

Canada-China Relations in the Age of Great Power Competition: An Assessment of Canadian
Foreign Policy Decision Making and Strategic Outlook

By

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
In
International Affairs

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Ottawa, Ontario

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Abstract

Canada has, so far, awkwardly navigated the current U.S.-China geopolitical competition undertaking an ambiguous position, often labeled as inaction in policy circles, that has rendered any foreign policy decisions difficult to assess from a strategic perspective. Despite bilateral frictions that saw Sino-Canadian relations brought to their lowest point since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1970, the Canadian government has yet to embark on a policy direction that would see it in strategic opposition to China regardless of the path its closest ally and current hegemon, the United States, has set for itself. The Canadian government has, in fact, adopted a hedging approach to the U.S.-China rivalry. Canadian foreign policy decision making, despite being in contradiction to traditional international theories that would see it balance with Washington, is consistent with Canada's policy of engagement towards China which emphasizes the need to work constructively with Beijing and the irrationality of containment for Canadian interests. Structural level theories, in treating middle powers like Canada as policytakers in the same manner as lesser powers, forgo their very role as supporters and builders of the Liberal International Order and, hence, their strategic commitment to enforcing its core tenets even in the absence of an American buttress. The current state of Canadian foreign policy exhibits an approach to great power competition anchored in the established order that recognizes the drawbacks of both balancing and bandwagoning in light of the framework Washington and Beijing have adopted to their rivalry.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the following people, without whom I would not have been able to complete this research:

My supervisor, Dr. David Carment, for his continuous support, insight, and dedication throughout the research project.

My advisor, Dr. Jeremy Paltiel, for inspiring the topic of this research, for his expert advice, and for being a great mentor.

The remainder of the thesis examination board, Margaret Cornish, Dr. Yangling Wang, and Dr. Meredith Lilly for investing time and effort into making this research better.

A special thank you to my friends, family, and beautiful soon-to-be wife, Brianna, for their unconditional love and support.

Finally, a special thought for my mother-in-law, Jocelyne, who passed away tragically at the onset of this research. Forever my guardian angel.

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Canada-China Relations in the Age of Great Power Competition: An Assessment of Canadian Foreign Policy Decision making and Strategic Outlook

“America has no permanent friends or enemies, only interests” – Henry Kissinger.

Road Map

When Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor landed on the tarmac of the Calgary International Airport on September 24, 2021, it marked the start of a critical juncture for not only Canada-China relations but also Ottawa’s relationship with the United States. While most would tend to agree with the former part of this statement, the latter is more controversial across Canadian opinions. In the past few years, Canadians have been rudely awakened to the vulnerability of their country to the inescapable forces of U.S. hegemony. Historically shielded from the center of geopolitical conflict, Canadians tend to think of their reality as one that is relatively safeguarded from displays of international power. The predominance of the United States, its one and only neighbour, foremost ally, and world hegemon, accounts for much of that sense of security. The global dominance of the United States, however, is declining, with the international system increasingly shifting to a multipolar order. Across the Pacific Ocean, China’s spectacular rise from the remnants of civil war in 1949 to great power status has brought back great power competition to the international agenda. The debacle of the two Michaels served as an utmost illustration to Canadians that Canada can easily get caught in the crosshairs of this new U.S.–China power rivalry and that the consequences can be dire.

Canada has, so far, awkwardly navigated the current U.S.-China geopolitical competition undertaking an ambiguous position, often labeled as inaction in policy circles, that has rendered any foreign policy decisions difficult to assess from a strategic perspective. Despite bilateral frictions that saw Sino-Canadian relations brought to their lowest point since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1970, the Canadian government has yet to embark on a policy direction that would see it in strategic opposition to China regardless of the path its closest ally and current hegemon, the United States, has set for itself. Speaking on the normalization of Canada-China relations in 2021, then-

Foreign Affairs Minister, Marc Garneau, stated that the “four Cs”—co-exist, compete, co-operate, and challenge—would shape Ottawa’s approach to Beijing, further stressing that constructive (albeit selective) engagement would persist. Taken alone, Canada’s response might seem like an anomaly given its historical commitment to Canada-U.S. relations and to the Liberal International Order¹. But to understand Ottawa’s reaction to the ongoing rivalry between Washington and Beijing, we must first broaden our scope by investigating how hegemony transitions from one great power to another and, subsequently, how states navigate these moments of transitions in *theory*. Theories of international relations allow us to position where Canada *should* theoretically find itself within the evolving balance of power where the United States is no longer the sole hegemon. Similarly, as the last iteration of the phenomenon, the Cold War offers important evidence on how states *have* aligned themselves in the hegemonic competition that saw the making of the current international order, i.e., how states behaved in *practice*. Canada’s reaction to the Cold War was reflective of the broader response Western middle powers adopted to the U.S.-Soviet rivalry and in adherence with the prescriptions of mainstream international relations theory by supporting the strategic interests of the United States against that of the Soviet Union. The middle power research program, however, clashes with traditional theoretical prescriptions, arguing that states of middling capabilities have their strategic interests anchored in the established order for a multitude of reasons, often confused as a deeper attachment to the United States as a hegemon. Whereas this clash did not surface during the Cold War, today, America’s approach to the established order, its allies, and its strategic rivalry with China is inherently different from the Cold War era which has prompted novel reactions from middle powers, in challenge to mainstream international relations theories. Middle powers have demonstrated their ability to move beyond the dichotomy of balancing and bandwagoning that is pre-ordained to them by the realist and

¹ Sometimes called “Rules-Based International Order”. This author prefers the usage of “Liberal International Order” for it better depicts the normative character of the current US-led international order grounded in political liberalism, economic liberalism, and international liberalism.

liberal schools of thought in adopting strategic positions that make use of both engagement and containment policies vis-à-vis China. Investigating the nature of this shift is imperative to understand the implications for the current Canadian response to the evolving balance of power. Canadian foreign policy decision making with regards to China, likewise, points to a departure from theoretical directions but empirical evidence has yet to be laid out to support such argumentation, hence the need for analysis that permits inferences about Ottawa's current strategic outlook.

Research Objectives and Contribution to Theory

This research begins with the assumption that the unipolar moment is coming to an end and that the ongoing structural shift we are witnessing is one of hardening multipolarity ushered by BRICS² countries with China leading the charge as Washington's primary competitor. This research also builds on established perceptions of Canada's role in the world, informed by a review of the literature, as one of middle power. The contested operationalization of "middle power" is neither of interest to us nor does it impede the work of this enquiry as most of the literature recognizes that Canadian policymakers have always understood their country's role within the lens of middlepowermanship. Nonetheless, some attention is paid in the next section to position the concept within international relations theory. The primary objective of this research is to understand which elements of Canadian foreign policy are most influential for the current state of foreign policy decision making with regards to China. The secondary objective is to build upon the primary aim of this study to make inferences about Canada's current strategic leaning in the U.S.-China rivalry i.e., to identify whether Ottawa is balancing, bandwagoning, or hedging.

This research contributes to both Canadian foreign policy and international relations theory. In Canada's short history, the country has only undergone one hegemonic transition when *Pax*

² Acronym for five non-Western major emerging economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

Britannica was replaced by *Pax Americana*³ following the end of the Second World War. Ottawa then moved the direction of its foreign policy away from the historical motherland for the rising American behemoth. This transition from one Anglo-Saxon Western power to another and, likewise, from Canada's colonial patron to its neighbour with similar ties to the declining hegemon was relatively comfortable. The transition also occurred at a moment in history when Canada was internationally immature.

In policy terms, this has translated in a general lack of experience from Canadian policymakers who currently struggle to cope with the decline of its greatest ally and neighbour and the implications it carries for the Liberal International Order. Furthermore, Canada struggles to manage China's ambitions for the global order which are partly antithetical of Ottawa's. Canada now finds itself between a rock and a hard place. Whilst the objectives of this research are empirical rather than normative, this study, nonetheless, offers a contribution to policy by breaking down the implications of the U.S.-China rivalry for Canadian foreign policy, making clear where its interests lie in comparison to that of the two great powers. Looking at the current geopolitical environment from a broader middle power perspective, this research should help policymakers to better understand the preferred normative directions for Canadian foreign policy seen within the lens of Canada's historical approach to international affairs. Similarly, this research should clarify the pitfall of adopting a dichotomous vision to the U.S.-China rivalry where Ottawa can either and only support a declining hegemon or sacrifice Canadian interests in siding with China. In doing so, policymakers should come to understand the viability of a third strategic option in guiding foreign policy decisions, a timely realization given that this government continues to operate in the absence of a clear strategy.

Furthermore, mainstream international relations theories fail to explain the current state of Canadian foreign policy decision making with regards to its relationship with China. Canada enjoys a

³ Shorthand for American hegemony since 1945.

particular position within the international structure that is of great contribution to theory: a strategically and neighbour of the declining hegemon whose approach to great-power rivalry is directly challenging core Canadian interests. Canadian foreign policy's current disconnect with theory suggests that there are more determinative factors to be considered when examining middle powers more generally. Adopting a disciplined configurative/interpretive approach to theory, the research establishes that, while traditional international relations theories provide the groundwork to understand how hegemony shifts, their account of how states react to transitions of power is incomplete. Theories like hedging, which confer a greater amount of agency to middle powers in international affairs, offer additional perspectives that facilitate our understanding of how states navigate the current great power competition between the U.S. and China. Such findings point to a need for realist and liberal theorists to look beyond the traditional dichotomies of balancing/bandwagoning and great powers/lesser powers in theorizing states' responses to hegemonic competition. In doing so, Realism and Liberalism must recalibrate their conception of the middle power concept which ascribes a preordained status quo role to that grouping of states, in contradiction to empirical evidence.

To achieve these objectives, this study will seek to answer the research question in multiple phases. First, I will demonstrate why Canada's current reaction to the ongoing great power rivalry is a research problem worth unpacking and present the research question as well as my main arguments. Second, I will situate the research question within the broader body of literature on Canadian foreign policy with the aim to identify its historical determinants. Third, I will present a robust theoretical framework by supplementing international relations theory with additional perspectives to better represent Canadian foreign policy determinants and the objectives of the study. Fourth, I will lay out the methodology used to carry out the research including its variables, research technique, case selection, data collection and interpretation, and hypotheses. Fifth, I will establish a comparison

baseline of Sino-Canadian relations from which data collection will be evaluated in making inferences about Ottawa's strategic leanings. Sixth, I will independently analyze five cases of importance to Canada's triadic relationship with China and the United States to support my arguments. Lastly, based on the results of each case, I will conclude on their aggregated implications for the research question and objectives as well as future directions for research, theory, and policy.

Research Problem

The Rise and Fall of Great Powers in International Relations Theory

A particular subset of international relations theory—hegemonic transition theories—offer a varying degree of system-wide perspectives on the rise and fall of great powers in the international system. *Balance of Power Theory*, *Balance of Threat Theory*, *Power Transition Theory*, *Offensive Realism*, and *Hegemonic Stability Theory* pose as the leading frameworks in the literature on the phenomenon of hegemonic change. Of special interest to this study are their prescriptions on how hegemony transitions from one great power to another and how other states react to these periods of transitions. These leading theories, which take center stage in the realist and liberal schools of thought, are summarized in Appendix A.

Balance of Power Theory prescribes that relative power equilibrium across great powers ushers peace whereas power disequilibrium makes conflict inevitable, hence resulting in transitions of power, because rising powers are always dissatisfied with the status quo (Waltz, 1979). States seek to maximize their security but not power, as power maximization will ultimately lead them to conflict through relative imbalances (Waltz, 1979). In response, states will seek to balance the rising power by building coalitions or, on the contrary, will recognize that their interests are better served by the challenging hegemon leading to their bandwagoning (Waltz, 1979). *Balance of Threat Theory* refutes Waltz's (1979) conception that power asymmetry in favour of one power leads to an international reaction from other

powers to restore balance (Walt, 2013). States react against perceived *threats* (seen as aggregate capabilities, geography, and perceptions of aggressive intentions) from rising hegemons rather than *power* which, in turn, results in transitions of power internationally (Walt, 2013). In reaction, contingent upon their positioning within the international structure and their analysis of the level of threat, states will choose to either challenge or accept the rising hegemon (Walt, 2013). States of lesser power are more inclined to bandwagon with the rising hegemon, especially when their geographic position makes them prone to its offensive capabilities and distant from allies, whereas stronger states will seek to protect the status quo by balancing against the rising power (Walt, 2013).

Offensive Realism proposes a third option to balancing and bandwagoning. The anarchic structure of the international system is portrayed as an environment where power maximization is the only way to ensure survival (Mearsheimer, 2014). Issues of relative gains and collective action make balancing operations challenging in the face of a threatening rising power (Mearsheimer, 2014). States are, therefore, less concerned with security maximization than strengthening their capabilities (power) to safeguard against other powerful actors (Mearsheimer, 2014). Thus, a race for power is perceived as the catalyst for hegemonic change. *Offensive Realism* proposes that states will seek to bandwagon, balance, or buckpass (when a great power purposely relays the balancing task to another party to steer away from confrontation with the rising power) in reaction to hegemonic transitions, depending on the nature of the system. (Mearsheimer, 2014). In a bipolar structure, balancing is the only option available against a rising great power as there is no one to pass the buck to (Mearsheimer, 2014). In unipolar moments⁴, other great powers are too weak to receive the buck, leading to common balancing against the rising threat (Mearsheimer, 2014). Multipolarity is most attractive for buckpassing as multiple states can receive the buck (Mearsheimer, 2014). However, when the threat from the rising

⁴ Mearsheimer rather uses the term “unbalanced multipolarity” when one state is markedly more powerful than its neighbours.

power becomes too great and/or when the party receiving the buck fails to act, such strategy is quickly replaced by balancing (Mearsheimer, 2014).

Hegemonic Stability Theory is both adopted by realists and liberals. Realists argue that the presence of a single hegemonic power is what leads to long-lasting periods of peace (Gilpin, 1981). Whichever state can exercise the most power—a mix of economic might, military capabilities, political strength, and prestige—and whichever state expresses the greatest capability to lead will inevitably rise as the dominant entity, effectively shaping the world order to its interests and values (Gilpin, 1981). The hegemon creates a global regime “defined as sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations” (Krasner, 1983, p. 2). The hegemon maintains its position atop of the international hierarchy for as long as it uses its overall power to bear the supply of public goods and loses its primacy when it stops to do so and/or relatively to another rising power (Gilpin, 1981). The stability period ends with the orchestration of a new order by the rising power (Gilpin, 1981). Support for the hegemon is, thus, conditional upon its relative provisions of economic and security guarantees for lesser powers compared to what the rising power offers (Gilpin, 1981).

Liberals add that “consent to lead” is another key aspect of *Hegemonic Stability Theory* (Keohane, 1984). Non-great powers and institutions have more agency than the realist school prescribes. The self-reinforcing character of institutions, working for the provision of common goods, secures the consent from non-great powers to support the established order and the hegemon’s ability to lead (Ruggie, 1982; Ikenberry, 1998; Keohane, 1984). International orders are also perceived as capable of operating in peace without a hegemon by virtue of the normative power of institutions to usher consent across global actors (Ruggie, 1982; Ikenberry, 1998; Keohane, 1984). States also seek to create complex interdependence with great powers to decrease their vulnerability in multiple realms beyond security at a low cost (Keohane, 1984). Therefore, conditional upon their adherence with the

normative character of the order and the provision of public goods, states will either support the current order or work to its reform (Ikenberry, 1998; Keohane, 1984).

Finally, *Power Transition Theory* argues that the international order is both static and dynamic. Hegemony transitions from one hand to another, often through war, when the relative political, military, and economic capabilities attain homogenous levels between two hegemonic states and/or when the rising power has overtaken the declining hegemon (Organski, 1958; Organski & Kuegler, 1980). Contrarily, gaps in relative growth rates create a static hierarchic structure that favours peace (Organski, 1958; Organski & Kuegler, 1980). Unlike other realist theories, *Power Transition Theory* believes peaceful hegemonic transitions are possible when the rising power is, in large part, content with the status quo (Organski, 1958; Organski & Kuegler, 1980). States react to changes in the international balance of power through a mix of national-level variables. The varying commitment of these national-level variables to the current global order determines a state's level of satisfaction with its position within the hierarchy and, by extension, its position with regards to the hegemon and rising power (Organski, 1958; Organski & Kuegler, 1980).

Hegemonic transition theories may seem to vary widely but there is actually more commonality than meets the eye. In fact, these leading perspectives all point to the status quo being altered when the current hegemon declines whether it be economically, militarily, an aggregation of multiple factors, or when it waives its global leadership role. Additionally, support for the system is contingent on the provision of common goods for other actors within the international structure who are charged with the strengthening or weakening of the status quo by bandwagoning, balancing, or buckpassing against threats to the hegemon. On international orders writ large, whereas liberals believe the Liberal International Order to be much "stickier" by virtue of the normative power of its institutions for other states within the system, realists confer little agency to lesser powers and, by extension, believe international institutions to be entirely a reflection of the global distribution of power. Institutions are

not believed to evolve in parallel to power distribution but in sync. In other words, international institutions are primarily, if not entirely, a reflection of the normative interests of the dominant hegemon. Such pre-conditions and the degree to which they prove to be true in practice have direct informative value for the current context, specifically for middle powers traditionally aligned with the Western bloc.

Middle Powers in International Relations Theory

The above academic debates largely overlook the implications of hegemonic competition for middle powers. This is largely explained by the fact that traditional international relations theories heed little to middle powers as a concept and category. Most theories focus on interactions amongst great powers and between great powers and lesser powers. As non-great powers, states of middling capabilities are often relegated to the latter dichotomy with regards to their influence on the system, stripped of their agency as global *policymakers*, rather seen through the prism of *policytakers*.

Realism and Liberalism offer different images of the concept of “middle power”, reflecting each tradition’s central assumptions about international relations. Realists see middle powers through the lens of *power* which assumes them a preordained role in the international system. Their position is regarded to be above that of small powers yet distant from that of great powers by virtue of their relative material capabilities (Wilkins, 2019). Assumed to play a role of stabilizer/legitimiser to the international order, middle powers are seen as especially sensitive to changes in the balance of power resulting in their status-quo orientation (Wilkins, 2019). Liberals agree with this characterization of middle powers as stabilizer/legitimiser of the international order but rather attribute this status-quo orientation to behavioural and normative qualities (Wilkins, 2019). Middle powers are defined not by *power* but by the *role* they ought to play internationally which often amounts to the provision or reinforcement of public goods and a proclivity for multilateralism, alliance-building, and norm/rule enforcement set by the hegemon(s) (Wilkins, 2019).

As a result, international relations theories lend little policy options to middle powers in moments of hegemonic competition. States of middling capabilities are argued to be bound to varieties of bandwagoning or balancing against rising powers, a conventional image the Cold War reinforced (see Appendix B). Stephen Walt (2013) and Kenneth Waltz (1979) argue that states of lesser stature internationally will opt to bandwagon with the rising power either for profit maximization or when overtly vulnerable to its offensive capabilities whereas stronger states will seek to protect the status quo by building coalitions against the rising power. Conversely, Gilpin (1981) believes that support for the hegemon is conditional upon its relative provision of economic and security guarantees for lesser states compared to what the rising power offers; again, binding middle powers to a dichotomous choice. In near adherence to Gilpin, Liberals argue that states will support the status quo conditional upon their adherence with the normative character of the order and the provision of public goods by the hegemon (Ikenberry, 1998; Keohane, 1984). Keohane (1984) also contends that lesser powers seek to create complex interdependence with great powers to decrease their vulnerability in multiple realms beyond security at a low cost. These reactions again amount to a form of balancing or bandwagoning. Similarly, Organski & Kuegler (1980) predict that the varying commitment of national-level variables to the current global order determines a state's level of satisfaction with its position within the hierarchy and, by extension, its desire to either bandwagon with or balance against the rising power. Finally, although Mearsheimer (2014) seems to offer a third policy option in buckpassing, his theory only confers that luxury to great powers, not middle powers.

Thus, the general assumption, in mainstream international relations theory, is that middle powers are inherently status quo as a result of their role as both supporters and legitimizers (not builders) of *Pax Americana*. Western middle power diplomacy flourished for most of *Pax Americana* as the order offered a number of favourable structural pre-conditions through the provision of key public goods in the form of international institutions, multilateral arrangements, and security and economic

guarantees (Layne, 2012). The United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are often cited as the prime representations of those public goods. The underpinnings of the Liberal International Order have worked to the proliferation of middle power activism. As non-great powers, states of middling capabilities are more vulnerable to the reach of great powers and, consequently, prefer to operate within a structure that constrains power preponderance and unilateral action through the enforcement of set rules and norms, i.e., multilateral institutions. In the current order, these institutions are an extension of American hegemony, hence the misconception that middle powers' vested interest in ensuring the survival of these forums is rather a commitment to U.S. hegemony (Manicom & Reeves, 2014).

International institutions are the linchpin of middle power diplomacy. States of middling capabilities concentrate their activism in multilateral fora to overcome power asymmetries against greater powers and to gain legitimacy in addressing global issues. Central to liberal conceptualizations of middle power, this grouping amalgamates national interest with cosmopolitanism under the umbrella of "good international citizenship" (Efstathopoulos, 2018; Cooper et al., 1993). Western middle powers act as enforcers of global liberal norms/rules in a form of enlightened self-interest that dictates the proliferation of these norms/rules as good for the community of states while shoring up the country's international status as a moral agent (Cox 1989; Efstathopoulos, 2018).⁵ In seeking recognition as "good international citizens", middle powers resort to alliance-building. They provide intellectual and entrepreneurial leadership through novel ideas and by facilitating consensus in overcoming deadlocks on global issues. Their lack of relative capabilities pushes them to forgo unilateral and bilateral actions in favour of coalitions that amplifies their influence in international relations while further lending to their global clout (Efstathopoulos, 2018). They utilize their soft

⁵ Efstathopoulos (2018) notes that the concept of good international citizen for Western middle powers is highly normative in that their role as norm/rule enforcers is far from cosmopolitan.

power to engage other states through processes of persuasion and consensus-building, rather than coercion, an important distinction from great powers internationally (Nye, 2004). In doing so, middle powers rely extensively on rallying like-minded states around ideas that further constrain power asymmetries internationally (Efsthathopoulos, 2018).

It is, therefore, a fallacy to recognize the status quo orientation of middle powers as static. Although that proved to be largely true during the Cold War because the United States put forward a vision of the international order that worked to their advantage, middle powers tend to have a more status quo orientation only by virtue of their stake in specific elements of the established order. Furthermore, much of their activism revolves around progressive reforms of the system that work to further constrain the overreach of great powers by creating a level-playing field; so not exactly status quo. “If change is afoot, they have an interest in managing that change so that the system that emerges on the other side is one in which they can thrive” (Manicom & Reeves, 2014, p.33). In fact, the middle power research program argues that, certainly, if this category of states has more capabilities than small powers, we can naturally expect them to have more autonomy and agency in their strategic alignment towards rising powers (see Gilley & O’Neil, 2014b). States of middling capabilities can work to either sustain the hegemon by buttressing its leadership and normative ideals internationally as was the case during the Cold War; they can use their residual capacity, in the absence of great power rivalry, to address new international issues of interest through activist diplomacy that seeks to progressively reform marginal elements of the current order; or they can work to accelerate the hegemon’s decline by acquiescing to a different conception of what the global order ought to be (Gilley & O’Neil, 2014a; Paltiel & Nossal, 2019; Manicom & Reeves, 2014). Middle powers can, thus, be said to be fairly influential in moments of hegemonic competition, challenging preconceptions that labels them as policytakers rather than policymakers. Incidentally, today “middle powers have to rethink the premises of their roles and possibilities within an evolving environment without a single, supportive hegemon

and with major powers with whom they do not fully share common norms and values.” (Job, 2020, p.15-16).

