DOES SIZE REALLY MATTER?
A THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ARGUMENT THAT MIDDLE POWERS ARE QUALITATIVELY DIFFERENT FROM OTHER STATES IN THE SYSTEM

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the argument that middle powers in their foreign policies are qualitatively different from other states. Over time, what started as a term referring to states of medium capabilities has come to imply a certain type of state behavior. In common language today, it is typical for a middle power to engage in mediating, peacekeeping, cooperation-building and the like. The aim is to perform a critical analysis of both the theoretical and empirical substances of such statements. Theoretically, this involves discussing how the argument of the qualitative difference is constructed. What exactly is a middle power, and what are the behavioral characteristics commonly ascribed to such states? Empirically, it involves using this theoretical structure to locate possible middle powers in the system, and to evaluate their behavior on a few variables against the performance of other states. The results indicate that the idea of the qualitatively different middle power can be subject to more theoretical rigor than has previously often been the case. When this framework is tested empirically, the results show a weak basis for some of the most commonly claimed examples of middle power behavior. Overall, this investigation finds little empirical support for the argument that middle powers are qualitatively different.
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INTRODUCTION

During the last half of this century, a literature has evolved on the theme of “middle powers.” It posits the existence of an upper class of non-great powers, a group of states that is distinguishable from small powers, micro states and others. The aim of the middle power literature is to surpass the traditional stratification of states that discerns only between great powers and others, the only formally recognized division. At the core of the middle power idea lies the argument that such powers are qualitatively different from other states. Middle powers are of a different kind, they are not just weaker or smaller versions of the great powers. On a more specific level, the general argument of a qualitative difference incorporates several types of middle power behavior. Middle powers are mediators and bridgebuilders, and they are responsible members of the international community willing to commit considerable resources to peacekeeping and other system stabilizing operations. The idea of a qualitative difference implies that middle powers act in a manner distinctive from other states in the system.

Although this hypothesis has been subject to a substantial amount of attention, it is not widely accepted and far from established in the international relations literature. There are both theoretical and empirical problems. The idea of the qualitatively different middle powers has developed on a practical level rather than theoretical. There is a flow of ideas from specific experiences that constantly adds new facets to middle power behavior. This flow continues while there is little attention devoted to the theoretical structure of the argument. When put together, the various suggested behavioral characteristics resemble a library without organization. At the
same time, there is no agreement on what exactly a middle power is. Although it draws heavily from practical experiences, the argument of a qualitative difference has empirical problems as well. A large amount of the literature consists of case-studies. These generally discuss the foreign policy of a specific country, and aim to show how this country behaved "as a middle power" in a certain context. Also the more recent comprehensive studies that include several middle powers focus on showing how these states behaved in a certain way in specific cases. There are very few studies that compare the behavior of the middle power group to non-middle powers. The argument of a qualitative difference has little empirical support as long as it is not shown that these behavioral features are in fact more prevalent among middle powers than others.

Despite these problems, the idea of the qualitatively different middle powers remains an interesting topic for research. The most important reason for this is the frequency with which the idea surfaces in media and politics. Particularly within Canada the middle power concept has become too familiar not to use, even if there are well known problems attached to it. Indeed, this is where the country's foreign policy strategy is referred to as "the Axworthy handbook on the 'soft power' influence of middle powers."¹ The argument of a qualitatively different middle power also lives on in academia. Here, however, the topic has always been viewed with more skepticism. Nevertheless, there is a steady flow of contributions. That these contributions have not yet arrived at a middle power concept that is theoretically sophisticated and empirically strong, indicates defeat only to the pessimistic mind. At this stage, I prefer to take the

¹ Jonathan Manthorpe, "Japan Aims to Be a Regional Policeman," The Vancouver Sun, 8 October 1998.
optimist's view, that is that the problems signal room for improvement. This is not a promise to deliver such improvement, but it does explain where the motivation comes from.

This thesis investigates the argument of a qualitative difference both theoretically and empirically. Since there is a lack of theory, the primary aim is to arrive at a better understanding of how the argument is constructed. This involves discussing the definition of and connection between the two main concepts; middle powers and their typical behavior. A secondary task is to use this framework and approach the argument empirically. This involves supplying current data to the two defined categories: who are the middle powers and do they behave according to the theory? Since emphasis is on the theoretical aspect of the argument, the method of investigation is largely analytical. The empirical investigation of middle powers' behavior focuses on a few selected variables, and examines the validity of the hypothesis that they are qualitatively different.

The first chapter focuses on the origin and development of the middle power idea and the qualitative difference that came with it. A review of the realist approach shows how these ideas deviate from a traditional understanding of international relations and state behavior. Following this is an account of how the argument developed throughout history, and a reflection on where it stands today.

The second chapter approaches the argument that middle powers are qualitatively different from a theoretical viewpoint. A discussion of the literature arrives at a suggestive organization of the various ideas. This involves deciding on a definition of middle powers, and showing how the various types of behavior relate to each other and to the middle powers.
The third chapter uses this framework to locate a group of middle powers in the system. Middle powers' propensity to act in ways prescribed as “middle power behavior” is measured by looking at a few current indicators. Concluding remarks reflect on both the theoretical potential and the empirically indicated validity of the hypothesized qualitative difference.
CHAPTER 1. ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARGUMENT

REALISM AND THE QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCE

The most dominant theory of international relations is realism and its variants. Realists view the international system of states as being in a state of war. States coexist in an anarchy; there is no higher authority that governs relations between them. Within this anarchy each state then relies on self-help for survival and security. Tending to its security, a state automatically creates insecurity for other states in the system (the security dilemma). The condition of anarchy and reciprocal insecurity places all states “in a warlike situation ... in which every alliance is temporary and every other state is a possible enemy ...” (Doyle;1997:43). The argument of a qualitatively different middle power group does not necessarily depart from these basic assumptions. However, when elaborating on the role and place of states in this anarchical system, realism proposes two predominant ideas that are less compatible with the middle power hypothesis. These ideas reflect particularly the views of structural realism. The dominance of these ideas in the international relations literature makes them the natural background for understanding the argument of a qualitatively different group of states.

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See for example Cooper et.al. (1993:9).

Doyle (1997:41-201) identifies three strands of realism; fundamentalist, structural and constitutional. The structuralists emphasize the effect the structure (anarchy) has on the units (states). The two ideas discussed here are both fundamental to the structural thesis. All strands of realism share the focus on capabilities, the resulting hierarchy of powers, and the assumption that states' influence generally reflects position in this hierarchy. The idea that states are functionally similar is primarily structuralist (Doyle;1997:47,135).
Structural realism and the homogenization of state behavior

The condition of anarchy implies that there is no formal structure of roles similar to the internal organization of a state. All states thus perform similar tasks, and they can not be distinguished according to what function they have: they are like units (Waltz; 1979:96,101). Because of their similarity in what they do, states can best be characterized by their capability to perform these tasks (Waltz; 1979:97). Some of the most traditional capabilities are population and territory size, natural resources, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence (Waltz; 1979:131). Economic and military factors have traditionally been the most fundamental. Every state has a certain combination of capability strengths and weaknesses. This "DNA" forms the basis for an assessment of a state's power and leads to characterizations of states as greater or smaller powers (Waltz; 1979:131,192).

Structural realism and system influence

The distribution of capabilities across the system creates a more or less official hierarchy of powers (Aron; 1966:98). Without any central authority governing state relations the "law of the jungle" will pervade, that is the strong will dominate the weak.

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4 Defining state power as level of capabilities is not specific for structural realism (see for example Morgenthau; 1973:112-149).

5 The focus here is on the power structure, as opposed to structural power. The power structure can be defined as the distribution of power among components (Goldmann; 1977:8). This is different from structural power, understood as "power deriving from a position in a structure" (Galtung in Goldmann; 1977:9). A state's structural power does not necessarily reflect its relative capability-based power. For example, Susan Strange (1988) argues that while the United States' relative level of capabilities may be declining, its structural power is increasing.
"In every international system the dominant powers in the international hierarchy of power and prestige organize and control the processes of interactions among the elements of the system" (Gilpin;1981:29). Distributions of capabilities within a system are not constant. Some capabilities may gain or lose importance, or states' supply of important capabilities may increase or decrease. If changes in the distribution of capabilities are profound enough to enable new powers to rewrite the order of the system (and it is in their interest to do so), these rising powers will seek to alter the current order. The result is a changed system that reflects the new distribution of capabilities and the interests of the new leading powers (Gilpin;1981). 6

**Where does this leave the presumed qualitatively different middle powers?**

Realism is clearly a theory for great powers. Focusing on capabilities as the factor that distinguishes states and the translation of capabilities to influence, it is natural to concentrate on those with the most potential. Kenneth Waltz (1979:72) has argued that "... theory, like the story, of international politics is written in terms of the great powers of an era.... Theories that apply to self-help systems are written in terms of the systems' principal parts. It would be ... ridiculous to construct a theory of international politics based on Malaysia and Costa Rica ...." 7

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6 The premise that power over the system rests on certain capabilities is at the core of the debate over the continuance of American leadership. Paul Kennedy (1990) argues that the United States, as any leading power, eventually experiences "imperial overstretch" (when demand for involvement in external affairs supersedes a state's supply of resources). His "declinist" argument is met by "renewalists" who argue the continued power of the United States, based on its supply of new important capabilities (Nye;1990, Strange;1988, Ikenberry;1996). See also Lundestad (1994).

7 One is here reminded of Ramesh Thakur's different take on the accusation that international relations theory is state-centric: "International Relations literature may or may not be power-centric; it clearly cannot be regarded as being state-centric until such time as it puts the average state at the centre of its concerns" (1991:242).
The first argument that states are like units acknowledges only a *quantitative* difference between states. The second argument posits that influence is determined by level of certain capabilities. Clearly, the middle power status fades significantly when stripped of the qualitative difference. However, it is possible to create a category of middle powers in the realist view. A middle power constructed in this image would 1) be functionally indistinguishable from the great powers and 2) unable to exert influence other than that based on traditional capabilities, which would result in at best a middle level of influence. In short, they would be "... large states writ small: they pursue similar interests by similar means, but with appropriate modifications to reflect their relatively fewer resources and power disparities with major actors" (Thakur; 1991:242). Although realism rarely pays much attention to lesser powers, Ray Cline's (1977) work is an example of ordering all the states in the system based on their score on certain capabilities. The realist position is used with some frequency within the small power literature.⁸ David Vital's (1967) *The Inequality of States* is perhaps the best known example of studying secondary powers from a perspective where these are interesting primarily because of their survival in a self-help system.⁹ This approach is not common within the middle power literature. It denies the existence of a typical middle power behavior, and is unable to explain middle power

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⁸ Thakur (1991:242) has argued that the small power literature suffers from this syndrome of seeing smallness as a weakness.

⁹ Vital's (1967:5) view of small states is reflected in his research questions: 1) what are the practical consequences for the small power of the material inequality of states? 2) what are the limits of the small power's strength and, in particular, its capacity to withstand great external stresses? 3) given its limited resources and the ease with which overwhelming strength can be marshalled against it, what national policies are open to the small power to pursue? See also a case-study that follows up on this theoretical discussion: Vital (1971) *The Survival of Small States*. 
influence "out of rank." The idea of the qualitative difference, on the other hand, directly opposes the "like units" thesis, and challenges the realist rule of thumb that level of influence reflects level of certain capabilities. In a different context Laura Neack (1995:227) has stated that: "... middle power theory, might lead us to theories of state type and foreign policy behavior that actually reflect reality in its great complexity." Against the seductive simplicity of the realist approach, the thesis of the qualitatively different middle power is more complex, but promises more detailed insights in return.

**THE ORIGIN OF THE QUALITATIVELY DIFFERENT MIDDLE POWER**

The term "middle power" is of fairly recent origin, and its practical use has been an element of international politics mainly since World War II. The idea of an intermediate state category, however, is quite old. The hypothesis that middle powers are qualitatively different has developed as an integral part of the middle power concept in general.

**European thought before Vienna 1814**

Modern ideas on the grading of powers in general and middle powers in particular start with Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century (Wight;1978:295, Holbraad;1984:10).^{11}

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^{10} Pruitt (1964:167) argues that a capability-based approach to state influence "falls flat on its face" in cases where smaller states have influence over larger ones.

^{11} Systems of independent units developed during both the Chinese Chou Dynasty (particularly the "Spring and Autumn Period" 771–483 B.C.) and the Greek system of city-states (from the fifth century on) (Holsti;1992:17,30-31). Within these systems differences in strength between the units were recognized, awarding different levels of status and prestige. However, there are few ideas on an intermediate category of states noted from this period. Wood (1988:5) mentions one exception. Mencius categorized around 300 B.C. the states of the Chou Dynasty as big, middle-sized and small according to the amount of land they controlled. However, the more comprehensive accounts of the history of the middle power concept generally start with Thomas Aquinas (Wight;1978:295-301, Holbraad;1984:10-66).
Writing on the concept of the state, Aquinas emphasized the differences between states and argued it was a heterogeneous group. He distinguished between three types of political units; city, province and kingdom (Wight; 1978:295). He did not define the term *provincia*, and his contribution lies primarily in introducing a threefold categorization of states (Holbraad; 1984:11).

