoric, from supporting human rights to democracy, was utilized on certain occasions, it was

primarily destined for the Global North and the domestic audiences, as that was a way to be an active participant in the international arena, which is ruled by the Global North. However, the actions showed that the rhetoric was not destined for the Africans, as South Africa pursued policies in accordance with its national interest and main aim, which was to be the regional leader in the continent.

4.2 Presence in the International Arena

As mentioned, post-apartheid, South Africa wanted to lead Africa and chanted for a ‘better Africa and a better world.’ However, this was not an easy and smooth road against the backdrop of many African countries that perceived South Africa as an extension of the West or a ‘big bully’ (Samson, 2009; M. Schoeman et al., 2017). Aware of these obstacles and resistance, South Africa opted for multilateralism to be accepted in its region and the international arena, claiming that it speaks for the African continent and African interest in multilateral gatherings (BRICS) and institutions (the UN). Today, South Africa is a member of the African Union, the BRICS, G20, IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa Dialogue Forum), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Commonwealth (DIRCO, 2022).

Using multilateralism as a tool to be recognized as a leader and to spare resistance was successful for South Africa. It did not spare the resistance but provided South Africa with a stage to show itself. It became one of the non-permanent members of the UNSC two times, first in 2007-2008 and the second time around in 2011- 2012, advocating for the ‘voice of Africa.’ It was the main initiator and advocated for having the Doha Round in WTO to express the interests of the South and mainly Africa as a way of pursuing African Renaissance policy through multilateral structures (Monyae, 2012; Qobo, 2012). According to Wyk (2012), the best achievements of South Africa were the restructuring of the South African Development Community (SADC) and transforming the Organization of African Union. These were the venues where South Africa could use its ideational power. Landsberg (2012) puts forth that both during Mbeki and Zuma regimes, the ANC understood that South Africa could not prosper without the rest of the continent, and to be recognized as the leader and promote the national interest, it pursued a multilateral approach, which it could champion the interests of the South and build

bridges between North and South. Not only did it initiate such measures, it also proved its commitment by meeting the costs and needs of organizations it is a part of, such as the African Union and NEPAD (Flemes, 2007). In the case of SADC, as was mentioned, it was South Africa that initiated the organization to promote human rights and democracy and deal with peace enforcement when necessary.

However, as we delve deeper, we see that the alliance that South Africa values the most is indeed the BRICS, which is not a regional grouping but a global one involving rising and regional powers, mainly the 'Global South.' According to Williams and Papa, when it comes to security in a military sense, South Africa has its cooperation with African countries; however, most of the weight in alliances is given to Global South, mainly the BRICS, since insecurity for South Africa comes out of developmental problems, that can be overcome with its existence in the BRICS and its cooperation with the BRICS countries (C. Williams & Papa, 2020). Williams and Papa(2020, p. 343) put forth that

BRICS, the most prominent "alliance" South Africa has joined, is instructive... Since South African leaders view widespread poverty and inequality within their country as a major threat, and the system of global governance that creates power imbalances as perpetuating these domestic problems, rising power alignments are often dubbed alliances, as they help positively contribute to South Africa's domestic development goals while seeking global governance reform.

Compared to the other 4 states in the BRICS, South Africa seems like the odd man out there, as it has the poorest economies compared to the rest, which also led many, from industry to academic spheres, to be surprised and critical of South Africa's integration into the BRICS. In terms of GDP, while South Africa ranks 32nd, Brazil is 12th, Russia is 11th, India is 6th, and China is 1st in the world ranking. However, BRICS is a grouping that shares 'similar experiences and common challenges in the international system and domestically' and one that benefits from each other mainly on an economic scale, without putting 'domination' at the forefront, which makes it the most valuable for South Africa (Shoba, 2018, p. 184). It may be the odd man out there, but it is not in direct competition with the other group members; it just enjoys having a seat at the table as the representative of the African continent. As I argued, South Africa is seeking to be the regional leader of Sub-Saharan Africa, if not the whole continent, and it is emulating the actions of the

other regional powers to become one. BRICS is an arena where South Africa can claim that it is recognized as the key player in the region by the other great powers and rising powers. It is the main international stage that provides South Africa with the status that it seeks.

Ramaphosa (2023), the current president, says that BRICS provides South Africa with a strategic relationship with a great power, China, the top international trade partner, funding from the New Development Bank set up by the BRICS in 2015, and an opportunity to champion African interests. Money, investment, and recognition are the main gains South Africa gets from the BRICS, which are essential for its mission to be a regional leader. As of 2023, at the summit held in South Africa, Ramaphosa announced BRICS 3.0, indicating that new members will join, which are Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Although Ramaphosa welcomed the new members by claiming that it would provide more diversity, a symbol of success for Global South multilateralism, and a greater voice, it may have downsides since it may do the opposite, giving South Africa a smaller voice and less representation. As we've said, South Africa is the odd man out in the BRICS with the smallest GDP and expansion of the club with other regional powers may downplay the hand of South Africa, especially given the fact that its competitors in the African continent will also be joining the club (BBC, 2023; Vandome, 2023).

At the global level, South Africa was the driving force behind the formation of IBSA, which provided the country with economic growth and recognition as a regional power, a successful implementation of the South-South cooperation agenda. It is now a part of the G20 and BRICS, which further strengthened the country's status and became a vital part of South Africa's economic development and policy (Flemes, 2007; Vickers, 2012). Apart from only focusing on the South at the global level, South Africa aimed to be a bridge-builder between Global North and South, and one of the examples in this agenda can be the EU announcing that it will make South Africa its strategic partner and bolster support for NEPAD (Landsberg & Monyae, 2006). Although there were works for signing a Free Trade Agreement with the USA and the EU, they failed, and South Africa signed a Trade, Development, and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) through long and difficult negotiations (Vickers, 2012).

We say it is a successful and active part of multilateral platforms, but we should also mention that what South Africa understands and wants from such platforms differs from that of middle powers such as Canada. According to Qobo (2012), South Africa participates in such organizations to “limit the dominance of bigger countries in shaping the outcomes of the agenda in their favor.” Middle powers want to be a part of the international management and have their voices heard, but compared to Canada, South Africa wants reform in multilateral organizations, mainly the UN Security Council, as a spokesperson of Africa and the South.

Addressing the 70th General Debate in the UNGA, President Zuma (2015) says

It is unacceptable and unjustifiable that one billion people in the African continent are still excluded as permanent members of the key decision-making structure of the United Nations, the UN Security Council. A continent with a smaller population than Africa is represented by three countries on the UN Security Council as permanent members. The UN cannot pretend that the world has not changed since 1945. We are no longer colonies. We are free, independent sovereign states.

This is a direct request from the international arena to include African countries in managing the international system. This also demonstrates to us that South Africa values and focuses latent power, the number of population, when it comes to managing the system, as it downplays the European continent and its power. On this subject, Serrao and Bischoof (2009) say that South Africa is “concerned with not the rules of the game, but who is permitted to play.” Moreover, what is prominent in most of the actions and speeches of South African leaders is that although they want to champion African interests, they want to be the main spokesperson of Africa, meaning that they want to be the center of attention, the big brother, and the leader. The fact that it deliberately says that it aims to champion African interests within the BRICS, the G20, and the UN should be interpreted from a critical perspective as the main aim is to stand out as the maestro, not another violin player.

5. Conclusion

This chapter concludes that, in the post-apartheid era, the Republic of South Africa was a regional power that sought status through social emulation. In the case of South Africa, what this thesis showed is that South Africa currently is emulating the steps of the other regional leaders, not the great powers. Although it utilizes

moral rhetoric, such as promoting human rights and democracy, its actions are indicative of a regional power seeking status through social mobility to move upward in the hierarchy and become a regional leader. Its military intervention in Lesotho, posing as the African leader on the world stage, especially in relation to BRICS, failure to condemn Russia and Zimbabwe, and its voting behavior in the United Nations are telling of its effort to achieve regional leadership.

The second sub-section of this chapter lays out that South Africa is a regional power with a visible latent power, meaning population and military size. The fact that it is the 2nd country in military expenditure within Sub-Saharan Africa and 6th in the African continent, and a member of the BRICS with a developing economy is telling in this context. Even before the apartheid regime ended, South Africa was the economic hegemon in Sub-Saharan Africa, and when the times were changing, it was eager to be a leader in every realm in its region. It may have utilized status symbols that would fall under the category of social creativity; however, its actions showed a different story. One could argue that the fact that the South African Government dismantled its nuclear weapons may indicate otherwise; however, the backstage of this mission was sheer domestic politics.

Years after dismantling them, President Klerk (2013) wrote that the dismantling of nuclear weapons was derived from a moral ground and was for the long-term security of South Africa. However, even though it may have altruism attached to it, it was mainly an action born out of security reasons and domestic politics. With regard to domestic politics, South Africa was in a time of political unrest, and there was the fear of leaving the nuclear weapons in the hands of a Black government ruled by the ANC, which allegedly was related to communism (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.). Furthermore, the initial reason for building nuclear weapons was to use them as a political tool to create a calculated ambiguity, which was not on the agenda anymore since the security landscape changed drastically in the 1980s. The Cold War ended, Cuban troops left Angola after a tripartite agreement, and South Africa granted Namibia its independence after being isolated by the West. Therefore, the end of regional conflicts and the threat of the spread of communism showed the government that such a military strategy was irrelevant. Plus, the government was aware that nuclear weapons stood as an obstacle to South Africa's acceptance into

the international community. Therefore, we can conclude that dismantling 6 nuclear weapons after a decade of achieving them was not an act of morality but an act of security considering both international and domestic politics (Council on Foreign Relations, n.d.; Paul, 2000, pp. 113–124). Many of their actions and foreign policy choices can also be seen from this perspective. As I've argued above, South Africa's foreign policy is region-tailored and aimed at being the regional leader of Sub-Saharan Africa, if not the whole continent. For example, while South Africa blames the Russia-Ukraine War on NATO and refrains from condemning Putin (Cocks, 2022), it is taking Israel to the International Court of Justice due to war crimes, genocide, and human rights abuses. The moral approach taken in the Palestine conflict is another indicator of South Africa's claim to be a leader and a spokesperson of the African continent in multilateral settings.

Some academics have argued that South Africa's acceptance as a regional power and a 'paragon' has been relatively quick and that it indeed experiences a status surplus due to its fallback in terms of material indicators and failure to promote human rights (Røren & Beaumont, 2019). Røren and Beaumont (2019), in their article where they grade the greatness of the BRICS countries, argue that the stigmatization of South Africa as a pariah state and its exclusion from the international arena led the country to be granted "a status performance considerably beyond what is par: *a status surplus*"(Røren & Beaumont, 2019). Røren and Beaumont(2019) say,

The story of South Africa's status is also of theoretical significance. South Africa's *status bounce* aptly illustrates the inadequacy of the language of status inconsistencies, lags, or halo effects: South Africa's post-apartheid increase in recognition was almost immediate, was obviously a conscious calculation, and took place absent a significant change in material capabilities...it appears to be the result of international society deciding that South Africa's transition from apartheid – and the anti-racism and anti-imperialism it embodied – was deemed worthy of status recognition.

However, as we've put forth above with counterfactuals, the ideology was the weight tied to South Africa's leg and it already had the necessary material indicators to be given the status as a regional power. If it were a different country with fewer capabilities, for example, Lesotho, that dismantled such an ideology, it may not have received the same attention and status as South Africa and might still be the pariah

state. The adequate material indicators provided South Africa with the regional power status. Therefore, I conclude that capabilities matter, and in the case of South Africa, it is a regional power.

What this thesis argues is that South Africa is a regional power that is seeking a higher status as a regional leader in the international hierarchy with its region-tailored foreign policy. The second and third section show that South Africa took several steps to become the African continent's leader and spokesperson; however, South Africa's claim to be a leader is debatable for the rest of the continent. Schoeman et al. (2017) interviewed several officials and observers on the subject of what others think about South Africa in the headquarters of the African Union, which the results were telling. According to many interviewees, the duality between South Africa's deeds and rhetoric and its actions in regional organizations that were termed as 'big brother, big bully' approach are the two reasons why they have not yet seen South Africa as the 'leader' of Africa, but rather a local bully. Plus, past cases of attacks on foreigners resulted in protests in different African countries and led some to say, 'They (the South Africans) are not really African—they are their own Africa' (M. Schoeman et al., 2017).

In terms of latent power within its continent, South Africa lags behind several countries in several indicators. It has $\frac{1}{4}$ of the population compared to Nigeria and lags behind it in terms of GDP (Statista, n.d., 2024). Also, South Africa lags behind its regional leaders and rising powers. Compared to other BRICS countries and how they do in their own region, South Africa's lack of material power is telling, as none of the BRICS countries lag behind other countries, except great powers, in its region in terms of GDP. South Africa aims to rise in these indicators, especially in economic development; however, it has to be careful, as it receives resistance from the region it wants to lead. This leaves South Africa with relatively little choice to realize its interests, that is, using multilateral tools as an escape route. Kornegay (2012) says, "South African diplomacy, in turn, has been multilateralist to a fault in seeking to lead by consensus so as to avoid being seen as a 'neighborhood bully.'" That is essentially why South Africa hides behind pretty words of human rights, democracy, and liberal values that may indicate social creativity. However, its main aim is to become a regional leader on the world stage without causing too much

trouble and distaste among its competitors.