The Cold War Analogy, a Lazy Man's Metaphor

As the last iteration of hegemonic competition, naturally a plethora of metaphors to the Cold War have been fabricated in response to the U.S.-China rivalry. The issue with the increasingly popular Cold War metaphor is that it lacks some of the essential and interrelated elements of the United States' geopolitical rivalry with the Soviet Union while falling short of accurately describing the nature of the *current* hegemonic competition (Nye, 2021; Christensen, 2021). Washington and Beijing's rivalry is not one that revolves around ideology. Despite, American rhetoric that today's conflict is about an ideological struggle between liberal democracy and authoritarianism, China does not seek to export its political system internationally nor are its relations with other countries based on an ideological litmus test akin to Cold War blocs (Rolland, 2020; Shambaugh, 2020). In fact, the nature of the current system as well as China's place within it is such that any conception of Beijing and Washington leading opposing alliance systems is defeated. Contrarily to the Soviet Union, China does not seek to overthrow the system that afforded its spectacular rise to hegemony. Rather, Chinese aspirations resemble that of a partial hegemony in its sphere of influence where some of the building blocks that constitute the international system are reformed without dismantling the core tenets of trade and the UN (Rolland, 2020; Shambaugh, 2020). The People's Republic of China (PRC) seeks to exercise its influence over loosely defined portions of the “Global South” free of Western liberal ideals that were put in place by the United States (Rolland, 2020).

Moreover, China's vital position in the global supply chain structure deters many of America's allies to embark on an anti-China coalition with the United States based on a zero-sum approach (Nye, 2021; Christensen, 2021). In fact, many of America's traditional allies, albeit recognizing the challenge of a rising China, disagree that the PRC poses an existential threat to their regime (Christensen, 2021).

Finally, it is hard to imagine the PRC elevating to a degree of revisionism worthy of the Soviet Union any time soon. Other than North Korea with which it shares a mutual defense treaty, China does not entertain alliances in the traditional sense. While it does maintain special strategic partnerships with Russia, Iran, and Pakistan, in particular, those relationships are still a far cry from the U.S. alliance system. “[These relationships] haven’t bolstered China’s ability to project power abroad or to counter the U.S.-led alliance system in East Asia” (Christensen, 2021, p.13).

The changing nature of geopolitical conflict is, nonetheless, not solely attributable to the change in American adversary. When the Cold War ended in 1991, the absence of relative challenge to American power accelerated U.S. hegemony and conferred an embedded liberalist consensus where American values, norms, and rules prevailed and worked synchronously in multilateral, bilateral, and international institutions (Ruggie, 1982). In this unipolar moment, the asymmetry of American power left the interest of the sole hegemon largely unchecked, leading to its greater influence and involvement internationally in what some have characterize as “imperial overstretch” (See Massie & Paquin, 2020). With no significant counterweight to its power, the tenets of American exceptionalism continued to grow, challenging Washington’s support for multilateralism all the while eschewing the norms and rules of the established order middle powers have worked to uphold since 1945. Many pundits point to the events of 9/11 and the Global Financial Crisis of 2008 as the juncture when America’s global leadership commitment began to fracture. The United States’ increased frequency to resort to transactional interests since 2001 speaks to how multilateralism has ceased as a strategic option within American foreign policy circles (Paltiel & Nossal, 2019; McCormick & Schmitz, 2020). This return to a transactional approach was accelerated under President Trump. Many believed that the arrival of Joe Biden in office would mark a return to multilateralism but

the differences between Trump and Biden, meaningful as they are, obscure a deeper truth: there is far more continuity between the foreign policy of the current president and that of the

former president than is typically recognized [...] suggesting a longer-term development—a paradigm shift in the United States’ approach to the world (Haas, 2021, p.2).

Incidentally, this paradigm shift corresponds to the waning of the unipolar moment and the hardening multipolarity we are currently witnessing. America’s relative decline internationally and its approach to cooperation with allies carry significant implications for middle powers as they make up strategic policy decisions against the evolving balance of power. Obsessed over relative gains, Washington has characterized its confrontation with Beijing as one of existential threat and encompassing all aspects of its foreign policy (Job, 2020; Carment & Belo, 2020). Cooperation in an anarchic system is hindered by the value lesser states attribute to their independence from greater powers and by the zero-sum approach these same great powers apply in the face of competition (Grieco et al., 1993). Currently, Washington may be disinclined to hand carrots to its partners by fear that the loss of relative gains will constrain its strategic influence down the line at the hands of Beijing or other competitors (Grieco et al., 1993). Conversely, allies might fear that closer cooperation with the Americans, while alleviating relative gains concerns in the short term, will draw them further into dependence and have a reverse effect on long-term gains by constraining their manoeuvrability towards China (Grieco et al., 1993). Both dynamics work to render cooperation among allies convoluted.

The hardening multipolarity of the international system offers growing opportunities for other states to make gains across geopolitical axes, creating a malaise for today’s great powers. Both the Americans and the Chinese seek to address this malaise by fundamentally revising the order of alliances, solidifying new norms of conducts, and selectively ignoring and/or eroding key aspects of the current order (Job, 2020; Carment & Belo, 2020). The two great powers pressure their allies via unilateral actions to encourage loyalty and punish defection in hopes to maximize their relative gains against their adversary (Carment & Belo, 2020). Through its economic and political domination of

multilateral arrangements, the U.S. has come to weaponize the trade, security, defence, and other aspects of its foreign policy to ensure compliance from its allies with its strategic interests.

[The U.S.] imposes tariffs to force a political result or punish a state for perceived non-compliance with U.S. policy. [...] Non-U.S. corporations with leading-edge technologies are being restricted and/or banned in order to facilitate U.S. catch-up and to inhibit China's attaining dual-use technological superiority. Complex supply chains of the global economy are being fragmented and collaborative scientific research and development relationships ended, under the suspicion that the Chinese Government has and will engage entities, such as 5G leader Huawei, in spying and the theft of intellectual property. Middle powers and small states now find themselves impacted by such policies without regard to their erstwhile alliance relationships with the U.S. (Job, 2020, p.7-8).

Middle Powers in the Post-Cold War Environment

In response to the changing nature of the U.S.-China conflict, several middle powers have recalibrated the strategic approach they had previously adopted after 1945. In fact, traditional theoretical prescriptions have failed to address the novel reactions we have witnessed from this particular grouping of states in the post-Cold War period. Whereas examining these reactions in detail is beyond the scope of this research, generalizations about the grouping can help us understand the nature of this strategic shift and its implications for Canada. Middle powers have their strategic interests anchored in the tenets of the established order, often confused as a deeper attachment to the United States as a hegemon. States of middling capabilities have more autonomy and agency in their strategic alignment towards rising powers than international relations theory prescribes. We, therefore, need to consider additional strategic options available to non-great powers in the international system aside from balancing and bandwagoning to reflect these novel reactions. Soft balancing/bandwagoning, leash-slipping, binding, and hedging pose as the other strategic options

predominantly offered in the literature on the topic. The issue with incorporating each of these concepts is that it inevitably complicates the theoretical soundness of this research by blurring the conceptual differences between each strategic option. Seen as the strongest potential third option and often labeled as a *juste milieu* between bandwagoning and balancing, hedging offers a preferable choice to complement the theoretical framework I have so far set forth.

There is a lot of contention in academia as to what the purpose of hedging is as well as conceptual challenges (See Wilkins, 2021). Conceptual tensions largely stem from the blurry lines between balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging and whether they can be inclusive or are mutually exclusive (Ciorciari & Haacke, 2019). Simply put, hedging can be described as a mixture of countering and engagement policies which brings it along a fine line between the traditional dichotomy of balancing and bandwagoning. Hedging is a response to a security *risk* rather than a security *threat* and should be examined from the lens of a risk management strategy whereas balancing and bandwagoning denote security strategies in response to security *threats* (Haackle, 2019). The difference is subtle but important. Security *risks* are probabilistic and assessed both in terms of their likelihood and magnitude (Haackle, 2019). They are about the odds of certain events or developments and their expectation of harm. This crucial conceptual difference, therefore, points to a comprehension of hedging as not mutually exclusive from balancing and bandwagoning. It is possible that an actor once perceived to represent a *risk* becomes a *threat* and equally possible that a country once not thought to represent much of a *risk* evolves into a *threat* (Haackle, 2019). Hence, to the extent we conceive hedging as a risk mitigation strategy, practically, its application may vary from one state to another due to the subjective character of the exercise and taking into consideration a number of international level pre-conditions (Haackle, 2019). Hedging is seen as an added layer that permits an understanding of strategic options that is not binary but rather continuous along a spectrum where each extreme represents outright balancing or bandwagoning (see Appendix B).

In the post-Cold War era, hedging-like reactions are most often attributed to Asian countries who have come to cope with the decline of American hegemony which has, since 1945, upheld the hub and spokes system in the Asia-Pacific that ushered security and economic guarantees for regional non-great powers. The U.S.' retreat from global leadership has called into question Washington's commitment to the regional security of Southeast Asian countries who simultaneously have to cope with the rise of China and its implications for both regional economy and security. Furthermore, China has overtaken the U.S. as the largest trading partner of Asian countries, now offering preferential economic guarantees (Rajah & Lang, n.d.). In response to the changing nature of the regional order, countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and even Japan and South Korea are considered to have undertaken strategic approaches that can be neither characterized as balancing or bandwagoning and resembling some form of hedging by their mixture of containment and engagement policies (Haacke, 2019). The mainstream characterization of this strategic approach is often represented as Asian countries' continued dependence on American security treaty relationships yet increased economic engagement with China (Haacke, 2019).

Implications for Canada

These novel strategic reactions from middle powers carry significant implications for Canada's current response to the ongoing hegemonic competition which, likewise, seems to follow along the same path of divergence from tradition theoretical prescriptions. Ottawa's position within the balance of power is, however, quite unique compared to that of other middle powers. As a function of its place in North America, a continent historically isolated from the center of geopolitical tensions where the United States is its one and only frontier neighbour, Canada is not only subject to anarchy abroad but is also subject to hierarchy on the continent. Canada's place and behaviour in the world is a function of its subordination to the United States at home, rendering the exercise of middle power behaviour in relation to the US-China rivalry a challenging enterprise (Paltiel & Nossal, 2019). Similarly,

Canada's values and interests abroad have always been built on the platform of its alliance with the United States and their common commitment to the Liberal International Order but, today, that platform has weakened due to Washington's retreat from global leadership and its treatment of allies.

Significant strategic uncertainties, therefore, lie at the core of Canadian foreign policy. How is Canada responding to a declining United States? How can Canadian interests prosper in an international environment that is not buttressed by the United States and increasingly shaped by non-Western spheres of influence, with China leading the charge? How should Canada frame its triadic relationship with the two hegemons? To these questions, hegemonic transition theories suggest that Canada, as a Western middle power, should side with its traditional ally in protecting the status quo against a rising Chinese hegemon. Yet, Canadian foreign policy in this respect has been unclear under this government all the while operating in the absence of a clear made-available strategy on the evolving balance of power that would point towards a form of balancing. Indeed, at times, Canadian foreign policy decisions have reflected strong support for American geopolitical interests aimed at containing China. For instance, sanctions on PRC officials have been enacted in response to human rights violations in the Xinjiang. A diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Beijing Olympics was also announced under the same rationale. The forthcoming Indo-Pacific strategy likewise points to the government accepting a U.S.-centric vision in the Far East. Yet on other fronts, Canada is the only member of the FYEV grouping that has yet to deliberate on Huawei for which Washington has lobbied its banning from 5G infrastructures. Similarly, Canadian economic relations with China have continued their positive outlook despite the souring of bilateral relations and calls for delinking supply chains from the Chinese market by Washington. This potential departure from theoretical prescriptions highlights an anomaly worth examining with Ottawa currently serving as a poster child for the vulnerability of middle powers caught in the crosshairs of the U.S.–China power rivalry (Paltiel, 2018). To that effect, this thesis aims to answer the following research question: *What elements of*

Canadian foreign policy are most influential for the current state of government decision making with regards to Canada's relationship with China, and what conclusions can be inferred about Ottawa's strategic outlook in the evolving balance of power?

The current conceptualization of Canada's strategic outlook with regards to its triadic relationship with Washington and Beijing carries several shortcomings. A relatively small body of scholarly literature has undertaken the challenging task of examining Canada's strategic possibilities in the current hegemonic flux. The literature is mostly concerned with the practical application of *policy* options free of loaded *strategic* labels such as balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging. Most efforts are also forward-looking, concerned with the normative value of a strategic approach but stopping short of empirical analysis of current indicators. Nonetheless, the few attempts to address the research question bifurcate into two camps: those who believe Canada would be best served through a balancing strategy with the U.S. and those who argue that some form of hedging is in Canada's best interest. Bandwagoning with China is widely argued to be an impossible reality for Canadian foreign policy given the importance of Ottawa's bilateral ties with Washington.

Advocates of the balancing approach such as Gilley (2011), McDonough (2012), and Holland (2021) point to the absence of structural or normative incentives to bandwagon with China in the current hegemonic flux as primary argument for balancing against it. Gilley (2011) acknowledges that Canada's strategic options are intrinsically linked to how China will approach the international status quo. The more revisionist Beijing's approach will be, the more likely Canada will balance with the U.S. given its stake in the established order (Gilley, 2011). Conversely, if China adopts a mildly revisionist outlook, selected engagement will be desirable (Gilley, 2011). Similarly, Holland (2021) believes that adopting a U.S.-centric Free and Open Indo Pacific (FOIP) vision to the region would reaffirm Canada's standing as a middle power committed to the Liberal International Order and its normative ideals and strengthen its relationship with the U.S. and other Western allies. Looking at Canada's

historic strategic role in the Asia-Pacific, McDonough (2012) suggests that Canada will, in fact, most likely defer to the U.S. for its strategic leaning given that the deterioration of Canada's relationship with China is seen as less impactful than a deterioration of its long-standing relationship with Washington (Holland, 2021; McDonough, 2012).

The issue with this line of argument is that it purposely omits the range of options, beyond the traditional dichotomy of balancing and bandwagoning, that is available to middle powers. More so, using the dismissal of the bandwagoning option as argument for balancing with the United States rather than pointing to any real benefits to Canadian interests from adopting that position is hardly an argument in itself. Finally, academics omit the ongoing change in American behaviour and its implication for Canada. American foreign policy is characterized as static with no reference to its deliberate undermining of selected elements of the Liberal International Order, its retreat from global leadership, and treatment of allies in its approach to great power competition all of which are in direct antagonism to core Canadian interests. The unidimensional argument that China alone threatens the status quo/the established order is, therefore, defeated.

Proponents of a hedging-like approach address many of these shortcomings. Reeves (2020) refutes lines of argument that would see Canada adopt the FOIP concept, arguing that there is nothing to be gained from a FOIP vision that cannot already be achieved outside the framework, unlike the many other countries partaking in the concept (Reeves, 2020). Instead, by forgoing a strategic alignment through a U.S.-centric FOIP vision, Ottawa can maintain strategic flexibility with regards to China allowing it greater room for maneuver in policy decisions (Reeves, 2020). Similarly, Paltiel & Nossal (2019) & Paltiel (2020) adopt the idea of a *juste milieu* strategy and argue that Canada's strategic choice should not be seen as a dichotomous course of action between working with a declining and increasingly transactional United States or sacrificing Canadian values to work with China. Rather, in the absence of a strong platform to bulwark the Liberal International Order, middle powers should

take a “defensive realignment” that makes the best out of the hardening multipolarity to uplift the core tenets of the order (Paltiel & Nossal, 2019; Paltiel, 2020). In practice, that approach would see Ottawa anchor a coalition of like-minded states, beyond traditional groupings and across geographic poles, within multilateral institutions to serve as defenders of an international order that protects non-great powers from the anarchic realities of the system. (Paltiel & Nossal, 2019; Paltiel, 2020).

Similarly, Kawasaki (2021) presents engagement, hedging, and confrontation as the three strategic options available to Canada, where hedging is seen as the preferable option. Within this lens, China is seen as a risk rather than a threat and, consequently, Ottawa seeks to manage its relationship with Beijing rather than eliminate it. Hedging confers on Canada extensive flexibility with regards to its relations with both China and the United States and avoids the pitfalls of a bandwagoning approach or opting for a balancing framework; the former which relegates Canada to a small power role subject to Chinese and American coercive behaviour and the latter which negates the vested socio-economic interests Canada has to gain from collaborating with the PRC (Kawasaki, 2021). The main issue with Kawasaki’s argument is that adopting “engagement” as substitute for bandwagoning confuses Canada’s historical approach to China as one premised on supporting Chinese geopolitical interests. Rather, “engagement” is a characterization of policy response to a non-like-minded state that steers away from containment, isolation, and confrontation and that embraces a constructive relationship with aims to alter state behaviour (Evans, 2014). If anything, “engagement” finds a better home in hedging.

The findings of this research point to the merit of the hedging camp. I argue that Canadian foreign policy decision making, despite being in contradiction to traditional international relations theories, is consistent with Canada’s historical approach to China and, simultaneously represents a current strategic orientation closer to hedging than balancing or bandwagoning. In fact, structural level theories, in treating middle powers like Canada as policytakers in the same manner as lesser powers,

forgo their very role as supporters and builders of the Liberal International Order and, hence, their strategic commitment to enforce its core tenets even in the absence of an American buttress. The current state of Canadian foreign policy exhibits an approach to great power competition anchored in the established order that recognizes the drawbacks of both balancing and bandwagoning in light of the strategic paths Washington and Beijing have adopted. This study reveals that dominant ideas and structural factors have generally exerted more influence on Canadian foreign policy decision making with regards to its relationship with Beijing, showcasing the enduring strength of the middle power image for Canada's international behaviour and its implications for Ottawa's response to hegemonic competition. I further argue that, using an appropriate framework to analyze Canadian foreign policy decision making, in line with the middle power research program, it becomes evident that traditional theoretical prescriptions of balancing and bandwagoning are insufficient in accounting for Ottawa's continued policy of engagement with China which emphasizes the need to engage constructively with Beijing and the irrationality of containment for Canadian interests. The present picture is one in which Ottawa is neither siding with Washington nor Beijing, but rather hedging against the two great powers in maximization of its own national interests. These conclusions differ from the current normative conceptualizations of the research question in that it defines the bounds of what Canada's hedging approach resembles in practice, supported by empirical evidence.

Canadian Foreign Policy: A Literature Review

Having successfully established the research puzzle, the logical next step is to strengthen our understanding of the determinants, inputs, and trends of Canadian foreign policy as the central subject of the research question. That is, what factors have, over the years, endured in facilitating our comprehension of Canada's international policies and influenced the direction of Canada's strategic position in international affairs? What are the competing approaches, leading academics, and how much hegemony do they enjoy in the study of the topic? Analyzing the state of the literature allows us to identify the contending and complimentary perspectives that are best suited to explain how Canada has navigated the last iteration of hegemonic competition. The results of this analysis, in turn, allow us to draw inferences about Canada's current state of foreign policy decision making with regards to the U.S.-China rivalry by highlighting which determinative factors should be examined in the data collection and interpretation phase.

Canadian foreign policy literature is principally focused with Canada's place in the world and with its consequent policy formulation. The body of literature is dominated by the three ideational frameworks that see Canada's position within the international system as that of a small power, a middle power, or a major power. The small power image is largely a result of Canada's state of dependence on the North American continent which is thought to reflect similarly in its conduct internationally. Lacking the material capabilities that would see it offset American preponderance continentally or, before 1945, from its colonial patron, the United Kingdom, Canada is believed to lack autonomy in the formulation of its foreign policy (Kirton, 2007; Lennox, 2009). This position of dependence makes Ottawa highly influenced by the foreign policy directions of major powers, chief amongst which is the United States. In this literature, Canada is seen as a follower of the international order as opposed to a helpful contributor of global peace and security (Kirton, 2007; Lennox, 2009).

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the image of Canada as a major power paints Ottawa

as enjoying a rank above that of middle powers by virtue of its relative rather than absolute capabilities and given the waning of American hegemony (Lennox, 2009). This view of Canada's position internationally argues that Canadian national interests trump other foreign policy considerations that would see it defer to other major powers' interests (primarily the United States) or adopt *juste milieu* goals due to its incapacity to usher change on its own (Kirton, 2007). Canada is expected to take unilateral action when the parameters of multilateralism do not suit its national interests and is expected to expand its alliance system beyond traditional Western partners (Kirton, 2007; Lennox, 2009).

The issue with these images is that they refer to perceptions of power rather than objective reality and are normative in nature (Nossal et al., 2015). They become easily manipulated by way of the evidence that is selected to support the arguments of the image let alone the conceptual challenges around each framework. The literature on the small power image will often refer to Canada's dependence on the American economic and security apparatus as an overarching feature that determines Ottawa's conduct abroad. The experiences of the Vietnam War, the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, and Canada's alignment during the Cold War are cited as evidence of this small power role. Conversely, proponents of the major power image will often refer to shifts in the global, domestic, and governmental environments set by the end of the Cold War that have pushed Canada towards a role of major power. Canada's growing relative capabilities under these circumstances are argued to grant Ottawa the same amount of leverage internationally as other major powers. The government's refusal to join American forces in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, its leadership in reforming core elements of state sovereignty through the establishment of the Responsibility to Protect, and its leadership in forming the G20 are cited as representations of Canada's major power role.

Breaking down each image of Canada's power, demonstrating their comparative strengths and weaknesses, is well beyond the scope of this research as academics have dedicated entire books to the

topic. Nonetheless, the image of Canada as a middle power remains the most enduring and appealing framework within the literature on Canadian foreign policy be it simply by process of elimination for conceptions of Canada as a major power or small power do not hold much weight internationally let alone domestically. Ottawa's reaction to the Cold War, the unipolar moment, and the relative decline of U.S. hegemony is best examined through the prism of the middle power framework for it offers more accurate generalizations about Canada's behaviour internationally. To that end, this literature review explores the determinants, inputs, and trends of Canadian foreign policy within the lens of the middle power image by organizing the most seminal sources on the topic in accordance with all three analytical levels—systemic, national, and individual. In doing so, this literature review equally demonstrates the ideational superiority of the middle power image in Canadian foreign policy.