In the following century, the Italian Bartolus developed a more complex classification of states. He combined territorial size with the Aristotelian triad of constitutions (one, few or many sovereigns). The middle category (he gives Venice and Florence as examples) was defined by a territorial size too large for direct democracy, but not so large that it required monarchy. Such a state would be best governed by aristocracy (Wight; 1978:296-7). The classification of states developed by Bartolus was primarily an argument for which constitutional form would be better in a given state. He was not concerned with the international or external aspects of different states. However, he did indicate that difference in size is connected with difference in kind (Holbraad; 1984:11).

According to Wight (1978:298) these thoughts are not continued until the 16th century. Giovanni Botero (1544–1617) divided states into the three categories of small, medium and large based on their relative size. A middle-sized state would have sufficient strength to stand on its own without the need of help from others. Botero thus connected size to international power and security. Botero also favored the middle category and discussed several of its aspects in more detail. He argued that the

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12 Wight (1978:296) discusses two possible meanings of the term *provincia*: One is the old idea of the Roman imperial political unit where the term would be used for both Italy and any of its internal regions, the other is the newer idea of the overgrown city-state (Venice) or the *pays* (Normandy).
medium-sized powers were likely to be the most lasting and stable, provided their leaders were content with mediocrity and did not try to advance to a higher position. These states were not envied for their greatness nor were they in danger by their weakness. For Botero, they embodied the virtues of the Aristotelian mean (Wight; 1978:298-99). Botero thus added two new ideas to the intermediate class of states. He is the first to connect their size to their international position, and to argue their advantages compared to other states. The difference in kind indicated by Bartolus had been developed further, but was not yet connected to specific types of behavior.

The idea of a middle category of states is picked up again in the middle of the 18th century and further developed by the Abbé de Mably. His interest lay in the roles different powers could play in a dualistic system, and prescribed how each type ought to conduct its affairs. His somewhat vague definitions of secondary powers are based on the actual role they were able to play; some were “almost able to play the role of dominant powers,” others were “less close to the dominant powers” (Holbraad; 1984:13-14). The upper secondary powers would have interests closely corresponding with those of the dominant powers. Avoiding war was equally important to both groups, as war would jeopardize their status in the system. The upper secondary powers were important allies of the dominant powers, and would also be playing mediating roles stabilizing the relationship between the dominant powers. The lower group of secondary powers would generally play an unimportant role in international relations. Their approach was one of selfish ambition. As their actions had little resonance they could be ruthless without fearing repercussions. Their interests lay in expansion and self-enhancement. Mably saw both types of
secondary powers as stabilizers of the system. The less obvious stabilizing role of the lower class of secondary powers was an indirect result of their greed and ambition: their behavior would make the dominant powers focus more on keeping challengers at a distance than fighting between each other (Holbraad;1984:13-16). Mably thus established a firm connection between power status and role, indicating a qualitative difference between power groups.

These early developments show how soon the idea of a qualitative difference became a natural ingredient of the middle power concept. It also shows how this idea brought with it a normative element. Introduced by Botero and further developed by Mably, the qualitative difference was primarily an expression of these states as being better than others. Mably's lower class of secondary states is a rare exception, where the qualitative difference implied a negative role. All these writings indicate the increasingly recognized differences in power and status among states. However, no such formal recognition was yet given to different classes of powers.13

The Congress of Vienna 1814-15

The agenda of the Congress of Vienna was to reorganize the European states system after the Napoleonic wars. In the Treaty of Paris where the mandate for the Congress was laid down, a secret article signed by France and the four victorious great powers

13 Within the Holy Roman Empire, ranking of powers was constitutionalized. From the end of the 15th century the Reichstag met in three "estates," reflecting the following ranking of powers: first the Electors (the "great powers" of the empire), then the princes and prelates, and finally the free cities. As an example of formal grading of powers it is significant even if at a sub-level of the international system: "It was an arrangement, not of social class within a nascent national state, but of diplomatic and voting power within a disintegrating international institution" (Wight;1978:297). Wight (1978:297) finds little on this practice in German constitutional writings that is of interest to the middle power concept. Nor does Holbraad (1984:27) pursue this lead any further.
(Russia, Prussia, Austria and Great Britain) stated that the future order of Europe was to be decided upon between the "Big Four. However, all states engaged in the war were invited, thus many minor powers sent delegations to Vienna (Nicolson; 1961:134-35).

Unable to agree on an organizational structure of the plenary Congress, the eight signatories of the Treaty of Paris (the "Big Four," France, Spain, Portugal and Sweden) postponed the Congress indefinitely. It finally assembled in June 1815, and then only to sign the Final Act (Nicolson; 1961:138-143). Two constellations of powers took charge of the negotiations leading to the final agreement; the formal committee of eight powers, and the inner committee of five (after France was admitted). In what followed, the inner committee was to be dominant. It held forty-nine meetings compared to nine for the committee of eight (Nicolson; 1961:147). Spain, Portugal and Sweden were thus excluded from playing an important role in the deliberations (Holbraad; 1984:20). However, by their position as members of the committee of eight, they were recognized as different from the other smaller powers. They "... came to occupy the level immediately below that of the five principal powers" (Holbraad; 1984:20). This status was short-lived, however. The Congress of Vienna established the division between great powers and others, that continued in the European congresses after the war. None of the three was invited to the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle that took place only three years later (Holbraad; 1984:21). The

14 Presumably, their delegations had the opportunity to take part in the festivities organized by the Austrians to "occupy the attention" of delegates from the smaller powers that had "practically nothing to do" (Nicolson; 1961:159).
temporary recognition of a middle power group did not leave such a distinction for the future.

This was the first taste of formal recognition for an intermediate category of powers. However, the status of Spain, Portugal and Sweden was a result of their role in the war and as signatories of the Paris Peace Treaty. They were not promoted as upper secondary powers, nor were they argued to be qualitatively different.

The German case

In the German subsystem, there was by now a long tradition for recognizing an intermediate category of powers. First in the system of German states created by Napoleon, later within the German Committee of Vienna and finally during the shaping of the Confederation, a group of “middle states” was recognized (Holbraad; 1984:27-29). Some of the reflections on this practice discussed the idea of a middle power in the European states system.

The middle states had limited impact versus Austria and Prussia in the Committee and the Confederation, and theoretical ideas on a middle power category reflected this reality. Friedrich Lindner, writing in 1820, was strongly opposed to the position Austria and Prussia had come to have over German affairs. The middle and small states, he argued, should come together and create a third German power. This state would also be a European middle power, filling in the gap left by Poland. Lindner defined a middle power as a state of secondary rank in strength, playing an international role different from the great powers. Middle powers were the guardians of

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15 The composition of this group changed somewhat during this period. Bavaria and Württemberg seem to have been middle states in all three contexts (Holbraad; 1984:28).
the balance of power, as they could be relied on to assist a great power under attack of another great power. If situated between great powers, middle powers were important "buffers" as well (Holbraad;1984:31-33). By picturing a special role in international relations for middle powers, Lindner continued the thought of middle powers as qualitatively different. The normative element was also important. The role of the middle power was that of a stabilizer, and implied a certain level of responsibility. However, where Mably had defined middle powers by the role they were able to play, Lindner reintroduced a medium level of power as part of the middle power definition.

**Europe after Vienna**

Karl von Clausewitz followed up on the ideas of Lindner. Concerned with the current security situation of Germany (1831), he discussed the loss of the Kingdom of Burgundy as a separating middle power between Germany and France, and the potential of Poland to position itself between Germany and Russia. Clausewitz identified a middle power along three dimensions. Geographically, a middle power would separate great powers. Politically, it had to be reliable and friendly. Strategically, it was strong enough to defend itself, so that it would offer some protection to its great power neighbor (Holbraad;1984:22-23). Clausewitz' middle power was clearly constructed to satisfy great power needs. In most aspects, his ideas are very similar to those of Lindner. However, Clausewitz introduced geographical position as a necessary condition for middle power status.

Most of the writings in the period following Vienna focused on the great powers. Discussions of secondary powers were often shaped as an argument for inclusion into
the great power group. Few had much to say about the characteristics of an intermediate category of powers. When many of the prominent secondary states of 1814 lost much of their weight throughout the century (e.g., Spain and Sweden), and no new German middle power seemed likely, these discussions abated. The middle power concept was not further developed until after World War I (Holbraad; 1984:33-42).

Paris 1919

The Paris Peace Conference of 1919, as opposed to the Congress of Vienna, did provide a plan for weighing the representation of participating states. Based primarily on war effort, participating countries were divided into four groups with according delegate strength (Holbraad; 1984:45). However, as the Conference proceeded, these divisions were of little importance. As in Vienna, a small group of great powers (the United States, England, France and Italy) took control, particularly through the private consultations between Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Orlando (Day; 1921:15-36). Again, the dividing line of importance was that establishing the group of great powers, and among the secondary powers more focus was on the exclusiveness of this group than the prospects of establishing an upper secondary group (Holbraad; 1984:46-47).

16 In the second half of the 19th century, Italy and the Ottoman Empire were the only candidates for middle power status. Holbraad has noted that these two states had more proximity to such a status than did the ones who claimed it after Vienna (e.g. the Netherlands, Spain). Paradoxically, this position of Italy and the Ottoman Empire and their participation in the Congress of Paris and the Conference of London (as opposed to the exclusion of the secondary powers at Vienna), provoked little speculation about a middle category of powers (Holbraad; 1984:37).
The structure for the Executive Council of the League of Nations did in practice come to recognize an intermediate group of powers. The Committee on the League had agreed that besides the great powers, four non-permanent seats would be accorded to secondary powers.\textsuperscript{17} No specification for election to these seats was agreed upon until 1926. In the meantime each Assembly would elect the non-permanent members. During this time Brazil, Spain and Belgium sat on the Council continuously. Sweden and Uruguay were on the Council from 1922 on, when two extra seats had been added to the previous four. Czechoslovakia replaced China in 1923. These countries had in fact come to hold semi-permanent seats on the Council (Holbraad;1984:50-51). This stability indicated the recognition of a group of upper secondary powers. However there were no formal rules supporting this distinction.

In 1926, the Assembly agreed to add one permanent (Germany) and three non-permanent seats. An elected member would sit for three years and was not to be re-elected immediately. However, if a two-third majority in the Assembly supported it, up to three of the non-permanent members could be re-elected. There were no restrictions on the number of times a member could be re-elected. The clause opening for re-election was created with Poland, Spain and Brazil in mind. Only Spain and Poland were to become "middle powers" by this practice, as Brazil left the League in indignation of being assigned to a secondary standing (Holbraad;1984:52-53). In effect "... a new category of semi-permanent members of the Council was created to meet the needs of states occupying an intermediate position between major and minor states."

\textsuperscript{17} In an early proposal for the structure of the Council, General Smuts formally introduced the term "middle power" to the discussions. The non-permanent members were to be drawn from two panels, separating between middle powers and minor states (Holbraad;1984:49).
Thus the Paris Peace Conference was more explicit about this group of powers than the Congress of Vienna. The Conference in Paris recognized the existence of an intermediate group of powers in the system, and designed a suited place for these powers in the new organization.

Although a formal recognition of secondary powers had come to existence, the idea of a middle power category was not in focus and did not acquire much substance during this period. Some of the larger secondary powers that received special treatment on the Council fought for their status, not to be recognized as middle powers, but to close in on a permanent seat (Holbraad; 1984:50-54). Thus they generally tried to belittle the difference between themselves and the great powers. At the same time, the smaller states in the League refused to accept the division between themselves and the middle powers. The literature in the 1920s and 30s discussed the League's decision to distinguish between categories of secondary powers. In these writings, there was substantial support for making this distinction. This argument was usually based on the observation that there was "an obvious difference" between states such as Spain and Switzerland. Beyond this, however, little was said about the characteristics of the intermediate group of powers. The middle power idea did not resurface as an important topic until after the collapse of the League and the nearing end of World War II (Holbraad; 1984:55-56).

Spain and Brazil were the most persistent in claiming their rights to a permanent seat. In failing achieve this, both were opposed to the rules that would give them a stable status as upper secondary powers. Both left the League in 1926, Spain returned in 1928 (Holbraad; 1984:50-53, Carr; 1947:100-102).

The Scandinavian and several South American states were opposed to this idea, and advocated a principle of equality of all non-great powers. Thus they favored a strict rule of rotation for the non-permanent seats of the Council (Holbraad; 1984:54).
The United Nations

Meeting at Dumbarton Oaks in 1944, representatives of the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain and China drew up a proposal for the structure of the new organization. These proposals continued the now well established distinction between the great powers and others. The five great powers (including France) received permanent seats and the right to veto in the Security Council, the executive body of the organization. Six seats were reserved for non-permanent members, elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms, three to retire each year (Holbraad; 1984:56). No rules on the election for these seats were agreed upon at Dumbarton Oaks (Goodrich & Hambro; 1946:119).

In San Francisco the following year this proposal was discussed and finally signed by the governments accepting the invitation by the great powers. These discussions focused on the body with the most power, the Security Council. It is here that several states argued for the recognition of an intermediate group of powers. There had been a change in the attitude of the secondary powers; they no longer fought for great power status, rather they promoted the idea of a category of secondary powers with a unique identity. Among those pointed out as middle powers at the time were Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Mexico and the Netherlands. The most forceful advocates of the middle power distinction at San Francisco were Canada and Australia (Holbraad; 1984:57).