Therefore, this chapter concludes that South Africa is a regional power that seeks status through social emulation, albeit showing niches preferred in social creativity in its rhetoric. Even though it aspires to be the region's – Sub-Saharan Africa and, in some cases, the African continent – leader, it not only lacks resources in terms of material power, but it also faces resistance by African countries who do not wish to have a local 'big bully' this time round.



CHAPTER 5

INDIA: THE ANCIENT GREAT CIVILIZATION, THE NEW FERVOROUS RISING POWER

This thesis focuses on states' status-seeking strategies post-Cold War, and as its third and last case, it presents India as a rising power that is yet unrecognized but one that is closing the gap with the great powers (Onea, 2021). India is currently banging on the door of the great powers with its trajectory in 5 indicators (military expenditure, military personnel, GDP, demography, and technology) and closing the gap with the great powers, influencing regional and global politics, which will be explained in detail below. Furthermore, this chapter expects India to seek status through social mobility as a country, meaning emulating the behavior of the higher club to get its aspired status. However, as mentioned in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, although we currently expect India to seek status through social mobility, this thesis puts forth that, given its capabilities and target group, India, a rising power, is more likely to resort to social competition if consistent status denial occurs.

This chapter comprises this thesis's third and last case study and focuses on the Republic of India as a rising power post-Cold War. I utilize primary and secondary sources to test the hypotheses mentioned in Chapter 2. **Firstly**, the chapter examines India's trajectory in four categories and interests. Specifically, this subsection first examines India's capabilities to explain why it is accepted as a rising power in the first place. This part includes four tables of India's military personnel, military expenditure by GDP per capita, total population, GDP, GDP per capita to see whether there is any intention to increase them and compete. **Secondly**, since India is considered as a rising power, banging on the doors of the great power club, different from the other chapters, this chapter moves on to present the strategic

context India is to discuss the possible threats and obstacles for it to become a great power. **Thirdly**, the chapter discusses its foreign policy goals to see what its interests are and whether they are similar to those of a great power. It discusses India's strategy, agenda, and aspired role in world affairs, specifically the post-Cold War era. This sub-section dives deep into the BJP's rise (Bharatiya Janata Party, one of the two major ruling parties in India) since its perception of India and how it wants India to behave. Here, we introduce the important figure in India's decision-making, Narendra Damodardas Modi, the prime minister of India since 2014, a right-wing Hindu nationalist, former Chief Minister of Gujarat, and a man from the lower caste who rose to power. **Fourthly**, the chapter looks into the identity formation of India post-Cold War. This sub-section aims to see how India perceives itself, where the current narratives in Indian identity come from, and how these shape India's current status-seeking agenda. **Lastly**, the chapter looks into what India does in world politics. This sub-section mainly discusses the post-Cold War years and analyzes the behavior to see whether India keeps its promises, meets expectations, and actually seeks status, as discussed in the first sub-section of this chapter.

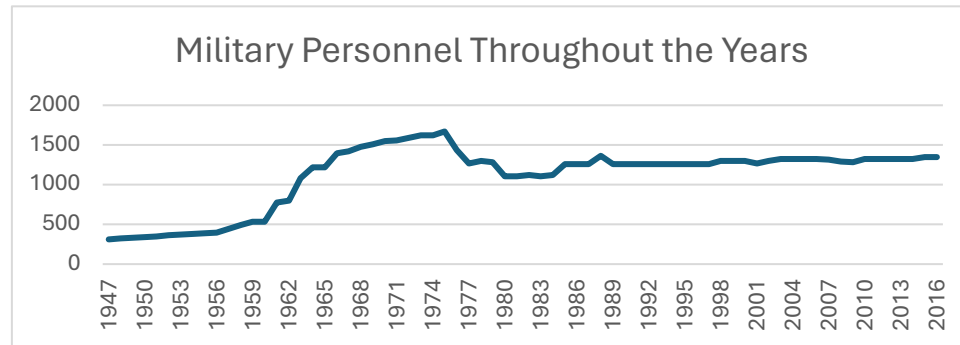
1. Is It Great-Power-Like?: India's Trajectory and Interests

1.1 India's Trajectory in Tangible Power

As mentioned in Chapter 2, this study identifies India as a rising power, and this sub-section will elaborate on why. First, we will view the material indicators of India that indicate why this study identifies it as a regional power and can indicate upward mobility in tangible power, mainly military personnel, military expenditure per GDP, population, and GDP. These can increase a country's ability to project its power outside its region.

First, India ranks third in military personnel ranking, following the USA and China (Correlates of War, 2021). When we look at the table below, we see that a decade after it gained independence, India's military personnel increased, especially during the 60s with the Sino-Indian Border Conflict and the India-Pakistan War of 1965. Since then, even though the military personnel has declined, it remained at high levels, albeit fluctuating, compared to the first decade of the Republic as a country in a volatile region. As of 2020, India has 3.068.000 military personnel (Trading Economics, 2024).

Table 11- India's Military Personnel Throughout the Years



Another indicator of a country's trajectory is the military expenditure per GDP. We see a relatively volatile picture in India as it fluctuates throughout the years. With the end of the Cold War, we may see a relative decline; however, we can argue that it remained high since, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Military Expenditure Database (2022), which looks into countries until 2022, India ranks 4th, following Russia (3rd), China (2nd), and the USA (1st). India is followed by Saudi Arabia (5th) and several established great powers, such as the UK (6th), France (8th), and Japan (10th).

The figure below was taken from the SIPRI database, as well. As of 2022, India spends %2.43 of its GDP on military. Again, looking at the World Bank Data(2022d) for great powers, as of 2022, the USA spends %3.45 of its GDP on military, China spends %1.60, and Russia spends %.4.06, increased due to the war against Ukraine. Lastly, the United Kingdom spends %2.23 of its GDP on the military. When we look at the regional powers, we can see that Türkiye's military expenditure flagrantly decreased in the last three years (2019-2022) to %1.23, which can be attributed to its economic difficulties; while Brazil, as of 2022, spends % 1.05 of its GDP on military (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022). In the case of India, it should also be mentioned that although India's expenditure per GDP has decreased, its actual military expenditure calculated by current US\$ has increased and continues to increase. Currently, India spends 81363.2 million US\$ on its military, which has constantly increased since 2012 (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022).

These indicators tell us that India spends much more on its military than all the

regional powers and some of the great powers, which is an indication of competition for a higher rank in the international hierarchy. For a country that is not ‘actively’ at war with a high level of military expenditure, we can interpret the current data as competition.

Furthermore, the fact that India tested the submarine-launched ballistic missile (INS Arihant) successfully in October 2022, making it the 6th country in the world to achieve it, and tested a new-generation medium-range ballistic missile (Agni-Prime) on 7 June 2023 makes it more obvious that India is a competing country in terms of military capabilities (Al Jazeera, 2022; Kulkarni, 2022; Press Information Bureau Delhi, 2023). In addition to submarine-launched ballistic missile, India is estimated to produce 160 nuclear warheads, has 2 Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (Agni-V – the newest), and 2 aircraft carriers (INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant) (Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, 2023; Kristensen & Korda, 2022; NDTV, 2023). India’s defense industry has become a success story, especially with ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ campaign, which translates to self-reliant India and aimed at achieving self-reliance in defense. According to the Economic Times (2024), India’s defense exports have grown %32.5 in 2023, and now India is not only manufacturing its own products but also ‘turned into an arms exporter.’

Table 12 - India’s Military Expenditure (%GDP) Throughout the Years

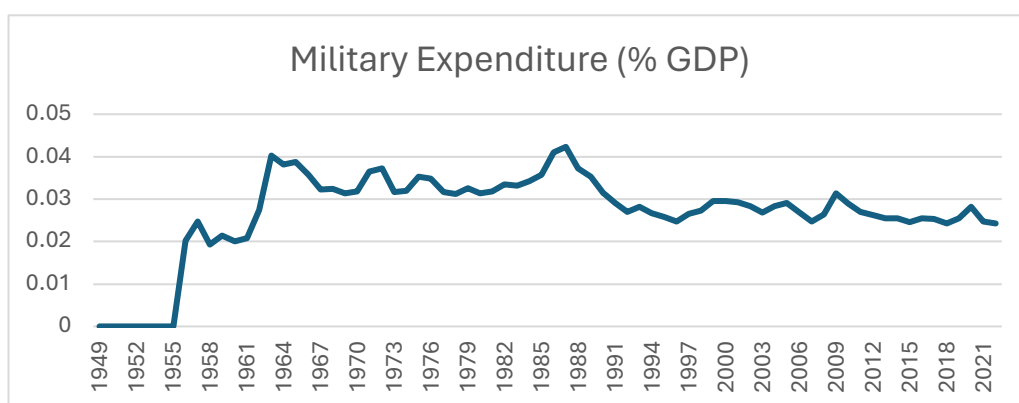
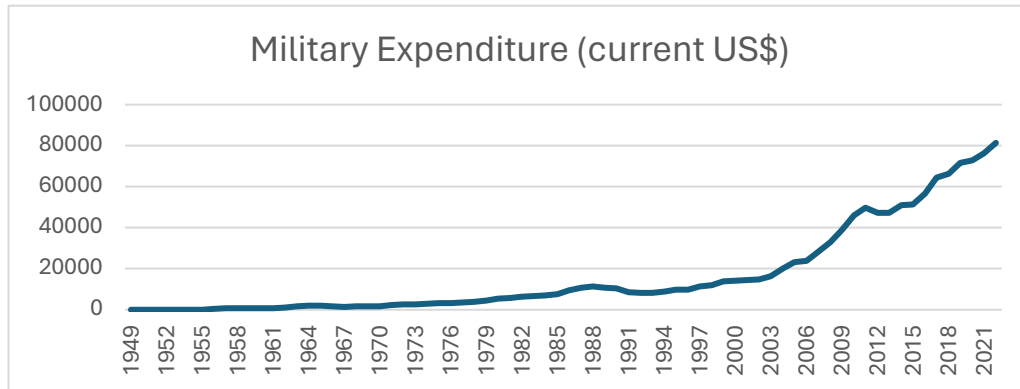
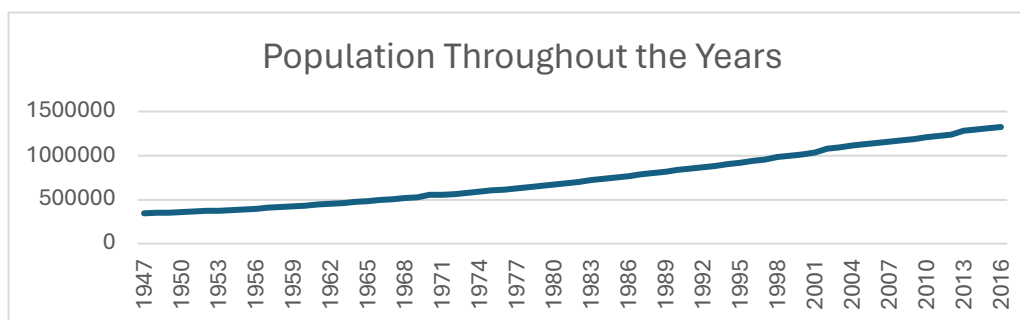


Table 13 – India’s Military Expenditure (Current US\$) Throughout the Years



Regarding the total population, the table below, which is taken from the COW project's data, shows that India is experiencing a gradual inclination in its population, with spikes here and there. According to COW National Military Capabilities Data (2021), as of 2016, India ranks 2nd, following China. However, as of 2023, India has surpassed China by having 1,428,627,663 people living on its territory. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Policy Brief (no 153) (UN DESA, 2023) argued that, even though the two countries have introduced policies to decrease the fertility rate, while China succeeded, India experienced 'rapid and persistent population growth' because due to India's federal structure, the state governments implemented their own policies. As we know, the higher the population, the higher the latent power; therefore, in addition to its military expenditure and personnel, India showcases strength in terms of latent power with its tremendous amount of population.

