APSS Papers

STUDENT PAPER 1

Canada's Peacemaking Role in the Former Yugoslavia and Kosovo-Serbia Crisis Explained Through a Middle Power Lens

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes Canada's foreign policy during the Kosovo crisis, emphasizing its role as a Middle Power in navigating complex international dynamics. While Principal Power and Satellite Power theories attempt to explain Canada's behavior, neither provides a comprehensive framework. Principal Power theory overstates Canada's autonomy and influence, as the country required multilateral support, particularly from NATO and the United States, to act decisively. Conversely, Satellite Power theory underestimates Canada's independence, failing to account for instances where Canada's policy priorities diverged from U.S. interests. Middle Power theory emerges as the most fitting framework, capturing Canada's reliance on multilateralism, moral leadership, and strategic coalition-building to advance its human security agenda. Through its active engagement in NATO-led interventions, advocacy for international human rights, and innovative use of diplomatic tools like the Uniting for Peace Resolution, Canada demonstrated a pragmatic yet value-driven approach to the Kosovo crisis. The study highlights Canada's ability to balance its moderate influence with impactful contributions, such as championing humanitarian principles and fostering post-conflict stability. The findings underscore Middle Power theory's utility in contextualizing Canada's foreign policy, while raising questions about how the theory might evolve with an agreed-upon definition and changing global dynamics.

INTRODUCTION

"The Kosovo crisis resulted in the largest population displacement from [a] European country since World War II" (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 1999, as cited in Redwood-Campbell, 2008, p. 3231). The theoretical framework of a middle power best supports Canada's role in the former Yugoslavia and the latter Kosovo-Serbia crises. Although there are various other theories, such as Principal Power, and Satellite Theory, neither are applicable as they cannot explain why Canada acted within a geopolitical stance in the international community, as a mediator initially, but an interventionist peacemaking approach later utilized against these states. These theories will be analyzed, starting with Principal Power, which is defined by Dewitt and colleagues (1983) as an international status that a state obtains which is considered the highest rank, and thus, not being constrained by other states in its actions acts in its principal manner and interest in "establishing, specifying and enforcing international order" (p. 38). Whereas Satellite is the opposite of Principal Power in asserting that Canada is an agent of the United States of America and formerly the British (Cullen, 2023a). As an agent, Canada's decisions are constrained by the United States as there is economic reliance; however, a dependence relationship was not evident in the crisis, as Canada led was the influencer rather than influenced (Cullen, 2023a). The Middle Power Theory is a theoretical framework Canada first used to explain its relative position to other countries and became a critical component of its identity (Cullen, 2023b). Although this theory has no single agreed-upon definition, the underlying part agreed upon argued by Chapnick (1999) is the "relative" relations between states which is used as an identifier of international rank (p. 73). Gammer (2001) argues Canada's response to Yugoslavia from the perspective of middle power, which matches the actions of Canada in relative terms of other states. Thus, Middle Power Theory will explain Canada's efforts in these crises using the 5 Cs of Middle Power Powederom, including coalition building, content, credibility, creativity, and concentration (Ravenhill, 1998; Cullen, 2023b).

PRINCIPAL POWER THEORY

Canada's role in former Yugoslavia and Kosovo-Serbia did not reflect principal power characteristics, such as independence, assertive policy, and self-interest (Cullen, 2023c). Canada did not act independently in the crises; instead, Canada leveraged states and international organizations in its actions. Instead of taking an assertive policy stance on former Yugoslavia and later Serbia, Canada acted as a mediator trying to have collective peace through mutual agreement, which overall was a method of appeasement until Canada was pressured to take an assertive role in working with other states to impose peace. Canada had no material interest in intervening in these crises, Canada was far from Europe, and there were no economic benefits as trade was minimal, but instead intervened for a moral imperative of human security (Gammer, 2001).