The Canadians, preparing for the discussions of a new organization, had outlined their approach during the last years of the war. Canada had made a

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20 Expressed by Canadian Prime Minister L. B. Pearson in 1945 (Holmes; 1982:38).
substantial contribution in the war, and next to a weak Europe Canada's relative position in the system had risen substantively. Concerned about whether their representation in a postwar institution would reflect the status the Canadians felt they deserved, they developed the functionalist principle of representation.\textsuperscript{21} This principle was first pronounced by Prime Minister Mackenzie King in a speech to the Canadian Parliament in 1943:

"... authority in international affairs must not be concentrated exclusively in the largest powers. On the other hand, authority cannot be divided equally among all the thirty or more sovereign states that comprise the United Nations, or all effective authority will disappear .... In the view of the government, effective representations ... should neither be restricted to the largest states nor necessarily extended to all states. Representation should be determined on a functional basis which will admit to full membership those countries, large or small, which have the greatest contribution to make to the particular object in question" (cited in Holmes; 1979:35).

The functionalist approach would give "to each according to his capabilities" in specific domains, a principle that would allow representation by the lesser powers and thereby avoid a great power hegemony across all sectors (Holmes; 1970:6-7). Functionalism was not initially connected to the term middle power, indeed the two ideas do not necessarily complement each other. According to the principle of functionalism a state would be a small power in one area, and a major power in another (Holmes; 1976:vi-vii). Functionalism implied recognizing weaknesses as well as strengths.

\textsuperscript{21} The functionalist approach was first outlined as a response to the proposed structure of the UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration). This was the first institution to reach an advanced stage in the planning process, and provoked protests from Canada in particular when it became clear that the Central Committee of the UNRRA would consist only of the four great powers (Holmes; 1979:33-44).
It was primarily in the discussions on eligibility for the non-permanent seats on the Security Council that functionalism became coupled with the idea of an intermediate category of powers. Here the Canadians wanted recognition for "... 'responsible' powers with medium military capacity ..." (Holmes; 1979:240). The use of the functionalist principle towards representation on the Security Council would be a way for Canada to distance itself from the small powers, as it would favor the upper class of the secondary power category (Holmes; 1979:236-7).\(^2\)

In their own efforts towards securing representation on the Security Council, the Australians pressed for recognition of a similar category of powers. In a speech to the Conference, the Australian deputy prime minister stated the case for the "security powers":

"It will have to be recognized that outside the great powers there are certain powers who, by reason of their resources and their geographical location, will have to be relied upon especially for the maintenance of peace and security in various quarters of the world.... Certain powers, not classified as great, have proved by their record in two world wars that they not only have the capacity but also the will to fight in resistance of aggressors threatening the world with tyranny. These powers are in a sense proved veterans in the struggle against Fascist dictatorship threatening the security of the world. They are in truth security powers. They have a claim to special recognition in any security organization" (cited in Holbraad; 1984:61).

The Australians added, for natural reasons, geography in their argument of an intermediate category of powers. Otherwise, the Canadian and Australian approaches

\(^2\) The expression "a so-called middle power" was used in a final Canadian attempt at securing a seat on the Security Council in 1945 (Eayrs; 1984:252-53).
were very similar; both emphasized a medium level of capabilities and willingness to use these capabilities to contribute to a stable and orderly world.

The secondary powers led by Canada had some success in securing formal recognition for the principle of functionalism. A few amendments were made to what had been proposed at Dumbarton Oaks. The most important battle, however, was over the rules for election to the non-permanent seats in the Security Council. It was here that a new group of powers could receive formal recognition. Although a proposal for establishing the functionalist principle as the rule guiding eligibility for the non-permanent seats in the Security Council was voted down, the functionalist idea was later incorporated into Article 23 of the Charter (Holbraad; 1984:59):

"... The General Assembly shall elect ten other Members of the United Nations to be non-permanent members of the Security Council, due regard being specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution" (Yearbook of the United Nations 1994).

23 Canada took the lead in promoting the rights of representation for secondary powers. Cooperation with other similar states was ad hoc. The various potential middle powers did not agree on a common approach. For example, Brazil would not gain much from the principle of representation reflecting contribution in the war, and was more likely to support Australia's idea of regional representation. This principle in turn did not attract the Canadians (Holbraad; 1984:59-62).

24 Besides the fight over representation on the Security Council, two other amendments are accorded to the Canadian delegation's efforts. Article 44 reads that states asked by the Security Council to participate in the use of force, if not members of the Council, have the right to be present during the deliberations in the Security Council regarding the employment of the country's forces (Holbraad; 1984:59, Goodrich & Hambro; 1946:168). Canada and France proposed (in accordance with the functionalist principle) that the General Assembly, in choosing members for the Economic and Social Council, "shall give 'due regard to the necessity of arranging for the adequate representation of states of major economic importance'." This proposal was later withdrawn. It was agreed, however, that states were to be eligible for immediate re-election. Thus in practice, the economic great powers would be favoured (Holbraad; 1984:59, Goodrich & Hambro; 1946:210-11).

25 This is the text after the amendment in 1965 whereby the number of non-permanent seats was increased from six to ten. Otherwise, the text is identical to that of 1945 (Yearbook of the United Nations 1994; 1995:1485).
Although contribution was given priority in the text, the choices made by the General Assembly soon reflected more the rule of geographical distribution (Holbraad; 1984:62-63). Holmes (1979:251-52) argues that not even the conference at the time accepted the priority of functionalism over regionalism. Rather, the amendment to Article 23 was a result of several other countries, in disagreement with the Canadian proposal, finding that the best tactic would be to accept the amendment and then ignore it. Either way, the prohibition of immediate re-election that was laid down in the second paragraph of the same Article in effect closed the possibility of a state acquiring a semi-permanent seat (Goodrich & Hambro; 1946:119-120). In the end, no visible line was drawn between different classes of non-great powers.

During the discussions at San Francisco, the intermediate category of powers had taken on two fundamental characteristics. These states had an intermediate level of capabilities, as well as the sense to "... use their power responsibly in the interest of the world community" (MacKay; 1969:137). The argument that these states were particularly responsible reflected the continued emphasis of a qualitative difference from other states. As before, this difference painted a rather flattering picture of the secondary states.

After 1945

Although unsuccessful in achieving formal recognition for an intermediate group of powers on the Security Council, the discussions at San Francisco firmly established the idea of such a group of powers. During the immediate years after the war, the term "middle power" became a common label for the state with a medium level of
capabilities and a high level of responsibility. At this time, there was still hope for a future system of collective security. The role of the middle powers in such a system largely reflected the ideas from San Francisco of the responsible, mid-weight power. Thus R. G. Riddell, an official of the Canadian Department of External Affairs, argued that the contribution of the middle powers would be through "...support backed by considerable resources, participation with a strong sense of responsibility and supply of political leadership of a high standard" (Holbraad; 1984:68-69). During these first years middle powers were also characterized by their shared opposition to great power rule.

As the international climate changed and the planned collective security system became unrealizable, the ideas from San Francisco on middle powers became dated. Without great power cooperation, the primary concern was no longer to limit great power privileges. The middle power term had become a common expression, but it had in almost the same instant been stripped of its identity. Throughout the 1950s the middle power identity took a new shape, largely reflecting the experiences of individual states and that of Canada in particular. This era gave the middle power the features by which we know and use it today.

26 Canadian officials had used the term "secondary powers" until the end of the war, when the expression "middle powers" became more common (Holmes; 1979:236).

27 Riddell further argued that middle powers would be strong contributors to such a system of collective security because they had more to gain from it than other powers. The middle powers' size, resources and strategic importance endangered their security while not giving them the means to defend themselves alone. Holbraad (1984:69fn) has noted that this view of middle powers is the opposite of that of Botero, who argued that middle powers were "neither exposed to violence by their weakness nor to envy by their greatness."

28 See for example Glazebrook (1947:308).
It was in the context of the divided United Nations that middle powers were to find their place. Here middle powers became connected primarily to two roles: mediation and peace-keeping (Holmes;1966:15-16, Holbraad;1984:71). Being significant powers but still distant from the fronts of the cold war, middle powers naturally came to take compromise positions (Holmes;1982:60-61). Within the General Assembly, middle powers were soon "fascinated" with the game of coalition-building across blocs and power statuses (Holmes;1982:43-44). This tradition was carried on outside the corridors of the United Nations. As international disputes arose and the great powers' hands were often tied, middle powers became recognized as mediators or "go-betweens." Canada was the prime example, but in 1965 John Holmes characterized India, Sweden, Norway, Ireland and Tunisia as typical middle power mediators (1966:16).

The United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) established in response to the Suez crisis (1956) set the precedent for the future peace-keeping activities of the United Nations. Again, Canada was on the forefront, playing a crucial role in designing and enabling this response from the United Nations. Contributions to this and later peace-keeping missions by middle-sized states, led to the idea that middle powers were the quintessential peace-keepers (Holmes;1966:16). "Middlepowermanship" was the term reflecting the unique identity of the middle powers as mediators and peacekeepers (Holmes;1966). As a result of these experiences, generalizations were made as to what qualities enabled middle powers to play these roles. Their weakness,

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29 Frequently taking compromise positions and attempting to reconcile the blocs, Canada, Ireland and the Scandinavians were labelled "the Sanitavian bloc" by *The Economist* (Holmes;1970:34).
localized interests and leader personalities made them particularly suited for mediation (Holmes; 1966:15-17). The peace-keeping record gave them a reputation of being more willing to contribute, and having a high level of responsibility (Holmes; 1966:24).

The qualitative difference was by now inseparable from the middle power concept. The set of roles and distinct qualities ascribed to the group grew stronger than the middle level of capabilities: "there developed an ambiguity in the term 'middle power.' It had originally implied a power of medium strength but it began to develop also the connotation of a middle or mediatory position in conflicts" (Holmes; 1966:15-16). This was a middle power that was very different from that of the 1940s. The emphasis was on the qualitative difference to such a degree that the quantitative difference had little importance if any. Thus in 1966, Holmes argued that despite their small size, Norway, Ireland and Tunisia could all be considered middle powers in light of their mediatory activities (1966:16). The argument of a qualitative difference developed from a sparse and careful start with Botero and Mably, to becoming in the 1950s and 60s the predominant idea carrying the middle power concept.

Another potential factor would be non-alignment. Some have argued that non-alignment during these years was a middle power trademark and that it put these powers literally "in the middle" (Wood; 1988:10). However, most of those states considered middle powers by any standard entered early into a military alliance. In addition, non-alignment would perhaps better be described as "on the side" than "in the middle." By virtue of a position formally "outside," non-alignment may of course have made some states more prone to mediation (e.g. Sweden, India), but it is usually not considered to be a typical middle power trait (Holbraad; 1984:70).

Later, Holmes (1976:vii) argues that "when we started to think there was a standard role for a middle power, a concept which had been functional became dysfunctional." Looking back at the first years of what he had already deemed "a giddy experience of world diplomacy" (1970:ix), Holmes (1976:vii) argues that the heavy focus on roles was a misinterpretation of the theory behind the idea. However, functionalism emphasizes "specialty areas," and thus seems to be compatible with the idea of special roles for middle powers (Cooper (1995) thus builds his idea of "niche diplomacy" - specialization - on the traditional Canadian functionalism). It may be an over-specification, and it may have caused the functionalist approach to become "overstuffed" (Holmes; 1976:vii), but it is difficult to see how it would be directly wrong.
In the decades after the war, several groups of countries acquired, or sought to acquire, the middle power label. Andrew Cooper (1997:9-20) identifies three groups. The first consists of the self-identified middle powers such as Canada, Australia, Sweden and Norway which were active in the development of a middle power identity from San Francisco on. A first wave of new middle powers such as India, Brazil, Yugoslavia and Indonesia displayed some of the traditional middle power features (diplomacy geared towards mediation and conciliation) while being more critical than the old middle powers to the institutions of the post-war order. A second wave of middle powers emerged in the 1970s and 80s, and included countries such as Nigeria\(^{32}\), Mexico and Algeria. Their middle power identity was similar to that of the first wave. In both cases, the enthusiasm for middle power diplomacy was short-lived (Cooper;1997:14-15).\(^{33}\) Nevertheless, they are important reminders that not all that is “middle power” has been Canadian, or Western for that matter.

**After the cold war**

With the changes that occurred in the late 1980s and early 90s, international politics rid itself of the entrenched bloc politics. The context within which the middle powers

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\(^{32}\) Nigeria made substantial efforts towards creating a middle power bloc during the 1980s. In 1987 Nigeria convened the “Concert of Medium Powers” or Lagos Forum, where diplomats from the older and newer middle powers met to discuss the methods through which these states could play a mediatory role in international politics (Cooper;1997:15).