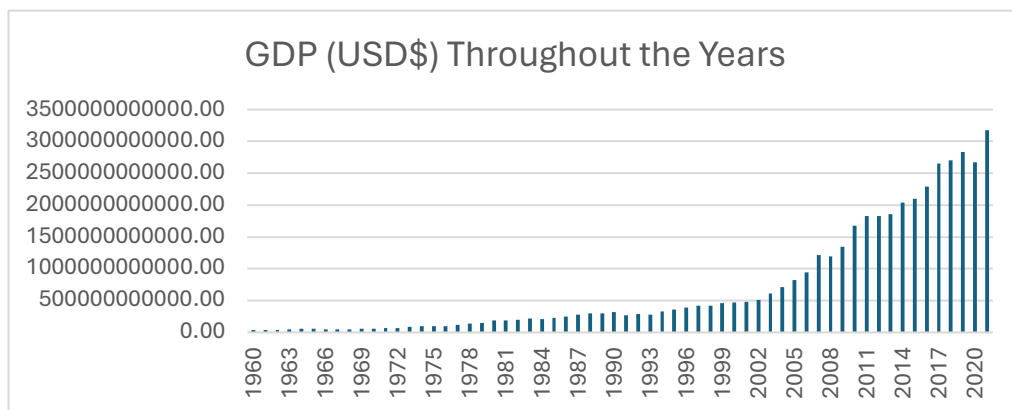
Table 14 – India's Population Throughout the Years



The last indicator we are looking at is the economy. According to the COW Project (2021), which was last updated in 2016, India ranks 6th in GDP. However, as of 2021, according to the World Bank Data (2022a), India's GDP is estimated at 3.39

trillion US\$, which makes it 5th following four great powers: the USA, China, Japan, and Germany. We may see India's success, especially when we look at the Purchasing Power Parity. According to the World Bank, as of 2021, India ranks 3rd, following two of the great powers, China and the USA.⁷ When we look at the table below, we see that India has struck a blow in GDP in the 2000s. Even though there are many theories that try to explain India's outstanding growth in the 2000s soon after the global recession, there is no consensus on how India achieved it (Aiyar, 2007). According to the World Bank (2023), for the years 2022-2023, "growth was underpinned by robust domestic demand, strong investment activity bolstered by the government's push for investment in infrastructure, and buoyant private consumption, particularly among higher income earners." Lastly, India, as part of the BRICS, which accounts for %32.1 of the global economy surpassing the G7, comes as the highest second contributor to the BRICS, following China (Ergöçün, 2023; Raghavan, 2023; Statista, 2024).

Table 15 – India's GDP Throughout the Years

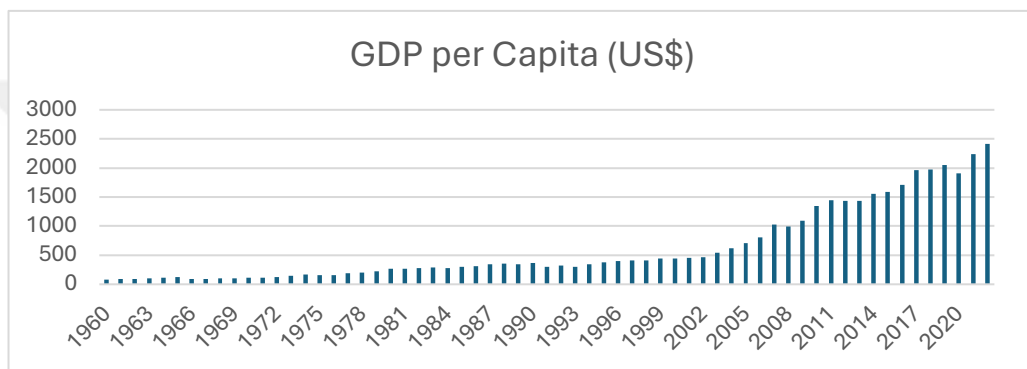


However, in the case of India and its economic success, we should take GDP with a grain of salt as India experiences high inequalities and unemployment. The table below suggests that alongside GDP, India has been increasing its GDP per capita, especially after the 2000s, yet it lags behind most of the countries. According

⁷ (The World Bank Group, 2022c) The World Banks database indicates " This indicator provides values for gross domestic product (GDP) expressed in current international dollars, converted by purchasing power parity (PPP) conversion factor. PPP conversion factor is a spatial price deflator and currency converter that eliminates the effects of the differences in price levels between countries."

to the World Bank (2022b), as of 2022, India ranks 162nd in GDP per capita with 2.410.90\$. This indicates that India is not a prosperous state, even lagging behind great powers and some of the regional powers. To give a comparison, Türkiye ranks 93rd, Mexico ranks 91st, and Israel ranks 23rd (The World Bank Group, 2022b). This tells us that although India is banging on the door of the great powers as a rising power, the transition to great power will not be smooth since it has to overcome domestic obstacles in terms of economy.

Table 16 – India’s GDP per Capita (US\$) Throughout the Years



Last but not least, even though the chapter does not include a table on technological growth, it deserves a paragraph on the case of India. As mentioned in Chapter 2, India ranks 40th in the Global Innovation Index (2022). What is worth mentioning is India’s space program. In 2023, India became the first country to land a lunar rover on the Moon’s south pole. It was also the first Asian country to reach Mars orbit with the Mars Orbiter Mission called Mangalyaan (Tharoor, 2023). It is worth mentioning as it showcases an indication of competition in the international hierarchy through technological advancements, just like the USSR and the USA did during the Cold War. India today invents its own launch vehicles and satellites, thanks to Nehru’s vision and dedication to self-reliance and current Prime Minister Modi’s dedication to modernizing and enlarging the Ministry of Defence and the military as a whole. Such advancements help India to enhance the country’s credibility, influence, and prestige (Tharoor, 2023).

Overall, when we look at India's trajectory on four indicators over the years and compare its current status to other great powers and regional powers, we can see that India surpasses regional powers in all indicators and surpasses many great

powers in specific indicators. Regarding capabilities, India is the only country in the second-tier states category to achieve great power capabilities in demographics, military, and economy. Therefore, India is currently on par with the great powers; however, it is not a recognized great power yet.

These show us that India is actively competing and trying to rise in the international hierarchy regarding material capabilities. However, one needs to also look at the foreign policy goals and national interests of a country to understand their aim, why they are increasing their tangible power, and what they want to achieve. Therefore, to understand whether India behaves like a great power or how it seeks status, let us look at India's interests in world affairs, precisely its foreign policy agenda and strategies, by examining the official papers published by the latest governments and utilizing secondary resources.

1.2 Strategic Context of India in terms of Threats

As a possible candidate for great power and a rising power, this chapter includes a specific sub-section on the strategic context of India to present the environment it lives in and viable threats to India's obstacles for it to become a great power in the international hierarchy. The author of this chapter identifies three possible threats to India's subsistence, which may hinder India's desire and goal of becoming a great power: the conflict with China, the conflict with Pakistan, and the possibility of a civil conflict between the two religious groups, Muslims and Hindus.

First, Paul and Shankar (2014) argue that India always viewed China as an obstacle to India's claim for leadership in Asia, and they put forth that India perceived the Sino-Indian War as a 'Chinese intolerance of India's increasing international profile.' As we know, China and India back in 1962 entered into a conflict over the disputed border territory, Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh, which turned into a war that India lost badly and made India reconsider the heritage of Nehru. Yet, the conflict with China did not stop or is not only due to the territorial discordance. One of the major indicators of China refusing India to become a viable great power in its region is China's contribution to Pakistan's military by providing conventional weaponry and enabling Pakistan to become a nuclear power since the 1960s (Nayar & Paul, 2002). Nayar and Paul (2002) put forth that the mistrust

between China and India and the fear of each other as a potential threat are mutual, to the point where China not only enabled Pakistan to be a nuclear power but also found a military regime in Myanmar and managed smaller neighbors of India in different aspects, technically containing India regionally (Nayar & Paul, 2002). Today, China poses as the main obstacle to India's claim for a permanent seat at the UNSC and veto.

Second, the conflict with Pakistan has been a major threat to India's existence since the day India became independent. Now, an in-depth discussion of all the previous conflicts (1947, 1965, 1971, 1987, and 1999) with Pakistan is out of the scope of this chapter; however, we can mention one of the latest and major attacks that took place in Mumbai in 2008. In November 2008, the Pakistan-based terrorist group Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) attacked Mumbai, leading to the killings of 160 people; it was called one of the most significant terrorist attacks after 9/11 by some since it covered the global media over a couple of days (Riedel, 2009). Currently, Al Qaida, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) are three of the terrorist organizations that are affiliated with Pakistan (South Asia Terrorism Portal, 2024).

I will briefly mention the general threat perceived by India from Pakistan with its justifications, mainly the unresolved dispute over Kashmir and Jammu and Pakistan's involvement with supporting terrorism. Today, India may have a reputation over Pakistan; however, it was not always like that (since the end of the Cold War and till the disappearance of the fear of expansion of communism), as both the USA and China supported Pakistan for their own national interests, weakening India's hand (Nayar & Paul, 2002). Given India's close relations with the Soviet Union, Pakistan was considered by the USA to be a useful pawn to counter Soviet influence in the region; in turn, Pakistan overexploited the international context and built up its military arsenal (conventional and nuclear) (Ganguly & Mukherji, 2012).

The growth of the Pakistan military, its support for terrorist attacks, and insurgent attacks due to border disputes have frustrated India for decades and have turned the state of affairs between the two states into a cat-and-dog fight, from a defensive posture to an offensive posture on and on (Ahmed, 2014). It was not until

the Kargil War, following the end of the Cold War, and the change in Pakistan's government that the international community turned against Pakistan and put diplomatic pressure (Ganguly & Mukherji, 2012). Even though the school of thought in India assumed that the acquisition of nuclear weapons would make conflict with Pakistan unlikely, this view changed immediately with the Kargil War of 1999 and General Musharraf's coup in Pakistan (Ahmed, 2014; Ganguly & Mukherji, 2012). Even though India attempted to hold talks with Pakistan over the Kashmir and Jammu issue when the civilian regime started to rule over Pakistan, the talks were ineffective. Pakistan, as the 'Other' in India's identity construction, serves as a fundamental fault and an obstacle for India to become a great power. As Ganguly and Mukherji (2012, pp. 36–37) puts forth, for Pakistan, the dispute has been an 'unfinished business' since the independence, and for India, a possible territorial compromise can not be accepted since it would affect other ethnic secessionist movements.

This takes us to the last threat for India, which also lies at the heart of the Pakistan-India conflict, and that is the civilian conflict between two major religious groups in India, Muslims – who make up 14% (approximately 200 million people) of the population - and Hindus. One of the main disputed subjects within India between the two religious groups is the Babri Masjid, located in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, which many Hindus believe is built on top of the birthplace of the sacred religious subject in the Hindu religion, Rama (Malji, 2018). In 1992, as Hindu nationalism was rising up in India, which will be discussed shortly in the following sub-section, a group of Hindu nationalists called for the destruction of the Masjid. The events turned into a riot that sparked a major conflict between the two religious groups, led to thousands of deaths, and was followed by major terrorist attacks believed to be conducted by Muslims (Malji, 2018). Given the current BJP government in India - a party that supports the Hindutva ideology, which is essentially an ideology based on religious discrimination in favor of the Hindus, sets the construction of a Hindu temple in place of the mentioned masjid as the main goal in its manifesto, calls Nathuram Godse, who assassinated Mahatma Gandhi a hero, and hopes to create one India around the Hindu culture, religion, and language (Hindi) - the Muslim minority

comprised of around 204 million people is a viable threat to India's existence and stands as a possible spark for a civil conflict.

1.3 India's Interests and Aspirations: 2 Strategic Cultures

During the 50s, Indian foreign policy was molded by Nehru and his non-aligned movement. Given the international context, it was a strategic and calculated policy (Mazumdar, 2011). Nehru pursued an ideational, non-aligned foreign policy, refusing to support any of the two blocs in the Cold War (for an explanation of the non-alignment movement and Bandung conference, please see footnote 6 in Chapter 4). Therefore, he assumed an activist foreign policy based on India's soft power attributes, focused on ending colonial rules elsewhere, and neglected India's defense capabilities, yet gave importance to economic well-being and self-reliance on technology that laid the basis of India's nuclear tests (Nayar & Paul, 2002).

Later, given the Sino-Indian border conflict, the US's position in the India-Pakistan conflict, the US rapprochement with China in the 70s, and Indira Gandhi's government, India's foreign policy became termed 'militant Nehruvian' (Chaulia, 2002; Mazumdar, 2011). We can also see why this term was used from the spikes in the above tables of military expenditure and personnel in the 60s and 70s. During that time, India got closer to the USSR and somewhat broke away from the non-alignment movement (Mazumdar, 2011). The non-alignment policy was still there in rhetoric, but the actions proved otherwise (Nayar & Paul, 2002). However, with the end of the Cold War, India had to transform its foreign policy completely, as the USSR collapsed, a close ally of India, and the center stage was taken by the USA (Chiriyankandath, 2004). There was a new international arena with no communist or Western bloc to balance. Therefore, there was no need for a non-alignment strategy. This time, foreign policy became more 'realistic,' emphasizing national interest.

Indeed, as early as 1996, during the Conference on Disarmament, India's representative, Arundhati Ghosh, stated that India would not be signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty as it was against India's national interest (United Nations Conference on Disarmament, 1996, p. 29). The emphasis on national interest and the strong wish to acquire nuclear weapons can be seen in the party manifesto of 1998 (Bharatiya Janata Party, 1998, p. 192), which says, "The BJP rejects the notion

of nuclear apartheid and will actively oppose attempts to impose a hegemonistic nuclear regime by means of CTBT, FMCR, and MTCR. We will not be dictated to by anybody in matters of security requirements and in the exercise of the nuclear option. We will pursue our national goals and principles steadfastly.” The same year, the new government’s wishes have come true as India tested nuclear weapons.