Lack of Independence in Actions

Canada did not act within its regards to the crises; in May 1998, Canada was among the first to take economic sanctions against Yugoslavia; however, during that same month, during the G8 foreign ministers

meeting, Canada advocated for the following countries to follow suit (Manulak, 2009). Canada, as a principal power, would not need to rely on the G8 to take economic sanctions as well, but it, during this meeting, needed cooperation to ensure that Canada was not the odd country out. In this same month, Canada was part of the NATO ministerial meeting. During this meeting, Canada and other allies agreed that to resolve the Kosovo-Serbia crisis, it would promote a peaceful method (Manulak, 2009). However, Canada and other countries decided that military action was not a priority option but could be enacted if necessary (Manulak, 2009).

NATO as a force of agreement for international action was not only during Kosovo, but Canada was also part of the NATO-led stabilization force in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the conflict in 1998, to which Canada dedicated 1200 troops (Manulak, 2009). Canada acts within the constraints of states and international organizations, evident in the NATO-led stabilization force in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the G8 meetings, and the NATO meeting for Kosovo-Serbia. Some may argue that Canada participated in the decision-making process and that Canada was the country that tried to influence the G8 to impose sanctions. However, Canada was not a leader within these organizations, other states had a more considerable influence, and while Canada may try to shift policy choices in the Canadian direction, it cannot force other states or pursue its policy path independently. Thus, the Principal Power theory is an insufficient explanation of Canada's role, and the vital component of independence is not satisfied.

Role as a Mediator

Canada's foreign policy towards former Yugoslavia was not assertive. Canada's emphasis in foreign policy during this time was "Axworthy's human security agenda," this would be defined as a decrease of state-centric security and, instead, there is a priority of human security (Manulak, 2009, p. 567; Nelles, 2002). This is an essential agenda because, for external intervention in affairs of another state, the former Yugoslavia, this would be defended through the concerns that are flagged through the human rights violation (Holohan, 2005, as cited in Murdoch, 2015, p. 248). So, through this agenda, Canada could mediate, but only to this extent; Canada took a pacifying role which was ineffective in dealing with former Yugoslavia in the Serbia-Kosovo crisis. This was evident in April 1996, early 1998, and March 1998. In April 1996, Canada was one of the first countries to engage concerning human rights concerns in Kosovo, Yugoslavia; Axworthy, the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited Yugoslav Foreign Minister Milan Milutinović in Belgrade regarding human rights (Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), 1996, as cited in Manulak, 2011, p. 11). In early 1998, James Wright, Director General for Central, East and South Europe, met with the President of Yugoslavia and encouraged cooperation with Rugova (Canada, 1998, as cited in Manulak, 2011, p. 11).

However, cooperation did not occur as there were no consequences for failing to cooperate (Canada, 1998, as cited in Manulak, 2011, p. 11). The only effect that occurred was when DFAIT allowed the Canadian ambassador to criticize Yugoslavia, in March of 1998, after the Serbian Special Policy (MUP) operation

that ensued against the Jashari family in the Drenica valley village of Prekaz (Canada, 1998, as cited in Manulak, 2011, pp. 11-12). Criticism may be argued as a role to show the displacement of a state; however, as a Principal Power, if true, would it not act more forcefully when the agenda is human rights and security? Only when Canada can provide material consequences, not criticism when its policies are ignored, will it provide a pathway for Canada to be a Principal Power. Even if there are consequences for disobeying Canada, they must come from Canada and no other superpowers to validate Canada's status as a Principal Power. Otherwise, it is a mere extension of a consequence of other states.

Lack of Beneficial Interest

Canada acted without an interest that was beneficial when intervening in former Yugoslavia and later Kosovo-Serbia Crisis. Instead, by intervening, Canada was reversing its previous policy of trying to sustain the independence of Yugoslavia from the Soviets through "economic and military assistance" (Gammer, 2001, p. 30). Furthermore, the economic sanctions that Canada posed meant that Canada chose a side, and this was during a time when "economic relations," specifically "trade relations, were peripheral to the relationship between Canada and Yugoslavia" (Gammer, 2001, p. 50). Furthermore, Canada would risk a relationship built with Yugoslavia, that up to 1988 bilateral relations were good to the extent that Prime Minister Mikulic visited Canada and even assured support for "Canada's candidacy for the Security Council" (Gammer, 2001, p. 54). If anything, Canada was disadvantageous by intervening in the initial former Yugoslavia crisis and later Kosovo-Serbia. There was no guaranteed economic benefit, and it would not have the backing to further its international order if achieving a seat at the security council. If Canada were a Principal Power, it would be in Canada's interest to not intervene in the affairs of former Yugoslavia and prevent or direct international attention elsewhere that would not inhibit the strength amplifier that former Yugoslavia was for Canada.