Geostrategic Position

Canada's geostrategic location is first characterized by a neighbourhood that is both lonely and dominated by the American behemoth (Nossal et al., 2015; Lennox, 2009). Canada has no other neighbours to offset the preponderance of the United States on the continent rendering its position one of dependence and subservience to the hegemon continentally (Lennox, 2009). In direct antagonism to the tenets of traditional international relations theory, Canada's position in the world is one of hierarchy *in* anarchy (Lennox, 2009). Clarkson (1968) and Stairs (1982) heed considerably to the influence of Canada's bilateral relationship with the U.S. on its foreign policy and contends that there are two competing approaches when it comes to Ottawa's relationship with its Southern neighbour: quiet diplomacy and independent diplomacy with the former enduring over the years despite the appeal of the independent framework. Under the former's guise, international objectives are ranked in a way that prioritizes the alliance system with the U.S. and the West and focus on the stability of the status quo (Clarkson, 1968).

Internationally, Canada's multilateralist agenda is deeply grounded in its need to offset American preponderance on the continent (Stairs, 1982; Keating, 2002). Alliances and supranational organizations are seen as giving middle powers like Canada the best leverage in international affairs and protecting them from the arbitrary actions of greater powers (Clarkson, 1968). Since the end of the Second World War, Canada has made continuous efforts to bind the Americans to core elements of the order, not only to ensure the stability of the global system but also to use America's global commitments as a counterweight domestically.

During the Cold War, Canada's range of external action was limited by its membership in the Western bloc (Kirkey & Hawes, 2015). The overarching zero-sum framework heavily constrained Canada's bargaining power and influence over the United States and did not allow for independent foreign policy initiatives in areas deemed sensitive to American hegemony or areas that could contribute to a crisis between the great powers (Kirkey & Hawes, 2015; Cooper, 1997a). Selective opportunities to engage in international affairs were available provided that the issue was outside of the competitive matrix between the U.S. and the Soviet Union (Kirkey & Hawes, 2015; Cooper, 1997a). Those structural conditions forced Canada to pursue a foreign policy centered around a single issue area: the maintenance of international peace.

In the unipolar moment, Canada had considerably more opportunities and fewer constraints on its foreign policy. The nature of the system allowed like-minded states to actively engage, and champion initiatives deemed contributive to the maintenance of the international order/supportive of the hegemon (Kirkey & Hawes, 2015). Middling capabilities and the sheer lack of challenge to U.S. hegemony nevertheless limited Canadian agency in these contributions and hindered any championing of radical reforms that challenged American interests (Cooper, 1997a; Kirkey & Hawes, 2015). This became especially frustrating in moments of display of American exceptionalism.

Group dynamics offer yet another important vector of geostrategic positioning. Canada is a party to a large number of international institutions, regional groupings, coalitions, and alliances. The degree to which each organization affects Canadian foreign policy is contingent upon the obligations that membership is likely to impose on the Canadian government (Nossal et al., 2015). The government tends to abide by the decisions of such grouping and in rare cases of discontent will disregard them and treat them as non-binding (Nossal et al., 2015). Clubs and coalitions operate a little differently as they tend to be composed of like-minded states. Canada is a member of the two most important groupings in the G7 and G20. Canada's membership in these clubs and coalition have a much more determinative effect on Canadian foreign policy, usually conditional upon the power of other coalition members (Nossal et al., 2015). When other members are of less importance to Canada's international relationships, the government has demonstrated its willingness to bear the cost of following its sole interest (Nossal et al., 2015). Contrarily, when other members of the grouping are more powerful, Canada tends to defer to their position (Nossal et al., 2015). Finally, Canada is a member to just one alliance—NATO. The organization, despite its clear benefit of providing greater security for Canada at a limited cost, nevertheless imposes a constraint on Canadian foreign policy in terms of continued defence spending and its collective decision making structure that forbids members from taking unilateral military actions (Nossal et al., 2015). Nonetheless, over the years, NATO has ensured a friendly relationship between Canada and alliance members, above all the U.S., and has guaranteed both relative stability in Europe and that American isolationism did not return (Nossal et al., 2015).

Canada's impressive group dynamics are a representation of the importance of multilateralism as a guiding principle and operational strategy of Canadian foreign policy but also of its commitment to pluralism. From a systemic perspective, Canada's approach to multilateralism is grounded in its position within the international system and its desire for distinction from small powers (Keating,

2002). Domestically, commitment to multilateralism is also a result of Canada's pluralistic outlook/commitment to national unity with membership in organization such as La Francophonie and the Commonwealth (Michaud, 2020). La Francophonie is also an important aspect of the federal government's objective to limit the extent of Quebec's paradiplomacy activities abroad (Michaud, 2020). Canada's commitment to multilateralism likewise stems from its position within the balance of power and the need to offset power imbalances on the North American continent by creating a distinctly Canadian voice that can serve to curb/limit American power (Lennox, 2009; Murray & Keating, 2021).

Capabilities

From the moment of "The Creation"⁶ onwards, capabilities have played a determinative role in the conduct of Canadian foreign policy. When the UN Charter was negotiated in San Francisco in 1945, the Canadian delegation sought to make an influential contribution that would secure its role on the global stage as an influential non-great power. Before 1945, Canadian foreign policy had thus far been rooted in ideologies of imperialism and, later on, isolationism that limited, if not eliminated, the role capabilities played in the making of Canadian foreign policy. Both of these conceptions of Canada's role internationally were one of a distant power stripped of responsibility to intervene globally for reasons of colonial attachment to the British Empire, a perception of unhindered security in North America, and a belief that national interests were best served by forgoing implication in European conflicts (Nossal et al., 2015). Introducing the concept of "functionalism" in 1945, Canadian policymakers argued that membership in both UN institutions and decision making processes should be conditional upon a member's capabilities and interests in the issue area under discussion (Stairs, 1982). A system that agreed with the principle of functionalism greatly benefited Canada by

⁶ "The Creation" refers to the creation of the post-Second World War international system and was first popularized by Dean Acheson, ex-U.S. Secretary of State.

recognizing "power" as non-static, unlike traditional conceptualization solely based on military capabilities (Stairs, 1982). The concept remains a guiding principle of Canadian foreign policy to date. Functionalism makes the best out of Canada's comparative advantages by securing it a seat at the decision making table when it has a strong contribution to make and leaves Ottawa out of discussions when its cards are too weak (Stairs, 1982).

Practically, functionalism is a recognition that, due to limited capabilities, non-great powers must resort to a more concentrated diplomatic effort in issue areas of interest. "Niche diplomacy" represents a more concentrated form of diplomacy focused on activities deemed of specialized interests or comparative advantage to a state (Cooper 1997b). Cooper (1997b) and Nossal et al. (2015) make the argument that relative capabilities, while not predetermined, limit the ability of middle powers like Canada to contribute significantly across the policy issue spectrum like great powers. Capabilities of the state, therefore, prompt a calculus of where to focus resources amongst a wide array of functions internationally (Cooper 1997b). For Canada, this has traditionally consisted of issues in the domain of security, economy, environment, and human rights (Cooper 1997b). One caveat for Canada is that a more selective foreign policy is complicated by Canada's position within the G7, arguably the apex of international institutions beyond the UNSC, as well as Ottawa's stake in the stability of the international system writ large both of which demand a large global footprint (Potter 1996, Cooper 1997b).

Similarly, throughout its history, Canada has never been wholly self-sufficient economically and has always been dependent on foreign trade for its prosperity. Having a vast territory but a relatively small population, the Canadian market cannot operate independently from the global marketplace. Canada has an excess of natural resources and agricultural products that it exports abroad and imports manufactured products it does not produce domestically. In 2019, Canada ranked 11 and 12 internationally in export and import value respectively (OEC, 2019). Canada's trade and investment

patterns have evolved with its geostrategic position, first being overly concentrated in the British market and gradually into the American market, adding a layer of complexity to its economic structure (Nossal et al., 2015). Canada is, thus, not only dependent on trade, but is also dependent on a single market for its well-being (Nossal et al., 2015). As a result, foreign policy interests hinge heavily on trade and its global stability. Moreover, the concentration of trade into one market renders Canadian foreign policy extremely vulnerable to American interests which have shown their unilateral tendencies over the years (Nossal et al., 2015).

Societal Interests & Actors

Societal actors in Canada do not enjoy a great deal of influence on the foreign policy decision making process but do have a fair bit of control over the policymaking environment. Societal actors can influence the policymaking environment by helping to mobilize support for particular policies, by helping to widen public participation in international policy processes, by helping to sustain attention on critical global problems, by helping to frame issues and set the policy agenda, and by helping to carry out transnational policies (Ayres, 2006; Carment & Landry, 2015).

The level of influence civil society exerts on international affairs has been greatly affected by the transformation of Canadian foreign policy over the years. In fact, the number of civil society organizations (CSOs) has ballooned over the past decades, along with their influence on decision making as a result of the wave of democratization that followed the Cold War and the larger process of globalization (Ayres, 2006). The transnationality of CSOs has effectively enmeshed them into various networks/relationships that facilitate their involvement in policymaking (Ayres, 2006).

As domestic support is sought over government policies, taking in the opinions and interests of powerful domestic groupings is one way through which the political executive hopes to strike the right balance. To that effect, Canadian political parties have been increasingly aligned with diasporic communities given the large level of immigration in the country and their electoral weight (Carment

& Landry, 2015; Kirton, 2007). The level of influence various social actors enjoy is often contingent upon their strength in terms of demographic weight but also resources and technological capability (Kirton, 2007). Social media and traditional mass media play a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions and the relative importance of an issue (Nossal et al., 2015). The media works to mobilize consent or opposition to government policies and has the power to determine what international issues are worth the public's attention (Kirton, 2007).

Dominant Ideas

Tomlin et al. (2007) argue that Canadian international policies often follow an evolutionary process where policy ideas and agendas shift rapidly rather than incrementally. In the Canadian case, historically, policy issues and alternatives co-exist for long periods of time in the policy sub-systems until one gains enough traction to make it to the government agenda. These shifts occur, in large part, as a reaction to international events or political change and are “windows of opportunity” seized by policy entrepreneurs. These “windows of opportunity” represent a moment of synchronism between three policy process streams: problem identification—the problem stream, policy alternative generation—the policy stream, and politics—the politics stream. Policy entrepreneurs which “reside at all levels of the policy hierarchy, both inside and outside government” take advantage of these “windows of opportunity” to promote specific policy ideas and alternatives (Tomlin, Hampson, & Hillmer, 2007, p.268).

Similarly, Nossal et al. (2015) argue that the preferences, beliefs, attitudes, and values dominant in society provide the lens through which Canadians and policymakers perceive the world. In the Canadian case, dominant ideas have been characterized by a particular period in the international system: the imperial era, the interwar period, the Cold War, the post-Cold War era, and the post-9/11 era (Nossal et al., 2015). The authors identify three dominant ideas over the course of Canada's history:

imperialism, isolationism, and internationalism—the enduring ideational framework (Nossal et al., 2015).

Internationalism was born out of the assumption that Canada is a middle power and that its interests and objectives, guided by liberal values, are more easily attainable through multilateralism (Nossal et al., 2015). The concept is often married to the responsibility to play a constructive role in international affairs, preservation of global peace and security, engagement through multilateralism as opposed to unilateral action, involvement in international institutions, adopting roles associated with acting as a broker/stabilizer of conflict, support for international institutions through rhetoric and resources, and a commitment to international law (Stairs, 1998; Nossal et al., 2015).

The concept of middle power is also important because it has guided policymakers in crafting Canada's foreign policy. According to Gecelovsky (2009), the idea of Canada as a middle power and its adjacent responsibilities found in the internationalist ideology gained traction following the experience of the Second World War, solidified during the establishment of the UN system, and became embedded in the policy apparatus from the moment of the Suez Crisis onwards (Gecelovsky, 2009). The middle power ideational framework has become the lens through which Canadian foreign policymakers view the world and one through which Canadian responses to international events are formulated (Gecelovsky, 2009). Nonetheless, the ideological framework of middle power evolved over the course of Canada's history. When American hegemony started to decline in the 1960s, accelerating bipolarity, the dominant classes within Canadian society competed over their interpretation of Canada's role in international affairs (Neufeld, 1995). The regulative definition of middle power, founded on support for American hegemony, was reformulated to encompass progressive activism, culminating in the interpretation of Canada's middle power role as we know it today (Neufeld, 1995).

The Prime Minister & Cabinet

The nature of the Canadian political system confers an impressive amount of power onto the executive branch of the government. As the head of the executive, the Prime Minister naturally sits atop of the political echelon which has brought many experts in the literature to argue he/she is the most influential actor and, to some, the most influential determinant altogether in Canadian foreign policy. Gecelovsky (2015) divides the Prime Minister's powers into two categories: positional and idiosyncratic. The former represents the powers possessed by the PMO and the latter the extent to which a PM seeks to distinguish the foreign policy of his government from the past administration (Gecelovsky, 2015).

There are generally four positional powers. First, is the power of appointments. The Prime Minister has the authority to appoint individuals to positions that are influential to foreign affairs (Gecelovsky, 2015; Eayrs, 1961; Nossal et al., 2015; Cooper 1997a). Through mandate letters, the PM draws the boundaries of a minister's tenure and by extension that of their department/agency and can change the content and direction of Canadian foreign policy at his/her discretion (Gecelovsky, 2015; Nossal et al., 2015). Mandate is, however, partly constrained by the freedom of action the government enjoys depending on the configuration of Parliament (minority or majority government) as well as domestic distractions such as national unity and fiscal deficit but also constrained by the international system itself (Kirton, 2007; Gecelovsky, 2015). Second, the PM has the authority to design government departments and agencies to suit the needs of their administration and priorities (Gecelovsky, 2015; Nossal et al., 2015). Over the years, international portfolios have been centralized and decentralized across government departments/agencies to reflect the priorities of the government and, thus, the Prime Minister. Third, the Prime Minister has the constitutional authority to mold the decision making process, which over the years has led to a growing centralization of decision making powers under the PMO (Gecelovsky, 2015; Cooper, 1997a; Michaud, 2006). Fourth, the Prime Minister has the power

to sign and negotiate international agreements. While the PM does not have the authority to enforce implementation of those agreements by the provinces, he/she can focus the public's attention on an issue that will make its way onto the agenda of the provinces (Gecelovsky, 2015). Nossal et al. (2015) also add that summit diplomacy has become a pervasive feature of Canadian foreign policy and is, by definition, very personal in that they principally involve the head of state.

Incidentally, the Prime Minister also has the ability to change the direction of Canadian foreign policy through his/her idiosyncratic powers, chief amongst which are the personal interests, beliefs, personality, ambitions, energy, and skills of the Prime Minister (Ravenhill, 1998; Kirton, 2007; Nossal et al., 2015; Gecelovsky, 2015). The predispositions of a Prime Minister in an issue area, as well as the depth and breadth of his/her convictions, will ultimately affect the level of attention the government attributes to an international policy (Kirton, 2007; Gecelovsky, 2015; Nossal et al., 2015). The leadership style of the Prime Minister also affects whether the government takes on a more process-oriented or goal-oriented approach (Gecelovsky, 2015). In the former, the PM seeks to build consensus and relationships within the decision making apparatus, hence lending more agency to Cabinet colleagues (Eayrs, 1961; Kirton, 2007; Gecelovsky, 2015; Nossal et al., 2015). Conversely, a goal-oriented leader seeks to further a specific cause and/or promote an ideological position. The search for differentiation from previous administration drives governments, for both electoral and personal reasons, to emphasize the originality of their contribution to Canadian foreign policy (Ravenhill, 1998; Gecelovsky, 2015). Throughout Canada's history, every Prime Minister has sought to leave his/her mark on the direction of the country's international policies.

Parliament & Election Cycles

Government type acts as an overarching variable on the determinative power of Parliament. Minority governments afford opposition parties more opportunities to exact policy concessions on international affairs than majority governments (Lagassé, 2016). During minority governments,

Parliamentarians are better placed to influence government decision making by threatening to implement non-confidence votes (Lagassé, 2016). Nonetheless, Parliament's influence is marginal in part because foreign policy does not often become legislation which is the primary role of Canadian lawmakers (Nossal et al., 2015). Foreign affairs are the sole responsibility of the political executive under the Constitution meaning that parliamentarians are relegated to the role of policy *influencer*.

Parliamentarians can attempt to use legislation to constrain the government's policy options through private members' bills or by threatening the government with a non-confidence vote, but the latter requires that the opposition parties coordinate and accept the risks associated with an election (Lagassé, 2016; Nossal et al., 2015). Opposition parties also leverage the Parliament's accountability function by questioning ministers on their decisions and policies, the performance of their departments, and the legislation they have introduced (Lagassé, 2016; Nossal et al., 2015).

Most pundits agree that, of all functions exercised by Parliament, parliamentary committees give it the most influence (Eayrs, 1961; Nossal et al., 20215; Taras, 1985). They provide Parliamentarians an opportunity to engage in policy development through questions to ministers and their officials, interviews with expert witnesses, and pursue investigations in Canada and abroad in an atmosphere that is far less partisan (Eayrs, 1961; Nossal et al., 20215; Lagassé, 2016). One caveat is that the composition of the committees will often influence the tone of recommendations which are also not binding. The government can choose to either abide by the recommendations or simply ignore them (Nossal et al., 20215; Lagassé, 2016). When committees are principally composed of members of the governing party, the recommendations tend to be more in line with the government's approach to that issue and vice versa (Nossal et al., 20215; Lagassé, 2016).

More often than not, when Parliament is asked to play a part in international policymaking, its involvement serves the political interests of the executive (Nossal et al., 20215; Lagassé, 2016). To lessen the political costs they face when pursuing controversial policies and to weaken Parliament's

accountability function, governments can resort to two Parliamentary co-optation strategies: vetting and laundering (Nossal et al., 2021; Lagassé, 2016). Vetting allows Parliamentarians to scrutinize a policy before the executive commits to it and concurrently allows the government to adapt its strategy before implementing the policy (Lagassé, 2016). Laundering makes it seem like the government's choice was contingent upon Parliament's approval or recommendations even though the decision making authority remains with the executive (Lagassé, 2016). This is best known as the "Parliament will decide" formula (Eayrs, 1961).

Finally, there is only a thin electoral component in Canadian foreign policy. Foreign policy issues are rarely the central subject of an election, albeit parties sometimes take a particular stance to woo voters (Nossal et al., 2015; Nossal, 2021). Parties are most often not rewarded or penalized for their foreign policy performance. Foreign policy issues tend to play a small role in election campaigns because political parties are in near adherence with most issues except for free trade agreements (FTA) (Nossal, 2021). Only six general elections have been dominated by foreign policy issues. 1891, 1911, and 1988 were focused on trade with the United States whereas 1917, 1940, and 1963 turned to defence issues (Nossal et al., 2015). When parties do differ in opinions, that difference is more often on the means to achieve an end than the end itself (Nossal, 2021). This consensus stems from the Canadian electorate's general lack of interest in international affairs (Nossal et al., 2015).

Foreign Affairs Bureaucracy

The foreign affairs bureaucracy only exerts a certain level of influence on Canadian foreign policy, an influence both complementary to and constrained by the Prime Minister. The bureaucracy is seen as a secondary-level decision-maker that works to advise the political executive through close cooperation across key players (Eayrs, 1961; Nobble, 2007). In this role as both holder of information and adviser to their political masters, bureaucrats have an opportunity to influence decision making, especially on smaller-scale decisions (Eayrs, 1961; Nossal et al., 2015; Nobble, 2007). While the policy

preferences of the executive will almost always prevail, there remain instances where ministers will defer to the opinions of senior officials on foreign policy issues. Officials do engage in persuasion, having several advantages over political staffers, primarily their monopoly over information and analytical capacity, an important advantage in a world characterized by secrecy (Nossal et al., 2015). In this sense, the senior civil servants serve as an “under Cabinet” of sort for their political masters (Eayrs, 1961). On grand scheme decisions, the mandarins of Ottawa are left with little room for maneuver as Prime Ministers usually set out the foreign policy objectives of their government through policy statements and/or mandate letters at the onset of their tenure (Nossal et al., 2015).

Nobble (2007) lists the PMO, PCO, and GAC as the key bureaucratic agencies/departments charged with the establishment, direction, and implementation of Canada's international policies. Notwithstanding the increasing centralization of power into the hands of the PMO, political executives and the PCO continue to rely heavily on GAC's foreign policy expertise especially because of its analytical capability as well as its role in policy implementation (Nobble, 2007).

Federalism

The impact of federalism on Canadian foreign policy is best explained by its constitutional underpinnings. Since the 1960s, Canadian provinces have taken on more active roles in international affairs, notably to avoid becoming mere implementers of agreements negotiated by the federal government (Paquin, 2021). As a result, the number of provinces actively engaged in international activities and negotiations—a phenomenon known as *paradiplomacy*—has risen considerably over the past decades. The *Constitution Act* barely addresses the issue of international relations. In fact, there is no constitutional attribution of exclusive jurisdiction over foreign affairs (Paquin, 2021; Nossal et al., 2015; Kirton, 2007). To that effect, the Canadian government adopts a doctrine of “indivisibility of foreign policy” meaning that the federal government can conclude legally binding treaties applicable to all of Canada. The principle of the sovereignty of Parliament, however, means that provincial

legislatures are not obliged to pass measures that might be necessary to implement a treaty concluded by the federal government (Paquin, 2021; Nossal et al., 2015; Kirton, 2007).

The federal government must, therefore, be cautious when engaging Canada internationally because it risks being undermined by provincial resistance or inaction. To mitigate this risk, the federal government has historically employed two broad strategies: (1) limiting international negotiations to areas of federal jurisdiction and using federal clauses to limit the scope of international treaties; and (2) establishing mechanisms for consulting the provinces on foreign policy positions (Paquin, 2021; Nossal et al., 2015).

A Canadian Middle Power

To synthesize, while there exist important contention points that largely stem from the theoretical differences between the three dominant ideational frameworks, the overwhelming superiority of the middle power image is such that the majority of academics tend to agree on Canada's position in the world and, consequently, what factors determine its foreign policy and strategic alignment. Of value to the arguments advanced in this research is that Ottawa's international position since the Cold War is better represented through the middle power prism rather than competing images that would see it either defer to American strategic interests (small power image) or pursue unilateral ones (major power image). The Canadian reaction to the Cold War and later the unipolar moment has been entirely reflective of a middle power role in international affairs that has created an ideational dominance that is three-fold and interrelated.

By the function of its position in the world self-perceived and recognized as that of a middle power, Canada has become wedded to the ideational concepts of internationalism and multilateralism, all of which are self-reinforcing. Systemic-level factors set the frame, the constraints, and the opportunities within which Canadian foreign policy operates. Geostrategic location and capabilities determine where Canada finds itself within the balance of power and, concurrently, shapes the

country's global behaviour. Chief amongst these factors is the principle of hierarchy *in* anarchy i.e., Canada's subservience to the United States on the continent. Canada's global behaviour has always been an attempt to secure its middle power interests by balancing both anarchy internationally and hierarchy on the continent. Canadian international policies are, thus, best served under an internationalist approach and in embrace of multilateralism which, over the years, has meant a vested interest in the maintenance of global peace and security, curbing the overreach of great powers while binding them into a rules-based international system, and offsetting the dominance of the United States in North America. Canadian self-perceptions of middlepowermanship, thus, serve as the mechanism through which Ottawa has and continues to navigate the international system regardless of its nature.