Let us mention the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) – the current ruling party- its goals and how it came to the center stage of Indian politics. As we already mentioned, the central ideology that the BJP pursues is Hindu nationalism, a country gathered around one religion, one nation, one culture, and one language, unlike the Congress party (its predecessor, the second biggest party in India), which supports a secular democratic India. The BJP is a party that is related to “Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), an ultraconservative Hindu organization devoted to preserving and restoring Hindu identity in India, particularly through the establishment of a Hindu state” (Malji, 2018, p. 41) RSS existed since 1925 and was turned into a political organization by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar; therefore, it not something new to the Indian politics.⁸ The Kashmir conflict and the ongoing conflict between the two religious groups has also existed for a long time and are only one part of the picture behind BJP’s success. According to Ganguly and Mukerji (2012), the hegemony of the Gandhi family in the Congress Party, the lack of charisma of Congress Party leaders, the Congress Party’s ill-commitment to secularism and democracy, the ossification of the Congress Party, and corruption allegations, the rising political consciousness of the lower-castes and the failure of the state-led economy are other important factors of BJP’s success and the nationalist takeover in India. Between 1989 and 2014, India was ruled by coalition governments, but since 2014, India has been ruled by a single-party majority, and that is the BJP (Vaishnav, 2018). BJP first won the majority of the seats in the parliament in 1996, came to power in the 2014 general elections, and recently achieved tremendous success in the 2019 elections. This time, Ganguly and Jha (2019) put forth, despite the rise of

⁸ (*About*, n.d.) Vinayak Damodar Savarkar is the founding father of the RSS, the Hindutva ideology, and the intellectual authority of the BJP, who is also has been associated with the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, although he was never charged by the court due to lack of evidence. The cited website is dedicated to Savarkar that is comprised of all his works and autobiography.

unemployment, bad economic policies, and distress, BJP won again due to unsuccessful and unpromising opposition parties, use of religious rhetoric, and exploitation of terrorist attacks as a political advantage. Besides, despite Modi being a member of RSS and a committed Hindu nationalist, he is pragmatic enough only to draw inspiration from intellectual figures like Savarkar but also be cautious of his actions.

The 1998 BJP's manifesto to win the elections tells what India aspires to do in the upcoming decades. On the subject of foreign policy, the manifesto (Bharatiya Janata Party, 1998) says,

We see a renewed tendency by some big powers to dominate and to impose conditionalities to advance their political and economic interest even if it is detrimental to others. There are also perceived notions of civilizational conflicts as also spurts in conflicts. This demands that India's national interest must be protected and pursued more vigorously. Our diplomacy must, therefore, be proactive rather than merely reactive without sacrificing the values of peace, equality, and cooperation.

Here, we can sense a strategy that is against the domination of great powers in the international arena, politically and economically. A statement that shows the tangible disassociation from Nehruvian policy and turn to ambitious foreign policy to place India as a major power in global affairs, which BJP (1998, p. 192) argue is in line with their size and capability, is put forth by saying,

In the recent past, we have seen a tendency to bend under pressure. This arises as much out of ignorance of our rightful place and role in world affairs as also from a loss of national self-confidence and resolve. A nation as large and capable as ourselves must make its impact felt on the world arena. A BJP Government will demand a premier position for the country in all global fora.

Another indicator of an ambitious status-seeking strategy is the obvious goal of acquiring a permanent seat in the UNSC and a reform in the UN to make it beneficial to them, not "certain countries to serve their narrow interests" (Bharatiya Janata Party, 1998, p. 193).

Yet, despite the aspiration of emerging as a major power and more realistic foreign policy, the immediate post-Cold War Indian foreign policy can be characterized as responsive and relatively cautious. During that time, India initiated a

rapprochement with the USA and summits with the EU and ASEAN; however, it remained cautious in when to support and when to condemn certain actions, as we could see from India's approach to the Iraq War (2003) (Chiriyankandath, 2004). This showed that India adopted the new international order as it built new relationships. But in this new order, which went from moralistic to realistic, Jaswant Singh – the founding father of the BJP and a long-time parliamentarian serving as Ministers in Finance, External Affairs, and Defence - claimed that “It is one-sixth of humanity seeking its rightful place under the sun in the calculus of great powers,” which would ‘earn India the respect of the world’ (Chaulia, 2002, p. 221; Joshi & Chengappa, 1998).

Looking at the recent years of Indian foreign policy under Modi (2014-...), some academics argue that many policies have remained the same and that Modi repackaged the older ones (Gupta et al., 2019). Gupta et al. (2019) conclude that although Modi aimed to carry out an activist and ideology-driven foreign policy and made it his mission to showcase India as the ‘leading power’ in Asia against China, he faced structural and domestic obstacles, which made his foreign policy overall to be a repackaging of that of his predecessors. The authors put forth that Modi, like his predecessors, aimed to portray India as a leading power standing out in its region as there are clear indications that he adopts an ‘India first’ strategy; however, they conclude that ‘Modi’s foreign policy engagements have shown that there is no clear Modi Doctrine — Modi is neither a Hindutva ideologue nor an adherent to liberal economic policies (Gupta et al., 2019).

This supports our above-mentioned comment, which indicated that although Modi is a member of the RSS, he is cautious about which policies to push for. Prime Minister Modi’s foreign policy can be best described as those of a pragmatist who uses his large political mandate to espouse populist policies of economic nationalism.’ On the other hand, some scholars (Tremblay & Kapur, 2017) argue that Modi’s foreign policy showcased a radical shift from the Nehruvian era, and by looking at the bilateral agreements signed during his regime, they put forth that Modi has established himself as a world leader.

In summary, what's certain is that post-Cold War, there is a clear shift in India's

foreign policy that paints a picture of India with two strategic cultures and status-seeking strategies. India has always been a country that has sought major power status, albeit through different strategies. Indeed, Nehru, a long time ago, mentioned that India has the potential to be a major power due to its location and population (Nayar & Paul, 2002; Paul & Shankar, 2014).

1.4 Do we see a great power behavior?

In light of the above information, with material capabilities and interests, India is a rising power and a power that is banging on the door of the great powers. India succeeds in many dimensions, particularly military (expenditure and personnel), economy (GDP), population, and technology. It also shows interest in being recognized as a major power through its rhetoric and successful defense industry and space program.

However, for a country to be a great power, we expect to see power projection, especially outside of its close region with interventions or military bases, which we do not see when we look at India. In rhetoric, going outside the region increased participation in systemic management and expanded alliances such as BRICS and QUAD (that means India will be involved in East Asia, allying with Australia and other East Asian countries) is implied, on the other hand, when we look at the concrete evidence, we see that India has been involved in its close regions, such as Afghanistan, Bhutan, or Sri Lanka. Therefore, India may have the capabilities and the foreign policy rhetoric to seek a higher status through social mobility; however, it is in its inception phase since we do not see a power projection outside of its region, meaning we do not see a full great power behavior. This also explains why this thesis did not consider social competition since it will be the last resort of the second-tier states.

In terms of status-seeking, the material indicators and foreign policy laid down above indicate that, first, the Nehruvian strategy, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's creed, is indicative of a social creativity strategy to seek status, indicating that India is a pro-peace, activist, neutral country and is the main advocator among the non-aligned states. It is a form of status-seeking since it puts forth that India is the first-ranking experienced country among the non-aligned states that can guide the others

in their mission to end the colonial/imperial rule in their own country. During that time, as the other middle powers did, Nehru played on India's strength and soft power and advocated for an activist, non-aligned foreign policy to survive the bipolar world order with limited resources. However, external and domestic changes brought changes in the status-seeking strategies and strategic culture, which takes us to the current status-seeking strategy.

Second, following the end of the Cold War, the rise of Hindu nationalism, and the BJP rule in India, although the behavior is lacking, we have social mobility as India's main status-seeking strategy, which may turn into a social competition strategy unless India is allowed to a higher status club, the great power club. The main striking example of such a strategy is indicative of India's becoming a nuclear power state despite all the isolation and condemnation from the international community, which will be explained in detail in the last section. Yet, it should be mentioned here that, given the current status of the international and regional order, India's bid for a higher-status club is most likely to be blocked by China. Lastly, the fact that Hindu nationalism has risen, the people of India developed a distaste for Nehruvian heritage, which showcased India as the weak link in the order, and the nation keeps voting for the BJP despite the disputed economic policies, shows that the majority of the people of India adopts this role identity and that they are pushing for it.

In this sub-section, we laid down India's aspirations in terms of foreign policy as a wanna-be great power post-Cold War; the following chapter will focus on how India perceives itself as an entity on the world stage.

2. India's Identity post-Cold War: 'The Great Timeless Unique Civilization'

This sub-heading will focus on how India perceives itself to make sense of its actions and its choice in status-seeking strategy. The author prefers to separate the Indian identity into two sections: internal and external. Since identities are formed by two entities, self and other, this separation will help the reader better understand who the self is and against which other it is formed. The first and internal section of the Indian identity is called the religious-cultural aspect. Here, the Self is a great, unique Hindu civilization formed against the backdrop of a violent, barbaric Muslim

identity. The second and external section of the Indian identity is called the political aspect. Here, the self is a major power formed against the 'former' non-aligned identity, which surfaced with the success of the BJP. The two aspects tie into each other and form the post-Cold War identity of India today.

Post-Cold War, the BJP came onto the stage with an emphasis on the Hindutva identity. According to the BJP manifesto (1998), India has a unique identity based on Hindutva, which is based on cultural and social diversity that is "woven into a larger civilizational fabric by thousands of years of common living and common and shared values, beliefs, customs, struggles, joy, and sorrow, as well as symbols of a high degree of unity without uniformity." According to the BJP (1998), this cultural heritage 'constitutes the cultural nationalism of India, which is the core of Hindutva.' The manifesto (1998) puts forth that Hindutva should not be understood from a sectarian perspective; indeed, it is the true meaning of secularism. The BJP (1998, pp. 146–147) argues that Hindutva can be a useful tool for nation-building and can "trigger a higher level of patriotism that can transform the country to greater levels of efficiency and performance." However, the mentioned Hindutva identity is more conservative and older than what the manifesto says.

Jaffrelot, by examining the writings of Golwalkar and Savarkar, the founding fathers of Hindu nationalism, puts forth that the origin of the Hindu nationalism manifested as Hindutva today is born out of the prejudice against the Muslim other from a movement called RSS.⁹ Jaffrelot (2021, pp. 445–469) argues that, in its origin, Hindutva indicates what it means to be a Hindu, which is the chosen people against the Muslims. As Commuri (2010) summarizes, Golwalkar presents that a Hindu unites around five themes: religion, race, geography, culture, and language (Hindi) (Chakrabarty, 2008) Therefore, religion and nation cannot be separated; hence, the other is the non-Hindu; in this context, it is the Christians and Muslims. Muslims and Christians are the others who are a threat to Indian identity and thus not only irreligious but also anti-national, as Commuri (2010) explains. Golwalkar

⁹ (Jaffrelot, 2021) M. S. Golwalkar is one of the early Hindu nationalists and Chief of the RSS, who lived from 1906 to 1973. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar is an activist who developed the Hindu nationalist ideology, Hindutva, that advocated for a Hindu nation, who lived from 1883 to 1966.

(1939, p. 52) writes

The non-Hindu people must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and revere Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but the glorification of the Hindu nation, i.e., they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ingratitude towards this land and age-long traditions but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead; in a word, they must cease to be foreigners or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment, not even citizen's rights.

Now that we know 'who Hindus are not,' we may look into what Hindus are, especially from Nehru's 'Discovery of India.' Nehru draws a 'great,' 'civilized,' 'non-aggressive,' 'peaceful,' and 'harmonious' India. The main emphasis is that India is a timeless great civilization that is welcomed by the influenced nations (Nehru, 2008). What we can understand from such words is that India's perception of itself is created as a reaction to the Muslims and British colonialism. Since Muslims were aggressive and barbaric and Britain colonized India, India is a non-aggressive, harmonious, and timeless great civilization. Furthermore, there is a territorial aspect of the Indian identity and their sense of greatness. Golwalkar (2000) says that Bharat (India) is the holiest of land, and Nehru (2008) says that the Indus are the initial inhabitants of this land. Therefore, Commuri (2010, p. 53) explains, "The myth of existence incorporates not only a sense of timelessness but also becomes associated with the divine and with a certain territory."

However, these two fathers of the Indian identity disagreed on certain points, which later affected the BJP's perception of identity and became incorporated into the post-Cold War perception of the Indian self. While Nehru pictures a non-violent, non-aggressive, modern India, Golwalkar rejects this idea by arguing that 'every Hindu God is armed' (Chaulia, 2002, p. 220). Moreover, For Nehru even though the Indus were the initial settlers of the holy land, the Indian nation is a fusion of different races, and what makes India great and distinct is the harmony between different races and this particular oneness; therefore, secularism is present in his idea. On the other hand, Golwalkar, therefore the current BJP's underlining ideology, puts emphasis on the Hindu as the Aryan, who follows the Hindu religion, speaks the language, follows its traditions, and shares that race (Chaulia, 2002; Commuri, 2010). The others are the non-Hindus and, thus, are not part of the nation. For Golwalkar

and the BJP it is the idea of a non-violent and harmonious India that led India to be colonized and resulted in its weakness; therefore, in the new world (meaning the post-Cold War era), it has to change, and India shall become great as it is (Chaulia, 2002; Commuri, 2010).