SATELLITE POWER THEORY

Satellite Power is a theory influenced by dependency theory, which stipulates that Canada's actions follow a pattern of reflection to the United States of America, as we are subordinate to them (Lennox, 2009). This dependency is framed in the continental hierarchy, which positions Canada's reliance through North America; even if Canada is dependent on other nations, the type of relationship Canada has is not comparable to the one with America (Lennox, 2009). However, this theory proposes that Canada does not contribute to peace; on the contrary, Canada furthers American domination (Lennox, 2009). Canada's intervention in former Yugoslavia and Kosovo-Serbia would be for the sole purpose of maintaining America's "rules-based international order," and Canada becomes a "victim of American domination" (Lennox, 2009, p. 3). However, this was not the case, as Canada's foreign relations with former Yugoslavia were not a mirror reflection or extension of the United States of America; instead, it was independent. Furthermore, Canada's intervention was to impose peace and manage the conflict, not to further American domination in the Balkans.

Independent Foreign Policy Relations with Former Yugoslavia

Canada does not follow the same foreign policy relations as the United States. Assuming such would preclude that any policy like the United States means that Canada is subordinate, and for Canada to be independent, it would mean that decisions must be different. This is a flawed argument for the theory because it would assume the only reason why Canada makes the same or similar decisions is because of the United States, ignoring that the reason may be because both states share borders and are influenced by one another from a micro and macro social and economic standpoint that both countries may have the same aim translating in similar policies. Beginning with the fact that Canada and the United States both shared initial mistrust of the new regime of Yugoslavia after the breakaway from the Soviet Union, but this was also shared with Great Britain, this is because Yugoslavia was part of the Soviet Union at one point, reflecting a security threat to the West which encompasses Canada and the United States (Gammer, 2001). Thus, it is only rational that trust would need to be gained from the West, and why Canada and the United States both shared this sentiment. However, unlike the United States, Canada's relationship warmed with a central focus in the 1970s on the "maintenance of Yugoslavia's political and territorial integrity" (Gammer, 2001, p. 47).

Nevertheless, even in 1975, when Canada expressed concern about the Yugoslavia republics' influence on the country's domestic and foreign policy, America did not (Gammer, 2001). This divergence was noticed when Canada promoted reform for multilateral institutions in Yugoslavia through the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), now Organisation for Security and Co-operation Europe (OSCE) (Gammer, 2001). However, the United States and other European countries containing ethnic minorities found this was intrusive and posed a "potential threat to their sovereignty and independence" (Gammer, 2001, p. 114).

Intervention For Peace, Not American Domination

Canada's intervention in former Yugoslavia and Kosovo-Serbia cannot be attributed to furthering the agenda of American Domination. It would be a fallacy to assume that Canada's actions are new; it would ignore the enduring values of respect for human rights in a stable rule-bound world, entrenched in the core of Canadian foreign policy (Dawson, 2003). Canada intervened with international willingness in Namibia, El Salvador, and Central America (Dawson, 2003), demonstrating that Canada's foreign policy has been consistent and that by not intervening in the crises, it would be against the core values that Canada justified previous interventions (Dawson, 2003). Not only was Canada distinguishable from America in an indirect manner, but also in a direct manner, when David Cox (1993) said in the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veteran Affairs that 'no other government, to my knowledge, has been more empathetic about the limitations on principle of sovereignty than the current Government of Canada' (p. 23, as cited in Gammer, 2001, p. 1998). This speech makes it clear to the House of Commons and other states, including the United States, that Canada acts within its purview and that limitations of sovereignty are based on what the Canadian government sees fit.