\(^{33}\) Although Cooper (1997:14-15) does not discuss this, the “alternative” take on the middle power identity of the first and second waves is not dissimilar from some of the current ideas on middle powers. Today, middle powers are argued to be more generous in their foreign aid, and overall more conscious of the need to address the north-south gap (Stokke;1989, Pratt;1990). This type of middle power behavior has made its way into the qualitative difference argument more quietly than the mediation and peacekeeping activities. It is not clear when generosity and a favorable disposition towards the underdeveloped part of the world became a typical trait of middle powers. Thus it is possible that the two waves with their critical attitude to the established order had a lasting effect on the middle power identity.
had found their identity thus no longer exists. The adaptation of the middle power idea to the current system does not yet appear to be as fundamental as that which fitted the middle powers to the cold war. In general, research still focuses on the order- and peace-building capacities of middle powers. They contribute through "... international coalition-building, by serving as international mediators and 'go-betweens,' and through international conflict management and resolution activities, such as UN peace-keeping" (Neack;1995:224). There are still examples that feed the old ideas. Norway acted as a typical middle power in the Middle East (Cooper; 1995:6), and Canada’s role towards the ban on anti-personnel landmines is an equally traditional example.

A new strand of middle power scholarship is introduced by Cooper et.al. (1993). They "relocate" the middle powers in the changed system, by using the terms “followership” and “leadership." Arguing that middle powers during the cold war generally were “first followers” (i.e., supporting the current order and performing certain functions to this end), Cooper et.al. suggest that the post-cold war environment offers possibilities for middle power leadership (1993:20-21). Leadership is more active than reactive; it is initiative-based. Their focus is on showing "... the dynamics of how and why middle power followers such as Australia and Canada can embrace leadership roles in international politics" (1993:16). Cooper et.al.’s theory is that middle powers, by the use of the technical and entrepreneurial capabilities of their diplomacy, may play leading roles in international coalition- and institution-building (1993:23-25). Thus whereas the earlier attempts at theorizing about middle powers

34 Several of the essays in a very recent volume edited by Cooper (1997); Niche Diplomacy, also continue this traditional view of the middle power identity.

35 Canada’s role on the landmine issue seems to illustrate this notion of leadership well.
focused on finding a functionally unique place for these states, the newer approach is more concerned with the methods through which middle powers can promote themselves from followers to leaders. Also, compared to the pragmatic approach towards “putting meaning into the concept” after World War II, Cooper et al. aspire to create a more theoretical, \textit{a priori}, approach to the middle power identity.

Research on the middle power idea remains of largely Canadian production, but scholars from Australia and India are also present in the literature. The volume of work from Scandinavia does not seem to reflect the frequency with which these countries are referred to as middle powers in non-Scandinavian works.\textsuperscript{36} This does not mean that “middle power-like” ideas are not discussed. However, if these states are analyzed as generous aid donors, frequent mediators and peacekeepers, they are generally analyzed \textit{as such} and not as middle powers. Furthermore, if this foreign policy behavior is considered representative of a group, this group is often Scandinavian or Nordic.\textsuperscript{37} In general, the impression is that the middle power concept has not had much of an explanatory function. For example, works on Norwegian foreign policy may state in the introduction that Norway is a small or middle power (this upgrade seems to have taken place during the last two decades), but little more is said about it. When

\textsuperscript{36} It is worth noting that the English expression “middle power” does not easily translate to Norwegian, the same may be the case for Swedish and Danish. Possible Norwegian versions would be \textit{middelsmakt} or \textit{mellommakt}, neither of which is a common expression.

\textsuperscript{37} For example, Ulf Bjørk (1995) discusses Sweden’s role as a critic versus mediator in world politics 1945-90, but makes no reference to a middle power identity. Hans Mouritzen (1995) discusses the rise and fall of a “Nordic model of foreign policy.” This model, not unlike the middle power idea, suggests strong efforts towards world peace, environmental awareness and solidarity with the Third World.
analyzing foreign policy, their attention is on country specific conditions (i.e., Holst;1985).38

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“The concept of middle power came out of a peculiar history. It is a term of convenience with no standing in international agreements or organizations. It is subject to confusing ambiguity, its significance is in a play on words. It may or may not have a future” (Holmes; 1976:34).

There is a long tradition of thought that leads up to the current qualitatively different middle power. However, a critical assessment of the state of the research supporting the argument reveals both theoretical and empirical problems.

A substantial amount of the literature on middle powers dates from the 1950s and 60s, and most of it is authored by state officials. These works are generally atheoretical in character, they are “political memoirs” with emphasis on detailed descriptions (Hawes; 1984:3-4, Dewitt & Kirton;1983:17, Neack; 1995:227). Following these contributions is a stream of case studies where the aim is to show how a specific country behaved as a middle power (Neack;1995:226-227).39 Drawing on the specific experiences of the case country, these studies continually add new dimensions to what

38 Another example is Øyvind Østerud (1997) who discusses the Norwegian role in the Middle East peace process. In one of the few explicit references to Norwegian behavior as middle power-like, Østerud focuses on telling the story of how it happened, rather than drawing on middle power ideas. Also when he discusses the realist versus internationalist strand in Norwegian diplomacy (which resembles a similar Canadian debate, see Dewitt;1983), he does not use the term middle power for the latter.

39 Some of these are Chaudhuri;1969 and Sethi;1969 on India, Gomez;1966 on Mexico, Cox;1989 on Japan, Cooper et.al.;1993 on Canada and Australia, Pratt;1990 on Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Canada. A recent volume edited by Cooper (1997) includes chapters on Canada, Norway, Australia and Sweden, as well as the less traditional Malaysia, Argentina, Mexico, Turkey and South Africa. In addition, there is a whole library on Canadian examples of middle power behavior.
exactly the typical middle power behavior is. Lacking any theoretical backbone that could sift these contributions, the argument of a qualitative difference constantly expands and dilutes. The legacy of the practical rather than theoretical approach that guided the earlier development of the argument is still evident; "indeed, middle power scholarship was and is methodologically unsophisticated..." (Neack; 1995:227).

This type of research also causes problems for the empirical substance of the argument of a qualitative difference. The early contributions as well as the later case-studies focus on finding examples of middle power behavior. As Neack (1995:225) has noted, "... most discussions of middle powers in international politics are idiographic discussions of the foreign policies of self-identified middle powers." Among the literature reviewed here, only the series *Middle Powers In the International System* (e.g., Protheroe; 1988, Doran; 1989) approaches the fundamental question of whether the middle power behavior actually is more prevalent among the middle powers than other states.

The normative element inherent in the argument of a qualitative difference has caused much criticism. This notion of superiority does not mix well with the fact that the middle power status is a label states claim for themselves. Thus in many of the case-oriented studies the temptation turns out to be too strong, and "... analyses of middle powers frequently have a celebratory rather than an analytical tenor" (Cooper et.al.; 1993:172).

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40 Thakur (1991:245) argues that much the same is the case for the small power literature: "not surprisingly, the theme of New Zealand as a small state recurs in the literature, although not with any degree of rigour or sophistication in regard to conceptual definition or theoretical propositions."
The lack of theoretical structure and empirical support are fundamental problems for the argument that middle powers are qualitatively different. The following chapters aim to address these problems appropriately.
CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter develops a theoretical structure of the argument that middle powers are qualitatively different. In order to do so, both of the two key concepts (in italics) must be defined and their connection determined.

WHAT IS A MIDDLE POWER?

"Just as we are prepared to recognize the great difference in power and responsibility between Canada and the Soviet Union [so] we should expect some recognition of the considerable difference between Canada and Panama"41

One would be hard pressed not to agree with this statement. It seems a reasonable request, and on the surface clear-cut in the case of Canada versus Panama. However, the clarity fades quickly when attempting to define the difference. Obviously, Canada is different from Panama in many respects. Which are the decisive factors?

The problem of definition, although receiving much attention in the literature since 1945, is still very much an open-ended question (Neack;1995:225). Over the years, several "traditions" have crystalized. Currently there are four main approaches to the middle power definition. In turn, they focus on behavioral, normative, material and psychological factors. The first two approaches emphasize the qualitative difference between middle powers and others, found in certain types of behavior. The last two focus on the quantitative difference between middle powers and others, i.e., the relative power of the middle powers.

41 Mackenzie King to Commonwealth prime ministers in 1944 (Eayrs;1984:252).
The behavioral approach: a pattern of activity

This type of definition uses behavior to distinguish middle powers from other states. A middle power is a state whose behavior conforms with a certain set of characteristics. The qualitative difference is what defines the middle powers. Authors disagree as to which these behavioral characteristics are.

Paul Painchaud (1966:29-35), participating at a conference in Banff, Canada on the topic of "Canada's Role as a Middle Power" launches the idea and concept of a middle power "ideology of foreign policy." This ideology is a symbol and objective for the diplomacy of certain countries. Painchaud argues there is no general ideology common to all middle powers. Each "... has realized in its own way and in the function of a specific context its objectives as a middle power" (1966:30). For his discussion, the focus is on Canada, whose middle power ideology consists mainly of mediation. Mediation is understood in a very broad sense as "... the aptitude to cause international relations to evolve" (1966:35). He does not mention any other middle powers that are mediators except Canada, or middle powers that have a different ideology.

J. D. Sethi (1969) supports Painchaud's idea of a middle power ideology of foreign policy. He does, however, develop one that is common to all middle powers. This policy has three objectives: (1) relative or absolute security (normally sought within alliances), (2) successful international economic competition, and (3) mediation (1969:108-9). Sethi focuses on India, but mentions six other countries that can be characterized as middle powers. These are Canada, Germany, France, Britain, Japan and Australia (1969:107, see also Table 1 below).
A more recent discussion by Robert Cox (1989) argues that middle powers are distinguished by their commitment to international order through building international organizations. When evaluating whether Japan is a middle power, Cox mentions several more specific indicators. The “behavioral test of middlepowermanship” centers on low military spending, high development assistance, environmental awareness, multilateralism, economic liberalism and moderation of conflicts (1989:837-838). Cox does not mention other states that would qualify for middle power status by these criteria.

The most comprehensive recent treatment of middle powers as actors in international relations is Cooper, Higgott and Nossal’s Relocating Middle Powers (1993). They argue that “to be included in the category of middle powers, countries have to act as middle powers” (1993:27). A middle power is recognized by the following behavioral traits: multilateralism, assuming compromise positions in disputes, and notions of “good international citizenship” (1993:19). Cooper et.al. focus primarily on Canada and Australia, and offer no explicit list of middle powers qualifying by their criteria. However, throughout the book they indicate several other states as middle powers. These are presented in Table 1.

The normative approach: behavior on high moral grounds
A normative definition of middle powers is very similar to the behavioral definition. The qualitative difference of the behavioral approach is here carried a bit further. Middle powers are ‘moral superpowers,’ they are “potentially wiser or more virtuous” than others (Cooper et.al.;1993:17-18). The qualitative difference is specified in behavior that is considered “right.” Thus, a normative definition is behavioral, but a behavioral
definition need not be correspondingly normative. A normative definition is an extreme version of a behavioral definition, and is rarely stated in an explicit way. However, done implicitly, it is not so uncommon.

An example is the project "The Western Middle Powers and Global Poverty," initiated in 1983. This project decided to focus on five western middle powers; Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. The initial acknowledgment that this was only a sub-group of the middle powers has become much less clear in some of the publications that followed, most notably *Middle Power Internationalism* edited by Cranford Pratt (1990).42 The main thesis of this volume is that middle powers are characterized by their "humane internationalism." They accept and actively support the idea that the industrialized part of the world has ethical responsibilities towards reducing global poverty. Since little is said about how the middle power group as a whole is different from the sub-group, the contents of the book appear to refer to the middle power group as a whole. Thus the impression is that there are five middle powers, and that humane internationalism distinguishes these from non-middle powers. Middle powers are identified as more active and skillful members of the United Nations, more responsive to international values, and sponsoring aid programs that are better than those of others (1993:13-14).43

42 Another volume in the same Series is Olav Stokke, ed. (1989) *Western Middle Powers and Global Poverty*. This book focuses on the same group of middle powers and consists of chapters on each country's aid policies and the determinants of these.

43 In all fairness it should be mentioned that not all the authors in this volume express the same opinion as Pratt, in fact some of them do not mention the term "middle power" at all (see for example Asbjørn Løvbæk;1990:25-68). Others take the material approach (discussed below) to the problem of definition (see Bernard Wood;1990:69-107).
Table 1. Middle Powers by the Behavioral and Normative Approaches.

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**Evaluation: defining middle powers by the qualitative difference**

**The normative definition**

A normative definition of middle powers introduces several problems. First and most importantly, how do we decide what is “right” and “wrong?” Morality is conceived differently between cultures, classes and generations. Whose conception of right and wrong do we apply to state behavior? To what degree does this predetermine the selection of middle powers? One of the strongest critiques of Pratt's group of middle powers is that it is too exclusive; the five middle powers are “... 'like-minded' developed

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44 The lower half of this list is only briefly suggested by Cooper et al.
northern states..." (Cooper et.al.;1993:18). Second, with any conception of morality it is difficult to draw a clear line between middle powers and others. Most likely, all states display behavior that is both "right" and "wrong." How often does a state have to act in a way considered “right” for it to be a middle power? It is not clear how this would be measured. Do we just count “right” actions, or are "wrong" actions calculated with? If Norway is a middle power based on “right” actions towards underdeveloped countries, do its whaling activities threaten this status? Considering the problems of culture-bias and measurement problems, the normative approach is not a preferable type of definition for middle power status.

Much more common in the literature is the behavioral definition of middle powers, and it will be discussed more closely.