Even though the BJP manifesto (1998) mentions buzzwords such as cultural and social diversity, this particular emphasis is telling:

The BJP is committed to facilitate the construction of a magnificent Shri Ram Mandir at Ram Janmasthan in Ayodhya where a makeshift temple already exists. Shri Ram lies at the core of Indian consciousness. The BJP will explore all consensual, legal, and constitutional means to facilitate the construction of Shri Ram Mandir at Ayodhya.

The mosque and the goal to build a Hindu temple there symbolize the alienation of the Muslim identity. Commuri (2010, p. 66) says, “In the last few decades, the construction of the Muslim Other has come to be exemplified in the violent struggle for the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya and the construction of the Ram temple.” Indeed, certain speeches of the people who are related to the BJP, such as Chandra Dikshit, see the mosque as a ‘humiliation of the Hindu people’ and even go on to argue that Muslims should apologize from the Hindus’ (Commuri, 2010, pp. 66–67). Some take this as a conflict of ideologies, not just religions, but the essence of India (Commuri, 2010, p. 68). Today, even though certain politicians want to serve ‘Hindutva’ as a secular ideology stripped from the RSS’s legacy and convey that they regret the violent events of Ayodhya in 1992 and Gujarat in 2002, in reality, it is just a way of holding power in hand; therefore, it is just the marketing to hold power in India (Chacko, 2014). It is important to mention the Gujarat riots in 2002, which took place when Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat since it is telling in terms of Modi’s ideology. On February 27, 2002, a train carrying Hindu pilgrims who were returning from the demolished Babri Masjid caught fire, which led to 59 Hindu people being killed (Genocide Watch, 2023). The Hindu nationalists, mainly the RSS, exploited the speculations that the Muslims had set the train on fire. This led to an outbreak of violence against the Muslims, which was allegedly authorized, encouraged, or connived by Chief Minister Modi (Genocide Watch, 2023). This sets the scene as Modi being the champion of Hindu nationalism.

According to Jaffrelot (2021), Hindu nationalism got its base with the RSS, yet it bloomed when the BJP won the elections thanks to the interest given to the lower caste. Indeed, some have argued that BJP's successful social engineering and Modi's being shown as the leader of the OBCs (Other Backward Class, a political term to refer to educationally and socially backward people in India) increased the votes and made the BJP the first (Jha, 2019). According to the Pew Research Center's survey (Starr & Sahgal, 2021), "a large majority of Buddhists (89%) identify as SC, but just 3% of Jains fall into this category. Among Muslims, a small share (4%) identify as SC, but many (43%) identify as OBC." SC here refers to Scheduled Class while OBC refers to Other Backward Classes, which was invented by Prime Minister Singh, who argued that "there were other disadvantaged people in India besides SC or ST" (Starr & Sahgal, 2021). Given the size of the population that identifies as OBC, the success of Modi in getting the votes from the OBC is significant. According to the opinion polls 2023, 55% of Indians view Modi very favorably (Pew Research Center, 2023).

From then on, due to the political landscape in Asia, it went unquestioned by the Western powers, who raised their word for human rights when it was a win-win situation. In the case of India, post-Cold War and the rise of China made the Western powers look for a 'counter-weight' in Asia, which made India's 'internal' issues unquestioned. Without outside pressure, ethnic democracy became solid in India, and India benefitted from soft power as the world's largest democracy (Jaffrelot, 2021, pp. 453–454).

As we can see, India pictures itself as 'the timeless great civilization that is built by the Hindu values and is harmonious,' arising from the heritage left by Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru. This 'greatness' has an effect on how it wants others to perceive itself in the world. This, in turn, reflects on their status-seeking strategy and their perception of multilateralism. We've already said that the BJP circle ridiculed India's non-aligned policy and blamed this policy for its weakness. Given the post-Cold War environment and the change in the structure of the world, India claimed a new role that pictured itself as an exceptional, unique one. Muni (2020, p. 30) says, "Post-Cold War, when world order was in flux, India has openly and boldly expressed its aspirations to be a leading, 'not only balancing,' power." This stemmed

from India's identity as a 'diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-linguist, successfully democratic, and developing' nation.

According to Wojczewski (2019), the unique identity of India, specifically its emphasis on being the largest diverse democracy, again coming from the heritage of Nehru, puts itself in such a higher place that it assigns 'a moral or cultural uniqueness and superiority,' which is usually seen as Indian exceptionalism. Therefore, the post-Nehruvian discourse attests that India becomes the symbol of the world order, which assumes a higher status in the world order. Wojczewski (2019, p. 183) says, "By claiming that India has found a way for the peaceful contention of differences, the discourse aims to forge a counter-hegemonic project in which India is a crucial building block of a 'true' world order and thereby enhance India's agency, status, and power in global politics." The emphasis is on being the moral, diverse, peaceful, and harmonious one; however, the new identity moved on from non-alignment to multi-alignment based on the national interest of the country, where the use of force and nuclear deterrence is not ruled out. As Muni (2020) puts forth, the concept of Dharma Yuddh, which is one of the key components of Indian tradition, dictates that "the brave is the one who fights for the poor and the helpless."

Last but not least, Wojczewski (2019, p. 188) puts forth that another component of Indian discourse is non-discrimination, but in reality, India does not advocate for 'equality for all' but actually hides behind such buzzwords to justify its interests and have a seat at the higher table while reshaping the world alongside the great powers. The fact that it wants to be recognized as a nuclear weapon state, despite being a non-signatory to the NPT, and claims a seat at the UNSC is telling (Thies & Nieman, 2017, pp. 99–115). Overall, Indian exceptionalism is portrayed as 'India is a unique symbol of tolerance, pluralism, and peaceful co-existence and has the moral capacity for leadership in global politics' (Wojczewski, 2019, p. 191). In reality, India is ruled by a discriminatory ideology that is Hindutva that favors the Hindus and a country that claims great power status with the sheer size of its population and military power. Therefore, the role identity as being an ancient civilization should be interpreted as a pretension of being a great power.

3. What does India do?

As we've seen what India wants to do in the world and how it wants to be perceived, this sub-section will look into what India does on the world stage. Mainly, the aim here is to answer the question of whether the BJP and one of its prime policymakers, Narendra Modi, the Post-Cold War regime per se, achieved making India be recognized as a great power.

India has sought a major power role in the international arena since it became independent in 1947, as we can see from the statements of its founding father, Nehru. So far, we've mentioned India's two distinct cultural strategies, laying down two status-seeking categories by emphasizing two different forms of power: soft and hard. There were two distinct phases where India pursued two different status-seeking strategies to stand out, one was among other non-aligned powers and one is directed toward the great powers; however, as we will see, it was unrecognized or as Nayar and Paul (2002) put forth, both were faced with indirect regional containments by other great powers, who wished not to enlarge their club, especially by a Global South country.

These two distinct phases are also reflected in India's perceptions of its identity. The first status-seeking strategy was based on soft power, promoted by Nehru, who put forth India as a moral, non-aligned leader during the first phase of the Cold War. It relied on being a pro-peace, anti-colonial, activist country. It simply sought to stand out among the other non-aligned powers, which leads us to conclude that from 1947 till the 60s, India pursued a social creativity strategy to seek status. At the time, India claimed to be a 'moral leader, emphasizing its soft power capabilities such as being an example, harmonious, democratic, pro-peace nation that defeated colonial rule; therefore, one that can lead others in their mission to do so. However, at the time, India was an economically challenged nation in a volatile geographic location. Therefore, the fact that Nehru willingly ignored the importance of defensive capabilities and gave importance to soft power coupled with some emphasis on internal economic well-being made India vulnerable to outside threats. At that time, Nehru might have thought that standing outside of the two camps and the sheer size of India's landmass and population could help it to be safe and make up for the lack of material capabilities (Nayar & Paul, 2002). But the events that followed in the 60s

proved otherwise.

Besides, given the context of the international structure, where the USA was so fearful of the expansion of communism and a potential club to influence its leadership role in the developing world, India was being contained by an ever-so-growing enemy right at its border, supported by a major power, and that is Pakistan. At the time, Pakistan was a great location to limit the Soviet Union's nuclear mission (Nayar & Paul, 2002). In summary, the first status-seeking strategy, social creativity, went down the drain as India dealt with a lack of material capabilities, both economic and military and regional containment.

The second status-seeking strategy was introduced after India was struck by the realities of the bipolar world order and a humiliating defeat in a war against China. From then on, India crossed out the ideational foreign policy based on morality and emphasized its 'righteous place' in the international arena by emphasizing its rise in military, technology, demographics, and economy through a realistic-pragmatic policy in practice. This means that starting from the 1970s and following the post-Cold War, India pursued social mobility as a status-seeking strategy.

One of the concrete signals of status-seeking and pursuing a social mobility strategy is India's rejection of the NPT (Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons), vetoing of CTBT (The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty), rejecting the 'global nuclear apartheid' and becoming a nuclear state in 1998 (Nayar & Paul, 2002). Chiriyankandath (2004) argued that, indeed, India could have acquired nuclear weapons as early as China did, yet they did not do it back then as it was not urgent for national security, and it would be costly financially and morally. Lastly, it would weaken India's hands in its efforts to make sure that the NPT addresses the concerns of non-nuclear states. However, in the post-Cold War world, India acquired and tested nuclear weapons, and Chiriyankandath (2004, p. 205) explains that it arose from India's desire to assert India to be recognized as a significant power in the world.

According to Nayar and Paul (2002), the timing of the testing of nuclear weapons is twofold. Firstly, there was an internal effect since a multiparty regime led by a nationalist party (BJP) came into power, plus nuclear nationalism was evident not

only among the elites but also in the public through media influence. Secondly, Nayar and Paul (2002) put forth that India thought that if there were sanctions due to not submitting to CTBT, then they must certainly test the nuclear weapons so that the sanctions would be imposed due to a 'definite act.' Plus, they argue that it was not the tangible threat from China that made India become a nuclear state but a threat of opening the gap in terms of capabilities. Therefore, the assessment of the relative capabilities pushed India to acquire nuclear weapons (Nayar & Paul, 2002)

The time was right, and interests had aligned. In 1998, the Deputy Chairman and one of the founding fathers of the BJP and former finance minister, Jaswant Singh (1998, p. 43), made a clear statement that signaled India's eagerness for mobility and desire to be a significant member in international affairs by saying,

The first 50 years of Indian independence reveal that the country's moralistic nuclear policy and restraint paid no measurable dividends, except resentment that India was being discriminated against. Disarmament seemed increasingly unrealistic politics. If the Permanent Five's possession of nuclear weapons increases security, why would India's possession of nuclear weapons would be dangerous? If the Permanent Five continues to employ nuclear weapons as an international currency of force and power, why should India voluntarily devalue its own state power and national security?

This clearly indicated a break from the Nehruvian policy, a competition against the established powers, and compared to South Africa, India not only requested reform in the management of international affairs but demanded to be one of the major ones (Chaulia, 2002).

The second status signal of India is its claim for a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council. Here, India is seeking the veto power, which has been the main status symbol for a major power since World War II. In the post-Cold War, India has been active in many multilateral organizations, as well as the United Nations by being a major participant of the peacekeeping operations as it sent its soldiers, election supervisors, experts, etc., to the field as the original members of the organization (Debiel & Wulf, 2017; Pant, 2016). However, here, it is merely a calculated political action, merely to claim that India is an active reliable participant; therefore, it deserves a permanent seat at the higher table with veto power. In 2015, the Minister of External Affairs Rajya Sabha (2015) said, "India's contribution to

UN peacekeeping operations, over the years, as a responsible member of the United Nations has been appreciated and acknowledged, and enhanced India's credentials to be a permanent member in a reformed Security Council." Indeed, scholars argue that India's participation in peacekeeping missions and its positive attitude on certain occasions is so that it has leverage when demanding recognition and a seat at the UNSC (Gupta & Chatterjee, 2016; Pant, 2016). It has been at the forefront of gatherings to discuss reform of the UNSC, and its claim for a seat at the table stems from it representing the one-sixth of humanity as a diverse and economically strong successful democracy, in addition to its ancient history of being a timeless harmonious nation (Mukerji, 2020).

India indeed participates in peacekeeping missions with a firm stance, but it shows reluctance when it comes to promoting democracy and human rights despite being one of the oldest and largest democracies in the world (Debiel & Wulf, 2017; Gupta & Chatterjee, 2016). Due to its colonial history, it is wary of the West's efforts to promote democracy. Additionally, due to its unquestioned history of pressuring minorities in India, it is wary of the promotion of human rights. In terms of Responsibility to Protect, even though it agrees that it is the internal community's responsibility to protect those in need, India takes the Westphalian notion of sovereignty and non-intervention; following that, it abstains on certain examples of R2P, such as Libya and Syria, and position itself next to Russia and China. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that when it comes to its own neighborhood, such as Bangladesh in 1971 and Sri Lanka in 1987, India does not refrain from the use of force (Gupta & Chatterjee, 2016). As a matter of fact, human rights, democracy, or responsibility to protect are not incorporated in India's identity, compared to Canada's. As they are not what India promotes or cares about. The only instance where we see an emphasis on democracy or secularism is to praise India so that it can qualify for a seat.