MIDDLE POWER THEORY

Middle Power Theory, as mentioned, has yet to have one definitive explanation, which opens it up to the claim that arguing that this theory does or does not represent Canada and its actions in former Yugoslavia and Kosovo-Serbia would be counterproductive as the theory itself is up to debate. Although this assertion is a warranted claim, the idea itself relies on comparisons between states, that it is the "behaviour of states [that] dictates middle power status" (Cullen, 2023, slide 4b). Thus, even if the theory definition may be argued, the methodology used to analyze and determine the nature of state action can be explained by the theory remains the same. Canada acted as a middle power, not by following a strict definition but by comparing various categories of interests that display middle power characteristics, including "multilateralism and peacekeeping" and the numerous factors associated with them, such as conflict management, values, credibility, and concentration to name a few (Chapnick, 1999, p. 73). Canada's actions are further supported through the analysis of the measures of other states and the relative inaction compared to Canada, which objectively demonstrates Canada's capability of "moderate international influence" (Chapnick, 1999, p. 73).

Coalition Building: Multilateralism Through U.N, G8 and NATO

As part of coalitions such as the United Nations and NATO, Canada used them to advance its foreign policy towards Yugoslavia further. This is important as a middle power. Canada is limited in its influence by gathering support through these organizations. Furthermore, although these institutions can be utilized, the states that tend to use them are "states that dominate them," which modify the interests of member states for their purpose (Gammer, 2001, p. 199). However, the Yugoslav case revealed "a middle power like Canada to initiate the redefining of those institutions" (Gammer, 2001, p. 199).
Canada focused on more than one coalition because Canada recognized the limitations; this is why Canada focused on the United Nations, the largest organization. The organization that granted mandates for intervention through the Security Council resolution is recognized as legitimate; thus, Canada knew this was necessary. In September 1998, Canadian officials in New York pushed a member of the Security Council on the U.N. to support a stricter Chapter VII mandate, including an enforcement mechanism– allowing for intervention; however, it was blocked by Russia as it would not support any resolution inclusive of an enforcement mechanism (United Nations Security Council, 1998, as cited in Manulak, 2011, p. 13). This block supports Gelber's assumption that the great powers are states distinct as they are not only within the Security Council (UNSC) but have "exceptional powers" through the veto (Gelber, 1946, as cited in Chapnick, 1999, p. 77). Canada's influence is only to the extent that the Security 5: U.S., Russia, France, Britain, and China allow, and due to this, Canada seeks other avenues of influence, including G8 and NATO.

As mentioned in May 1998, Canada took economic sanctions against Yugoslavia (Manulak, 2009). During their meeting that month, it exerted its influence to try to persuade ministers of the G8 to follow

the path Canada was paving (Manulak, 2009). This is important as the G8 is a separate entity of the United Nations with no veto power (Manulak, 2009). However, the intervention was not asked; economic pressure is a measure that represents an indirect intervention through trade destabilization. Canada also focused on NATO in May 1998, but this was on the agenda, unlike G8, in which forceful intervention was not an option (Manulak, 2009). NATO agreed they would promote a peaceful resolution, but unlike the U.N.'s Security Council, military intervention will occur if necessary (Manulak, 2009). Canada acknowledges its limitations within the coalitions and utilizes them differently based on the organization's capacity and willingness.

Content: Moral Agenda of Human-Centric Security

Canada's role as a middle power is to be a moral leader, and more specifically, Canada being a traditional middle power in the unipolar world during the United States supremacy meant additional responsibility, but with it, the influence and backing of the United States (Cullen, 2023b; Neack, 2013). As evident in multilateralism, some states did not and would not support intervention, representing the difference between Canada and others. Canada being a middle power means that international activities such as forwarding a moral, human-centred agenda are because of its moral imperative, as "middle powers are the only states that are able and willing to be collectively responsible for protecting the international order, especially when smaller states could not and greater powers would not" (Holmes, 1982; Wood, 1988, as cited in Neack, 2013, p. 58).