**The behavioral definition**

**Potential**

There is some coherence among authors regarding what the middle power specific behavior is. Recurring themes are certain roles (e.g., mediator, facilitator), policy choices (e.g., foreign aid, peace-keeping), and principles guiding their diplomacy (e.g., assuming compromise positions and seeking consensus on international issues). A behavioral definition also has a conceptually and analytically rich substance; it says a great deal about the object it defines.

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45 Meanwhile, Cooper et.al. (1993) focus primarily on Australia and Canada in their own book. Other middle powers that are discussed at some length are largely Western European countries (see upper half of their selection in Table 1). Thus their group seems quite “like-minded” as well.
Problems

1. Unclear line between middle powers and others

Over time a large number of states will display some of the behavioral features stated in a middle power definition. As with the normative definition, the process of selection becomes a problem. For how many mediation experiences are necessary for middle power status? How many attempts at creating consensus are sufficient? It seems to be a highly situation-specific definition, where a state would display middle power behavior in one situation, but not in the next. Who, at the end of the day, are then the middle powers? Those whose roles have been exerted in popular issues that are followed around the world? Another problem is detecting the existence of these behaviors. How much involvement is required for the label “facilitator”? And what does it mean to be consensus-oriented? These behavioral features are perceived, and differences in interpretation would lead to different decisions on inclusion to the group. It is perhaps illustrative that few of the authors using behavioral definitions actually give an explicit list of which countries they consider to be middle powers.

2. Presupposition of the unestablished

The behavioral definitions, although not as extreme as the purely normative definitions, generally paint a rather flattering picture of the middle powers. In the earlier works this is evident since the focus is often on admirable roles such as mediation and conflict resolution in general. The behavioral definitions today place more emphasis on a general pattern of middle power statecraft (e.g., Cooper et al.;1993, Cooper;1997:9). However, there is still a significant tilt towards positive behavioral traits. Middle powers of the 1990s are consensus-oriented creators and
supporters of international institutions. Thus they are still promoted as international
order-builders.

There is no consensus regarding the truth in these characterizations, and the
presupposition that middle powers behave this way is constantly challenged. To
Holbraad (1984:74), behavioral definitions are likely "... little more than ideologically
motivated statements about how middle powers ought to conduct themselves." While
focusing on their more positive roles, Wood (1988:22-23) admits that "the extent to
which middle powers do seem to engage in free-riding and fence-sitting in their
international dealings is quite striking ..." However, Wood does not pursue this
behavioral trait any further. The newer behavioral definitions that avoid the focus on
roles are also challenged. A critical view holds that the image of the "entrepreneurial
middle power diplomacy geared towards international institution-building" is little more
than pretentious rhetoric. Rather than entrepreneurial and initiative, middle powers are
reactive and responsive. Turning their coats with the stronger wind, the middle powers
can even be observed counteracting the very order-building process they are
presumed to undertake.46

With these criticisms in mind, the behavioral definition has the fundamental
disadvantage of prejudging any inquiry into the actual behavior of middle powers
(Holbraad;1984:74). A behavioral definition thus grabs further than it can reach. It

46 In The Vancouver Sun (editorial, October 9 1998) Nobel Peace prize-winner Jose Ramos Horta is said
to have characterized Canadian diplomacy as "wishy-washy." The Canadian official policy of promoting
human rights is contradicted by the policy of "engagement;" a "... euphemism for making deals with
dictators and thugs palatable." Another example of this view is Naomi Klein's article "The Real APEC
Scandal" with the subtitle: "Why did Suharto think he could push Canada around? Because he
understood our place in the new global economy better than we do." (Saturday Night February 1999)
She argues that the Canadian responsiveness to the demands from Suharto that no demonstrators be
visible during the conference, "... show that the idea of Canada as a 'middle power,' acting as the world's
conscience, is nothing short of a national delusion."
assumes what is "... neither obvious nor proven" (MacKay; 1969:143). What is set forth in the behavioral definition should be the end point rather than the beginning of an analysis.

**Analytical impotence**

The behavioral definition also has a serious problem related to its usefulness as an analytical tool. If behavior leads to power status, it becomes tautological to claim that power status leads to behavior (Thakur; 1991:245, Holbraad; 1984:75, Neack; 1995:225). An illustration of this problem is Cooper et.al.'s *Relocating Middle Powers* (1993). They define middle powers as states pursuing multilateral solutions to international problems and embracing compromise positions in international disputes (1993:19). Cooper et.al. then "theorize" about this category of powers, and suggest a pattern of behavior that middle powers will follow. Middle powers can play the roles of catalyst, facilitator and manager towards building international consensus and cooperation (1993:24-25). Although Cooper et.al. are careful not to use identical expressions of their independent and dependent variables, the properties that define middle powers seem strongly connected to the predicted behavioral pattern.47

This evaluation indicates that the argued qualitative difference should be kept outside the definition of middle powers. Two alternative definitions remain, both of which emphasize the quantitative difference between states.

47 This problem is even clearer in their conclusion. There Cooper et.al. perform a redefinition of middle powers. They are identified by "... an approach to diplomacy geared to mitigating conflict and building consensus and cooperation (1993:173-174). Then they theorize about this category: "if our argument has substance, then we should expect that middle power diplomacy will fix on mediatary and consensus-building activities..." (1993:174). Any middle power by their definition would of course display the behavioral pattern in their argument.
The material approach: taking stock of capabilities

This approach lends itself to the traditional way of defining powers. States are grouped according to their relative level of certain capabilities; it is the quantitative difference between states that matters.\(^{48}\) A middle power, naturally, is "... a country much stronger than the small nations though considerably weaker than the principal members of the states system" (Holbraad; 1971:78). This was the meaning of the term when it first became used during the 1940s. Thus Mackenzie King, the then Prime Minister of Canada, declared to Parliament in August 1944:

"The great powers are called by that name simply because they possess great power. The other states of the world possess power and, therefore, the capacity to use it for the maintenance of peace - in varying degrees ranging from almost zero in the case of the smallest and weakest states up to a military potential not far below that of the great powers" (Eayrs; 1984:252).

Beyond this general characterization the various material definitions vary considerably. Martin Wight (1978:65) suggests that a middle power is

"... a power with such military strength, resources and strategic position that in peacetime the great powers bid for its support, and in wartime, while it has no hope of winning a war against a great power, it can hope to inflict costs on a great power out of proportion to what the great power can hope to gain by attacking it."

\(^{48}\) Raimo Väyrynen (1971) suggests that (small) powers may also be defined by a second variant of material definition. This he calls "exogeneous ranking," and it involves measuring material evidence of the importance other states place on the state in question (e.g. size of diplomatic missions). Studies that cover the state system in general have ranked states according to such criteria (Singer & Small;1966), and investigated the discrepancy between such a ranking and a capability based ranking (Wallace;1971). However, this type of material definition has received little attention in the middle power literature.
The most apparent examples for Wight at the time (1972) were the previous great powers degraded by war: Britain, France, Germany and Japan. His definition only indicates a certain level of capabilities that reflect middle power status. It is a conceptual definition, and describes rather than measures the relative power of the middle powers.

Michael Handel (1981:23-30) argues that weak states have small populations and a low GNP, and that great powers have large populations and a high level of GNP. Without stating an explicit definition of middle powers, he then describes them as being of two types:

"... those with relatively small populations but highly developed and efficient economies (I), and those which are highly populated but economically less developed (II)."

Handel’s list of middle powers includes Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Mexico and Spain (see also Table 2 below). As Wight before him, Handel does not state the exact level of capabilities that would indicate middle power status: his approach is rather to give a conceptual characterization of these countries.

Steven Spiegel (1972:90) does much the same when he defines middle powers as

"... those states whose level of power permits them to play only decidedly limited and selected roles in states and regions other than their own" (1972:99).

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49 This reminds much of David Vital’s (1967:8) earlier characterization of small states: these are industrialized states with a small population, and underdeveloped countries with a larger population.
Spiegel distinguishes between no less than seven power groups. His "formula of power" includes traditional material factors such as territory, population, energy production and consumption, GNP, efficiency of administration and government, military power and motivational power. He does not state a specific middle power level of these capabilities. Spiegel's selection of middle powers is presented in Table 2.

Carsten Holbraad (1984:79-81) uses level of GNP as the primary and population size as the secondary factor to identify middle powers. He groups states into geographic regions. Within these he then looks for obvious breaks indicating an upper class of powers (Holbraad considers only the United States and the Soviet Union to be great powers). Consequently, no exact level of GNP or population size is applied generally across the cases. His list of middle powers is presented in Table 1.

Bernard Wood (1988) uses a simple ranking of states based on their GNP to identify a "loose tier of states." The middle powers are located below "the half-dozen or so largest." He does not explain the line separating middle from small powers. Wood arrives at 34 countries that he considers to be mid-sized economies (see Table 2). Wood's list is then to be "... modified by judgments on the intangible factors and the contextual ones" (1988:17). However, he seems to have left this to ponder for a later study.
Table 2. Middle Powers by Capability-Based Definitions.

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* Wood (1988:18) argues that regional organizations of the economic weight and cohesion of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations could be considered for middle power status alongside with individual states.
The psychological approach: a perception of relative strength

This is a different take on the quantitative difference between states. Instead of measuring capabilities, a psychological definition is based on perception of relative power. This type of definition is not common in the middle power literature and is not mentioned in some of the more comprehensive discussions of middle power definitions (e.g., Holbraad; 1984, Cooper et.al.; 1993). However, authors writing on small powers use psychological approaches (Rothstein; 1968, Väyrynen; 1971), and scholars outside the middle power tradition suggest that this is also a potentially useful approach for defining middle powers (Keohane; 1969).

Raimo Väyrynen (1971:93) characterizes this type of definition as “the subjective dimension of rank.” A state’s rank is measured by the self-perception of politicians or the general public, and by perceptions of actors external to the state. Robert Rothstein (1968) has perhaps developed the most authoritative example; he uses this approach to define small powers. He argues that

“the Small Power is not defined by specific qualities which it possesses (or lacks) but rather by a position it occupies in its own and other eyes.... A Small Power is a state which recognizes that it can not obtain security primarily by use of its own capabilities, and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of other states, institutions, processes, or developments to do so.... Ultimately, it is the set of psychological expectations about the limits of possible and effective action which distinguishes Great and Small Powers, not merely the possession of capacities of one kind or another” (1968:29,27fn).

50 As Väyrynen (1969:93-94) has noted, such perceptions can be based on a variety of factors, only one of which is relative level of capabilities. Other variables are for example perceptions of level of development and prestige. A Nordic subjective rank, Väyrynen suggests, may then reflect a self-perception of high prestige based on the level of social justice in these countries. This introduces a qualitative element to these definitions. However, the psychological definitions reviewed here focus primarily on perception of capabilities and relative power. They are therefore considered to be based on a quantitative rather than qualitative difference.
This approach could also be applied to middle powers. Robert Keohane (1969:295-297) starts out with a middle power group based on level of capabilities. He then adds a psychological dimension; perception of *systemic role*, i.e., influence over the system as a whole. A middle power is defined as

"... a state whose leaders consider that it cannot act alone effectively but may be able to have a systemic impact in a small group or through an international institution" (1969:296).

Keohane suggests that Canada, Sweden, Pakistan, Brazil and Argentina are middle powers by objective measurements, but does not say whether adding the psychological dimension modifies this group.

**Evaluation: defining middle powers by the quantitative difference**

*The psychological definition*

Both of the authors reviewed here use the psychological definition together with a capability-based definition (Keohane;1969:296, Rothstein;1968:23). As a conceptual addition to a capability-based definition, the psychological definition has some potential. A capability-based ranking says little about the object it defines, except that it is stronger or weaker than another object. The psychological definition creates a more meaningful category; it states a characteristic common to all the objects it defines (Rothstein;1968:23, Keohane;1969:296).

The use of such a definition, however, also involves some complications. One problem is which factors to emphasize in the expression of a middle power "state of mind." The difference between the definitions by Rothstein and Keohane illustrates this problem. Is such a state of mind recognition of overall *systemic role* potential
(Keohane; 1969) or recognition of insufficient security (Rohtstein; 1968)? A conceptual psychological definition does not emerge by itself. It reflects a choice on behalf of the observer. In addition, there seems to be no actual perception of systemic role or insufficient security that forms the basis for choosing which countries to include. Both Keohane and Rothstein decide for themselves which countries have, or should have, this perception of their own relative power or strength. Finally, it is not clear that the psychological definitions are real definitions at all. Rothstein’s discussion centers around states that are traditional small powers by a measure of capabilities (Keohane; 1969:293). Keohane (1969:298) arrives at a group of middle powers based on their relative power, and does not say whether adding the psychological dimension changes this group. These observations indicate that the psychological definitions are less definitional than they are descriptive; they appear to describe objects that have been grouped together by other criteria. Since these definitions are conceptual labels developed by observers and then ascribed to the states, and apparently of little consequence for who the middle powers are, their contribution is doubtful at best.