An important aspect that transpires across the literature is the near static nature of systemic-level determinants. Canada's position in the world is relatively stable, and only changes over longer periods. Incidentally, no change in that position is believed to have occurred since the end of the Cold War. Systemic-level determinants should be seen as parameters delimiting the nature of Canada's middle power role in the exercise of its foreign policy. Conversely, national and individual level determinants are seen as much more volatile. Yet, the literature is also consensual on national and individual level factors. The nature of the Westminster system is such that the Prime Minister is by far the most influential actor in the conduct of Canadian foreign policy with a direct effect on the determinative nature of the domestic and governmental environments. The centralization of power into the hands of the PMO has worked to lessen the influence of the foreign affairs bureaucracy which enjoyed a moment of relative dominance in the 1960s during the DEA's Golden Age. The same centralization of power into the hands of the Prime Minister has historically constrained the level of influence from other Cabinet members as well as that of Parliament. While Cabinet somewhat enjoys a level of decision making power, Parliament is largely relegated to a role of influence over the policy

process. Nonetheless, despite Canadians general lack of interest in foreign affairs during election cycles, government type operates as an overarching constraint on the Prime Minister's extensive foreign affairs powers. Minority governments greatly complicate the work of the executive by rendering the government's survival conditional upon the confidence of Canada's lower chamber and, by the same token, spurs the amount of influence Parliamentarians and other actors have on the decision making process. Federalism, for its part, exerts little influence on Canada's international policies. Provinces have demonstrated their unwillingness to challenge the supremacy of the federal executive in the conduct of Canada's international affairs and proper mechanisms have been erected to ensure consultations with the provinces in areas that fall under their purview.

Finally, dominant ideas exert a high level of influence on Canadian foreign policy decision making. Rising to dominance and eventually losing traction through a multi-stage process, dominant ideas operate as the lens through which Canadian policymakers see their country's middle power role in international affairs. The literature on the determinative effect of structural-level factors on Canadian foreign policy showcases the endurance of concepts of internationalism and multilateralism from the Cold War onwards.

In assessing Canadian foreign policy decision making with regards to China, this study's attention focuses on geostrategic position, capabilities, societal interests and actors, dominant ideas, the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Parliament and election cycles, the foreign affairs bureaucracy, and federalism.

Methodology

Theoretical Framework

The research problem demonstrated that hegemonic transition theories of *Balance of Power*, *Balance of Threat*, *Power Transition*, *Offensive Realism*, and *Hegemonic Stability* alone are insufficient to account for the current state of Canadian foreign policy with regards to the U.S.-China rivalry. In fact, theoretical prescriptions of balancing and bandwagoning fail to address the novel reactions we have witnessed from middle powers in the post-Cold War period. Strategic options must also encompass the possibility of states hedging against great powers, as evidenced by the contributions of the middle power research program.

The objective of this research being to elaborate on Canada's position within the U.S.-China rivalry, a robust theoretical framework must be built to delimit what constitutes each strategic option in practice when it comes to Canada's relationship with China. To that end, Table 1 enumerates the three strategies' contrasting responses across five policy issue areas investigated throughout the research, namely: diplomacy, security, economic relations, defence, and human rights. The contrasting responses are drawn from an examination of Sino-Canadian relations since diplomatic relations were established in 1970. This "baseline" is provided in the following chapter. Given that Canada's historical China policy has been one of "engagement", as described by Evans (2014), continuity of this engagement approach has been labeled as hedging as its closest strategic equivalent whereas bandwagoning and balancing have been established as the positive and negative poles along the same strategic spectrum. One important clarification is that, when it comes to economic relations, the policy of engagement is actually closer to bandwagoning than hedging as Canadian policymakers have long sought to achieve a bilateral economic partnership with Beijing to offset the country's overreliance on the American market. This notable distinction is clarified in Table 1 where baseline points representing the policy of engagement have been greyed out. This table will serve as a cornerstone of the

investigation in that it will allow me to subjugate the findings of each case under study to all three strategic options and, consequently, determine if the government's approach to Beijing in that issue area represents a continuity of the policy of engagement (hedging) or whether it takes a more balancing or bandwagoning attitude.

Table 1

Three Strategies' Contrasting Responses Across Five Policy Issue Areas

	Diplomacy	Security	Economic Relations	Defence	Human Rights
Bandwagoning	Reject calls to undermine China and work to have Beijing's place in global governance-making recognized.	Allow unfettered investments and activity from Chinese companies, including SOEs, and monitor the threat of Chinese interference.	*Pursue a bilateral economic partnership with China and continue to increase trade levels.	Reject FOIP concept and provide no objection and/or encourage regional resolution to disputes and maritime rule of conduct.	Adopt a policy of non-intervention where Canadian position is made known but Chinese sovereignty over domestic affairs is recognized.

<p>Hedging (Engagement Policy)</p>	<p>Engage with China on a case-by-case basis and in reflection of independent Canadian international interests; work to further integrate China into the Liberal International Order.</p>	<p>Manage economic activity from Chinese companies/SOEs while protecting critical sectors such as high technology from Chinese influence.</p>	<p>Increase trade with China through existing multilateral arrangements such as the WTO, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).</p>	<p>Limit Canada's involvement in territorial disputes while working multilaterally for the proliferation of an UNCLOS-based maritime order.</p>	<p>Use a quiet diplomacy approach bilaterally while working multilaterally with like-minded countries to denounce China's human rights record.</p>
<p>Balancing</p>	<p>Nurture the relationship with the</p>	<p>Reject economic activity from Chinese SOEs</p>	<p>Decouple from the Chinese market and</p>	<p>Adopt a U.S.-centric FOIP vision;</p>	<p>Support all U.S. efforts to</p>

	U.S. by assisting Washington in undermining China and ground Canadian foreign policy in a liberal democracy ideological compass.	and limit that of private firms; increase national security against Chinese influence; support U.S. security efforts.	pursue alternatives in Asian democracies.	undermine China's maritime interests; join Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and/or AUKUS	undermine the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) rule in China.
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*Economic relations is the only issue area where the policy of engagement hinges closer to bandwagoning than hedging.

On a separate note, the review of the literature revealed that Canadian foreign policy is highly influenced by non-systemic-level variables. Structural variables tend to be constant under a short enough timeframe rendering any attempt to empirically demonstrate causality between determinants and variations in the dependent variable rather useless. In relevance to this research, this means that whilst the middle power image delimits the parameters within which Canadian foreign policy operates, other determinants are influential in generating policy outcomes. The literature review has identified those determinants as societal interests and actors, dominant ideas, the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Parliament and election cycles, the foreign affairs bureaucracy, and federalism. Furthermore, the

normative failure of mainstream international relations theories to correctly, or at least consistently, prescribe Canadian foreign policy decision making with regards to its current relationship with Beijing points to the need to look beyond systemic theories.

Foreign policy analysis allows the researcher to bridge the gap between systemic-level analysis and competing explanations for Canadian foreign policy decision making. In fact, foreign policy analysis operates at the crossroad between international relations theory and public policy analysis (Morin & Paquin, 2018). This field of research is process-oriented as opposed to outcome-oriented, meaning that it focuses on the foreign policy *decision making* aspect of the state rather than the interaction between that state and others. The framework recognizes the continuous interaction between actors and their environment and is, therefore, not bound by a specific level of analysis nor by a conception that international and domestic politics are exclusive. Foreign policy analysis is also an embrace of the multiple disciplines that generate explanations for foreign policy decisions and a rejection that different approaches must compete to create a generalizable theory. Thus, the theoretical framework is not only multilevel and multidisciplinary but also multicausal (Morin & Paquin, 2018). As Morin & Paquin (2018) describe it best “the questions [foreign policy analysis seeks to answer] are endless, but the starting point is always the same: identify a foreign policy, which is often puzzling or counter-intuitive, and then try to explain it” (p.2).

The theoretical framework of this research, therefore, takes a bifurcated approach. On the one hand, international relations theory, supplemented by the arguments of the middle power research program, provide theoretical prescriptions that will allow me to identify a strategic leaning to the current state of Ottawa’s foreign policy decision making with regards to China. On the other hand, foreign policy analysis enables me to identify which elements of Canadian foreign policy decision making have been most influential in generating that strategic leaning. The multilevel, multidisciplinary, and multicausal nature of the framework permits a much more holistic analysis of the phenomenon

of interest, beyond the exclusive use of structural-level variables, meaning that inferences about Canada's position in the balance of power will be much closer to reality.

Concepts & Variables

The literature review informed which variables should be investigated in analyzing Canadian foreign policy decision making. The operationalization of these variables is inspired from Nossal et al. (2015) *The Politics of Canadian Foreign Policy* with adaptations from other leading academics in the field of Canadian foreign policy. This seminal work is, to date, the most complete attempt to analyze and explain the various determinants of Canadian foreign policy, in embrace of the foreign policy analysis approach. Some variables are adapted into a larger variable as causality becomes increasingly hard to assign with more determinants available. The variables can be regrouped into three distinctive categories: international environment, domestic environment, and bureaucratic environment, effectively bridging the gap between systemic-level determinants and other competing explanations from the national and individual levels.

As noted previously, international environment determinants are near invariants. They represent essential elements of Canadian foreign policy decision making that only change over a long period. They, however, serve as the parameters of decision making for policymakers by setting the constraints and opportunities of the international system within which Canadian international policies operate. To that effect, these determinants are categorized as parameters rather than independent variables and apply in the same manner across all cases. Below is a summary of all variables and parameters:

Dependent Variable: Canadian foreign policy decision making.

- Concept: Canadian foreign policy
- Type: Nominal

- Operationalization: Defined as choice. Varying in content and nature.

Parameter 1: Geostrategic position

- Concept: International environment
- Type: Nominal
- Operationalization: Defined as a country's geographic and geopolitical position. Varying in terms of the regrouping of states around a country's frontiers and on its continent, its position within the global balance of power (i.e., status quo or revisionist), its rank on the international stage, and its group dynamics (i.e., allies, competitors, enemies, and membership in multilateral organizations).

Parameter 2: Capabilities

- Concept: International environment
- Type: Nominal
- Operationalization: Defined as the complexity and availability of resources a state has available to act in international affairs. Varying in terms of trading relations, health of domestic currency, sources of capital for investment, investment in R&D, availability of natural resources, technological and economic independence, population, wealth, level of development, industrial structure, level of urbanization, and strength and independence of military.

Independent Variable 1: Societal interests & actors

- Concept: Domestic environment
- Type: Nominal
- Operationalization: Defined as the shared interests in international affairs of different organized or unorganized groups of actors. Varying in content, nature, and influence.

Independent Variable 2: Dominant ideas

- Concept: Domestic environment
- Type: Nominal
- Operationalization: Defined as enduring ideas within the foreign affairs community that come to dominate the framework within which policymakers view the world. Varying in content, nature, influence, and endurance.

Independent Variable 3: The Prime Minister & Cabinet

- Concept: Bureaucratic environment
- Type: Nominal
- Operationalization: Defined as the predispositions of the PM and the Cabinet members. Varying in terms of positional powers (appointments, design of the administrative structures of government, decision making structure, and plenipotentiary powers), idiosyncratic powers (personal interests, beliefs, and biases), and constraints (government type and domestic distractions)

Independent Variable 4: Parliament & election cycles

- Concept: Bureaucratic environment
- Type: Nominal
- Operationalization: Defined as the level of influence exerted by political officials outside the political executive and electoral politics on Canadian international affairs. Varying in terms of committees, nature of the opposition, government type, party system, governance style, nature of the chamber, influence, and weight of foreign policy issues.

Independent Variable 5: Foreign policy bureaucracy

- Concept: Bureaucratic environment

- Type: Nominal
- Operationalization: Defined as the predispositions of actors that can influence decision making across government departments and agencies in charge of international affairs. Varying in content, nature, and influence.

Independent Variable 6: Federalism

- Concept: Bureaucratic environment
- Type: Nominal
- Operationalization: Defined as the global interests of provinces and territories. Varying in content, nature, and influence.

Research Technique

The research takes the form of a between-case design using the structured focused comparison method. Additionally, the study undertakes a disciplined configurative/interpretive approach to theory by using established distinct theories, drawn from both international relations theory and foreign policy analysis to explain the outcomes in the dependent variable.

The method of structured focused comparison allows to better manage the load of cases and makes it easier to analyze each case while staying in line with the objectives of the study. To that end, each case is analyzed through a set of identical predetermined questions drawn from the literature review and the established theoretical framework to develop cumulative knowledge about the phenomenon of interest. This underlines the “structured” part of the study as the questions both guide and standardize data collection making both comparison and synthesizing possible. The technique is also “focused” in the sense that it only addresses a particular aspect of the phenomenon under examination through the selection of cases.

Structured focused comparison offers better comparative opportunities than single case studies that would see different manifestations of the Sino-Canadian relationship examined individually and at separate times. Single case studies offer little in terms of comparison as they are not initially performed for the purpose of later comparison and are subject to the idiosyncratic features of each case and investigator (George, 2018). They also tend to lack a common focus and/or theoretical framework, rendering comparison challenging if not impossible (George, 2018). For research of this size, analyzing every case using a single case study approach would not only lead to comparative challenges but would also be time-consuming as each case would necessitate its own investigation, irrespective of the other cases, and without the practicality of a standardized data collection mechanism.

Similarly, a number of authors have, over the years, sought to compare Canada's foreign policy with other middle powers, Australia being the comparative option of choice. For instance, Manicom & O'Neil (2012) have sought to address the research question by comparing both Ottawa and Canberra. The issue with comparing Australia and Canada's approach to the U.S.-China rivalry is that an overarching factor will always play into the value of the analysis. While both Western middle powers, Ottawa and Canberra have a very different approach to security (let alone trade) in that the former does not fear for its security by virtue of its deep integration into the American security apparatus. Canada has been historically shielded from the center of geopolitical conflict, always being an ocean away from any serious security threats. State survival being a central pillar of Realism, any comparative exercise of Canada's strategic outlook versus that of another state from a realist perspective will ultimately circle back to Ottawa's overwhelming sense of security stemming from its geostrategic position (see Lennox, 2006). Comparing Ottawa and Canberra's reaction to the U.S.-China rivalry is, thus, largely defeated.

Case Selection

Because of the in-between case design of the research, each “case” becomes an observation, a specific instance of the outcome of interest. Cases are selected based on their relevance to the research objectives and are categorized across a range of issues in Sino-Canadian relations believed to affect the triadic relationship between Canada, the U.S., and China the most. These issue areas are namely: diplomacy, security, economic relations, defence, and human rights. Together, they represent a sample of the broader population i.e., all areas of the triadic relationship, and are selected for their perceived differing outcomes in the independent variable. Purposive sampling of cases based on their perceived differing values of the independent variables and strategic leaning causes no inference issues to the study as they do not predetermine the outcome of the dependent variable. Ideally, all issue areas would be investigated, potentially yielding different results to the research conclusions. However, that enterprise is out of scope given its significant length, hence the decision to focus on the most important cases at play while leaving out others. Additionally, equal weight must be given to each issue area to render a more accurate depiction of Canada’s overall approach to Beijing, thus the reasoning behind not examining cases like Hong Kong and Taiwan which would have unfairly weighted human rights and defence issues in the investigation phase.

Human rights/Xinjiang carries the highest possibility of balancing as an issue area that has historically occasioned friction in the bilateral relationship. Furthermore, reports of human rights violations in XUAR are, to date, the most serious accusations against the PRC. Similarly, whereas Canada has long played a role in integrating China into the norms, rules, and principles of the order, China’s arbitrary arrest and detention of the two Michaels, in retaliation for the arrest of Meng Wanzhou and in direct flouting of core elements international law, makes the case ripe for some form of balancing act against Beijing. The case of the 3 Ms is especially important to the study as it is largely seen as the catalyst for the recent degradation of Sino-Canadian relations and was a direct result of the

U.S.-China rivalry. The case spills over other areas of the bilateral relationship, human rights being one of them, but also security and economic relations. Conversely, in these issue areas, the government appears to demonstrate an inclination to maintaining positive relations with Beijing. Although, security is an area of the relationship Canadians are uncomfortable with, the government has refused to bar Huawei from its 5G network even in the face of American/FYEV pressures, pointing to something other than balancing. Similarly, economic relations, which have historically hinged closer to bandwagoning under the policy of engagement, have maintained their positive course notwithstanding coercive agricultural bans on Canadian products. Lastly, defence/South China Sea poses as a bit of an outlier in that, by virtue of its integration into the American security apparatus and China's flouting of maritime international law, Canada would be expected to unequivocally side with Washington in the defence domain. Yet, the lack of defence policy investments in the region or even the government's uneasy relationship with the U.S.-led FOIP concept points to a strategic reaction other than balancing.

Cases are also selected for their spread across the lifetime of the Justin Trudeau government. This selection criterion allows the study to draw inferences based on the type (majority vs minority) of Canadian government in power a sort of de facto control variable given the importance it plays across multiple variables. The lifetime of the current Trudeau government has been selected as the time frame for the study as the most recent manifestation of Canada's international policies and considering the acceleration of great-power competition in recent years. The choice is also a reflection of the heavy influence Canadian Prime Ministers exercise on foreign policy and of continuity in Sino-Canadian relations across different administrations. To investigate whether the policy of engagement has continued throughout the U.S.-China rivalry, examining the latest manifestation of the country's foreign policy approach to China under the current Prime Minister constitutes a logical starting point.

Case 1: The 3 Ms

- Issue area: diplomacy

- Timeline: 1 December 2018 - 24 September 2021

Case 2: Huawei

- Issue area: security
- Timeline: 15 May 2019 - Present

Case 3: Chinese bans on Canadian agricultural products

- Issue area: economic relations
- Timeline: January 2019 - Present

Case 4: Xinjiang/Uyghurs

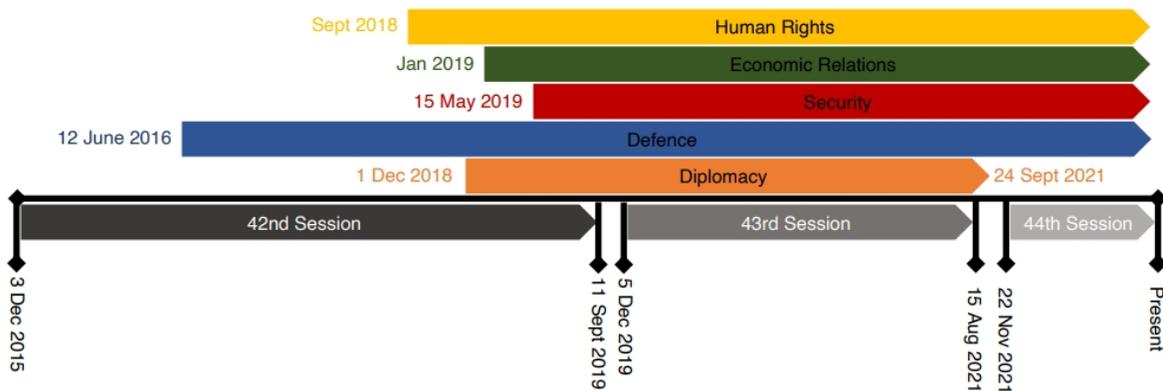
- Issue area: human rights
- Timeline: September 2018 - Present

Case 5: South China Sea

- Issue area: defence
- Timeline: 12 June 2016 - Present

Figure 1

Cases Timeline



Sources & Measurement

Data collection is done using the predetermined question-based approach of structured focused comparison. This predetermined set of questions is informed by the review of the literature and is representative of varying elements thought to influence the dependent variable. Data collection is mainly based on document analysis of both primary and secondary sources. An important challenge for most researchers is to ensure the transparency of their data collection and interpretation. In seeking to formulate explanations for the outcomes of each case under study, I demonstrate that alternative explanations have been considered and dropped not based on personal bias, but rather due to their weaker plausibility in line with the available data and relevant generalizations. In the same vein, when competing explanations offer the same level of plausibility, they are both retained.

Based on the results of the standardized set of questions, the outcome of each case is explained in terms of the effects the various determinants had on the dependent variable. The common analytical framework across all cases allows me to develop context-dependent generalizations. That information is then used to make inferences about Canada's strategic leaning in that particular issue area by situating the results in Table 1. The aggregated results of each case are then interpreted as a whole for their effect on Canadian foreign policy decision making and their consequent impact in generating a given strategic approach to the U.S.-China rivalry. The standardized set of questions is summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Data Collection Questions

Variable	Relevant Questions
Parameter 1: Geostrategic position	What states surround Canada's frontiers? What states are on Canada's continent?

	<p>What is the international status of Canada's neighbours?</p> <p>What is Canada's position within the balance of power?</p> <p>Who are Canada's allies, competitors, and enemies?</p> <p>How is Canada's membership in multilateral organizations defined?</p>
Parameter 2: Capabilities	<p>How complex are Canada's economic relations?</p> <p>What resources does Canada have to act in international affairs?</p> <p>Where does Canada invest its resources internationally?</p>
Independent Variable 1: Societal interests & actors	<p>Are there groups with shared interests in the issue area?</p> <p>What are the groups' interests?</p> <p>How influential are the groups?</p>
Independent Variable 2: Dominant ideas	<p>Is there a dominant ideational framework at play?</p> <p>Are there any competing ideas in the decision making apparatus?</p> <p>Who shares those ideas, how influential are they, and who drives them?</p>
Independent Variable 3: PM & Cabinet	<p>How influential/involved is the political executive in the case?</p> <p>Are there any constraints on the power of the executive?</p> <p>Are there known shared or disparate views between the PM and the Cabinet?</p>
Independent Variable 4: Parliament & election cycles	<p>How influential/involved is Parliament in the case?</p> <p>What are the key international affairs committees involved?</p> <p>What's the composition of the House of Commons (HoC)?</p> <p>Is there an electoral dimension to the case?</p>

Independent Variable 5: Foreign policy bureaucracy	What are the predispositions of the foreign policy bureaucracy on the case? How influential are the key bureaucratic departments/agencies?
Independent Variable 6: Federalism	What are the global interests of the various provinces in relation to the case? Are the interests shared or disparate across provinces? Do those interests compete against the interests of the federal government?

Hypotheses

The review of the literature and the baseline allow me to draw generalizations about the phenomenon of interest. The below hypotheses are a representation of those generalizations and enable me to draw inferences during the data analysis phase i.e., whether government decision making is consistent or inconsistent with its previous historical approach to foreign policy and China.

H1: If Canadian foreign policy interests clash with that of the U.S. or another great power, then multilateralism is used as the primary avenue to resolve the impasse.

H2: If a Canadian foreign policy position is established, then its implications for the conduct of U.S.-Canada relations are foremost taken into consideration.

H3: If internationalist objectives are pursued, then those objectives prioritize the Western alliance system.

H4: If internationalist objectives are pursued, then those objectives are carried multilaterally.

H5: If Canada is a member of an international grouping, then its likelihood to follow along with the decisions of that grouping is contingent on the strength of its members.

H6: If Canada lacks capabilities in an issue area, then the government stays out of the decision making process.

H7: If societal actors have demographic weight and resources, then their influence on government decision making is increased.

H8: If the Prime Minister exerts influence on Canadian foreign policy, then that influence is channeled through positional and idiosyncratic powers.

H9: If the government is in a minority position, then opposition parties exact more policy concessions on international affairs.

H10: If Parliament exerts influence on international affairs, then that influence is channeled through parliamentary committees.

H11: If there is an election, then foreign policy will not play a decisive role.