Canada's concern was not uncalled for; there were various concerns, including but not limited to Serbia's violent repression of Kosovo's ethnic Albanians through beating, torture, and in some cases, death by Serbian police officers (International Crisis Group (ICG), 1998, as cited in Manulak, 2011, p. 12). Paired with Serbia's economic hold on Kosovo, unwillingness to invest in basic infrastructure and an unemployment rate of 70% were meant to force submission under the Serbian regime (ICG, 1998, as cited in Manulak, 2011, p. 12). In the late 1990s, out of 2 million Kosovar Albanians, 850,000 were forcefully expelled from Kosovo into neighbouring countries, 400,000 were internally displaced, and 10,0000 were murdered, and this was the most significant displacement in Europe since World War II (Maloney & Jackson, 2018, as cited in Recaj, 2021, p. x). However, this is not just displacement; there were deliberate destructions of archives, libraries, land ownership documentation, personal documentation, and cultural artifacts (Maloney & Jackson, 2018, as cited in Recaj, 2021, p. x). Canada pushed for such action to prevent but, to minimize the 'combined effects' because 'these events constituted genocide in its original 1948 definition' (Maloney & Jackson, 2018, p. xxii, as cited in Recaj, 2021, p. x). Canadian action now and the push for other states was to minimize the genocide, as seen in other countries. By ignoring this, Canada would disregard the indirect mandate of a middle power that is supposed to guide the moral path of the international community.

Credibility: Mediation with Intervention as Necessity to Support Moral Agenda

The most critical aspect of a Middle Power is whether they will be consistent with the words and actions; if these two are aligned, the credibility is maintained (Cullen, 2023b). Canada has remained consistent in mediation, military intervention, and peacebuilding through institutional building after the intervention. Canada did not act recklessly and was consistent in not imposing peace, instead aimed for mutual agreement. This was evident in April 1996 when Axworthy, the Canadian Foreign Minister, visited Yugoslavia, expressing concerns about human rights, with the intention that Yugoslavia would acknowledge and correct the domestic actions so that these concerns would subside (DFAIT, 1996, as cited in Manulak, 2011, p.11). However, this was not the case, and then again Canada in early 1998, James Wright, Director General for Central, East, and South, with the President of Yugoslavia and encouraged cooperation with President Rugova (Canada, 1998, as cited in Manulak, 2011, p. 11). Rugova was elected as President on May 24, 1992, after the Kosovar Assembly issued a Declaration of Independence after an underground referendum was held between September 26-30, 1991, with 99.87% of the Albanian population voting for an independent Kosovo Republic (Judah, 2000; Malcolm, 1998, as cited in Manulak, 2011, p. 10). Rugova did not want violence but instead wanted to gain independence; the President aimed for peaceful delegitimizing of Serbian institutions so that the people of Kosovo would not need to rely on these institutions (Judah, 2000; Malcolm, 1998, as cited in Manulak, 2011, p. 10). Canada was acting in the best interest of the states supporting Rugova, who wanted peaceful independence. Canada was trying to cooperate with former Yugoslavia to find a solution and prevent further human rights concerns.

Canada intervened when it was necessary to get the United Nations Security Council to provide an enforcement mechanism, and it was clear that this would not occur. If Canada were to abide by the human-centered policy it was pushing, it must even intervene without the UN's authorization. Although this seems simple enough, Canada's intervention with NATO was considered "unprecedented" for a "multilateral NATO mission in the absence of a UN Security Council mandate" (Nelles, 2022; Manulak, 2011, p. v). NATO was also considered the first war to defend human values, and this validated Canada as a middle power and its commitment to human security (Geislerova, 1999). The war was launched on March 24, 1999; Canada participated in a 78-day air war until Milosevic agreed to withdraw troops from Kosovo (Independent International Commission on Kosovo (IICK), 2000, as cited in Murdoch, 2015, p. 253). To maintain peace in the region, Ten NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) were established (IICK, 2000, as cited in Murdoch, 2015, p. 253). Canada was also part of the peace maintenance mission, ensuring that the air war was not in vain and that actual changes would occur to prevent future reoccurrences of human rights violations.