To assess what we have put forth so far, in terms of capabilities, it is evident that India is there near the great powers and even surpassing some of them. It has a power projection ability considering its rise in technology, demographics, military, and economy. It has the power to influence policy in a number of countries around its region, such as Taiwan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. This statement may indicate that

India is a regional power. However, India's participation in many gatherings, especially the BRICS, might show that it can reach out of its region and be involved in the management of the system.

At the 2023 BRICS Summit held in South Africa, there have been talks to include six new members of the club, and those are Iran, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, and Argentina. According to Kugelman, (2023) a BRICS enlargement would be beneficial for India since most of the additions represent the values of the Global South, contribute to multipolarity, are in a part where India is trying to extend its energy and trade interests in India's broader geopolitical considerations, and friendly countries for New Delhi. Of course, there may be risks in adding new countries since these countries also have close relations with China, and in the next step, there may be unfriendly countries, such as Pakistan, proposed by China and Russia to join; however, overall "BRICS expansion could advance Indian interests, giving New Delhi more clout with a set of nations with which it is keen to expand relations" (Kugelman, 2023). Considering this new possible expansion, India most certainly enjoys leverage in the international arena. Plus, despite changes in foreign policy and rhetoric, Gupta and Chatterjee (2016, p. 106) put forth, "India's perceived role as the leader of developing countries and as a power opposed to imperialism and hegemony did not undergo any radical change." Therefore, this study concludes that India is a recognized rising power in the hierarchy of the international system. But, is India a recognized great power?

First and foremost, let me mention the reactions to India's nuclear weapons test. Of course, the first reaction from major powers was anger, especially from the USA and China. From the side of the USA, the first policy to implement toward India was political isolation and economic sanctions. Equally, China condemned India, blaming it for disrupting the stability in Southeast Asia by invoking a nuclear arms race (Nayar & Paul, 2002). However, due to changes in the stance of the US regime (mainly change in the government from Clinton to Bush), the positive reaction coming from Russia and France, followed by disagreements on collective economic sanctions, reaction towards India turned into engagement (Ganguly & Mukherji, 2012; Nayar & Paul, 2002). Indeed, India experienced status accommodation with the Indo-US Nuclear Deal of 2008, which certified India with nuclear weapon state

status despite not signing the NPT. Secondly, India enjoyed visits by important policymakers from established states, such as Clinton, Condoleezza Rice, Bush, Obama, Trump, and recently Biden. Obama made a remark that put forth the USA's support for India's claim for a permanent seat at the UNSC, which also included a statement of recognition: "The United States not only welcomes India as a rising global power, we fervently support it" (The White House, 2010).

Regarding capabilities and the above-mentioned information, it may seem as if India is recognized as a great power and, of course, gets more attention than before, evident of its involvement in BRICS and QUAD; however, we can confidently concur that India is recognized as a rising power but not a great power yet. The reason why India got a pass from major powers, especially from the USA, in its conquest for nuclear weapons is because India is not considered a threat to US interests (Ganguly & Mukherji, 2012). Plus, regarding security issues, India is still not the first country to consider, consult and discuss. India is still not part of a formal alliance on security and military, perhaps due to its multi-alignment policy post-Cold War to balance China and the USA and secure itself from political contingencies, as Debiel and Wulf (2017) put forth (Gupta & Chatterjee, 2016). It has mainly agreements or Memorandum of Understanding with the USA about energy or trade. They signed a defense agreement in 2005, yet it generally emphasized defense trade, preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, combatting terrorism, and providing safety and stability in important trade routes on the sea (Secretary of Defence & Minister of Defence, 2005).

A number of academics and China put forth Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) as an Asian NATO; however, the reality has shown otherwise ("Quad Summit 2021," 2021). QUAD is an informal security dialogue of Australia, the USA, Japan, and India, first initiated by Japan in 2007. The talks stopped due to changes in the Australian government, but QUAD meetings started at full scale in 2017. It first came to be as a maritime cooperation to provide safety and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, which many have interpreted as a coalition as a reaction to China's rise militarily and economically. The four nations first conducted their joint naval exercise in Malabar in 2000 and then in 2021 and 2023, which was put forth as a work between like-minded nations to ensure a

secure and inclusive Indo-Pacific region (*Australia Joins Exercise MALABAR 2020*, 2020). Certainly, the QUAD holds great importance in the region since China sees it as a major threat and a form of containment. Indeed, it threatens Asian nations such as Bangladesh not to join such informal dialogues. However, as we can see from the Joint Statements, importance was given to low political issues such as COVID-19 vaccines, disaster relief, climate change, supply-chain resilience, and technological innovation (*Quad Leaders' Vision Statement - Enduring Partners for the Indo-Pacific*, 2023; Smith, 2021) In a world where India still purchases most of its weapons from Russia, receives mixed signals from the USA, and tries to engage with China and the USA at the same time as a form of balancing, it is safe to say that India is a country that is trying to close the gap with the great powers, but still, a rising power outside the club, that is most likely be blocked by China every time it tries to join the club, who still has to juggle with the three great powers and their interests.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, India is a rising power that performs well in many dimensions, specifically military (expenditure and personnel), economy (GDP), population, and technology. The material indicators provide India an opportunity to be a rising power; furthermore, with its role identity and foreign policy interests, we can see that it shows the willingness to be appropriately categorized as a rising power. However, through its role identity, material indicators, and behavior in the international system, India seeks a higher status and wants to be recognized as part of the great power club. Indeed, the second sub-section puts forth that India has always considered itself a major power and wanted to join the great power club, claiming that it is its 'righteous place.'

Following its independence, India sought status among the other non-aligned powers through social creativity. However, soon enough, it changed its strategy and has been seeking status through social mobility by emulating the steps of the great powers. The reason why it opted for a social mobility strategy in the post-Cold War was due to the changes in domestic politics and the international structure, but most importantly, India has discovered that "to be seen as a subject rather than an object" in international relations, it had to do what the other great powers did, which was to

acquire nuclear weapons and a permanent seat at the UNSC (Nayar & Paul, 2002, p. 236). As Nayar and Paul (2002, p. 231) argued, India's actions post-Cold War were a self-redefinition as a major power and an attempt to be considered seriously in the international arena due to its increased self-confidence following its rise technologically, militarily, economically, and demographically. Although acquiring nuclear weapons, seeking a permanent seat at the UNSC, and having ambitious space and defense programs are indicative of great power behavior, we are not currently seeing concrete evidence of India going outside of its region when we look at its military bases and interventions. Therefore, we conclude that India seeks status through social mobility to become a great power, yet it is not currently there.

Despite its status claim and limited criticism from the major powers, India is not recognized as a great power. Nayar and Paul (2002, p. 11) explained, "India often finds itself isolated by the major system, especially on core issues that affect its security and economic prosperity." It may be accepted as a nuclear weapons state; however, its acquisition of a permanent seat at the UNSC seems unlikely as long as China is there. Besides, it is constantly rejected by powers who are ready to welcome Germany or Japan since the established powers wish to keep the power in the hands of the developed Global North nations and keep their club exclusive (Nayar & Paul, 2002). In addition, its challenges in the economic sphere domestically, stance on global regimes, relations with the USA and other major powers, internal volatile dynamic - especially between the two religious groups - and a threatening neighbor supporting terrorist attacks on India's territory stand as major challenges of becoming a great power.

India is motivated by reinstating its place in the world, tormented by Nehru's policies that left it weak and closing the gap with the great powers in terms of relative capabilities. Rather than changing the international system, it desires to show that it is a salient power in Asia and deserves a voice in the management of the international system. Currently, the possibility of a conflict and resorting to social competition as a status-seeking strategy due to status denial, as Ward puts forth, seems unlikely since India is still not in a place where it can defeat China or the USA if a conflict occurs and it is aware of it. This is why it resorts to social mobility to restore parity. However, as we've mentioned, India is not currently recognized and

is left out by the great powers in the case of high politics issues. If this continues and if India can get over its obstacles related to the economy, its threatening neighbors, and internal issues related to two main religious groups, India is likely to change its status-seeking strategy to social competition and resort to violence to claim its 'righteous place' in the world with the great powers.



CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: SEEKING THE GOLDEN SNITCH

This study aims to show the who are the second-tier states in the international hierarchy, how they seek status, what strategies are available, and what accounts for their status-seeking strategies. It focuses explicitly on the second-tier states immediately below the great power club and their strategies for seeking status in the post-Cold War world.

Exploring why states that are not considered great powers invest in certain policies, even if these policies do not increase their power, leads us to consider four key questions. First, who are these second-tier states? Second, what strategies are available to them? Third, how do they pursue status? Fourth, what influences their chosen status-seeking strategy? Drawing from existing scholarship on power, status and Social Identity Theory, this study proposes three hypotheses. These hypotheses are then tested through case studies of Canada as a middle power, South Africa as a regional power, and India as an emerging power.

1. The Argument

In this thesis, I tackled status and how second-tier states seek it. Essentially, status is the primary reward everyone desires, from individuals to states. It is desirable, hard to catch, and scarce. Therefore, it is the golden snitch in the game of international relations. Like individuals who desire higher status, whether in terms of wealth, job, or social life, states seek higher clubs in the international arena.

In its mission to answer the first question, which is who second-tier states are,

this study provided a unique way of categorization due to the overabundance of definitions and categorizations of states. Borrowing from the works of Cline et al. (2011) and Volgy and Gordell (2019), this thesis, first argued that we might identify the categories of states through three indicators: material dimension (opportunity), behavior in the international system (willingness), and recognition from others (status attribution). Advancing on this theory regarding the material dimension, this thesis states that we should look into material personnel, military expenditure, population, economy (GDP), and technological development to examine where a country stands in the international hierarchy. Therefore, this study puts forth the following hypothesis,

***H1:** Your capabilities will determine what kind of power you are and, therefore, the category you fall into.*

After identifying the current position and category of the country in question, this study argued that to comprehend the available status-seeking strategies for second-tier states and what influences their choice of strategy, we must consider both the country's material capabilities and its role identity. Material capabilities determine the current type of power and actions achievable by the state. However, identity dictates the desired type of power to pursue, which is central to the concept of status. Therefore, this study proposed the following hypotheses:

***H2:** Rising and regional powers are more akin to seeking status through social mobility in accordance with their capabilities. In contrast, middle powers are more akin to seeking status through social creativity in accordance with their capabilities.*

***H3:** The kind of identity will determine the choice of status strategy states will take by determining what kind of power the state in question wants to become.*

2. The Findings

First, we consider Canada as a middle power that pursues the status-quo and multilateralism, excelling in technology and economic dimensions. It is worth noting that Canada ranks 66th in military personnel, 14th in military expenditure, 9th in GDP, 38th in population, and 15th in technology (Correlates of War, 2021; *Global*

Innovation Index, 2022; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022a; The World Bank Group, 2022a). This data indicates that Canada is a middle power that performs well in terms of economic and technology dimensions in material indicators, although it lags behind great powers, rising powers, and some regional powers in military personnel and population. Therefore, the evidence supports our first hypothesis and confirms that Canada currently is a middle power in the international hierarchy. Additionally, in terms of identity, Canada, as one of the earliest self-identified middle powers globally, has emphasized its identity as a 'peace-loving nation,' which also resonated in the international arena (Axworthy, 2001; *Canada's Reputation Shines Internationally and at Home*, 2021).

When examining Canada's behavior in the international system, it becomes evident that Canada distinguishes itself through moral initiatives. These initiatives range from involvement in the Landmines Treaty to the formation of the R2P guidelines, mediation efforts, soft power elements, support for the rules-based system and challenge the revisionist states through multilateral channels. Moreover, the evidence indicates that when engaging in hard power elements, such as participating in interventions, Canada consults with its allies, especially the USA.

Therefore, our case study validates the two hypotheses. Since the end of the Cold War, Canada has prioritized foreign policy centered around rules-based order, multilateralism, and cooperation-building and has acted upon them. Despite facing challenges and changes with shifts in prime ministers, Canada persistently pursued social creativity as it built upon its strengths. Notably, Canada's efforts, including Pearson's mediating role in the Suez Crisis, led to significant achievements such as winning a Nobel Peace Prize.

As a country that has introduced major multilateral initiatives through multilateral channels and cooperation, such as the Responsibility to Protect, the Ottawa Treaty, and support for International Criminal Court, Canada transformed what could be negative attributes into positive ones, carving out a distinctive international profile. It has shown no inclination to surpass the higher group, expand beyond its region to create a sphere of influence, or claim a permanent seat at the United Security Council. Therefore, it leads us to conclude that Canada, aware of its

material attributes and national identity embraced by the public, seek status through innovative approaches.