H12: If the foreign affairs bureaucracy exerts influence on international policies, then that influence is complementary to and restrained by the Prime Minister.

H13: If international policies do not involve provincial power, interests, or jurisdiction, then provinces defer to the position of the federal government.

H14: If diplomatic or human rights issues arise in Sino-Canadian relations, then quiet diplomacy is preferred as a resolution mechanism.

H15: If economic issues arise in Sino-Canadian relations, then Canada prefers to resolve disputes through bureaucratic channels first and the WTO second.

H16: If megaphone diplomacy is used in Sino-Canadian relations, then conflict persists.

H17: If geopolitical tensions mount, then PRC officials will see Canada as an extension of American interests.

Threats to Validity and Reliability

One of the main advantages of structured focused comparison is that it provides for a more reliable measurement of data than other qualitative research techniques in the between-case design family. The predetermined questions are repeated across each case and lend to a more standardized set of conclusions than other comparison case studies would otherwise permit. Reliability issues are also mitigated by the fact that only one researcher is charged with data interpretation, hence eliminating differences in personal biases. However, no researcher is ever totally free of their own predispositions. Transparency in the data interpretation phase is essential to bring biases to a near-zero while remaining *empirical*.

This researcher, nevertheless, recognizes some of the validity challenges of the study. All six independent variables, the dependent variable, and the two parameters are nominal and subjective in nature. The operationalization of each of these variables/parameters is done to reflect the most compelling operationalization within the literature on the topic, against competing ones. Finally, an additional challenge is to adequately determine what information is essential and what is not in analyzing each case and whether it will, in turn, affect the validity of the conclusions. The data interpretation phase must be generalizable enough to draw conclusions on which determinants are most influential for the outcome in the dependant variable but must not skim over details that render the conclusions irrespective of what *really* happened. Again, transparency in the data interpretation phase partly mitigates this threat to validity. Critics might also question why other potential determinants are missing from the analysis. Independent variables were chosen upon a thorough review of the literature and were identified as the primary sources of influence for Canadian foreign policy. Non-listed variables should be treated as secondary, relatively insignificant, or beyond the scope of this study.

A Baseline of Sino-Canadian Relations

As set out in the road map, we now come to a critical point in assessing Canadian foreign policy decision making vis-à-vis China. To analyze whether the current Canadian position in the U.S.-China rivalry is closer to balancing, bandwagoning, or hedging, I must first delineate what constitutes “continuity” in Sino-Canadian relations in practice and, simultaneously, where that continuity point lays on the strategic spectrum. Incidentally, identifying the baseline point allows me to characterize what other strategic options look like in practice for the Canadian case.

To the present day, the history of Canada's bilateral relationship with China has been characterized by “a push and pull dynamic of contradictory forces of economic attraction and political repulsion” (Burton, 2021, p.587). The bilateral relationship, fraught with the inevitable antagonisms of our political systems, has developed into what is arguably the most complex set of relations Canada has with a foreign country other than the United States. In policy terms, Canadian approaches to China since the 1960s have been framed through the concept of “engagement” which has served as a rationale for governments pursuing a diverse set of China objectives (Evans, 2014). “Engagement” is a characterization of policy response to a non-like-minded state that steers away from containment, isolation, and confrontation and that embraces a constructive relationship with aims to alter state behaviour (Evans, 2014).

The below section is an attempt to draw a baseline of this engagement and how Canadian foreign policy has navigated the relationship over the years. This is not to be confused with a historical recount of the major junctures in Sino-Canadian relations. Rather, the baseline serves as a landmark from which the results of the data collection phase are compared and subsequently interpreted for their effect on the dependent variable. To that effect, the baseline will examine Canadian engagement with China from the establishment of diplomatic relations under Pierre Elliot Trudeau to the more

recent Harper years. The section will be divided across the five issue areas for the purpose of the theoretical framework.

Diplomacy

Diplomatic engagement has been the most vibrant area of the bilateral relationship, aside from economic relations. The Canadian government was the second major Western country to recognize the PRC after France. When Pierre Elliot Trudeau switched the government's recognition of China from the Republic of China (ROC) to the PRC, he acknowledged the absurdity of isolating the latter and failure “to recognize the existence of those who rule a quarter—soon to be a third—of the human race” (Evans, 2014, p.23). The world needed China to resolve global issues and ensure global peace and security. Early in the history of bilateral relations, the Canadian government endorsed the concept of engagement with Trudeau later on writing in his memoir that “a China open to the world would be subject to the same diplomatic persuasion as other countries and could be expected over time to adjust its political, economic, and social practices to bring them into harmony with international norms” (Head & Trudeau, 1995, p.123).

To be fair, Trudeau’s predecessors also sought to establish diplomatic relations for the same reasons, but the window of opportunity was either never present or seized by policymakers (Fritzen, 2007). Earlier diplomatic efforts from Canadian administrations were squashed by Washington’s fierce opposition to diplomatic recognition of a communist regime at the helm of the Cold War and further thwarted by the Korean War (Lefrançois, 2016). During the Cold War, Canada made it a point to signal the independent nature of its foreign policy on China in respect to Canada’s bridging role between East and West. The Montreal Olympics of 1976 proved to be the first test of Canada’s independent approach. Canada, who recognized the PRC before the U.S. (and the UN), opted for a compromised approach that would neither compromise its bilateral relations with Beijing nor Washington by allowing ROC athletes to compete under the Taiwanese banner (Lefrançois, 2016).

The Canadian government had established the so-called “Canadian formula” to deal with the issue of Taiwan's status where Ottawa “takes note of” China's territorial claims over Taiwan (Burton, 2011). The formula broke the recognition logjam internationally as other countries followed suit thereafter including on the subsequent support for China's admission to the UN and its agencies in 1971 (Burton, 2011).

As China grew stronger, Canadian policymakers continued their efforts to integrate the PRC into key international institutions of the order. Paul Martin made a point of building a partnership with Beijing that embraced its renewed power in the international system, specifically by integrating it as a key member of the G20 (Evans, 2014). For Martin, the G20 would serve as a buttress in the bilateral relationship that would connect both countries in the realm of global governance, a signal of China's renewed power and Canada's leading role in international institution-building (Paltiel, 2018). Global issues became an integral part of bilateral dialogues including on issues of global security, reform of international institutions, ASEAN, APEC, climate change, and the Korean peninsula.

In 2005 following a visit to Canada by President Hu Jintao, the relationship was elevated to a strategic partnership—the highest form of relationship with the Chinese state—which was coupled with an elevation of cooperation in areas of transportation, food safety, health sciences, nuclear energy, sustainable energy, and climate change (Evans, 2014). This reflected 35 years of successful bilateral relations and Canada's respect for China's core interests despite points of frictions on human rights (Evans, 2014).

2006 marked an end to decades of Liberal power in Ottawa and a sharp change of direction in Sino-Canadian relations. The Conservatives of Stephen Harper brought with them a vision of the world divided in black and white, a sharp distinction between friends and enemies based on their like-mindedness, with China seen as the latter of the two dichotomies despite the strategic partnership. Canada's Asia focus shifted from authoritarian China to democratic India. The negative portrayal of

Beijing was mostly a by-product of right-wing disdain for Chinese communist leaders, opposition to the Chinese development model, and a perception of threat grounded in neo-conservative thinking borrowed from the South of the border (Evans, 2014). Distinction from previous Liberal governments was also a key aspect of this behavioural shift. Harper sought to distance himself from what he believed to be Liberal legacies and on China that meant the advancement of personal and Liberal elite financial interests in the face of human rights (Evans, 2014). For the first time in the history of bilateral relations, the political consensus on China was broken (Frolic, 2011).

The government made known its distrust of the CCP and shifted the relationship from the enduring concepts of engagement and strategic partnership to a “constructive and comprehensive relationship” (Jiang, 2009). The days where Canada was deemed China's “best friend in the world” were gone and replaced by wary attitudes. Stephen Harper shunned the Beijing Olympics' opening ceremony, attempted to facilitate the ascension of Taiwan into international organizations, and organized several official exchanges with the Taiwanese (Evans, 2014). Similarly, the Dalai Lama was both awarded honorary Canadian citizenship in 2006 and received by Stephen Harper himself in Ottawa the next year as a representative of Tibet; a first for a Canadian PM⁷. The government also repeatedly expressed its sympathy for the Falun Gong movement, another entity the PRC considers to be a threat to national unity. Furthermore, the Harper government proudly granted asylum to Chinese dissidents; a practice common in previous governments but done “behind the scenes” (Evans, 2014; Nossal & Sarsan, 2014).

The PM also proudly endorsed the consular case of Huseyin Celil—an imprisoned Canadian national of Uyghur origin in China⁸ (Jiang, 2009). Despite both megaphone and quiet diplomacy

⁷ Paul Martin had previously met the Dalai Lama in 2004 but in an informal setting at the residence of the Archbishop of Ottawa where the Tibetan leader was presented as a “spiritual leader” (Lefrançois, 2016).

⁸ Huseyin Celil had renounced his Chinese citizenship prior to his arrest in Uzbekistan at the request of the Chinese police in 2006 but Chinese authorities refuse to recognize his Canadian citizenship to this day.

attempts in multilateral and bilateral settings, Celil remains in Chinese custody to this day with officials refusing to convey information about his wellbeing to the Canadian Embassy in Beijing (Jiang, 2009). Consular issues are not uncommon in the history of the bilateral relationship. Despite the ratification of a consular agreement between the two parties in 1999, China has proved its willingness to imprison both Chinese dual-national dissidents who speak against the regime and Canadian nationals as leverage for diplomatic concessions; Huseyin Celil being a prime example of the former and the case of the Garratts, the latter (GAC, 2016a). Indeed, in 2014, Kevin and Julia Garratt were arrested and detained in China on charges of espionage in retaliation for Canada's arrest of Su Bin, a Chinese national working in Canada accused of stealing military data for the CCP (Murphy, 2019). The Garratts were eventually released after Su Bin pleaded guilty to U.S. charges which had prompted the request for his extradition (Murphy, 2019).

Ottawa's attitude shift under Harper was met with increasing anger from Beijing who took issue with the perception that somehow China needed Canada more than Canada needed China (Evans, 2014). An enduring malaise in the relationship is Canadians latent realization that China has significantly outpaced Ottawa internationally not only in terms of hard power but also in terms of soft power. The Chinese have long perceived Canada's status as rooted in the Western bloc and as a strategic appendage of the U.S. (Paltiel & Smith, 2020). Ottawa sits relatively low on Beijing's diplomatic priorities, a difficult pill to swallow for Canadian policymakers who saw their country as equal if not superior for most of the history of the bilateral relationship (Paltiel & Smith, 2020). At home, Harper's cold politics approach to China was criticized for its lack of results in altering state behaviour, lack of electoral gains, and high price not only economically but because Chinese officials pushed back by delaying/stalling diplomatic dialogues (Evans, 2014).

By the Fall of 2007, the Harper government abandoned its moral high ground approach to Beijing and opted for a more nuanced strategy focused on economics and energy (Evans, 2014).

Harper returned to previous positive junctures of the relationship to partly rebuild the relationship, chief among which was a state visit to China in late 2009; his first since taking office. The trip proved to be a critical juncture in ushering a *détente* and active period of bilateral agreements in several issue areas including the long pursued “approved destination status”. The strategic partnership officially returned after the government’s shunning of Beijing had failed to yield tangible results.

Security

Engagement in the realm of security is relatively new to the relationship and has been characterized by complications more than opportunities. As China grew bigger and stronger, domestic concerns regarding the influence the PRC could potentially exert on Canadian society also increased. Fears have mainly been threefold.

First, Chinese investments, especially from Chinese State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), have prompted concerns that the CCP could exert undue influence on the Canadian economy (Houlden, 2020). There continue to be concerns that Chinese SOEs are not just driven by economic gains but also politically driven as arms of the CCP (Burton, 2015b). These fears include economic espionage, theft of Canadian IP, the lack of independence in the Chinese justice system in cases of disputes, and control over critical Canadian economic assets all of which could give China undue leverage over the Canadian government (Burton, 2015b). The Harper years, which saw CNOOC’s acquisition of Nexen and CCC’s failed purchase of Aecon, were a reflection of growing Canadian concerns regarding Chinese economic activity in the country. Controversial as they were, these Chinese investments paved the way for the gradual imposition of restrictive measures on foreign acquisition of Canadian assets (Houlden, 2020). Anxiety born of potential Chinese investments reflects a broader balancing exercise between competing pressures in Canada’s China policy. Within the bureaucracy, departments and agencies charged with international trade portfolios like GAC and Export Development Canada tend to be more in favour of greater engagement with Beijing in contradiction with the recommendations

of the national security branches of the government such as the Royal Canadian Mountain Police (RCMP), Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), and Canadian Security Establishment (CSE) (Burton, 2015a).

In fact, a second fear born out of China's growing reach is its domestic political influence, particularly where it flows through the CCP United Front Work Department, even if these efforts may not have a major influence (Houlden, 2020). CSIS has been concerned with the influence of Chinese agents on Canadian soil since the late 1990s and has increasingly called for caution against what it believes to be CCP-led efforts to establish influential relationships within all levels of government decision making (Manthorpe, 2021).

Third, the establishment of Confucius Institutes which are intended to expose Canadian students to Chinese language, history, and culture has drawn many criticisms from Canada's spy agency which believes the institutes to be CCP espionage outposts (Manthorpe, 2021). These institutes are reported to contribute to the CCP's intimidation of more than 1.5 million Canadians of ethnic Chinese descent to silence advocates of political reforms in China and critics of the PRC's human rights record (Manthorpe, 2021).

Economic Relations

Economic interests have always been at the core of Canada-China relations. The Chinese market has long been labeled as a viable alternative to Canada's overreliance on the American marketplace. China rapidly evolved into what is now the world's second-largest economy and soon to be first according to estimates marking 2030 as the landmark when China's GDP will overtake that of the United States (Bratt, 2021). Despite wide variance in population and power, the two economies are highly compatible in that what Canada possesses China generally lacks (Houlden, 2020).

Canada's economic relationship with China began even before diplomatic relations were established. During the Diefenbacker years, Ottawa was exporting wheat to Beijing via NGOs against

a trade embargo set by the U.S. (Burton, 2011). In 1978 when the CCP abandoned Maoist era policies for the opening and reform ideology of Deng Xiaoping, engagement between the two countries reached new heights and focused heavily on economic development programs (Burton, 2011).

The government assisted Beijing in developing the infrastructure of a market economy, an investment that would reap benefits in threefold: a kickback for the trade surplus accumulated from Diefenbaker's wheat sales; an integration of China into the institutional and normative framework of what John Ruggie has so famously termed "embedded liberalism"; and investments in poverty reduction and gender and minority rights brought about by market reform (Paltiel & Nossal, 2019). For the majority of the history of bilateral relations, Canadian policymakers believed that social change in China would ensue from market reforms.

Chrétien championed economic advancements during his tenure, epitomized by the annual Team Canada missions focused on trade and investment issues. These trade missions remain the largest in Canada's history and had for objective to induce investment from Chinese SOEs into Canadian products and connect Canadian business owners with potential partners (Burton, 2021). Canada also played a key role in facilitating China's accession to the WTO in 2001 and both countries now offer the other most favoured nation treatment (Evans, 2014). Both countries, despite relatively positive economic partnership, have a long history of economic disputes which are usually brought to the WTO. Canada's trade investigations on China often revolve around anti-dumping and anti-subsidies claims (Potter, 2016).

Despite Harper's initial hawkish approach to China, economic relations remained on pace with two-way trade and investment increasing during his tenure (Evans, 2014). China is now Canada's second most important bilateral commercial partner (or third when the EU is counted as a whole) behind only the United States (Scarffe, 2020). Since China's accession to the WTO, bilateral trade has grown from about 1% to nearly 6% in 2019 but still dwarfs in comparison to the weight of the

American market (Scarffe, 2020; Bratt, 2021). Agricultural exports dominate Canadian trade with China, a reflection of the latter's food security issues (Houlden, 2020). Aside from agricultural products, the Chinese market is highly compatible in terms of natural resources and energy. China is rich in few natural resources whereas Canada has an abundance of many and is a big exporter. Similarly, China is the world's greatest energy importer and Canada is a leading exporter of energy.

While the trade picture seems to offer a positive outlook, trade has never quite lived up to the expectations with attempts of a bilateral economic partnership squashed and trade statistics, while growing, low considering the two economies compatibility (Chen, 2019). Similarly, investments are at even lower levels compared to Canada's investment relationship with other Asian countries (Scarffe, 2020).

Human Rights

From the onset of bilateral relations, human rights in China have always been an area of malaise for Canadian politicians who sought to balance economic interests with a Chinese view of human rights that is inherently different from Western conceptions. From Trudeau to Martin, the general advice to the government was that human rights were a sensitive topic in the bilateral relation given the lack of political opposition in China and Beijing's non-intervention policy. A multilateral approach through international organizations and NGOs coupled with quiet diplomacy was deemed more likely to draw compliance from the CCP with global human rights norms (Evans, 2014; Lefrançois, 2016).

The government reacted strongly to the shocking images of state-sponsored crackdown on protestors in Tiananmen Square in 1989. Expectations that political reforms would follow economic reforms were shattered and human rights were no longer to be put aside in the Canadian equation of its relationship with China (Evans, 2014). The events prompted a fierce condemnation of the Chinese government via a unanimous motion in the HoC, targeted sanctions, suspension of Canadian

International Development Agency's (CIDA) development programs, temporary recall of its diplomatic staff, and more. China became the subject of harsh criticism at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in a yearly resolution condemning its handling of human rights partly led by Canada (Lefrançois, 2016).

The government's reaction to Tiananmen proved to be more virtue signalling than a changing direction for the state of bilateral relations. The Mulroney government continued to advocate, despite calls against it, for engagement with Beijing in fear that anti-China sentiments and isolation would only worsen the prospects of social change in the PRC (Evans, 2014). Mulroney argued that severing ties with the PRC would be equivalent to "closing our borders with the U.S.", hence acknowledging China's uncontested role in international affairs and its importance to Canadian foreign policy (Lefrançois, 2016, p.92). By 1991, after three years of megaphone diplomacy, the government returned to its quiet approach on human rights and resumed consultations and high-level visits (Webster, 2010). The government's shunning of China had failed to yield results and bilateral relations continued their positive path.

Chrétien was especially criticized for sidelining human rights in favour of a "trade trumps all" approach but that picture proved to be somewhat inaccurate as human rights dialogues peaked under his administration. While Chrétien focused wholly on trade, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, challenged China on human rights issues through direct bilateral engagement in the form of dialogues (both track I and II) notably the Canada-China joint Committee on Human Rights. These dialogues were also supplemented by the work of the Canada-China Legislative Association established in 1998. Nevertheless, later reports "revealed that Chinese participants did not appreciate the missionary attitude of the Canadian delegation; the repetitive agenda that included Falun Gong, Tibet, Xinjiang, and the death penalty; and the expectation that all of the discussion about issues and remedies should focus on China alone" (Evans, 2014, p.46). It is also claimed that the PRC suggested

this confidential bilateral format in exchange for Canada ceasing to support a yearly UNHRC resolution against China (Burton, 2015b).

One point often neglected is that the shift to bilateral human rights dialogue was a trend of the time for many linked-minded states and not just centered around China (Webster, 2010). Canada was not stand-alone in dropping its sponsorship of the UNHRC resolution as Australia, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and Japan had all done so in the years prior (Webster, 2010). It is important to note that the dialogues might still have had some effect in facilitating change in Chinese behaviour, most importantly, amendments to the constitution and the signing of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the International Convention on Economic and Social Rights (Evans, 2014).

When the Conservatives ascended to power in 2006, the government changed the direction of our bilateral relationship by making human rights a precondition to re-engaging in dialogues and overstepping some Chinese core interests (Evans, 2014). Harper made numerous public calls on China's human rights record and held that, unlike his predecessors, human rights were not to be sidelined for commercial interests (Jiang, 2009). Following a study from the Human Rights Subcommittee of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, the Canada-China bilateral human rights dialogue was halted after it was decried as ineffective and manipulated by the Chinese regime (Burton, 2015b). The move received both acclaim and criticism from civil society with one camp arguing that resuming quiet diplomacy implies tacit acceptance of Chinese behaviour and the other camp reiterating that China's economic opportunities are too vital to sacrifice over a misunderstanding that social change will occur overnight (Webster, 2010).

Midway through their first term, Harper's Conservatives reversed course on their approach to China. The government abandoned its moral high ground approach to Beijing and opted for a more

nuanced strategy focused on economics and energy as some cabinet members, motivated by business opportunities, were not as inclined as their social-conservative colleagues to lecture China on human rights (Lefrançois, 2016; Evans, 2014). Harper resumed human rights dialogues and ushered a *détente* of bilateral relations for the remainder of his tenure. Once again, shunning China on human rights had proved ineffective.

Defence

Defence has never been an area of collaboration between Canadians and Chinese in large reflection of the former's deep integration with the American military apparatus. Dialogues have, however, been held on matters of regional and global defence ranging from “potential conflicts in the South China Sea to regional security in northeast Asia and the broader Asia Pacific region, the weaponization of space, human security and the Responsibility to Protect, the environment, and climate change” (Evans, 2014, p.49). Due to its leadership in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), lack of great power interests, and absence of colonial history, Canada was invited to contribute to regional security in the South China Sea during the Chrétien years by providing coordination, expertise, and funds to the South China Sea Informal Working Group (McDorman, 1997; Dewitt & Welch, 2016). The initiative, led by Indonesia, operated in a Track 1.5 format where governments informally met academic specialists to explore dispute management options. Given the sensitivity of questions of sovereignty and territorial borders, the Canadian government opted for a standoff approach (McDorman, 1997). In that vein, Canadian efforts were channeled through CIDA which provided the funds enabling Canadian CSOs to collaborate with the Indonesian ministry of foreign affairs on the organization of the working group sessions (McDorman, 1997).

Canada has never been a key player in the South China Sea but has pursued its interests (principally *juste milieu* goals of peace and security as well as global order based on rules) through both bilateral and multilateral settings. Canada has traditionally deferred to U.S. preferences and UN

processes in the domain of East-Asian defence (Dewitt & Welch, 2016). Even Canadian contributions to the Korean War were within the frame of the UN mission and Canada has never maintained a military presence in the region since then (Paltiel & Nossal, 2019). Since Chrétien, Canada's shift in the region has been entirely economic, and Canadian officials have largely withdrawn (Dewitt & Welch, 2016). As a result, Ottawa has been relegated to a second rank role in the evolving military balance of the Asia-Pacific, despite earlier contributions (Dewitt & Welch, 2016; Paltiel & Nossal, 2019).

Nonetheless, a key Canadian regional defence interest is freedom of navigation. Not only does trillions worth of global trade move through the South China Sea but Canada is also highly intertwined with the proliferation of global norms and rules such as maritime navigation; norms and rules China seeks to reform. Interestingly enough, freedom of navigation is also where Canada has the least amount of regional leverage (Dewitt & Welch, 2016). Any attempt for Canadian intervention would be perceived as meddling by China given Canada's relative lack of defence and security contributions in East Asia (Dewitt & Welch, 2016). Furthermore, it is challenging for Canada to craft a position given its opposition to freedom of navigation in the Northwest Passage where the application of the concept, albeit somewhat different, would complicate Canada's territorial claims (Dewitt & Welch, 2016).