The capability-based definitions

The suggested middle power definitions that are based on relative power are of two kinds. Some, such as Wight (1978) and Spiegel (1972), are conceptual and describe the appropriate middle level of power. These appear to be, as the psychological definitions, more an addition to a group already delimited by some calculation of their capabilities. The conceptual definitions based on objective power (as opposed to the psychological definitions that describe subjective power) also introduce several difficulties. One problem is that they may become outdated, as the international system changes. An example of this is Wight (1978:75), who proposes that middle powers
have “such military strength, resources and strategic position” that great powers will bid for their support in peacetime, and find that costs would outweigh benefits if they were to attack the state. Besides the awkwardness of applying this definition to today’s system, there are clear problems of operationalization. What level of capabilities is he referring to? The attitude of the great powers towards the middle powers is only indicative of this, and it is not clear how this attitude would be measured. Spiegel’s definition exemplifies the same problem. According to him, middle powers have a level of power that enables them to play only limited roles in other states and regions (1972:99). Deciding what a “limited role” is, as well as how large or small a region is, seems to have been left for the potential user of the definition to figure out.⁵¹

Remaining is now the traditional and still most common method of ranking states: by directly measuring their level of certain capabilities.

Problems

There are of course two fundamental, well-known problems with using a capability-based definition of power status. First, the line separating one group of powers from the next will always be arbitrary and subjective (Keohane;1969:296, Väyönen;1971:92). Both the upper line to the great powers and the lower line to the small powers are difficult, but the lower border is particularly problematic (Holbraad;1984:80). It does not help that the middle power group already is such an elusive and unestablished category. The differences between the selections in Table 2

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⁵¹ Raimo Väyönen (1971:91) distinguishes between the intensional and extensional dimension of a definition. The intensional meaning refers to the properties a unit would have to possess. The extensional meaning of a definition refers to the actual objects to which the term would be applied. The conceptual definitions of middle powers seem to have a weak link between the two meanings. The intensional meaning is broad and vague, which alienates the extensional meaning.
illustrate the problem of arbitrariness in deciding where to draw the line. The various selections differ according to total number (exclusiveness) and whether they are tilted upwards (include old great powers) or downwards (include smaller European states) on the continuum. A second problem with these definitions is deciding which capabilities to include (Väyrynen;1971:92, Goldmann;1977:11, Wood;1988:15). The examples reviewed here range from Wood (1988) who focus only on GNP, to Holbraad (1984) who combines GNP and population, and finally there is Spiegel's comprehensive “formula of power” (1972).

These two problems are important. However, the capability based ranking has several advantages compared to the other alternative middle power definitions.

Potential
The strongest argument for using this definition lies in the frequency with which authors using other definitions seem to assume a material distinction as “a first cut.” This is so particularly with the psychological definition, but the behavioral and normative also show this tendency. Cox (1989:827) states that a middle level of economic and military capabilities are necessary but not sufficient criteria. Chaudhuri (1969:211) argues that “... substantial military strength might be useful but is not an essential requirement for middle power status.” Sethi (1969:108) argues that middle power status requires a certain level of capabilities, but the “ideology of foreign policy” is the most important factor. Cooper et.al. (1993) pretend to follow a strict behavioral definition that excludes the consideration of material factors. However, their group of middle powers (see Table 1) reveals a suspiciously close correlation with a list of states with a middle level of capabilities. If middle power status is based on a certain diplomatic style, there is no reason why they would not discuss countries such as
the United Kingdom on the one hand and Switzerland on the other. It seems that there has been some preselection.\textsuperscript{52}

The focus on tangible factors gives this approach the benefit of dealing with fairly reliable, objective and easily obtainable data. Statistics are readily available for most countries on economics, military spending, population, territory, and the like. The process of measurement is fairly straightforward. When the upper and lower limits of capability levels are set, there is little ambiguity regarding which states belong to the middle power category. The simplicity and clarity of measurement stand in sharp contrast to all the other three suggested definitions.

Finally, for the purpose of constructing a theoretical framework for the argument that middle powers are qualitatively different, this type of definition fares better than the others. The behavioral and normative definitions are inappropriate since they assume a qualitative difference both in the definition as well as the theory of middle powers. The psychological approach is only useful as an addition to a capability-based definition. Thus the better approach for examining whether middle powers are qualitatively different is to use relative size as a starting point. This enables theorizing on and empirical investigation of middle power behavior, roles, and influence. Actual middle power behavior and the hypothesized qualitative difference can then be characterized as the dependent variable. Thus using a material definition does not

\textsuperscript{52} Cooper et.al. explicitly refuse a definition based on capabilities, but the following quote indicates that they implicitly assume such a division: "... by focusing less on positional attributes and more on the tasks performed on specific issues, a more systematic (and less arbitrary) assessment of the range of middle power leadership activities can be achieved. Rather than concentrating on the behavior of a narrow group of 'like-minded' countries, for example, this mode of analysis opens up the possibility of studies on a wider range of middle-sized countries" (Cooper et.al.;1993:27). These two sentences appear to be contradictory, and the "Freudian slip" in the second sentence indicates that capability level has indeed been calculated with in their selection.
imply that all there is to know about middle powers is that they are weaker than the
great powers.

The first concept in the argument that middle powers are qualitatively different has now
been clarified: middle power status is based on relative level of capabilities; the
quantitative difference between states. The next task is to find out what the qualitative
difference is.

WHAT IS THE QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCE?

There is no lack of suggestions as to what constitutes "middle power behavior," but
there is a lack of structure. Authors choose what distinguishes middle powers as
qualitatively different, but rarely relate their ideas to those of others. Moreover, within
the various works the concept "middle power behavior" is very broadly used. For
example, Cooper et.al. (1993:24) suggest numerous types of middle power behavior.
Among these are multilateralism, willingness to compromise, diplomatic technical and
entrepreneurial capacities, the roles of facilitators, catalysts and managers, diplomatic
skill, mediation, conflict mitigation, followership and initiative-based leadership. How
do all these ideas relate to each other? This is representative of what was referred to
in the introduction as "a library without organization." The aim is here to organize the
ideas into a typology of middle power behavior. This taxonomy presents in a clear way
what is out there, and what exactly is meant by "middle power behavior." In showing
how the different ideas are connected, the model enables comments on the empirical
substance of the argument of "the qualitative difference."
Towards a typology of middle power behavior

From a reading of the literature, a distinction emerges between two fundamentally different aspects of "middle power behavior." One set of behavioral variables refers to characteristics of the middle powers' approach to international relations, for example "multilateralism" and "diplomatic skill." The other side of middle power behavior consists of the typical roles middle powers play, for example "mediator" and "functional leader." This distinction makes intuitive sense; multilateralism and diplomatic skill are examples of behavior that are under the state's own control. Playing a role, whether mediating or leading in a specific issue-area, are both behaviors that are dependent on other states accepting the role. Thus, you cannot mediate if not wanted, and you cannot lead if others do not choose to follow. This distinction is supported in other areas of international relations theory. The approach-related side of behavior conforms with what Sprout & Sprout (1962:144) have labeled "techniques" of statecraft:

"... the functions performed with various instruments and combinations thereof. Thus, for example, foreign offices and embassies, including their personnel, are instruments of statecraft; but diplomacy is a technique. Military forces - weapons plus the soldiers who operate them - are instruments; military operations of various kinds are techniques."

There is no mention of roles in their listing of "techniques" (1962:145).

Few authors make the distinction between the two types of behavior explicitly, and there is substantial "fleeting" of ideas from one category to the other. In the series Middle Powers in the International System the distinction is never made clear. For example, "good multilateral citizenship," measured by financial support for the United Nations, is classified as a role along with mediation and leadership (Wood;1988:21,
Protheroe;1988). This is confusing, as what would normally be considered a domestically determined choice has suddenly become an international "role."

Often the two categories of middle power behavior are assumed to be connected; approach is the *intervening variable* between size, the independent variable, and role, the dependent variable. For example, Cooper et.al. (1993:23-4) argue that middle power leadership is based on "entrepreneurial flair and technical competence." Holmes (1966:22-8) sees among other factors Canada's alignment and commitment to responsibilities as important factors behind Canada's ability to play the "middle power role."

Thus there is considerable reason to keep the two types of behavior separate. Based on this distinction, Table 3 presents a rough organization of the different assumptions on middle power behavior. In this table the approach category has been further specified, indicating a subgroup of the variables that are under the control of the state itself. However, the variables in this subgroup do not refer to actions in themselves, but rather to the *quality* of these actions. The question is not what principles a state follows in its foreign policies (e.g., multilateralism), but how well it performs these policies (e.g., diplomatic skill). These variables are a favorite in the middle power literature. Lacking a high level of traditional capabilities, the idea is that middle powers can acquire leadership roles based on "... imaginative and energetic use of their diplomatic capabilities. The skills they have utilized are not those of a giant but of a good dancer ..." (Cooper et.al.;1993:23-4). These ideas are also voiced outside the middle power literature. Sprout & Sprout (1962:147-8) recognize that "... the diplomatic record includes many instances in which gifted negotiators, representing small and weak nations, have exerted influence on events quite out of
proportion to the military or economic resources at their command." The idea is that "the less the military or economic power possessed by a nation, the greater its need for goodwill and intelligent diplomacy if it is to influence the course of international events" (Lyon;1963:81).

Table 3. A Model of Middle Power Behavior.  

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It may be noted that this does not appear to be a well balanced model of state behavior, as it is tilted heavily towards positive traits and roles. This is, however, a representation of what is in focus in the literature. Indeed, the concept has a feeling of "international beauty contest" (Fraser;1966:12). Wood (1988:20) does mention the less impressive roles of "status-seeker" and "free-rider" or "fence-sitting." He elaborates little on these, beyond stating that they "merit serious consideration." Cooper et.al. (1993:10) emphasize that middle powers are also "followers" in international politics, that the games of skill can be set aside by the structural dimensions of power.

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Table 3 shows the structure of the argument that middle powers are qualitatively different. Both of the main concepts are clarified. “Middle power” refers to relative size, “qualitatively different” refers to approach, quality of approach and roles. This table is a “map” of the various suggested types of qualitatively different middle power behavior. As with the literature that it systematizes, the model does not imply a strict causal connection between the three categories of variables; size, approach and roles. The general assumption is that there is a correlation, a pattern in the behavior and roles typically displayed by middle powers.
CHAPTER 3. EMPIRICAL INDICATIONS

This chapter employs the theoretical framework established in the previous chapter. The categories are replaced with empirical data to indicate whether middle powers are qualitatively different from other states.

LOCATING THE MIDDLE POWERS

In order to operationalize the capability-based definition, two decisions must be made. First which capabilities to measure, and then what is the appropriate middle power level of these capabilities.

The first question leads into one of the larger debates in international relations, namely how to measure power. There are numerous attempts at providing the combination of factors that most accurately determines a state's power. Here we have already decided to proceed with a material definition, which is based on a comparison of level of capabilities. It is clear that this leaves out many factors that determine actual power, for example the relevance and perception of these capabilities (Holsti; 1992:122-124). However, the goal is (thankfully) not to find the secret formula for state power, only to enable an approximate ranking of states.

For this purpose, it is appropriate to keep it simple while still arriving at a sound ranking. The measurement of states' level of GNP has notable advantages in this regard. GNP incorporates several determinants of power into one number. Variables such as population, area, strategic location, leadership and alliances will all influence the level of GNP (Holbraad; 1984:78). A.F.K. Organski (1968:207-215) arrived for this reason at "an index of national power" based on GNP alone, since "... the GNP is
determined by so many of the same factors that determine national power." Kerstin Pëtren (in Goldmann; 1977:11-12) found in a study that GNP numbers correlated strongly with nineteen other indicators of military and economic power (e.g., investments, energy production and consumption). More generally, it has also been argued that rankings based solely on GNP deviate very little from rankings that include several variables (Holbraad; 1984:78). This indicates that increasing the complexity may not lead to many changes. If, however, an additional indicator were to produce a different ranking, it would be a question of judgment to decide how to compare the two different scores. There is no common currency into which all scores on different capabilities can be converted and then aggregated. This presents a problem particularly for the definition of middle powers: “the United States is unequivocally a major power on virtually all dimensions; the Gambia is indisputably a small state on virtually all dimensions. Australia and New Zealand span the threefold range on the different dimensions” (Thakur; 1991:244). Thus if adding indicators does make a difference, rank-disequilibrium introduces a significant element of arbitrariness. Finally, GNP measurements have been shown to correlate strongly with our perception of state power (Alcock & Newcombe; 1970).

Using GNP as a reliable indicator of state power does not imply that GNP alone is what makes a state powerful (Organski; 1968:208-209). For the purpose here, 

57 The middle power selections of Wood (1988) and Spiegel (1972) are very similar, considering how much more complex Spiegel's "formula of power" is than Wood's use of GNP. The main difference between the two seems to be where they draw the line. Wood's group of middle powers is much more inclusive than that of Spiegel.

58 This point has been made by Handel (1981:24) with specific reference to the middle power group. Holbraad's work (1984) is an example where two indicators, GNP and population, are compared and weighted differently from case to case.
capabilities are not so much sources of power as they are indicators of power. This makes additional variables seem less useful. Ten indicators may all indicate the same thing, whereas ten sources will always be ten different sources. They do not overlap in the same way.

The next task is to draw the line separating middle from great and small powers. Here, of course, one can not win. Regardless of how well the line is argued, it remains arbitrary and subjective. Some authors suggest a specific level of the capabilities in question. This is particularly a popular method in the small power literature (Handel; 1981:30-31). However, time will eventually make such definitions obsolete. In addition, it is not absolute power, but rather relative power that is of interest here. With this in mind the better approach, while scientifically unsophisticated, is to examine the ranking and search for indications of an intermediate category of powers.