Secondly, South Africa is considered a regional power with significant latent power, demonstrating a visible interest in assuming leadership in Africa. We should recall that South Africa ranks 53rd in military expenditure and military personnel, 32nd in GDP, 24th in population, and 61st in technology. It should be mentioned that South Africa surpasses its regional counterparts within Sub-Saharan Africa as it ranks first in technological development and second in military expenditure and GDP (Correlates of War, 2021; *Global Innovation Index*, 2022; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022a; The World Bank Group, 2022a). This data affirms that South Africa qualifies as a regional power with robust latent power, exceeding others in its region, confirming the initial hypothesis. Emphasizing its African and Southern identity as fundamental aspects of its national identity, South Africa sometimes criticizes Western values when it aligns with its national interests. This orientation suggests that South Africa seeks status through social mobility. Even though the duality in South Africa's words and deeds may complicate the picture, the case study validates the two hypotheses.

Despite employing social creativity tools, such as emphasizing the support for human rights and democracy, South Africa's primary interests have become evident in the president's narratives particularly in its ambition to be a spokesperson for Africa and the Global South. South Africa indicated its ambition to make Sub-Saharan Africa and the African continent its sphere of influence through Mbeki's speech, 'African Renaissance,' and 'Africa First' policies (Landsberg, 2012; SABC News, 2017).

Expressed desire to obtain a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council, participation in informal groups like BRICS (seen as challenging the rules-based order), and criticism for assertive behavior in regional forums raise questions about South Africa's pursuit of liberal democracy and human rights defense, typically associated with social creativity. Further actions, such as intervention in Lesotho to failure to condemn Zimbabwe for human rights violations, suggest that South Africa prioritizes its national interest, which was to be a regional leader. Therefore, we

conclude that South Africa emulates the behavior of other regional leaders in seeking higher status in the international hierarchy and hopes to become a regional leader. Its identity as an African spokesperson and its standout material capabilities relative to other Sub-Saharan nations support the validation of the last two hypotheses.

Third, India is a rising power that performs well in more than three material dimensions, narrowing the gap with the great powers and demonstrating a willingness to join the higher club. It is important to note that India ranks 4th in military expenditure, 3rd in military personnel, 2nd in population, 6th in GDP, and 40th in technology (1st in Southern and Central Asia) (Correlates of War, 2021; *Global Innovation Index*, 2022; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022a; The World Bank Group, 2022a). These statistics highlight India as a rising power 'banging at the door' of the great powers and narrowing the gap with the great powers, although not overtaking the superpower and the rising great power just yet. However, we may recall that to rise is not to overtake but to narrow the gap (Buzan, 2004; Onea, 2021). Therefore, our first hypothesis is validated, as India's prominence across multiple dimensions indicates its status as a rising power. India identifies itself as a great ancient civilization "yearning for its rightful place in the world" (Bharatiya Janata Party, 1998). This study expects India to pursue status through social mobility, considering that social competition becomes the last resort for second-tier states after enduring continuous status denials (Ward, 2017). Given the potential conflict with China and the recognition and engagement with major powers such as the USA, Russia, and France post-Cold War, India is presumed to seek status through social mobility rather than social competition (Ganguly & Mukherji, 2012; The White House, 2010).

Despite India's notable achievements in nuclear and space programs and its aspiration for a seat at the UN Security Council, it has not displayed hard power behaviors of great powers, such as establishing military bases or intervening far beyond its region. This supports the conclusion that India seeks status through social mobility and is not yet classified as a great power.

Therefore, the case study confirms the two hypotheses. As was seen in the writings of the founding fathers of India, Nehru (2008) and Golvarkar (2000), India

has always perceived itself as a major power. When the world established a new world order, India reversed Nehru's non-aligned ideology and took orthodox steps to claim its 'rightful' place in the international hierarchy (Bharatiya Janata Party, 1998). Simply put by Nayar and Paul (2002, p. 236), "The lesson for India in all this was that in order to be treated as a subject, rather than as an object, there was no alternative to building its own power capabilities, even while employing diplomacy to avoid disruption of the overall relationship." The fact that it rejected to be a part of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and became a nuclear power, continuously claimed a permanent seat and veto power at the UNSC, acquired the material power to influence its regional sphere and became part of the BRICS to enlarge the scope of its interests indicate that India seeking a higher status through social mobility in the international hierarchy. It emulates the steps of the great powers through conventional ways.

3. Implications

Overall, this study has 2 theoretical implications and 1 policy relevance.

3.1 Theoretical Implications

First and foremost, this study illustrates that the category often considered as one – second-tier states - is essentially comprised of three distinct categories with different characteristics. Therefore, not all second-tier states are the same. Within the classification of second-tier states, this study identifies three categories based on material indicators, specifically military expenditure, military personnel, population size, economic strength, and technological development.

The study shows that there are middle powers, regional powers, and rising powers under the second-tier state category, which sits below the great powers and above the small powers. Middle powers are notable for their advanced technological development and economic strength, measured by GDP. Moreover, middle powers tend to be prosperous nations, reflected in their GDP per capita, and pursue liberal democratic values. On the other hand, regional powers excel in military capabilities, evidenced by high military expenditure, military personnel, and population size. However, they lag behind in economic development, often characterized as developing economies that also showcase slower progress in technological

development. Rising powers demonstrate multidimensional advancement, excelling in more than two dimensions compared to other second-tier states, distinguishing them within the international hierarchy.

Through advancing Cline et al.'s (2011) proposition, this study provides a comprehensive categorization of states based on three leading indicators, which are material attributes (opportunity), behavior in the international system (willingness), and recognition from others (status attribution). This study contributes significantly to power literature by establishing clear material criteria for categorizing countries and determining their position within the international hierarchy based on power. This approach addresses the abundance of definitions and material indicators used by different academics, providing decisive criteria to identify and classify countries into specific categories based on their power status.

Secondly, this study successfully rejects the null hypothesis and confirms that not all second-tier states pursue status in the same conventional manner. Status-seeking among second-tier states involves different strategies. Drawing on Tajfel and Turner (1986) from the Department of Psychology, Larson and Shevchenko (2003) identify three distinct status-seeking strategies: social creativity, mobility, and competition.

While social creativity refers to creating innovative ways of seeking status by transforming negative aspects into positive ones, social mobility refers to emulating the behavior of the higher club. In today's world, social creativity is exemplified through soft power elements rooted in moral values, such as peacekeeping efforts, mediatory efforts, human rights initiatives, and being an example state. The conventional ways, which are prominent in social mobility, are exemplified in increased involvement in the management of the system, such as seeking a permanent seat at the UNSC, nuclear and space programs, going outside of the proximate region through military bases and interventions, and expanding spheres of influence. In the case of social competition, we expect to see direct competition that may lead to conflict, crisis, or even war.

This study initially adopts Ward's (2017) research asserting that social competition occurs in case of status denial. Expanding on Ward's (2017) work, this study presents that social competition is the last resort of the second-tier states,

which are challenged by their material capabilities. Therefore, this study does not consider social competition to be the preferred strategy. This conclusion is supported by the case studies, particularly with India, the sole rising power examined, which does not directly compete with great powers nor exhibit aggressive behaviors typical of major powers today.

Three case studies confirm that states choose the proper status-seeking strategy based on their power trajectory and role identity, which they have developed through the years and integrated into their national identity. As Canada advocates for a rules-based order, supports the status quo, and claims to be a ‘peace-loving nation.’ Given its capabilities, Canada pursues status through social creativity, aiming not to join the ranks of great powers but to distinguish itself within the overall hierarchy. On the other hand, South Africa, positioned as a regional power, aspires to be a regional leader by claiming to be the spokesperson of Africa in multilateral forums. Consequently, South Africa seeks status through social emulation, following the steps of the established regional leaders to achieve a higher status as a regional leader of Sub-Saharan Africa, if not the whole continent. Therefore, South Africa seeks status regionally. Lastly, as a rising power, India seeks status through social mobility. However, as a rising power, India emulates the behavior of the great powers, seeking status systemically. Given the nuclear landscape, geographical factors, capabilities, and absence of consistent status denial, none of the states mentioned in this study opted for the last-resort strategy of social competition.

In summary, second-tier states vary significantly and are essentially comprised of three distinct categories in accordance with their level of skills in 5 material dimensions. Additionally, these states adopt different strategies for seeking status, influenced by their material capabilities and role identities. Since they are limited by their resources, they will ultimately choose two strategies: social creativity and mobility. However, social competition remains a potential consideration as a last resort in cases of persistent status denials, as proposed by Ward (2017b).

3.2 Policy Relevance

Secondly, this study has policy implications. As Lebow (2010) put forth, status is one of the main motivations of states to engage in war and conflict. Consequently, it

is essential for decision-makers to be able to read the narratives and behavior of those in the international system. This research on status aims to provide insight for individuals and decision-makers seeking to understand global dynamics and make informed decisions. Therefore, I will present what the future might look like for the countries in our case studies and how we might expect them to behave.

Firstly, Canada is likely to behave the same, meaning it will lean on moral grounds in the international arena. We can anticipate Canada engaging in moral movements and developing further humanitarian initiatives on issues like Palestine or Ukraine through international institutions. Due to its limitations in its military capabilities and focus on multilateral approaches, we expect Canada to seek status through social creativity, consulting with allies, and engaging in diplomatic channels.

Secondly, South Africa will likely become more active in the African continent and assert regional leadership. This active participation can be manifested through multilateral channels such as BRICS or forming alliances within the African continent. We anticipate competition with other claimants of African leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa, such as Nigeria, leading to the emergence of pro and anti-South African alliances or coalitions. With the expansion of BRICS, South Africa is likely to take on a more active and ambitious role as a spokesperson for the African continent and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Thirdly, we are not currently seeing great power behavior regarding India, such as military interventions and military bases outside of its proximate region. As mentioned in the previous chapters, rising powers are more likely to resort to social competition and, hence, violence if consistent status contestation occurs (Ward, 2017). We anticipate India becoming more engaged in great power competition in the coming years. This could be reflected in Prime Minister Modi's rhetoric, which may become more nationalist, pro-Hindu, and hawkish. As we've said, India is currently seeking status by implementing ambitious, self-reliant defense and space programs, yet it is focused on its close region. Therefore, as the next step, we expect India to set up military bases in strategically essential locations outside its immediate vicinity, such as Djibouti, located in the strategically important Bab-el Mandeb Strait. Recently, External Affairs Minister of India, Jaishankar, stated that 'It is very

reasonable for us... to not try and prepare but actually prepare for a far greater Chinese presence than we have seen before' when talking about the increased size of the Chinese navy and military bases (The Economic Times, 2023). As the Chinese Navy grows in size and expands its bases in the Indian Ocean and Africa, we see that the Indian Navy is also expanding by acquiring advanced ships and submarines and increasing the military budget (Hussain, 2024). Therefore, we anticipate India leveraging its investments in alliances like QUAD and potentially taking independent actions to further its strategic interests. This may, in turn, could make the great power club irritated and not provide India with the aspired status it wants. In this instance, we expect India to resort to social competition, confident with its capabilities and role identity.

Lastly, while not a case study, this research also highlights Türkiye's status within the international hierarchy. Türkiye is often considered a rising or emerging middle power deserving of attention. Understanding Türkiye's status-seeking behavior and expected conduct in global affairs is an important aspect that warrants further exploration. Here, we aim to locate Türkiye in the international hierarchy, see how it seeks status, and how we expect it to behave.