45 Years of Sino-Canadian Relations

The baseline demonstrates that, throughout the 45 years of bilateral relationship from Trudeau to Harper, a consensus on China has endured despite two notable cold periods: Tiananmen and Harper's early years. This marks a historical continuity in Canadian foreign policy, one that is difficult for any government to effectively deviate from.

Canada's policy of engagement with China reflects an approach to diplomacy where Canada sees itself as a contributor to China's ascension to core international institutions and adherence to global norms of the order. Canada's objective has always been to positively influence China's opening

to the international community in hopes that China would grow to be more like “us” and embrace the norms and principles of the Liberal International Order. Canadian diplomacy towards Beijing is, nevertheless, operated in reference to the tempo of U.S.-China relations with greater opportunities offered when relations are warm. At times, Canadian policymakers have, nonetheless, demonstrated their dedication to engaging China in areas of core Canadian interests, irrespective of the attitudes of its Southern neighbour.

On economic relations, economic opportunities have been the primary avenue through which Canadian policymakers have sought to use the relationship to offset Ottawa’s overreliance on the American market. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the complementarity of the Chinese and Canadian markets has pushed Canadian policymakers to seek further economic engagements with China with the signing of a FIPA and bilateral economic partnership as ultimate objectives.

Canada’s approach to social change and human rights has traditionally resorted to quiet diplomacy and occasionally megaphone diplomacy through multilateral channels. The former has potentially yielded more results, but it is hard to distinguish the exactitude of Canadian contributions as opposed to social change as a function of increased living standards in the PRC. Malaise in the relationship can be traced to Ottawa’s uneasy relationship with elements of the Chinese regime that are antagonistic to its own. The PRC’s conception of human rights and governance is entrenched in an authoritarian political system that stems from its inception as a Marxist-Leninist state. Canadian policymakers have long sought to alter the resulting Chinese behaviour on human rights, in hopes that it would one day adopt the liberal norms of the order.

In the realm of security, China’s economic structure is highly centralized in the hands of the CCP and driven by its powerful SOEs. China’s approach to soft power is equally anchored in the CCP apparatus and is portrayed as unwelcome foreign influence. These antagonisms work to create tension over our own conception of what China ought to be as well as fears of Beijing’s renewed power for

our society. As China's power has grown, Canadians have become increasingly uneasy about the prospect of Chinese influence domestically.

Finally, Canadian involvement in areas of Asia-Pacific regional defence has been largely absent, in large part due to the difficult task of mitigating the deterioration of its bilateral relationship with either Beijing or Washington that any involvement would create. Despite a significant stake in the proliferation of global norms/rules in the region that would see a UNCLOS-based regime enforced, hegemonic competition has rendered any policy position challenging. In response, Ottawa has largely reduced its footprint in the region, continuing its focus around the Atlantic defence.

The policy of engagement has, therefore, historically leaned on the side of hedging with the exception of economic relations where the preferences of Canadian policymakers have hinged closer to a bandwagoning approach. While early policies were not adapted to the reality of China's rise to hegemony, Sino-Canadian relations have always been carried through the lens of our bilateral relationship with the U.S. The engagement policy is, thus, relatively well-suited for the U.S.-China rivalry. Of importance for the arguments of this study is that the utmost importance of Washington to Canada has and continues to be unquestioned in foreign policy planning but so is the necessity to engage with Beijing despite antagonisms in the relationship. This dual commitment reflects the importance of the middle power image. The policy of engagement can, thus, neither be seen as an adoption of Chinese strategic objectives (bandwagoning) nor deference to a U.S.-centric policy of containment against Beijing (balancing). Whether that continues to be true under the Trudeau government remains to be seen. The following analysis sheds some light on the question.

Analysis

Before diving into the analytical phase of the research, it is important that we remind ourselves how we got to this point. We began by establishing the research problem, that is, that Canadian foreign policy decision making has been puzzling in navigating the U.S.-China rivalry. The Canadian reaction departs from traditional international relations theory's predictions and, likewise, deviates from the experiences of the Cold War where Canada's strategic alignment, as a Western middle power, was with the United States. However, I have demonstrated that Canada and other Western middle powers have their strategic interests anchored in the established order for a multitude of reasons, often confused as a deeper attachment to the United States as a hegemon. That misconception accounts in large part for why novel reactions to hegemonic competition in the post-Cold War period are often perceived as anomalies rather than premised on the changing nature of America's approach to the global order, its allies, and great power rivalry. Middle powers have demonstrated their ability to move beyond the dichotomy of balancing and bandwagoning that is pre-ordained to them by international relations theories in adopting strategic positions that make use of both engagement and containment policies vis-à-vis China.

The objective of this study being to investigate whether that also proves to be true for the Trudeau government, a number of steps had to be undertaken. First, I established that the middle power image is the most enduring in the literature on Canadian foreign policy, highlighting the determinants, inputs, and trends that are best suited to explain how Canada has navigated the last iteration of hegemonic competition. Second, I introduced a robust theoretical framework and methodology that allows me to investigate five issue areas in the Canada-China relationship to support my claims on Canada's hedging position. Third, I drew a baseline of Canada's engagement policy towards China since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1970. That baseline, in turn, allows

me to assign change or continuity in making inferences about Ottawa's strategic position in the changing balance of power.

The next step is where we find ourselves now. Each issue area, namely, diplomacy, security, economic relations, human rights, and defence will be investigated separately. Each case will answer the data collection questions set up during the methodology phase, reflecting the extent to which respective determinants have had an influential role on Canadian foreign policy decision making throughout the lifetime of the case. Subsequently, these findings will permit inferences on Canada's strategic leaning in that specific case, by subjugating the results to Table 1. As noted previously, international environment determinants of Canadian foreign policy are invariants. They pose as parameters of decision making by setting the constraints and opportunities of the international system within which Canadian foreign policy operates. To that effect, these parameters and their respective responses to the data collection questions are listed below and apply in the same manner across all cases.

Parameter 1: Geostrategic Position

What states surround Canada's frontiers? What states are on Canada's continent? What is the international status of Canada's neighbours? What is Canada's position within the balance of power? Who are Canada's allies, competitors, and enemies? How is Canada's membership in multilateral organizations defined?

Canada shares its only land frontier with the United States with other neighbours being remotely distant across the Atlantic, Arctic, and Pacific oceans. With no other neighbours to offset the preponderance of the U.S. on the continent, Canada finds itself in a position of subservience to the world's hegemon not only internationally but also continentally. Ottawa's position internationally is such that foreign policy decisions are constantly made within the lens of its bilateral relationship with Washington. Since the Second World War, Canada has been aligned with the United States and has evolved into Washington's foremost ally. Within the balance of power, Canada is best perceived

within the prism of a Western middle power whose interests hinge on a predictable geopolitical environment based on rules, norms, and institutions that constrain the reach and coercive actions of greater power, including that of its closest ally. As a builder and supporter of the Liberal International Order, Ottawa has dedicated many resources to sustain and advance a global normative regime that fostered a favourable environment for its internationalist interests.

Over the years, multilateralism has evolved into the guiding principle and operational strategy of choice for Canadian foreign policy to achieve these internationalist objectives. Ottawa's adoption of multilateralism is a reflection of its status as a middle power invested in supporting and progressively reforming the current order. In this fashion, multilateralism is also a keystone element of Ottawa's need to offset Washington's dominance on the continent which works to both create a distinctly Canadian voice internationally and bind the Americans into a system of rules and norms that curbs displays of exceptionalism. Ottawa's long list of allies is equally a cause and a reaction to Canada's commitment to multilateralism. Canada is a party to a large number of international institutions, regional groupings, coalitions, and alliances and has very few geopolitical competitors and enemies by extension of its middle power status. The majority of Canada's groupings are an extension of Ottawa's position within the "Western bloc" but also extends to other regions of the world where its interests lie. As a non-great power, Ottawa is more vulnerable to the reach of great powers and, consequently, prefers to operate within a structure that constrains power preponderance and unilateral action, hence its vested interest in multilateral forums. In the current order, these forums are an extension of American hegemony. Consequently, Canada has dedicated much of its energy to ensure the survival of these institutions' core principles while demonstrating its role as an advocate and leader of progressive reforms in an attempt to render the order more inclusive and egalitarian.

Parameter 2: Capabilities

How complex are Canada's economic relations? What resources does Canada have to act in international affairs? Where does Canada invest its resources internationally?

Throughout its history, Canada has never been wholly self-sufficient and has always been dependent on foreign trade for its prosperity. Canada's trading patterns have evolved with its geostrategic position, first being overly concentrated in the British market and gradually into the American market. Today, Canada is a member of several economic arrangements spreading across the globe but the majority of its exports and imports remain housed in the United States. Dependence on trade and concentration into a single market make Canadian foreign policy subservient to the American behemoth but also reliant on a global trade regime that curbs coercion. Canada lacks the material capabilities of a great power that would confer it more independence from the anarchy of the international system and the hierarchy of the North American continent.

Be it population, GNP, industrial capacity, technological innovation, natural resources, size and capabilities of the military, or others, Canada tends to rank well above smaller powers but still relatively short of greater powers which have helped reinforce the idea of Canada as a middle power. This same conception has led to an interpretation of how Canada's capabilities ought to be invested internationally founded on the auspices of comparative advantage. Since the inception of the UN system, Ottawa has taken a functionalist approach to its participation in international affairs meaning that Canadian involvement is often conditional upon its capabilities and interests in the issue area. Niche diplomacy poses as the operationalization of functionalism and has resulted in a concentration of resources on activities deemed of specialized interests or comparative advantage to Ottawa. In practice, this has often resulted in resources focused on human rights, disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, trade liberalization, gender equality, peacekeeping, and international law.

Case 1–Diplomacy: The 3 Ms

We begin with the Meng Wanzhou saga and the arbitrary arrest and detention of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor in retaliation—the 3 Ms as they have come to be known⁹. The case might be the most important in the study as the catalyst for the souring of bilateral relations between Canada and China. The case is of specific interest given that it positioned Ottawa in the middle of a geopolitical spat between Washington and Beijing, reaping the consequences of all three arrests. Below is an examination of the Canadian government decision making on the case. The findings reflect a) all six independent variables believed to have a determinative effect on the conduct of Canadian foreign policy via the data collection questions established during the methodology phase; b) the timeline of the case (see Figure 1); and c) the most compelling generalizations on the outcomes of the case as well as alternative perspectives according to primary and secondary sources. These findings are analyzed according to the theoretical framework illustrated in Table 1 (see methodology) to determine whether Canadian foreign policy decision making on the case meets the threshold of balancing, bandwagoning, or hedging, providing an explanation for which variables have been most influential in generating those results.

Summary

On December 1, 2018, the RCMP arrested Huawei Technologies CFO Meng Wanzhou on a U.S. extradition request for running afoul of U.S. sanctions against Iran. U.S. authorities alleged that the CFO had been untruthful with HSBC officials about her company’s dealings with Skycom, a Huawei subsidiary operating in Teheran, putting the bank at risk of violating U.S. law (Proctor, 2018). Nine days later, Chinese authorities arrested Canadian Michael Kovrig in apparent retaliation for Meng’s arrest who is also the daughter of Huawei’s founder and CEO Ren Zhengfei, a powerful

⁹ It is important to note that, although the Canadian government has repeatedly rejected Chinese claims that the two Michaels were Canadian spies, available information can neither confirm nor deny the factuality of these claims.

Chinese businessman with ties to the CCP. A day later, on December 11, 2018, another Canadian, Michael Spavor, was also arrested in China¹⁰. Over the course of three years, the case of the 3 Ms would evolve into a geopolitical chess match between Washington and Beijing with Canada left as a pawn. On September 24, 2021, 1,028 days after Meng's arrest, diplomatic efforts culminated in the CFO agreeing to a deferred prosecution agreement (DPA) with the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) where she admitted having misled HSBC on Huawei's dealings with Skycom in Iran (Jacobs & Coletta, 2021). The statement allowed her to walk free and return to China with charges set to be formally dropped on December 1, 2022 (Jacobs & Coletta, 2021). On the same day, the "two Michaels", as they have become known, were released by Chinese authorities and subsequently brought back to Canada after over a thousand days of detention in the Chinese judicial system on espionage charges (Coletta, 2021). The case became a juncture point in the Sino-Canadian relationship, quickly shifting what had been early hopes of a bilateral economic partnership in 2015 to the lowest point in the history of the bilateral relationship. The geopolitical spat ushered a recalibration of not only Canada's relationship with China but also with its closest ally, the United States, as the case spilled over other areas of the triadic relationship.

Independent Variable 1: Societal Interests & Actors

Are there groups with shared interests in the issue area? What are the groups' interests? How influential are the groups?

Nearly every Canadian think tank with a foreign policy arm released reports, commentaries, op-eds, podcasts, and held webinars on the 3 Ms debacle. Influential foreign policy pundits, academics, ex-diplomats, and even ex-Prime Ministers sought to leverage their clout to either secure the release of the two Canadians directly or shape public opinion and influence government decision making. While civil society actors widely believed the Michaels were innocent collateral from the arrest of

¹⁰ Robert Schellenberg, a Canadian sentenced in China in November 2018 on drug smuggling charges, was also re-tried on January 14th, 2021, and sentenced to death, in apparent retaliation for the Huawei CFO's arrest (Gollom, 2021).

Meng Wanzhou, some called for the government to intervene in the Huawei CFO's legal proceedings, as is the government's right under the *Extradition Act*. CSOs repeatedly cited the clear political component the Trump administration had brought to bear on the case and the foreign policy interests Canada had to lose by getting involved in a U.S.-China geopolitical spat, let alone the cost to the lives of two Canadians. In November 2019, Allan Rock, a former Liberal minister, led a delegation of former Canadian officials, politicians, and academics to China for a Track II dialogue on the case and other dimensions of Sino-Canadian relations¹¹ (Blackwell, 2019). At the end of their trip, the group unanimously pleaded their case to Dominic Barton—Canada's Ambassador to China—arguing that political intervention in releasing Meng was the only way forward as Chinese officials had made clear the case had become too politicized by Donald Trump (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021).

Similar pleas to the Executive were made four more times. In May 2020, Greenspan Humphrey Weinstein LLP, a prominent Canadian law firm approached by Allan Rock and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) Louise Arbour, sent a letter to the Minister of Justice arguing for government intervention (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). In the same month, Rock and Arbour addressed a memorandum to the PM, the Clerk of the PCO, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Justice reiterating the arguments of Greenspan Humphrey Weinstein LLP (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). A month later in June 2020, Rock and Arbour once more led a letter to the PM penned by a group of 19 former government officials, senior diplomats, and academics (Carter, 2021). Finally, in September 2020, a similar letter to Justin Trudeau was signed by more than 100 former diplomats (Chase & Fife, 2020). In response to these letters, the Macdonald-Laurier Institute (MLI) organized its separate plea to the Prime Minister, rejecting the arguments of Arbour, Rock, and others, arguing that Canada would betray key values and important

¹¹ The delegation included Gordon Houlden, John Bird, Ted Menzies, Phillip Calvert, Rob Wright, Len Edwards, Yves Tiberghien (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021).

allies while playing into China's coercive behaviour should it politically interfere in Meng's legal proceedings (MLI, 2020). The efforts from advocates of government intervention were in vain as Prime Minister Trudeau rebuffed calls that would have seen some sort of prisoner swap, arguing that it would set a precedent for other Canadians abroad (Chase & Fife, 2020).

Most societal actors also agreed that the government should have exerted more pressure on Beijing, beyond rhetoric, by working with allies to release the two Canadians (Gilbert & Piché, 2021). Banning Huawei from Canada's 5G infrastructure, withdrawing from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and imposing sanctions on the PRC were prominent features of civil society's arguments but tools the government never adopted (Gilbert & Piché, 2021; Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). While the government never provided clear reasoning for its lack of willingness in imposing sanctions and other measures, a potential reason might have been the reluctance of allies to coordinate actions. Another potential reason is that the government sought to not further antagonize PRC officials amidst negotiations to secure the release of the two Canadians (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021).

In mainstream media, the case consistently dominated the news cycle and is still the focal point of every China-related matter in Canada. Steven Chase, Robert Fife, and Nathan Vanderklippe from the *Globe and Mail* (G&M) were at the forefront of the news cycle on the 3 Ms (G&M, n.d.a; G&M, n.d.b; G&M, n.d.c.). Chase and Fife demonstrated a more hawkish view of Beijing by extension of whose opinion they featured in their news articles. Along with the reputational damage that China caused itself, the two effectively helped shape the steep decline in Canadian public positive opinions towards China since 2018. Indeed, public opinion pointed to Canadians being both against a prisoner exchange and favourable to further retaliatory actions against Beijing. Over 72% of Canadians opposed political intervention in the legal proceedings and 50% believed the government should had done more to resolve the case (Angus Reid Institute, 2020b). Finally, latest opinion polls show that

only 14% of Canadians held positive views of China, an all-time low in the history of bilateral relations (Angus Reid Institute, 2020a).

Independent Variable 2: Dominant Ideas

Is there a dominant ideational framework at play? Are there any competing ideas in the decision making apparatus?

Who shares those ideas, how influential are they, and who drives them?

Multilateralism proved to be the operational tool of choice for the Canadian government as evidenced by its multiple attempts to use multilateral fora to vouch for the release of the two Michaels. This preference for multilateralism was unchallenged in policy circles as the power disparity between Ottawa and Beijing was widely understood. The approach is also consistent with images of Canada as a middle power married to internationalist objectives of human rights and international law. The Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations (the Declaration) and its affiliated Partnership Action Plan (PAP) was a leading example of Canada using progressive multilateral diplomacy to respond to a shortcoming of the international order and an example of ad-hoc coalition outside the UN system (GAC, 2021i). The government relied on its closest allies to advance the Declaration with early diplomatic efforts done in coordination with FYEV countries and with subsequent endorsement by G7 members (GAC, 2021i; GAC, 2021e). The government also featured the Declaration at the 47th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the 76th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), and the U.S. Summit for Democracy (Permanent Mission of Canada to Geneva, 2021; PMO, 2021b; GAC, 2021j). Additionally, on the days of the Michaels' trials and verdict pronouncement of Michael Spavor, GAC organized a show of solidarity outside the courthouses with as many as 24 countries and the European Union (EU) attending to voice their opposition to China's opaque judicial process (Vanderkippe, 2021).

These multilateral efforts reflected an inclination for megaphone diplomacy. However, the efforts operated in tandem with a quiet diplomacy approach. Canadian bureaucrats and the political

executive opted for quiet diplomacy in the early stages of the case and later shifted to a more vocal condemnation of the PRC as the lack of success dragged on and criticism mounted. Backdoor diplomacy with the American administrations of Donald Trump and Joe Biden were the most apparent efforts of the kind, supplemented by negotiations with Chinese officials in bilateral settings. Contrarily, Parliament and CSOs largely voiced their support for megaphone diplomacy and called on the government to do more. The secrecy behind the resolution of the case makes it hard to assign success to one approach over the other, however, it seems that quiet diplomacy efforts urging the Biden administration to seek a resolution to the case in tandem with increasing international pressure on the Chinese regime both worked for the release of the Michaels.

Independent Variable 3: The Prime Minister & Cabinet

How influential/involved is the political executive in the case? Are there any constraints on the power of the executive?

Are there known shared or disparate views between the PM and the Cabinet?

As the case unfolded, the Executive showed a preference for quiet diplomacy which many viewed as inaction (Gilbert & Piché, 2021). The synchronism between Meng's extradition hearing in BC and the Michaels' progress within the Chinese judicial system made it clear that China's retaliatory actions were constraints on government decision making (Gilbert & Piché, 2021). Available information such as PMO and GAC statements/readouts and appearances before Parliamentary committees point to the PM and the Minister of Foreign Affairs having raised the case of the two Michaels at nearly every opportunity with like-minded states, especially the United States, as well as with Chinese officials (CACN, 2020; FAAE, 2019; FAAE, 2020).

Justin Trudeau only had one face-to-face interaction with Xi Jinping at the 2019 G20 in Osaka, Japan with no details of the exchange offered by the PMO, perhaps because the case of the two Canadians never came up (D'Amore, 2019). The PM struggled to secure direct lines of communications with his counterpart in part because Beijing repeatedly criticized Ottawa for being

complicit with the United States in what they believed was the politically motivated arrest of Meng Wanzhou (Ljunggren & Blanchard, 2018). As a result, communications with the PRC were mostly relegated to the ministerial and bureaucratic levels. Prime Minister Trudeau focused his efforts on discussions with the American administrations of Donald Trump and Joe Biden. Whereas Trump did not show much openness to advocating for a return of the Michaels in his dealings with Xi Jinping, the Biden administration amplified calls for their release and increased bilateral communications with the Canadian side on the issue (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). In fact, many believe the September 9th, 2021, meeting between Xi and Biden to be when the DPA and subsequent release of the two Michaels were orchestrated (Maher, 2021).

Justin Trudeau proved to be highly influential in the government's handling of the case. Over the saga's 1,028 days, the PM replaced Canada's top diplomat in Beijing and shuffled Cabinet positions that saw four different Minister of Foreign Affairs. Although, unlike the firing of John McCallum, there was no indication that the rotation between Chrystia Freeland, François-Philippe Champagne, Marc Garneau, and Mélanie Joly was related to their performance on the case or their disparate views from that of the PM (Tunney, 2019). Similarly, as previously mentioned, the Prime Minister continuously rebuffed requests from prominent civil society actors to orchestrate a prisoner swap (Gilbert & Piché, 2021). The Prime Minister's advocacy with foreign heads of states, no less the United States, was a sign of the importance Justin Trudeau attributed to the Michael's release.

The government resorted to a more vocal condemnation of the PRC when it launched the Declaration on February 15, 2021 (GAC, 2021i). Although, it is worth noting that Canadian officials worked hard to keep the Declaration country agnostic, pointing to the stickiness of the quiet diplomacy approach and the constraint the plight of the Michaels posed on government action (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). To date, the coalition is composed of 69 members states (including the EU) effectively representing a third of world countries and all regions (GAC, 2021i). The initiative

is two-prong. The Declaration is a non-binding commitment to core principles of human rights, consular relations, the rule of law, and the independence of the judiciary and calls upon all states to end the practice of arbitrary detention for diplomatic leverage (GAC, 2021i). The Partnership Action Plan is the operationalization of the Declaration where states can voluntarily participate in six areas of cooperation and engagement to deter and sustain momentum against the practice (GAC, 2021i). The PM and the Minister of Foreign Affairs featured the initiative at the 2021 G7 summit, the U.S.-led Summit for Democracy, and the 76th UNGA (PMO, 2021b; GAC, 2021j; GAC, 2021e).

Independent Variable 4: Parliament & Election Cycles

How influential/involved is Parliament in the case? What are the key international affairs committees involved? What's the composition of the House of Commons? Is there an election component to the case?