Creativity: Using Multilateralism when Multilateralism Fails

Canada's support for its human agenda, paired with multilateralism, has been evident, even with the failure to secure backing from the United Security Council Canada provided innovative ways to leverage other

forms of multilateralism, including NATO and Uniting for Peace Resolution. Although Canada failed to secure support through the UN, this did not discourage Canada, as mentioned; it participated in the NATO-led mission against the UN (Manulak, 2011). However, before doing so, Canada pursued a rare "uniting for peace resolution," which would bring urgent general assembly meetings (Manulak, 2009, p. 569). Canada assumed the Presidency of the UN Security Council in February 1999, which provided additional means to re-engage the UN with the Kosovo-Serbia crisis (Manulak, 2009).

Canada realized the Security Council was ineffective, so Axworthy and Paul Heinbecker, the assistant deputy minister for global and security policy, visited New York to build support from different voting blocs (Manulak, 2009). Canada had strong backing for this initiative, with the Singaporean ambassador's intention to support it, predicting 150-160 countries would vote in favour of the motion, and the Egyptian ambassador said that they could deliver all Islamic countries in support of the action (Manulak, 2009). Thus, Canada does not rely on multilateralism for its sake of it; instead, Canada utilizes and recognizes its weaknesses of it and pursues a path to overcome these limitations. Furthermore, Canada, pursuing uniting for peace resolution, exemplifies that even if a method is rare, it does not make Canada's commitment waiver; instead, Canada relied on such a rare method as a solution for a vetoing Security Council. This use of a rare method affirms Canada as a middle power; as Neack (2013) states, "middle powers are committed multilateralists who employ their expertise in the maintenance of international order when the great powers will not" (p. 53).

Concentration: Collective Capacity to Overcome Limitations

As a middle power, Canada is obligated to be strategic. Thus far, it is evident that multilateralism is utilized to further their agenda when great power refuses to do so, acting not alone to provide a collective front against former Yugoslavia and Serbia. This collective capacity is garnered because of Canada's limited ability; unlike the United States of America, Canada could not intervene even if it wanted to (Cullen, 2023b). Canada needs this support because voicing decisions is only as effective with the corresponding strength in enforcing such judgments (Gelber, 1946). Furthermore, Canada realized that its human-centred agenda also requires how reconciliation and transitional justice will occur after the intervention. If peace is necessary, accountability for actions is also needed, but Canada alone must be able to overcome such responsibility. Canada worked with other states but took the lead in advancing the Rome Statute of 1998 to form the International Criminal Court (Tomlin et al., 2007, as cited in Manulak, 2009, p. 567). Thus, Canada has gained support from various states and organizations and leveraged this support to further its agenda in former Yugoslavia and Kosovo-Serbia.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, although various theoretical frameworks explain state behaviour, including but not limited to Principal Power, Satellite Power, and Middle Power, only Middle Power is appropriate in describing

Canada's role. Principal Power overestimates Canada's influence; Canada required other states, especially the United States of America, in the NATO-led intervention. Canada was not in a position where it could act in disregarding other states or the United Nations Security Council without enough support to mitigate the consequences of a non-UN authorization mission. In addition, Satellite's explanation does not explain how Canada acted independently and that when Canada did align with the United States of America, it was because it aligned with Canada's foreign policy. The United States of America's foreign policy did not dictate Canada's; instead, it is the opposite; Canada's influence through its foreign policy agenda, and relation to the U.S.A, meant that their policy shifted in support of Canada's. Middle Power effectively explains Canada's position on the international stage and why Canada chose to use different forms of multilateralism to advance its human security agenda. Although the Middle Power theory supports Canada's relation in the intervention in former Yugoslavia and the latter Kosovo-Serbia, it poses the question of whether this theory would still apply to the same, greater, or less extent if there were an agreed-upon definition.

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