Table 4 shows the result. Although few would argue the great power status of the United States, some suggest that the other permanent members of the Security Council are now better ranked as middle powers (e.g., Wight; 1978, Holbraad; 1984, Wood; 1988). The UK and France score right above Italy, China above Brazil, and Russia above Mexico. Considering this, it would be possible to include at least some of these in a middle power group. However, the four questioned great powers still occupy a position in the system quite different from the middle powers they would be ranked with (e.g., Brazil, Canada and Spain). (The most peculiar example is perhaps Wood (1988) who puts China and Finland together in a middle power group.) The choice here is to consider their veto in the Security Council in general, but perhaps their position and status in the system in particular, to be sufficient reason to rank them above the middle powers. With the five great powers outside the list, three non-
great powers appear in their own class at the very top; Japan, Germany and Italy. A
group of major powers can thus include one super power, four great powers, and three
economically superior non-great powers. The upper line for the middle powers is Brazil
(US$ million 400,000 below Italy).

Turning to the line between middle and small powers, it is helpful to look to the
earlier attempts, and these indicate two different approaches. Holbraad (1984) prefers
an exclusive approach, and does not consider the smaller European states to be
middle powers. Wood (1988) does the opposite, and opts for a very inclusive list of
over thirty middle powers. The approach here is somewhere in between. Drawing the
line below Portugal (at US$ million 100,000) gives a group of middle powers with few
nontraditional entries,\(^59\) while not making the group too large. All the traditional middle
powers are included, which will make the following empirical test correspondingly
relevant.

Table 4. Middle Powers by 1996 GNP in Millions of US$.\(^60\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1996 GNP</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1996 GNP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>709,591</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>226,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>569,899</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>213,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>563,249</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>177,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Korea, Rep.</td>
<td>483,130</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>177,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>402,565</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>168,917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>367,802</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>153,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>357,759</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>151,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>341,718</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>132,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>313,729</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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</tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>295,131</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Greece</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
<td>268,633</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>119,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>227,315</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>100,934</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^59\) Hong Kong is an exception, and for natural reasons it will be kept outside the empirical test.

\(^60\) Numbers are from *World Bank Atlas*, 1998.
THE QUALITATIVE DIFFERENCE - EMPIRICAL POTENTIAL OF MODEL

"... is mediation the exclusive policy of middle powers? May it not be equally the policy of small powers or of some of the great powers, though there may well be differences in the success with which small, middle, or great powers pursue the role? Further, is it sound to attribute to the concept of middle powers a 'certain type and content' of diplomacy? What evidence is there that middle powers follow common policies, different from or distinct from, those of small or great powers?" (MacKay; 1969:143).

The model of the qualitative difference argument showed that there are several different, but interconnected, assumptions within the one argument. The question is where to start an empirical investigation that can reply to the type of statement by MacKay. There are three sub-arguments in the model: 1) middle powers have a certain approach to international relations, 2) middle powers' diplomacy is of a certain quality and 3) 1 and 2 lead to middle powers playing certain roles.

The last argument naturally draws on a fairly restricted case-material. Middle powers do not play the roles of mediator or facilitator every day. With few observations it is difficult to find a pattern where certain behavioral features on behalf of the middle powers lead to the specific roles. Holbraad (1984:74) argues that typically only a few case examples of roles played in specific circumstances constitute the basis for general assumptions on how middle powers behave in international relations. In any successful case of middle power leadership, it is also difficult to show that the middle power approach or quality of this was in fact what led to the role. The number of variables that could influence the outcome - the role - are anything but limited. Thus it is possible that many such “found” connections are actually spurious, that the variable(s) argued to have led to the outcome actually had little or no importance.

"as with traditional middle power writings, it is not centrally concerned with, nor clear about, the way in which and the degree to which intellectual and entrepreneurial coalition-building effectively shaped outcomes. In the exemplar case of the Cairns Group, the authors concede it was not the major catalyst for the successful compromise of December 1992, but suggest that an elusive process of confidence-building made some contribution."

Another example is Cooper (1995:6) who argues that diplomatic skills on the part of Norwegian state officials were crucial in enabling Norway's role in the Middle East peace process. Such an assumption would rarely even be questioned. It seems perfectly obvious (especially to Norwegians). It is a flattering conclusion to draw, but of course there were numerous factors that led to the role as well as the outcome (Østerud;1997). The cases of middle power leadership are few and are most likely the result of a complicated mixture of variables. This type of middle power behavior could be investigated by case-studies, but then it would be difficult to create any meaningful comparison with other powers. Any case of "evidence" where a middle power achieved and successfully performed a role through a certain approach or quality of this approach could most likely be countered by similar cases for great powers.

The sub-argument that the middle power approach is of a certain quality is also problematic to test empirically. This is mostly because of the problems involved in measuring these variables. For example, the much favored variable "diplomatic skills" is difficult to measure across countries. It does not help that references to this category are often vague; what is a "middle power approach to diplomacy" (Cooper et.al.;1993:24), a "powerful diplomacy" (Pearson;1966:197), or Holmes' (1966:15)
"capacity for UN manship"? It would be possible to measure these variables as perceived qualities. A state would then score high on diplomatic skills if it were perceived as such, hence the problem of determining if it is actually skillful is solved. The objective reality is no longer relevant. If a state is perceived as having certain qualities, this perception (whether accurate or not), can influence the perceiver’s responsiveness to the state in question. Responsiveness can be defined as “a disposition to receive another’s requests with sympathy, even to the point where a government is willing to sacrifice some of its own values and interests in order to fulfill those requests; responsiveness is the willingness to be influenced” (Holsti; 1992:124).61 Lyon (1978:77-92) uses this approach and finds that there is an image of Canada abroad as a “nice guy,” and suggests that this may increase other countries’ responsiveness to Canadian initiatives.62 Such findings, of course, do not reply directly to the argument that middle powers are qualitatively different. Rather, they indicate that middle powers are perceived as qualitatively different. If accepting this change, there is certainly a potential for measuring middle powers on these variables and comparing them to other power groups. However, even if the variables indicating quality of behavior can be measured as perceptions, it remains to determine the actual impact that perceptions have: they may or may not be instrumental in guiding the perceiver’s actions. If diplomatic skills could be weighed and measured, the connection to roles would appear naturally. Measuring perceptions leads to an

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61 Pruitt (1964) has developed a “theory of compliance” that suggests various factors that determine level of responsiveness between states.
62 Buchanan and Cantril’s (1953) study on perceptions of national stereotypes is another example, outside the middle power specific literature.
indirect route from behavior to roles. Between state A being perceived as "good" on
the one hand, and playing leading roles on the other, lies a large "black box" where the
importance of such stereotypes for state B's responsiveness would be determined.

Considering these difficulties, the greatest potential for finding empirical support
for the argument that middle powers are qualitatively different seems to be in the first
of the three sub-arguments: that middle powers have a certain approach to
international relations. The task for the last part of this chapter is to look at a few
selected variables, and comment on the validity of the argument that middle powers
behave in a qualitatively different way.

MULTILATERALISM AND RESPONSIBILITY

"A distinctive characteristic of the foreign policy behavior of middle powers, it is
commonly said, is their embrace of multilateralism as the preferred means of
advancing their foreign policy interests" (Cooper et.al.;1993:116).

In its most basic interpretation, multilateralism refers to "coordinating relations among
three or more states in accordance with certain principles" (Ruggie;1992:568). Middle
powers, it is thought, are naturally inclined to favor a system where agreements
between more than two states regulate issue-specific areas. There are two main
reasons for this. First is the prospect that multilateralism will limit the ability and
tendency of the stronger powers to make other states in the system mere subjects to
their wishes. Middle powers fare better in a system governed by rules than power
(unilateralism), and prefer agreements where they are not one-on-one with a greater
power (bilateralism). Second is the recognition that middle powers lack the capacity to
act unilaterally. Multilateralism is a means by which these states seek to realize their
national objectives (Keating; 1993:13,18, Doran; 1989:4). One way multilateralism may ease the consequences of the middle powers' inferior strength is through fora where voting strength is equal among all states, as in the General Assembly of the United Nations. More important, however, is the possibility of building coalitions in a specific issue-area. Multilateralism is then for the middle powers an opportunity to make the stronger weaker and the weaker stronger. This opportunity is more important for middle powers than other secondary powers because of the middle powers' "status as important but not determinants participants in the world economy and polity" (Protheroe; 1988:xi). It is "... the middle-sized powers who are the true stakeholders of multilateralism" (Ostry; 1992:337).

The other variable, responsibility, reflects the development of a certain middle power attitude to international order. During the formation of the United Nations, middle power responsibility was based primarily on the contribution these states had made during the war. They could be "... entrusted to use their power responsibly in the interest of the world community" (MacKay; 1969:137). Later, middle powers have been coupled with peace-keeping and generous aid policies. A common denominator for all these behavioral characteristics is willingness to contribute, in particular when such willingness is voluntary. In Holmes' words, they have acquired a reputation for "producing the goods" (Holmes; 1970:23-4).

The following analysis focuses on a few current indicators of multilateralism and responsibility. The proposition is that middle powers behave in a qualitatively different way: they are more prone to multilateralism and more responsible than other states. In order to support this hypothesis, the middle power group should (I) appear sufficiently homogeneous for the behavioral trait to be considered typical for middle powers,
and (II) appear dissimilar from the other powers, so that the behavioral trait makes the middle powers qualitatively different.

**Empirical indications: Multilateralism**

Multilateralism is inherently coupled with institutions. John G. Ruggie (1992:574) distinguishes between three institutional "expressions": international order, regime and organization. In the middle power literature the focus is generally on international organizations (Keating; 1993:16-20, Doran; 1989, Ostry; 1992, Cooper et.al.; 1993:83-115).

"Middle powers are ... highly dependent on multilateral institutions as vehicles for conducting their international activities and policies, and perceive multilateralism as a counterweight to their relative lack of resources. This dependence should translate into a high degree of support for multilateral cooperation and its institutional mechanisms (Doran; 1989:4).

A first indicator of multilateralism is membership of international organizations, here specified to Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs). According to the hypothesis, middle powers should pursue membership of these organizations since it is within these that middle powers are better able to accomplish their goals and voice their opinions on international issues. There are often several area-specific suborganizations within the larger IGOs (for example the United Nations). Measuring number of IGO memberships thus also indicates preference for a multilateral approach to the various areas of international relations. Table 5 shows the top 50 countries in the world ranked by number of memberships in IGOs.63

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63 In this and the following tables, middle powers are indicated in bold type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Memberships in IGOs</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Memberships in IGOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>458</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>279</td>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>272</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>272</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>270</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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<td>Cameroon</td>
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<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>Brazil</td>
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<td>Costa Rica</td>
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<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>242</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>241</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the table only represents the top fifty countries, the group of middle powers appears a little less clustered than they really are. In fact, twenty out of the twenty-three middle powers are ranked within the top thirty-four. These middle powers span from 444 memberships (Sweden) to 270 memberships (Argentina). Regardless of whether one would find this difference large or small, with only three of the middle

---

powers ranked below thirty-four, it seems that a high level of presence in IGOs is a
typical behavioral feature of middle powers.65

Seven of the eight major powers are represented within the top twenty-four.
China is the anomaly of this group, at thirty-eight. The three countries with the highest
presence in IGOs are major powers, with France, number one, being a member of
almost one hundred more IGOs than Germany in second place. The tendency to seek
intergovernmental organizations as settings for external relations is a behavioral trait
of the major as well as middle powers. Thus the middle powers do not appear to be
qualitatively different from the major powers here. However, compared to the smaller
powers, middle powers are different. Only a few smaller powers are scattered among
the major and middle powers in the top, and the cluster of small powers starts right
below the twenty middle powers.

Joining IGOs over time creates a pattern where a state can be viewed as more or less
open, more or less interested in “pursuing multilateral solutions.” This is a general
indicator of multilateral behavior, a more specific measurement would show to what
degree states choose multilateral as opposed to bi-lateral options for a specific area.
This type of indicator can be found for the member states of the Development
Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. Table 6 ranks these states according to

65 These numbers cast some doubt on Cooper's (1997:11-12) description of Canada as the
“quintessential joiner” of international organizations, versus Norway as a “classic non-joiner.” Cooper
bases this characterization on Norway's decision to stay outside the European Union, but as the table
shows, Norway is overall more of a “joiner” than is Canada. Cooper must also have forgotten that there
are numerous organizations connected to or based within the European Union, several of which Norway
is a member.
the percentage of their Official Development Assistance (ODA) that is of a multilateral character.\textsuperscript{66}

Table 6. DAC Member States by \% Multilateral Aid of Total ODA, 1997.\textsuperscript{67}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Multilateral Aid % of ODA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>66.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>47.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>44.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>42.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>40.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>40.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>36.30</td>
</tr>
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<td>Luxembourg</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>26.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>24.50</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>22.80</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>16.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>13.10</td>
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</table>

Average for major powers 35.4
Average for middle powers 31.3
Average for small powers 29.7

\textsuperscript{66} Wood (1988) in the series \textit{Middle Powers in the International System} mixes the two variables multilateralism and responsibility together. In a study in the same series, Protheroe (1988) examines this combined variable more closely. He measures whether middle powers are "good multilateral citizens" by looking at their financial support for the UN. However, such a measurement reflects the answer to the question "to pay or not to pay?," an answer that is likely to reflect a variety of factors besides multilateralism. It is possible that whether states pay their UN bills has little to do with the degree to which they favor multilateralism (the United States is an illustrative example). The two variables should therefore be kept separate, and a "cleaner" measurement of multilateralism is for example percentage of ODA channeled multilaterally. These results will reflect the answer to the question "when to pay, should it be bi- or multilaterally?"