In Parliament, the Senate largely relegated the accountability function to the lower house except for a June 23, 2020, letter penned by 13 Senators demanding the imposition of sanctions against the PRC in the face of their detention of the two Michaels (Tasker, 2020). The case, spanned across all three sessions of Parliament, starting in the later stages of the 42nd session and resolving in the first few days of the 44th session. The Liberals were shielded by their majority government in the early stages of the case, partly accounting for the government's preference for quiet diplomacy. Nonetheless, the Conservatives of Andrew Scheer (the Official Opposition) exerted a lot of pressure on the government to take a harder stance against Beijing. Justin Trudeau was especially under fire for his perceived lack of intervention to secure their release given that he had interfered with the criminal prosecution against SNC-Lavalin. Blanchfield & Hampson (2021) notably report that the aftermath of the SNC-Lavalin scandal was still looming large at the time, potentially accounting for the Prime Minister's minimal involvement in the extradition request for Meng.

From December 5, 2019, onwards when the Liberals were brought down to a minority government, the case became subject to much more scrutiny from opposition members, especially the

Conservative Party of Canada (CPC). On December 10, 2019, at the request of the CPC, the Special Committee on Canada-China Relations (CACN) was established with the mandate to “conduct hearings to examine and review all aspects of the Canada–China relationship, including, but not limited to, consular, economic, legal, security and diplomatic relations” (CACN, 2019, para. 2). The committee became the foremost source of information and parliamentary influence on the government’s handling of the case, overtaking the role the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE) had so far played. When the motion to establish CACN was raised in the HoC, every single MP from the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) voted against the motion whereas all other members of the House supported it, pointing to the PM enforcing party unity on the issue (HoC, 2019). CACN ran for all but five days of the 43rd session of Parliament and heard from civil society, bureaucrats, and government officials on the fate of the 3 Ms and other areas of the Canada-China relationship (CACN, n.d.). Similarly, on November 18, 2020, the HoC passed a non-binding motion, sponsored by Michael Chong (CPC), demanding a decision on Huawei from the government within 30 days (HoC, 2020). All but five Liberal members voted against the motion, yet again demonstrating the strength of party unity (HoC, 2020). The Executive ignored the motion and continued to uphold the status quo in a deliberate attempt to avoid antagonizing the Chinese in the middle of deliberations to secure the release of the two Michaels (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021; Gilbert & Piché, 2021).

With regards to the election cycle, there was one potential electoral component to the case. The Declaration was launched in the last months of the 43rd Parliament, pointing to a concerted effort by the Executive to prove their positive input on the resolution of the case ahead of the electoral campaign (GAC, 2021i). The Conservatives of Erin O’Toole were also keen on leveraging the government’s criticized record on China to their advantage during the 2021 campaign period with numerous mentions of Beijing on their election platform and denouncing the government’s approach during the second English debate (Lao & Boynton, 2021). In sharp contrast, the Liberals made no

mention of China in their campaign platform, highlighting once again the Executive's preference for quiet diplomacy on the case (Maclean's, 2021).

Independent Variable 5: Foreign Affairs Bureaucracy

What are the predispositions of the foreign policy bureaucracy on the case? How influential are the key bureaucratic departments/agencies?

In the early stages of the case, the bureaucracy seemed to prefer a quiet diplomacy approach with diplomats using every available channel to voice their concerns with the arrest of the two Michaels which they viewed as arbitrary and in retaliation for Meng Wanzhou's arrest (GAC, 2021d; CACN, 2020). These efforts were directed at both Chinese officials to negotiate the Michaels' release and like-minded partners in hopes to secure their support and advocacy on Canada's behalf (CACN, 2020). It is reported that diplomats at 125 Sussex Dr. pushed for the Executive to adopt a quiet diplomacy approach to limit negative spillover on Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor's consular cases (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). The cautionary approach is widely believed to be the root cause of the relative inaction from the government on other areas of the bilateral relationship.

The most powerful bureaucratic actors were unequivocally Canada's ambassadors to China, the United States, and to Canada's permanent missions at the UN in New York and Geneva (Zabjeck, 2021; Cohn, 2021). In January 2019, Canada's Ambassador to China, John McCallum, was shown the door for his repeated comments on Meng's extradition hearing that left the impression that political interference was both the root cause and solution to the case (Tunney, 2019). McCallum's firing made it clear that the political executive would not tolerate any speculation that it was arbitrarily arresting a foreign national on behalf of the United States. In April 2021, McCallum's successor, Dominic Barton, and Canada's Ambassador to the U.S., Kirsten Hillman, spent three weeks in Washington where they held discussions with Chinese diplomats and top officials in the Biden administration to usher a deal that would see the two Michaels released (Panetta, 2021). Their efforts were inconclusive with Biden

reportedly uncomfortable with the idea of intervening in the DoJ's process much like Trump had done numerous times (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). It is also reported that both Biden and Xi saw the case as an obstacle to conclusive diplomatic talks and that the DoJ was increasingly skeptical of the prospect of a guilty verdict if Meng underwent trial in the United States as other institutions in violation of Iran sanctions were not being treated equally (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). Barton and Hillman's advocacy might, in the end, have warmed up the Americans to the idea of a DPA.

The bureaucracy also played a major role around the Declaration with GAC leading its policy implementation. On the margins of the 47th session of the UNHRC, Leslie Norton—Permanent Representative of Canada to the UN in Geneva—co-hosted an event with Australia on arbitrary detention for diplomatic leverage (Permanent Mission of Canada to Geneva, 2021). Diplomats also assisted Minister Garneau and PM Trudeau with their respective featuring of the Declaration at the 76th UNGA and the U.S. Summit for Democracy (PMO, 2021b; GAC, 2021j). Additionally, on March 19, 22, and August 11, 2021, GAC organized shows of solidarity for the Michaels outside the courtrooms in Dandong and Beijing in coordination with like-minded foreign missions in China, most of which were endorsers of the Declaration (Vanderkippe, 2021).

Independent Variable 6: Federalism

What are the global interests of the various provinces in relation to the case? Are the interests shared or disparate across provinces? Do those interests compete against the interests of the federal government?

Federalism did not appear to have played an influential role in the case with no known efforts that would have seen a resolution to the diplomatic spat. However, with economic repercussions ensuing from the case, largely affecting Western provinces, it is safe to assume the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan had a vested interest in a quick resolution of the case as well as appeasement of Sino-Canadian relations. With the Liberals holding none of the parliamentary seats in

the Prairies, perhaps we would have seen a different course of action should the effects of the diplomatic spat had been felt in Liberal heavy Ontario, Quebec, or the Atlantic.

Findings

The endurance of dominant ideas like multilateralism, internationalism, and quiet diplomacy was vibrant throughout the case. Canada juggled between megaphone diplomacy efforts and a backdoor diplomacy approach. On the one hand, it made use of multilateral channels to advance internationalist objectives that would work to secure the release of the two Michaels through its championing of a novel global initiative in the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations. Through its launch of the Declaration, Canada sought to address shortcomings of the international order that would work to return the Michaels home and prevent future cases by rooting its initiative in core principles of human rights, consular relations, the rule of law, and independence of the judiciary.

On the other hand, the human element to the case compelled the government to continue its use of quiet diplomacy to avoid negative policy spillovers on the two Canadians detained in China. Indeed, the fate of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor loomed large in any policy decisions within the realm of Canada-China relations. The quiet diplomacy approach proved to be the mechanism of choice for the political executive and the bureaucracy, more specifically, Prime Minister Trudeau, who showed a high level of influence on the case. The PM repelled calls from societal actors who advocated for political intervention in Meng's legal proceedings and rather directed his efforts South of the border to negotiate a resolution to the case. In prioritizing U.S.-Canada relations, Justin Trudeau demonstrated the endurance that continentalism plays in Canadian foreign policy, especially when the issue is of critical interest to Washington. Similarly, by virtue of the government's multilateral efforts to advocate for the Michaels' release, Ottawa displayed the importance of its alliance system and its position within the balance of power for its foreign policy. The Declaration was anchored in two of

Canada's most influential international groupings in the FYEV and the G7. Similarly, the arbitrary detention initiative was raised in UN channels repeatedly, reflecting Ottawa's commitment to contribute progressively to the order. Finally, Canada, did not resort to unilateral actions through the use of sanctions or other retaliatory tools and rather opted for concerted efforts, in respect of the middle power image.

Strategically speaking, Ottawa's approach to the case was reflective of its policy of engagement with China. The government did not seek to undermine China by prioritizing U.S. interests, otherwise, it would not have advocated for a DPA, nor would it have dedicated this level of effort into building a global initiative to return the Michaels home. Conversely, Ottawa did not kowtow to Beijing's demands by releasing Meng even though it was well within the constitutional powers of the Executive and knowing it would have, most likely, ensured the return of the Michaels. The government used a quiet diplomacy approach bilaterally while working multilaterally with like-minded countries to denounce the *practice* of arbitrary detention for diplomatic leverage as opposed to China directly while continuing to engage with Beijing in other areas of the relationship¹². In fact, the government has widely refuted calls from civil society that would have hoped for retaliatory actions of all sorts against Beijing for its arbitrary imprisonment of the two Canadians, including on Huawei where the spillovers from the 3 Ms case leads us next. Whether Ottawa limited potentially antagonizing China solely for the fate of the two Canadians or for the sake of other geopolitical interests is hard to analyze given the data available. Nonetheless, the certainty is that the results hinge closer to a hedging approach than any other strategic option.

¹² The Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations is country agnostic.

Case 2–Security: Huawei

The case of Huawei is of specific importance to this study. Subject to both pressures from Washington to ban the Chinese telecom crown jewel and warnings from Beijing that barring Huawei would prompt severe repercussions, Ottawa has yet to announce any policy decisions. With other Western allies having followed in the American footsteps, Canada’s refusal to tag along carries significant implications from a strategic perspective as a potential instance of either hedging or even bandwagoning. Below is an examination of the Canadian government decision making on the case. The findings reflect a) all six independent variables believed to have a determinative effect on the conduct of Canadian foreign policy via the data collection questions established during the methodology phase; b) the timeline of the case (see Figure 1); and c) the most compelling generalizations on the outcomes of the case as well as alternative perspectives according to primary and secondary sources. These findings are analyzed according to the theoretical framework illustrated in Table 1 (see methodology) to determine whether Canadian foreign policy decision making on the case meets the threshold of balancing, bandwagoning, or hedging, providing an explanation for which variables have been most influential in generating those results.

Summary

On May 15, 2019, U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order, effectively barring American firms from purchasing Huawei telecommunications equipment following the Chinese tech giant’s addition to the Commerce Department Entity List on the grounds of national security threat (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020). The U.S. administration argued that Huawei could be forced to give CCP officials access to backdoors in telecommunications equipment that would allow them to spy on the American government (Chapardar et al., 2020). The accusations came amid China’s 2017 *National Intelligence Law* which compels Chinese companies to “support, assist, and cooperate with” China’s intelligence-gathering authorities (Chapardar et al., 2020). Over the next

months, the Trump administration doubled down on the Chinese tech giant with additional bans that saw its presence in the American market brought down to a near-zero (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020). From the moment of the first ban onwards, the Americans embarked on a lobbying campaign to convince allies and like-minded countries of the danger they believe Huawei poses and threatened the continuation of alliances should like-minded countries open their doors to the Chinese firm (Chapardar et al., 2020). North of the American border, the extradition request for Huawei CFO, Meng Wanzhou, was well underway with two Canadians sitting behind bars in China as retaliation. American pressures to bar Huawei from the Canadian market complicated an already complex diplomatic spat with Beijing who warned that a Huawei ban would trigger repercussions for Canada (Chapardar et al., 2020). To date, the Canadian government is the only FYEV member that has yet to announce a decision on the Chinese tech giant after repeatedly pushing back its verdict (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020).

Independent Variable 1: Societal Interests & Actors

Are there groups with shared interests in the issue area? What are the groups' interests? How influential are the groups?

Much like the case of the 3 Ms, nearly every Canadian think tank with a foreign policy arm has released reports, commentaries, op-eds, podcasts, and held webinars on the fate of Huawei in the Canadian market. Prominent individuals and organizations have shaped public opinion on the case and have sought to influence government decision making. The Macdonald-Laurier Institute has been especially vocal about the need to bar Huawei from Canada's 5G network through its "The Eavesdropping Dragon: Why Huawei Has No Place in Canadians' Communications" project (MLI, n.d.). MLI's staff is often featured in mainstream media where they warn Canadians of dangers posed by the Chinese telecom (MLI, n.d.).

The opinion of civil society is almost unanimous in the need to bar Huawei from Canada's 5G network. Opinions, however, vary as to what reason should drive the government's decision. On the

one hand, some believe that the threat of being excluded from the FYEV grouping or other intelligence-sharing arrangements with like-minded countries is too great to risk over the potential economic gains that Huawei bears (Chen, 2020; Burton, 2020; Fadden, 2020; Berkshire-Miller, 2020). CSOs refer to other coercive elements of the CCP including its human rights violations in Hong Kong and Xinjiang, its intimidation of Chinese diaspora in Canada, the arrests of the two Michaels, the imposition of trade bans on Canadian agricultural products, and China's history of state-sponsored corporate/economic espionage as grounds warranting a Huawei ban (Chen, 2020; Burton, 2020; Fadden, 2020; Berkshire-Miller, 2020). Pundits argue that allowing Huawei into the Canadian market would effectively reward China's coercive behaviour.

On the other hand, other CSOs believe that any decision regarding Canada's 5G network should be made irrespective of U.S. concerns and entirely based on the government's independent assessment of security risks and economic benefits of allowing Huawei in our domestic market (Parsons, 2021; Karam, 2020; Robertson, 2020). In fact, in a report presented to CACN, Citizen Lab—an interdisciplinary laboratory based at the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy at the University of Toronto—argued that the cybersecurity threat from 5G is not unique to Huawei and is characteristic of every vendor including Western firms (Parsons, 2021). It is worth noting that the fear of China's 2017 *National Intelligence Law* looms large across opinions from civil society who fears Huawei could be forced to help the Chinese government with intelligence gathering at Canada's expense (Chen, 2020). This is further reinforced by the well-known connection between Huawei and the CCP/PLA who, despite operating as a private firm, is afforded much of the same luxury as Chinese SOEs (Chen, 2020). Citizen Lab recommends that Canada's 5G infrastructure be composed of multiple vendors to reduce the risk of foreign interference by limiting dependency (Parsons, 2021). Citizen Lab also believes that accusations of modified Huawei equipment are common but not well-

founded with little open-source information to support such claims (Parsons, 2021). In fact, foreign government assessments of Huawei have remained undisclosed, citing national security risks.

Economic considerations are another important factor in deciding the fate of Huawei. In 2018 alone, the company created 970 direct jobs and contributed \$304M to the Canadian GDP (Karam, 2020). Amidst the plethora of U.S. bans, Huawei relocated its research center to Canada in December 2019 a move that has seen Huawei's presence in the country estimated at around 1,600 jobs, most of which centered around research and development (R&D) with the help of top-tier Canadian researchers (Chapardar et al., 2020). Similarly, over the last decade, the company has invested \$50M in Canadian academic 5G R&D (Karam, 2020). This partnership between Ottawa and Huawei amplified the controversy around the Chinese tech giant when it was revealed that the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) sponsored Huawei, using tax-payer's money, to fund 5G research in Canadian universities (Chase & Fife, 2021a). The University of British Columbia and the University of Regina have, namely, partnered with Huawei on tens of millions of dollars worth of 5G research (Sparling, 2020). Nonetheless, Huawei never cut back its financial support for university research despite Meng's arrest (Chapardar et al., 2020). Beyond economic considerations, these efforts could also be seen as part of a charm offensive by Huawei to force the hand of the Canadian government into resisting a ban. The firm has dedicated many resources into convincing the Canadian public and policymakers that its dealings are independent of the CCP and beneficial to the country (Karam, 2020; Chapardar et al., 2020).

Additionally, two of Canada's largest telecommunications providers, Bell and Telus, have significant stakes in Huawei since they hoped to update their existing Huawei 4G systems to 5G (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). The cost of a Huawei ban was estimated at almost 1 billion dollars given the extent of existing equipment (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). In June 2020, Bell and Telus announced that they would be moving away from Huawei for their 5G networks, instead, relying on

Nokia and Ericsson technologies (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). Both telecom giants along with other smaller Canadian telecommunications companies have already approached the government for compensation related to the ban (Boutilier & Connolly, 2021).

In mainstream media, the case has caught the public's attention from the day the Americans began their influence campaign against Huawei and accelerated when it became clear that the fate of the two Michaels was linked to the Chinese firm. Steven Chase and Robert Fife from the Globe and Mail have been at the forefront of the news cycle on Huawei. Chase and Fife have demonstrated a more hawkish view of Beijing by virtue of who they featured on their news pieces. Along with the reputational damage that China has caused to itself, they effectively helped shape the steep decline in Canadian public positive opinions towards China and Huawei since 2018. In fact, The Globe and Mail uncovered the controversy of NSERC contracts and commissioned opinion polls on Huawei/China by Nanos Research in 2019 and 2021. (Chase & Fife, 2021a; Chase, 2021c). These polls revealed that opposition to Huawei's presence in 5G has increased to a high of 76% of respondents in 2021 (Chase, 2021c). Additionally, only 10% of 2021 respondents said Huawei should be allowed to supply gear for 5G, down from 22% in 2019 (Chase, 2021c).

Independent Variable 2: Dominant Ideas

Is there a dominant ideational framework at play? Are there any competing ideas in the decision making apparatus?

Who shares those ideas, how influential are they, and who drives them?

In an apparent departure from its historical approach, the Canadian government did not adopt a multilateral framework to the case as evidenced by its lack of deliberations on Huawei to date. Canada remains the only FYEV country that has yet to announce a decision on Huawei with all other members announcing a partial or full-scale ban of the Chinese telecom (Chen, 2020). The predominance of the quiet diplomacy approach with regards to the government's handling of China might account for Ottawa's resistance to a Huawei ban. In fact, it is widely believed that the

government purposely postponed its Huawei decision in light of the detention of the two Canadians in China and given Beijing's warnings that a ban would lead to repercussions (Ljunggren, 2020). That preference for backdoor diplomacy was once again showcased on November 18, 2020, when the HoC passed a non-binding motion, sponsored by Michael Chong (CPC), demanding a decision on Huawei from the government within 30 days. The Executive ignored the motion and continued to uphold the status quo for fear of antagonizing the Chinese in the middle of deliberations to secure the release of the two Michaels (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021; Gilbert & Piché, 2021).

The lack of decision on Huawei might also be an intentional act since 5G is not expected to deploy in Canada before the end of 2022. By delaying its ruling on Huawei, the government indirectly forced telecommunications companies to find alternative suppliers and has so far steered clear of antagonizing both the Americans and the Chinese (Ljunggren, 2020). However, months after the Michaels have returned from China, the government has maintained its silence on Huawei's future in the Canadian market. The Executive upholds that it is conducting its review of both the company's economic benefits and potential cybersecurity threats (The Canadian Press, 2021). Similarly, all three of Canada's biggest telecommunications providers have chosen a 5G supplier other than Huawei. The lack of decision might, therefore, not entirely be attributable to the diplomatic spat over Meng Wanzhou's arrest.

Independent Variable 3: The Prime Minister & Cabinet

How influential/involved is the political executive in the case? Are there any constraints on the power of the executive?

Are there known shared or disparate views between the PM and the Cabinet?

The Executive has been highly influential in the case. The case involves a number of Cabinet members aside from the PMO, namely, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry of Canada, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, and the Minister of National Defence. Despite repeated warnings from the United States/FYEV, civil society,

and the Official Opposition of Huawei's potential cybersecurity risks, the Executive continues to defer its decision and Cabinet unity has persisted notwithstanding the numerous portfolios involved. The government's refusal to follow the U.S./FYEVE lead, rather opting for strategic inaction and quiet diplomacy signals a high level of influence from the upper echelon of power. The Prime Minister and his ministers have continuously maintained the government line that its independent review of Huawei is underway. When the HoC passed the non-binding motion on Huawei, all but five Liberal members voted against the motion (none of them Cabinet members), demonstrating the strength of party unity enforced by the PM (HoC, 2020).

The government was somewhat ahead of the Americans on Huawei as Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Minister, Ralph Goodale, announced in September 2018 that Canada was conducting its review of potential threats to its telecommunications infrastructure from foreign suppliers (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). This announcement predates the arrest of Meng and that of the two Michaels, pointing to the constraint the diplomatic spat posed on government decision making. In fact, Reuters reported in August 2020 that six sources directly familiar with the government's approach said the Executive is purposely delaying its decision on Huawei to avoid reactions from Washington and Beijing (Ljunggren, 2020). Nevertheless, the case of Huawei continues to drag on despite the Michael's safe return. In November 2021, Industry Minister. Champagne declared that Canada only wants to deal with "trusted partners" in future AI ventures in 5G pointing to a Huawei ban but no mention of a ban or review of 5G providers was present in any of the mandate letters (The Canadian Press, 2021; PMO, 2021c).

Independent Variable 4: Parliament & Election Cycles

How influential/involved is Parliament in the case? What are the key international affairs committees involved? What's the composition of the House of Commons? Is there an election component to the case?

In Parliament, the House of Commons, driven by the CPC, has been the most involved in the Huawei case. CACN, at the request of the Conservatives, was partly established to examine and review security aspects of the Canada-China relationship which resulted in several hearings and briefs on the fate of Huawei in the country (CACN, 2019). Established at the beginning of the 43rd session of Parliament on December 10, 2019, CACN was supported by every single MP from opposition parties whereas the entirety of the Liberal caucus opposed it (CACN, 2019). CACN was not revived in the 44th session of Parliament, amidst a lack of Conservative backing, citing a lack of resources in the face of already stretched efforts across various HoC committees, including a new one on Afghanistan (Chase, 2021f). However, the move is mainly perceived as a reaction to the CPC's poor election record with the Chinese diaspora who reacted strongly to the party's hawkish approach to China (Chase, 2021f).

Nonetheless, the Conservative party pushed hard for Huawei's ban since the 2019 election period when Andrew Scheer committed to it in the party's platform (Maclean's, 2019). However, there has been no change in government decision making between the 42nd and 44th sessions of Parliament, pointing to a lack of influence from Parliamentarians. The government has been conducting its 5G review since 2018 and the case of Huawei has been discussed for equally long in multiple committees including FAAE, the Standing Committee on Industry, Science, and Technology (INDU), the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy, and Ethics (ETHI), and the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security (SECU) (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). Only in the later months of the majority moment and following Trump's ban and subsequent threat to allies in 2019, did scrutiny from opposition members intensified. Then again, despite the Conservatives' pledge to bar Huawei from Canada's 5G network in the 2019 federal elections, China and its telecom champion were never hot topics during the election cycle (Macleans, 2019).

Having brought down the Liberals to a minority in the 43rd session of Parliament, the CPC increased its criticism of the government's handling of China and Huawei, cumulating in the establishment of CACN. The special committee supplemented an already long list of parliamentary committees that have examined Huawei's future in the country, chief amongst which is SECU. The committee is standing, unlike CACN, and has been operating for the entirety of the Trudeau government. On Huawei more precisely, SECU has mostly been a vehicle to present MPs with the findings of the Annual Report of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians (NSICOP). Since its first annual report in 2018, the agency has identified China as a primary state perpetrator of cyber-attacks/espionage including on state critical infrastructures, and has cited its concerns regarding China's *National Intelligence Law* (NSICOP, n.d.). The reports have, however, never cited Huawei by name (NSICOP, n.d.).