Table 17 – Military Expenditure of Türkiye (%GDP)

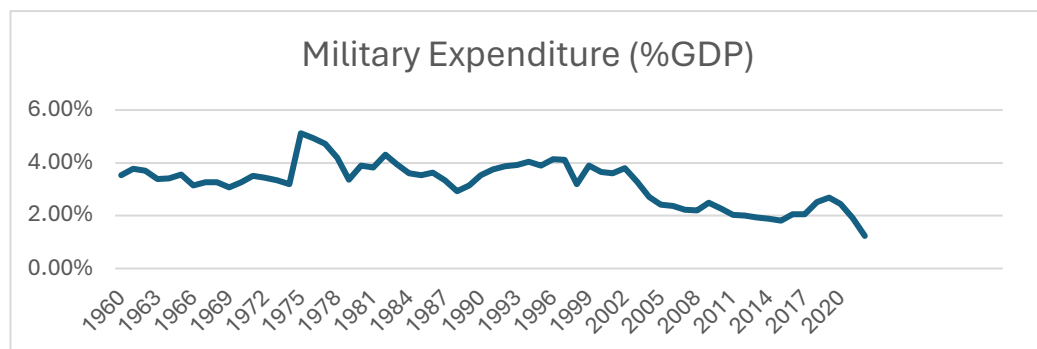


Table 18 – Military Personnel of Türkiye

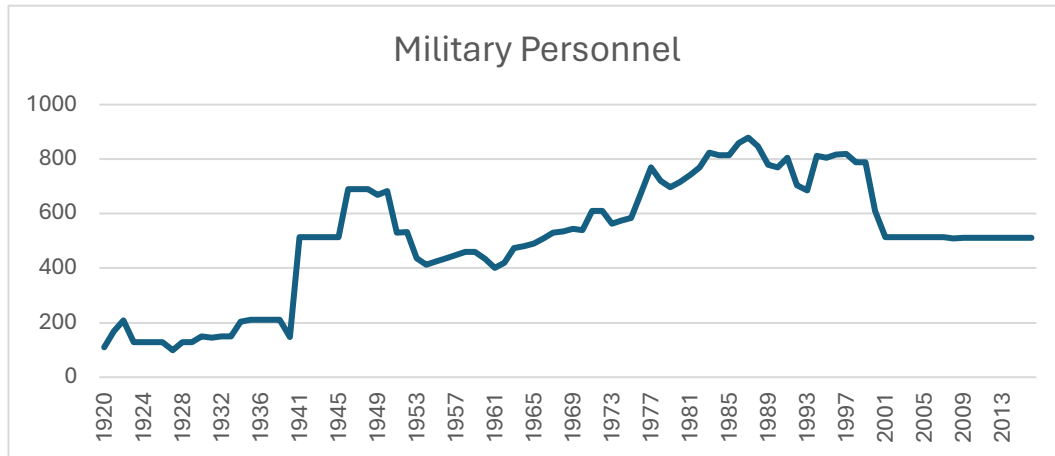


Table 19 – GDP (current US\$) of Türkiye

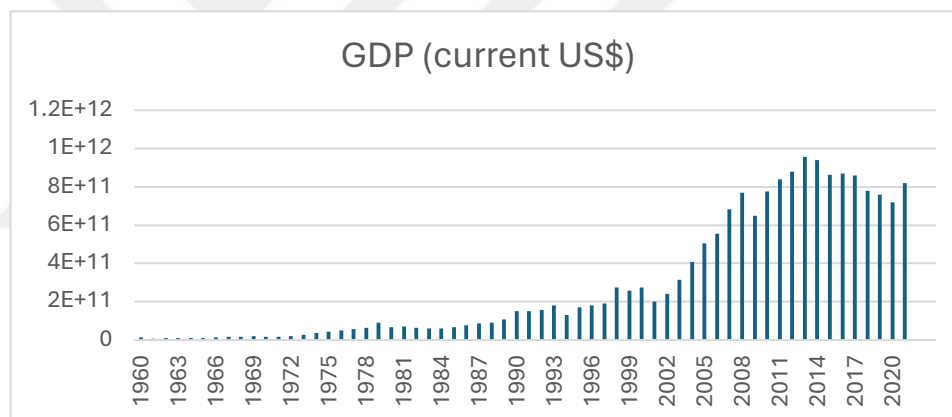
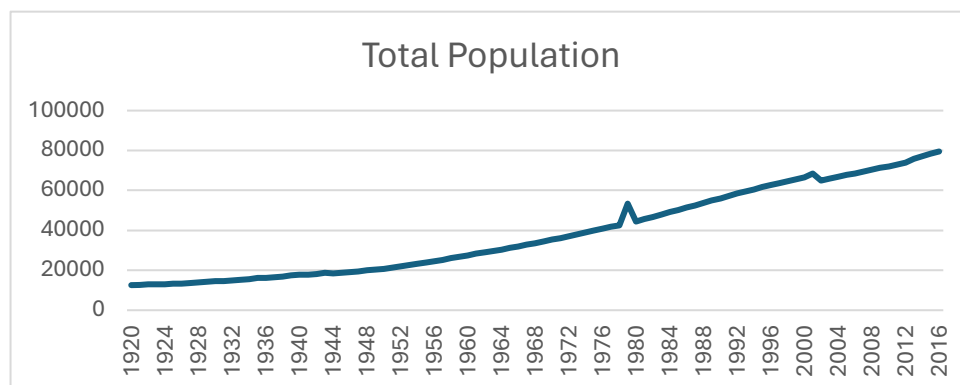


Table 20 – Total Population of Türkiye



Türkiye ranks 23rd in military expenditure, 9th in military personnel, 19th in GDP,

18th in total population, and 37th in technology (3rd in North Africa and Western Asia region, following Israel and the United Arab Emirates) (Correlates of War, 2021; *Global Innovation Index*, 2022; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022a; The World Bank Group, 2022a). Compared to great powers and rising powers, the statistics indicate that Türkiye lags behind in all indicators except military personnel. However, Türkiye is an attractive country with considerable latent power compared to regional powers. One might argue that Türkiye is following Brazil's steps in material indicators, indeed exceeding it in the technological dimension. Therefore, the above figures lead us to conclude that Türkiye is a regional power.

Looking at the table above, one might be surprised at the fluctuation in military expenditure and personnel, showing a downward trajectory. Regarding military expenditure and personnel, despite a relatively stable GDP, Türkiye is experiencing an unstable economy due to unorthodox economic policies, higher interest rates, high inflation, and increasing unemployment, which reflect the government's spending priorities. However, the economic factors are not the only determinant of this downward spiral. In addition to the economic policies, domestic politics, mainly the terrorist organization PKK, are effective in Türkiye's fluctuating trajectory.

Between 1988 and 1998, Türkiye increased its military expenditure and extended the period of compulsory military service due to the threat of PKK. Following the capture of Abdullah Öcalan, the head of PKK, the period of compulsory military service, the amount of recruited military personnel and defense spending decreased. Following the 1999 earthquake, Türkiye introduced shortened military service options for payment to finance city rebuilding efforts. However, as mentioned, Türkiye is in the top ten in military personnel and 23rd in military expenditure, allocating 1.23% of its GDP to the military, which is higher than most regional powers (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2022a). Furthermore, Türkiye is currently pursuing prestige projects related to military technology, such as the Fifth Generation Fighter Jet Kaan, its first national combat aircraft (Reuters, 2024).

Despite the current state of the economy mentioned above, Türkiye has had a

relatively stable and high trajectory in terms of GDP after the 1990s, particularly after the Özal regime's capitalist policy shift. Regarding Purchasing Power Parity, as of 2021, Türkiye ranks 12th, indicating that Türkiye performs well in economic productivity and living standards compared to other countries (The World Bank Group, 2022d). Even though it fell to 21st rank in the world's biggest economies, it is still part of G-20, underscoring its influence among developing nations (Euronews, 2022). Therefore, in terms of material indicators, especially military expenditure, personnel, and total population, Türkiye is considered a regional power with significant latent power. The role identity and the narratives of the policymakers further highlight its position and ambitions.

As the successor of the Ottoman Empire, it aspires to reclaim a prominent global position. Looking at the role identity it seeks in the international arena, Türkiye, like the other regional and rising powers, advocates for reform in the management of the system, mainly the United National Security Council. Erdoğan has reiterated continuously that 'the World is bigger than five' (Directorate of Communications, 2023). However, as seen in the media outlets, Türkiye supported India's bid for a permanent seat rather than seeking a seat for itself (Directorate of Communications, 2023). This pragmatic approach suggests that Türkiye is mindful of its capabilities and potential competition on the global stage.

Recently, Türkiye has paid attention to technological advancements and weaponry production; however, its advancements are far from those of India. While Türkiye holds influence in the international arena by being a member of G20, NATO, and OSCE, its effectiveness is more pronounced at the regional level within organizations like the Council of Europe, Union for the Mediterranean, or BLACKSEAFOR. Turkey's sphere of influence remains primarily regional, and when it extends beyond, such as its military mission in Libya, it faces significant repercussions. Despite its higher GDP than South Africa, Turkey is not part of BRICS, possibly to maintain a balance within NATO vis-à-vis China and the USA.

In terms of military involvement, Türkiye resembles and even surpasses India. Türkiye currently has military bases in Qatar, Kuwait, Somalia, Syria, Iraq, and Libya (Al Jazeera, 2017; El-Berni & Doğan Akkas, 2022). Balta et al. (2021)

interpreted that “Demonstrating an ability to extend its power projection beyond its immediate neighborhood, Turkey has also been part of twelve UN, NATO, and EU-led peace support operations abroad in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lebanon, Somalia, and Iraq.” This indicates that, as a regional power, Türkiye is projecting its power in its ‘Near Abroad,’ technically outside its region. Therefore, this study considers Türkiye as an aspiring regional power that is pursuing social mobility.

Last but not least, we should mention that, unlike the countries examined in the case studies, according to the Polity V dataset, Türkiye is an anocracy in the middle of a democracy and a dictatorship. It has been scoring ‘0’ since 2016 after it shifted from a parliamentary system to a presidential one (Marshall et al., 2016). This shift raised concerns about Turkey's role identity – once a country that was shown as an example of a Muslim but democratic country to Arab states – in the international arena.

However, Türkiye utilized social creativity tools when it aligned with its interests of acquiring a higher status. For example, it launched the ‘Mediation for Peace’ initiative in the UN (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.). We should also mention that Türkiye has emphasized humanitarian foreign policy and according to Benli Altunışık (2019), it has been the fourth largest humanitarian donor in the world by providing bilateral official development assistance to countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, and Somalia in 2017. However, further research leads us to conclude that these efforts become confined to the regional context and serve as a means to garner a higher recognition within its regional context. As Köstem (2018) puts forth, historical engagement becomes even more important for regional powers as they form a national identity through the elites by claiming a special responsibility. In this context, Türkiye presents economic influence through liberal means and sees itself as an ‘exceptional’ brother to help the Middle East (Köstem, 2018).

Given the overall context, Türkiye emerges as an aspiring regional power seeking status through social emulation, especially regarding material indicators and behavior. Türkiye engages in extra-regional interventions like Libya, hosts many

military bases outside of its borders, asks for reform in the systemic management, and demands status through prestige projects related to the military. While Türkiye is working to repair relations with neighboring states, its foreign policy over the past two decades presents a complex and potentially unstable picture of its pursuit for elevated status.

Presently, considering its substantial material indicators, surpassing those of some regional powers and its evolving role identity, we conclude that Türkiye is seeking status through social mobility by emulating the behavior of the rising powers. Looking ahead, we may anticipate Turkey adopting a more nationalist stance akin to India, projecting power within its region and beyond.

Overall, the above-mentioned expectations predicated on the current international system and the dynamics of domestic politics. We should be aware that changes and shifts within domestic politics can significantly influence a country's status-seeking policies, as evolving role identities and the emergence of new policymakers can redirect national priorities and strategies. The importance of domestic politics cannot be understated, as internal political transformations often lead to adjustments in foreign policy objectives and the methods through which countries pursue status on the international stage. As domestic political landscapes evolve, so too do the ambitions and actions of states within the global hierarchy, highlighting the critical interplay between internal political changes and international status aspirations. Understanding this relationship is crucial for analyzing how states navigate the complex web of international relations and how they may shift their strategies in response to domestic political developments. Therefore, although this thesis aims to provide a sound policy relevance with regard to the future expectations of its case studies, it leaves a room for distinct changes in the system as social sciences are complex and fluid.

4. Future Directions of Inquiry

This study provided a sound categorization of powers in the international hierarchy, picked three cases from three distinct categories, and analyzed what would account for their different status-seeking strategies. Having investigated the three countries from distinct categories, our findings confirmed our hypotheses that power

and identity affect the status-seeking strategy of states in different categories.

For future research, an interesting avenue would be to delve deeper into the dynamics of status-seeking strategies by focusing on countries within the same category but with distinct identities. South Africa and Brazil, representing regional powers and aspiring regional leaders yet to be accepted as such, could serve as compelling subjects for such an investigation. By examining the interplay between power and identity in these comparable contexts, one can understand how identity factors influence status-seeking behavior within the same categories. This approach would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between power, identity, and status-seeking strategies.

Second, one of the main puzzling questions while measuring the economic success of the countries was to choose which indicator to focus on, mainly GDP, GDP per capita, or PPP. All of these three factors change the trajectory considerably. For example, in the case of India, while it succeeds in terms of GDP visibly, it lags behind 161 countries regarding GDP per capita. As the most utilized one, this study has chosen GDP to calculate the economic well-being of the countries; however, future inquiry on which indicator is the most sensible one can help future researchers to make better and sound calculations when measuring power.

Lastly, a further inquiry into the role identities of countries like India and Türkiye, particularly examining how their historical experiences as former empires influence their contemporary international behavior and aspirations for major power status, presents an interesting avenue for further investigation. The notion that countries with imperial legacies may be more inclined to assert themselves as major powers aligns with the observation that such nations often carry a distinct historical consciousness and self-perception shaped by past imperial pride. The comparison between India and Türkiye, both of which share rhetorical assertions of their historical legacies and ambitions in global affairs, could provide valuable insights into the relationship between imperial pasts and contemporary status-seeking behaviors. By delving deeper into these two countries and examining how these nations project and leverage their historical narratives in their international engagements, we can better understand how imperial legacies influence role

identities and aspirations for major power status in today's world. This research agenda would contribute significantly to our comprehension of how history continues to shape the status-seeking ambitions and identities of nations with imperial pasts.

The aim of this thesis is to present that all states seek status in the international hierarchy depending on their identity and power, which are mostly indicated in their statements and actions. Stefan Zweig (Zweig, 2013, p. 358) says, “It remains an irrefragable law of history that contemporaries are denied a recognition of the early beginnings of the great movements which determine their times.” Yet, the great movements of the future are determined by the strategies of present-day actors in their flights to catch the golden snitch, and research like this hopes to help contemporaries recognize the early beginnings.

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