Since about one-half of the middle powers are represented on this committee, restrictions apply to generalizations for the middle power group as a whole. Meanwhile, all three types of powers are represented, enabling meaningful group comparisons. (Indicators where there are observations as many as there are countries in the world create very uneven categories, with eight major, twenty-three middle and 150 or so small powers.)

The first impression of the table is an almost perfect distribution of middle powers, with a larger group ranked in the middle, and a few scoring higher and lower respectively. The dispersion is weaker when the actual scores are considered. Finland is the highest ranked middle power with 47.4 percent of its aid channeled multilaterally, Australia is the lowest with 20.7 percent. This difference is small when compared to the total stretch within the DAC members, which ranges from 66.4 (Italy) to 13.1 (Japan). Thus the middle powers appear as a fairly coherent group.

The major powers are spread out even more than the middle powers. Italy is at the very top with 66.4 percent, Japan is at the other end with 13.1 percent. However, the average for the major power group, 35.4, is the highest of the three groups. The averages for the middle and smaller powers are 31.3 and 29.7 respectively. The average for the major powers clearly picks up a strong pull by Italy at the top, which stands out as an exception, far above the next highest state. Without Italy, the average for the major power group is 29.3. Although this gives the edge to the middle powers, the difference is slight. Within the DAC, the middle powers do not stand out as more multilateral than the other powers.
Empirical indications: Responsibility

Inherent in the argument that middle powers are particularly responsible lies a significant part of the normative element that has always been part of the middle power idea. Subject to both praise and criticism, the idea that middle powers are particularly unselfish in their behavior remains in common usage. The most popular claim to middle power responsibility is their willingness to contribute to United Nations peacekeeping operations (Wood; 1988:10-11, Neack; 1995:224, Holmes; 1966, Hayes; 1997).

In Holmes' words (1970:24) "... participating in peacekeeping operations... has become a badge of midllepowermanship...."

United Nations peacekeeping operations are established as ad hoc arrangements. No article in the Charter states the rules for this practice, and there are no regulations for country participation in the Charter (Siekmann; 1991:3, International Peace Academy; 1984:26). Some informal guiding principles have developed over the years. Most important, however, is that contributions are voluntary, and participation is optional (Siekmann; 1991:45).

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68 The first paragraph of Article 43 in the United Charter reads: "All members of the United Nations, in order to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, undertake to make available to the Security Council, on its call and in accordance with a special agreement or agreements, armed forces, assistance, and facilities, including rights of passage, necessary for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security." This is the only article in the Charter which explicitly refers to the supply of troops, and it concerns member states' duty to have forces on stand-by for the use of the United Nations. No such duty has been established by law (Siekmann; 1991:61-2).

69 The practice of recruitment today is that of a request from the UN (Siekmann; 1991:47). Some guidelines are applied when contributors are chosen. First and foremost is the consideration to the host government, whose approval of the composition of the force is necessary (International Peace Academy; 1984:359). Generally permanent members of the Security Council are excluded (although exceptions are made to this rule, for example France in UNIFIL and UK in UNFICYP). In addition, countries which may have a special interest in the situation (from its geographical position or for other reasons) are also excluded (International Peace Academy; 1984:359). Considerations are also made to ensure a broad geographical representation of the force (International Peace Academy; 1984:26).
This variable is measured along two dimensions: number of missions a country participates in and the strength of the contribution made to these missions. As of November 30, 1998, there were 16 ongoing peacekeeping missions. As of November 30, 1998, there were 16 ongoing peacekeeping missions. Table 7 lists the countries that participated in these missions at that time. This gives an indicator on whether middle powers are qualitatively different peacekeepers today.

Table 7. Country Participation in Peacekeeping Operations as of Nov. 30 1998.

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<th>MUNPAC</th>
<th>UNMOP</th>
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</table>

70 On 25 February 1999 the Security Council failed to adopt a resolution that would have extended the mandate of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Russia abstained, China vetoed). The old mandate expired 28 February 1999. The mandate for the United Nations Mission of Observers in Angola (MONUA) expired 26 February 1999. Termination was recommended by Secretary-General Kofi Annan as the peace process in the country had collapsed.

<table>
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<tr>
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</table>

The following countries participated in 3 missions:

- Bulgaria
- Fiji
- Greece
- Lithuania
- Malawi
- Mali
- Romania
- Tunisia

The following countries participated in 2 missions:

- Australia
- Brazil
- Greece
- Lithuania
- Slovenia
- Thailand
- Venezuela
- Benin
- Estonia
- Namibia
- Spain
- Togo
- Zambia

The following countries participated in 1 mission:

- Albania
- Congo
- Gabon
- G. Bissau
- Japan
- Singapore
- Burkina Faso
- Cote D'Ivoire
- Gambia
- Honduras
- Kyrgyzstan
- Tanzania
- Chad
- El Salvador
- Guinea
- Iceland
- Niger
- Zimbabwe

Twenty-one of the twenty-three middle powers were participating at the time (the two non-participants were Mexico and South Africa). Canada and Poland were most active, each with 10 missions. There is a top group of middle powers, consisting of Canada, Poland, Argentina, Austria and the Nordic middle powers. All these
participated in eight or more missions. At the same time, there is an almost equally large group of middle powers such as Greece, Korea, the Netherlands, Australia, Brazil, Spain and Thailand, all who participated in three or fewer missions. Moreover, in between these two groups the remaining middle powers are spread across every level of participation. Because of the even distribution, it is difficult to locate the middle powers on the table as more or less frequent participators. The only behavioral trait typical of the group as a whole is participation in itself.

All eight major powers are represented on the list. Thus participation in itself is not a middle power trait any more than it is a major power trait. A comparison with small powers would be somewhat unfair, as by the definitions here there would be 150 or so small powers in the world. It would not be possible for all these at any given moment to participate at the same time. But the table does show that more than one-half of the participating countries (48) are small powers. Based on this and particularly the presence of all the major powers in the table, the middle powers as a group are not qualitatively different here from other powers when it comes to being a participator in peacekeeping missions.

Commitment to peacekeeping also involves the amount of resources participating countries are willing to contribute. Table 8 ranks the countries from Table 7 according to the strength of their contribution.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{72} Total strength includes police, troops and observers.
### Table 8. Participating States ranked according to Strength of Contribution.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total Strength</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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<td>50</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>167</td>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>56</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Greece</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Namibia</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following countries had a total strength of less than 10:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Rep.</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Buissau</td>
<td>Venezuela</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>Albania</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The two strongest contributors are middle powers; Poland and India. Canada has moved down from the previous table. Finland has moved up, contributing significantly more than its Nordic counterparts partaking in the same number of missions. Again, the middle powers are almost evenly distributed: five are in the top with more than 600 troops, and seven contribute less than 40 troops. In between these two groups, the remaining middle powers are spread out. Canada and Sweden contribute over 200 troops, the Netherlands, Portugal and Norway more than 100, and finally Indonesia, Spain and Turkey more than 40. As with participation, the middle powers can not easily be grouped within this table as strong or weak contributors. The only way middle powers could be qualitatively different on this indicator is through superior strength. This is difficult to find, even if, in a desperate attempt, one were to argue that the top group was significant enough (consisting of Poland, India, Finland, Austria and Argentina). Bangladesh, Ghana, Ireland, Nepal and Fiji are all contributors at the same level. Two of the major powers, France and the US are also significant personnel contributors.

Another typical “responsible” middle power behavioral trait is their level of foreign aid (Stokke;1989, Pratt;1990). Table 9 shows the DAC members ranked by percentage of GNP donated to foreign aid.
Table 9. DAC Member States ranked by percent Foreign Aid of GNP.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>ODA % of GNP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>0.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average major powers</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average middle powers</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average small powers</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are four middle powers in the top, the Scandinavian states and the Netherlands, all with a percentage score far above the rest of the DAC members. The gap down to France from the Netherlands is .33 percentage points. The gap down to the rest of the middle powers is even greater, from .81 percent (the Netherlands) to .34

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percent (Belgium). The rest of the middle powers are fairly close together, ranging from .34 percent to .21 percent (Portugal).

The average percentage for the middle powers is .49, with .32 and .26 for the small and major states respectively. From this it seems that middle powers are qualitatively different on this indicator. However, the joint effort of the Scandinavian states and the Netherlands is very high above that of the other middle powers. The middle power average without the top four is .29, lower than the small states and not very far above that of the major powers. The median score also indicates that the top four are not very representative for the middle power group as a whole: the middle power median percentage is .34, with .28 and .32 for the major and smaller powers respectively. A high level of foreign aid is a behavioral trait of the Scandinavian states and the Netherlands, and these states do indeed appear to be qualitatively different from the rest. But this does not reflect the middle power group as a whole.

In summary, the hypothesized qualitative difference between middle powers and others is not evident on the variables tested here. Middle powers are more prone to membership in IGOs than small powers but not more so than major powers. The average percentage of foreign aid that is multilateral is almost the same for all the three power groups in the DAC. On these two indicators of multilateralism, middle powers are not qualitatively different from other powers. There are also signs that the commonly claimed connection between middle power status and peacekeeping needs reevaluation. Although some of the middle powers are frequent participators and contribute substantial resources to these operations, it is difficult to identify group homogeneity on these variables. The middle powers show varying degrees of
responsibility, they are represented at the lowest as well as highest levels. Moreover, at any of these levels they are accompanied by other powers. The average level of foreign aid is higher for middle powers than others, but this average reflects the policies of a small group of states. Thus the middle powers do not appear to be more responsible than other powers.

Now there is no reason to get overly upset on behalf of the middle powers about these results. The middle powers are still multilateral and responsible, they are just not necessarily more so than other powers. Furthermore, some of the traditional observations are supported here. Canada still appears to be a committed peacekeeper, whether Canadians may still claim "ownership" to this UN function is perhaps debatable.75 Likewise, the often pronounced generosity of the Scandinavian aid programs is supported by these findings. However, neither of these two cases is representative of the behavior of the middle power group as a whole.

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CONCLUSION

This thesis started with the observation that we commonly connect middle power status to certain behavioral characteristics. The aim was to assess on what grounds, theoretically and empirically, we make this connection. The idea of a qualitative difference was coupled with middle power status early on, but with fifty or so years of investigation, it still remains a problematic argument.

In asking how the argument is constructed theoretically, I found that this side of the idea is often left unexplained, and that there is really no "theory of middle powers" to speak of. The ideas on middle powers and their behavior that are available are often atheoretical and case-oriented. In order to create a clearer and thereby hopefully improved analytical structure of the argument, I organized the different ideas into a model. This model shows clearly the placement of independent versus dependent variables. I settled for a "naked" definition of middle powers based on relative power. The various suggested behavioral characteristics of middle powers contain the qualitative difference, and these were organized in the model as dependent variables. The model is a preliminary construction. Nevertheless, several common versions of the qualitative difference argument can be located in this structure. It therefore appears that the middle power idea can (and perhaps should) be subject to more theoretical rigor than has previously often been the case.

In the next step, I applied this framework to investigate the empirical substance of the argument that middle powers are qualitatively different. The capability-based definition is not unproblematic to apply. Acknowledging that the cut off is arbitrary, I suggested a group of middle sized countries in terms of GNP as middle powers. This
group overlaps considerably with previous definitions, ensuring relevance of the findings. There are three different sub arguments within the model. The one with the most empirical potential is the idea that the behavioral qualitative difference can be found in a certain approach that these states have to international relations. Two of these variables posit respectively that middle powers are more multilateral and more responsible than other states. When testing the middle powers' behavior on a few current indicators of these two variables, the argued qualitative difference was difficult to find. The question now is whether the middle power idea should be taken off the life-support it seems to have been on for quite some time within the international relations literature. Are the skeptics right that there is no such thing as a meaningful middle power category?

To affirm that would be a premature conclusion. Clearly, one could use other indicators of multilateralism and responsibility that might give different results. The model also included other variables that were considered part of middle powers' distinctive approach. It could also be, as some have suggested, that the qualitative difference of the middle powers can only be appreciated in an "unscientific way." Perhaps it is true, that the middle powers in a continuous search for their place in the system and a meaning for their existence as middle powers, show a qualitative difference in their behavior that is too elusive and invariable to catch with theoretical generalizations and empirical testing across cases.

Regardless of the truth of these ideas, it is not a daring prediction that occasional secondary power leadership and distinctive behavior will continue to occur. I believe what MacKay said about Canada three decades ago is relevant today for the middle power idea as a whole: "... the label stuck, and it still sticks, whatever its
present significance or validity" (1969:133). In the event that the argument of a qualitative difference will continue to surface, I hope to have pointed out that it is important to set higher standards for both its theoretical clarity and empirical verifications.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Sethi, J. D. "India as Middle Power." *India Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (1969): 107-121.