Ahead of the federal elections in 2021, the Conservatives were keen on leveraging the government's perceived poor record on China to their advantage with numerous mentions of Beijing on their election platform. Their platform committed to "Ban Huawei from Canada's 5G infrastructure and further investigate the company's role in providing surveillance capabilities that have been used against the Uyghur people and other persecuted minorities in China" (Maclean's, 2019). Erin O'Toole also took the opportunity to criticize the government's handling of Huawei during the second English language debate (Lao & Boynton, 2021).

Independent Variable 5: Foreign Affairs Bureaucracy

What are the predispositions of the foreign policy bureaucracy on the case? How influential are the key bureaucratic departments/agencies?

The foreign affairs bureaucracy is allegedly split on its predispositions about the case. On the one hand, CSE reportedly believes that the government has both the technological capacity and know-how to detect and prevent cybersecurity threats in its 5G network, including foreign suppliers

(Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). In September 2018, Canada's top cybersecurity official, Scott Jones, argued before SECU that the country's cybersecurity safeguards are adequate to mitigate any risk from Huawei's implication into Canada's 5G network and are actually superior to that of allies (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). CSE has also set up "white labs", paid for by Huawei, to allow equipment testing for potential back doors and capabilities that could allow foreign interference (Chase & Fife, 2018a). The cybersecurity agency is also wary of the dangers of sole sourcing Canada's 5G network to a foreign supplier which would become an increasing reality should Huawei be banned (Chase & Fife, 2018a).

On the other hand, it is reported that bureaucrats at CSIS are alerted by the security risks associated with allowing a foreign supplier such as Huawei into a critical government infrastructure. (Blanchfield & Hampson, 2021). However, both CSIS and CSE have made no official comments as to whether Huawei should be formally allowed into Canada's 5G rollout. Both agencies have repeatedly refused to provide specifics on the ongoing 5G review and have reiterated that they are working hand in hand in rendering a decision. Both agencies have also made no mention of Huawei in their annual reports and mainly reiterate the arguments of NSICOP reports about Chinese cyberattacks (NSICOP, n.d.)

GAC has also been involved in the case. In January 2020, the U.S.' muted reaction to the UK's initial partial ban of Huawei led mandarins at GAC to investigate if the Americans were still committed to a ban or whether their relative silence was a realization that their advocacy efforts had failed (Connolly & Boutilier, 2020). This reaction from the bureaucracy reinforces the argument that the government's strategic inaction on Huawei was in part to avoid repercussions from the Americans and suggests that the Canadian side continued to consider the Chinese telecom as supplier up to that point.

Similarly, the banning of China Mobile International Canada (CMI Canada) in August 2021, prior to the Michaels' return, suggests that fears of Chinese repercussions on Huawei loom large in

government decision making (Chase & Pozadski, 2021). The government stated that “as the investor is a state-owned enterprise ultimately controlled by the Chinese state, this investment could result in the Canadian business being leveraged by the investor’s ultimate controller for non-commercial purposes, such as the compromise of critical infrastructure and foreign interference, to the detriment of Canada’s national security” (Chase & Pozadski, 2021, para. 3). While Huawei is not a Chinese SOE, it carries much of the same fears around national security, hence raising the question as to why the government did not shy away from banning CMI Canada whose footprint in the country dwarfs in comparison to Huawei’s.

Independent Variable 6: Federalism

What are the global interests of the various provinces in relation to the case? Are the interests shared or disparate across provinces? Do those interests compete against the interests of the federal government?

Federalism does not appear to have played an influential role in the case, on the account that national security falls under federal jurisdiction with very little involvement from the provinces. Despite Huawei’s footprint in Ontario, the province has not shown public signs of opposition to a Huawei ban. Given the important economic contributions the Chinese firm provides to the Ontarian economy, it is hard to imagine that the province is against the status quo. The same can be said of other provinces which would lose from a Huawei ban, be it the tearing down of existing infrastructures in remote locations that have helped providing internet access to Northern Canadian regions or negative spillover effects on other elements of their economic relationship with Beijing (Young, 2021). Finally, despite the notable financial contributions from Huawei to the University of Alberta, the University of British Columbia, and the University of Regina, none of the provincial governments have intervened on the issue of NSERC research partnerships (Chase & Fife, 2021a).

Findings

The predominance of the quiet diplomacy approach accounts in large part for Ottawa's resistance to a Huawei ban. Canada remains the only FYEV country that has yet to announce a decision on Huawei with all other members announcing a partial or full-scale ban of the Chinese telecom. The policy decision goes against Canada's historical commitment to multilateralism which suggests that Canada would follow suit with its closest allies and, specifically, with the United States and the United Kingdom as important geopolitical players. The political executive is purposely delaying its Huawei decision to avoid repercussions on the two Michaels, on Canada-China relations, but also on its relationship with Washington, pointing to a lack of clear indication on the government's desired policy outcome.

Indeed, Ottawa banned China Mobile International Canada by virtue of its relationship with the CCP but has refrained from banning Huawei on similar grounds despite numerous reports about the firm's relationship with the upper echelon of Chinese politics. Canada's inaction might therefore be strategic and part of its preferred quiet diplomacy approach. The government hopes that by delaying its ruling on Huawei, with 5G expected to roll out in late 2022, it can a) force Canadian telecoms to find alternative suppliers; b) avoid potential repercussions from the Americans by allowing Huawei a role in its 5G network; and c) avoid antagonizing the Chinese by formally announcing a ban that would be seen as a U.S.-driven policy meant to counter China while working against the release of the two Michaels.

However, with the Michaels now returned and all major Canadian telecoms having shifted away from Huawei, the lack of decision makes clear that Ottawa still somewhat considers ignoring the U.S. call for a ban, otherwise, a ban would have already been announced. Nonetheless, the government has also alluded to restricting the Chinese telecom's role in 5G. The large economic benefits that the Chinese firm carries and its symbolic role in future economic engagement with the Chinese market

might weigh heavy in the government's current inaction. Policymakers may fear that barring Huawei would be damaging for Canada's economic prospects given the importance of the Chinese market for its global trade dependent-economy. The next case which covers the agricultural bans against Canadian products in retaliation for the arrest of Meng Wanzhou make the importance of these economic considerations ever clearer.

The strategic inaction from the government, thus, also showcases a twofold influence. On the one hand, the importance of the FYEV grouping and continentalism has negatively impacted the government's initial (and perhaps continued) inclination to allow Huawei into its 5G market. On the other hand, the importance of global trade, more specifically the Chinese market, for the Canadian economy alters the cost-benefit analysis of the Trudeau administration.

All in all, the outcome of the case unconditionally points to the government adopting a hedging approach vis-à-vis China. That approach, incidentally, mirrors Canada's policy of engagement with Beijing on the security front. On the one hand, Ottawa has demonstrated its willingness to limit the activity of Chinese SOEs in critical infrastructure by banning China Mobile International Canada from operating in the country. On the other hand, it has also refrained from extending such limitations to Huawei given the economic prospects and potential repercussions it carries. Canada has been afforded numerous opportunities to bar the Chinese telecom from its 5G network whether it was the show of solidarity with other FYEV countries, the return of the Michaels, or Bell and Telus moving away from Huawei equipment, but has never seized these opportunities. In doing so, the government has quietly demonstrated its intention to continue positive economic engagement with China, despite U.S. pressure, for it believes it can manage security concerns

Case 3—Economic Relations: Chinese Bans on Canadian Agricultural Products

Economic interests have always been at the core of Canada-China relations. Economic relations are an especially important issue area to examine as the Chinese market has long been labeled as a viable alternative to Canada's overreliance on the American market by policymakers amidst the two economies compatibility. The baseline demonstrates that economic relations are the outlier in the policy of engagement in that it hinges closer to bandwagoning than hedging as Canadian policymakers have continuously sought to secure a bilateral economic partnership with Beijing. By extension, the case carries significant strategic implications for the research question and objectives in that, should "continuity" persist, Canada's approach to China with regards to economic relations would need to be labeled as bandwagoning. Below is an examination of the Canadian government decision making on the case. The findings reflect a) all six independent variables believed to have a determinative effect on the conduct of Canadian foreign policy via the data collection questions established during the methodology phase; b) the timeline of the case (see Figure 1); and c) the most compelling generalizations on the outcomes of the case as well as alternative perspectives according to primary and secondary sources. These findings are analyzed according to the theoretical framework illustrated in Table 1 (see methodology) to determine whether Canadian foreign policy decision making on the case meets the threshold of balancing, bandwagoning, or hedging, providing an explanation for which variables have been most influential in generating those results.

Summary

In March of 2019, China announced it was revoking the registration of two major Canadian canola exporters, Richardson International Ltd. and Viterra Inc., over concerns of "hazardous organisms" detected in canola shipments from the two companies (Sun, 2020). Similarly, a few months later in June 2019, China's General Administration of Customs suspended imports of Canadian beef and pork upon discovering a shipment of non-Canadian pork exhibiting traces of prohibited animal

feed additive that was fraudulently certified as Canadian meat with the help of a falsified export certificate (Stordy, 2019). The bans were a *coup de grace* for the Canadian agricultural sector which was already experiencing informal restrictions from China on its soybean and peas shipment since January after Chinese authorities significantly increased its imports-control measures against Canadian products, causing Chinese buyers to seek new suppliers (Thomson Reuters, 2019). This series of agricultural bans are widely seen as economic retaliation for the arrest of Meng Wanzhou in December 2018. While red meat exports have resumed in November 2019, Canadian canola, soybeans, and peas continue to suffer the economic repercussions of China's bans, exerting pressure on the government to both resume and divest agricultural trade with Beijing.

Independent Variable 1: Societal Interests & Actors

Are there groups with shared interests in the issue area? What are the groups' interests? How influential are the groups?

Societal interests and actors are central to the case. Canadian farmers are represented by a number of organizations that have worked to both facilitate government lobbying and coordinate consultations and actions. Canola farmers are mainly represented through the Canola Council and the Canadian Canola Growers Association whereas soybeans and peas producers are mostly regrouped under the banner of Soy Canada and Pulse Canada respectively. The Canada Grain Council also represents all three industries (canola, soybeans, peas). For its part, Canadian red meat producers are primarily represented by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, the Canadian Pork Council, Canada Pork, and the Canadian Meat Council. Together, these groups share a vested economic interest in a healthy trade relationship with China as well as diversification opportunities in other Asian markets that would safeguard them from economic downturns, including coercive practices from Beijing.

Canadian agricultural commodities are a cornerstone of Canada-China trade and, therefore, carry great economic implications and interests for Canadian farmers. According to the Canada West Foundation, agricultural commodities and foods account for a third of Canada's exports to China and

the organization estimates the cost of a deliberate economic delink from the Chinese market at about US\$6 billion (Dade & Zhengyan Sun, 2021). Canola is one of Canada's top-selling commodities, generating about a quarter of all farming revenue in the country and accounting for about 43,000 jobs (Sun, 2020). In 2018, before the canola ban, China alone imported 46.6% of total Canadian canola exports (Sun, 2020). Exports have since dropped by about 50-70%, a loss estimated at about \$1.54 to \$2.35 billion as of August 2020 (Canola Council, n.d.). Canadian red meat follows a similar pattern. About 50% of Canadian cattle and beef products are sent to other markets, whereas for hog and pork products, that number climbs to 70%. (Afesorgbor et al., 2019). China accounts for more than \$600 million of that price tag, most of which is on pork products (Afesorgbor et al., 2019). The red meat sector represents about 266,000 jobs and saw a 12% drop in exports volume after four months of the ban compared to 2018, a revenue shortfall estimated at about \$100 million (Stordy, 2019). Soybeans and peas are no outliers. Canada exported \$1.7 billion worth of soybeans and \$718 million worth of Canadian peas to China in 2018 (Thomson Reuters, 2019). These numbers plunged significantly amidst China's import restrictions. According to Soy Canada (2021), soybean exports to China dropped to \$33 million in 2019 from their initial \$1.7 billion the year prior. Comparatively, peas have only slightly suffered having seen exports drop a small 2% from 2018 levels. However, it is worth noting that agricultural exports have since rebounded slightly or even increased according to the latest available statistics. In fact, peas exports to China increased 32% from pre-restriction levels (Zhengyan Sun, 2021). Similarly, canola and soybeans exports jumped 76 and 725% respectively from 2019 levels but are still dwarfed by their 2018 all-time highs (Zhengyan Sun, 2021).

Canadian agricultural groups have been influential on government decision making having worked in coordination with government officials from the onset of the case. Stakeholder groups have notably held roundtable discussions with the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and the Minister of International Trade where they advocated for resumed market access in China as well as trade

diversification to other markets with special emphasis in Asia¹³ (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2019c). A government-stakeholder working group on canola was also established with similar objectives (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2019a).

Aside from Canadian agricultural groups, a number of civil society actors have voiced their discontent with China's coercive economic practices. CSOs have called on the government to re-examine its economic relationship with China, namely by abandoning hopes of an economic partnership outside the CPTPP framework and by delinking critical supply chains and other exports from the Chinese market to lessen our exposure to Chinese coercive measures (Chen, 2019; Robertson, 2020; Byers & Majumdar, 2020). A number of CSOs have also called on the government to explore collective response mechanisms amongst Western allies in response to China's coercive economic practices (Chen, 2019; Patey, 2021; Byers & Majumdar, 2020). These arguments appear to follow the pulse of the Canadian public. In a 2021 survey by Nanos Research, only 19% of Canadians were in favour of a free-trade agreement with China and 56% supported Canada joining other countries in developing policies to address China's growing power (Chase, 2021c).

Nonetheless, agricultural business interests have shown reluctance to a full-blown delinking from China given the estimated US\$6 billion worth of Canadian agricultural exports destined to the Chinese market (Dade & Zhengyan Sun, 2021). For instance, in 2019, \$1.4 billion worth of canola products were additionally sold to other markets to make up for the Chinese ban (Dade & Zhengyan Sun, 2021). The combined sum in growth in canola exports to these markets (Bangladesh, Germany, Portugal, Australia, France, UAE, Pakistan) still came short of the standalone \$2 billion China accounted for pre-ban (Dade & Zhengyan Sun, 2021). While the government has shown its dedication to resume market access in China and facilitate market diversification, no formal steps have been undertaken towards a collective response mechanism. Similarly, the upcoming Indo-Pacific strategy is

¹³ The title evolved numerous times across the case timeline

a sign that Ottawa is looking at partly diversifying trade away from China (Chase & Fife, 2022). Although, that conclusion should not be conflated. In fact, in light of the many trade disputes born out of Joe Biden's Buy American plan, the Indo-Pacific shift could be just as much about addressing Canada's overreliance on the American market.

Independent Variable 2: Dominant Ideas

Is there a dominant ideational framework at play? Are there any competing ideas in the decision making apparatus?

Who shares those ideas, how influential are they, and who drives them?

Government decision making relied on a combination of multilateralism and quiet diplomacy to address the agricultural bans. Despite a relatively positive economic relationship, trade disputes, including in the form of non-tariff barriers (NTBs) are not uncommon in the history of bilateral relations. In fact, Canadian agricultural trade with China, although constantly growing over the years, has been married to periodic economic and political tensions born of Chinese import restrictions that may be more political/strategic than legitimate (Dade & Zhengyan Sun, 2021). The impacts of those restrictions also tend to be limited to targeted products with no additional spillover effects (Dade & Zhengyan Sun, 2021). Taking the example of Canola, in 2009 and 2016, China restricted imports of Canadian canola over concerns of fungal disease presence (Sun, 2020). In both instances, Canadian officials proved these allegations to be untrue (Sun, 2020). Changes to Chinese agricultural policies are believed to be the root cause of both trade disputes. Chinese farmers were struggling with the production of rapeseed oil in both years due to the plummeting global price of the commodity, threatening the industry's survival in China (Sun, 2020). The PRC is believed to have fabricated the presence of fungal disease in Canadian Canola shipments in order to protect its domestic industry (Sun, 2020). Similarly, the 2019 ban might partly be accounted for by the African Swine Fever which wiped out about 40% of China's pig population (canola is a significant source of animal feed) (Sun, 2020).

The government initially resorted to quiet diplomacy to resolve both the issue of Canadian red meat and canola. Canadian efforts were mainly kept at the bureaucratic level with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) leading on negotiations with Chinese officials (Bibeau, 2019; Stordy, 2019; Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 2019a). Whereas these discussions yielded results in resuming market access for Canadian red meat, the Government of Canada brought the canola issue to the WTO on May 7, 2019, where it called on the PRC to provide scientific evidence that supports its findings and the measures taken against Richardson International Ltd. and Viterra Inc. (Canola Council, n.d.). These calls were escalated to the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) on July 26, 2021, upon Beijing's refusal to provide the information and unsuccessful side talks between the parties (Canola Council, n.d.). The matter remains unresolved to date but continues to progress within the DSB.

As for Canadian soybeans and peas, there are no indications that the government has advocated for market access to be resumed either through a quiet or multilateral approach. Although exports of Canadian peas have now recovered, both peas and soybeans were never subject to a formal ban, potentially accounting for the government's lack of efforts. In a question period note from 2019 the government contended that, while there are increased inspection activities, there are no official technical restrictions on Canadian soybean exports to China and, hence, no government action undertaken other than support for trade diversification for producers (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 2019e).

Independent Variable 3: The Prime Minister & Cabinet

How influential/involved is the political executive in the case? Are there any constraints on the power of the executive?

Are there known shared or disparate views between the PM and the Cabinet?

Cabinet has been highly implicated in the case but has resisted involvement into most multilateral and quiet diplomacy efforts, rather focusing on support programs for Canadian farmers.

While the government attempted to resolve the issue through high-level discussions at the onset of the case, Chinese officials have shown little interest in face-to-face consultations, relegating most of the negotiations to the bureaucratic levels (Sun, 2020). Other than a meeting on the margins of the 2019 G20 between the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and her Chinese counterpart, available information shows no sign of negotiations and technical discussions held at the ministerial level (Bibeau, 2019).

Government programs to assist producers have been twofold: provide financial support for farmers amidst market disruptions and facilitate trade diversification to mitigate overreliance on a single market. In May 2019, the Government announced it was amending the Agricultural Marketing Programs Regulations to temporarily increase loan limits under the Advance Payments Program to help farmers manage the impacts of market disruptions (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 2019b). Later in June 2019, the government again announced an investment of more than \$13 million “for a variety of projects that will help to strengthen, diversify and grow Canada’s grains and oilseeds exports” (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 2019d, para. 1). Finally, in February 2020, in direct response to market difficulties for Canadian soybeans and peas, the government funded over \$430,000 to the Canada Grains Council “to develop a pilot insurance product for grain exporters” who see their exports shipments rejected overseas (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 2020, para. 2).

Similarly, in June 2019, then-Minister of International Trade Jim Carr led a canola trade mission to Japan and South Korea to facilitate market diversification opportunities for Canadian producers (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 2019b). The minister has also held roundtable discussions with industry leaders where they discussed market access issues in China as well as trade diversification to other markets with special emphasis in Asia (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2019c).

In sharp contrast, Prime Minister Trudeau has not overtly intervened in the case. Other than shows of support for Canadian producers during question periods and media availabilities, the PM entirely relegated the efforts to his ministers. Although the agricultural bans are widely believed to be in retaliation for the arrest of Meng Wanzhou, there are no indications that the fate of the two Michaels was ever a constraint on government decision making or interference from the Prime Minister.

Independent Variable 4: Parliament & Election Cycles

How influential/involved is Parliament in the case? What are the key international affairs committees involved? What's the composition of the House of Commons? Is there an election component to the case?

All three bans began at the sunset of the 42nd session of Parliament. While the red meat ban was lifted in November 2019 during the 43rd session and Canadian peas exports recovered in 2020, the ban on Canadian canola and import-control measures on soybeans have carried on to the 44th session. Parliament has had very little influence on the case. Agricultural bans did not surface during either the 2019 and 2021 federal elections and the issue was mainly dealt with through HoC Committees. Two committees have paid special attention to the issue: the Standing Committee on International Trade (CIIT) and the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food (AGRI). The level of activity has remained about the same during all three sessions of Parliament with the committees mostly hearing from government officials and industry leaders who provided updates on the situation. The committees never provided the government with recommendations on the situation nor prompted motions in the HoC.

All in all, government type does not appear to have played an influential role in government decision making. Parliament has remained on the margins of the issue from the majority moment to the current minority government, pointing to MPs lack of interest in the case or general adherence with the government's course of actions.

Independent Variable 5: Foreign Affairs Bureaucracy

What are the predispositions of the foreign policy bureaucracy on the case? How influential are the key bureaucratic departments/agencies?

Bureaucratic channels have been the main vehicles working for the resolution of the case. The issue of red meat was quickly resolved after only four months of impasse. In a press briefing, a spokesperson for the PRC claimed that a proposed Government of Canada action plan as a corrective measure for certificate issuance and delivery had satisfied Chinese officials and prompted the resumption of trade (Chase, 2019b). However, many experts rather point to the African Swine Flu as a catalyst for China's change of mind. (Sun, 2020; Chase, 2019b). The Flu wiped out 40% of China's pig population resulting in a significant meat shortage in China and, as a result, an increase in imports of Canadian pork products (Canadian Pork Council, 2020). The resolution might, thus, only be partly attributable to the foreign policy bureaucracy in handing the Chinese an opportunity to save face through the action plan.

On canola, the bureaucracy has reportedly engaged Chinese officials on every possible occasion through bilateral and multilateral channels (Bibeau, 2019). Namely, Canadian and Chinese bureaucrats held technical discussions on the canola issue on December 18-20, 2019, in Beijing at Canada's request (GAC, 2020a). On May 7, 2019, the Government of Canada brought the Canola issue to the WTO where Canada's Ambassador called on the PRC to provide scientific evidence that supports its findings and the measures taken against Richardson International Ltd. and Viterra Inc. (Canola Council, n.d.). These calls were escalated to the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) on July 26, 2021, upon Beijing's refusal to provide the information and unsuccessful side talks between the parties (Canola Council, n.d.). The matter remains unresolved to date but continues to progress within the DSB with the help of Canada's diplomatic representatives to the organization. Canadian bureaucrats have repeatedly asked China to engage in solution finding as the CFIA found Canadian shipments to

be in compliance with Chinese requirements (Canola Council, n.d.). The deputy minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada also serves as co-chair to the government-industry Canola working group which has met sporadically since its inception in 2019 to resolve the issue (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 2019a).

Once again, action on Canadian soybeans and pea have been minimal by virtue of the absence of a formal ban. Contrarily to canola and red meat, Canadian bureaucrats do not appear to be working towards resumed market access for soybeans and peas and have primarily focused on intelligence-gathering for the relevant Ministries (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 2019e).

Independent Variable 6: Federalism

What are the global interests of the various provinces in relation to the case? Are the interests shared or disparate across provinces? Do those interests compete against the interests of the federal government?

Canadian Western provinces have a vested interest in the case. For the past decade, Beijing has been the first or second-largest agricultural market for each of the Prairie provinces (Dade & Zhengyan Sun, 2021). Saskatchewan and Manitoba export a whopping 44% and 36% of their total exports as agricultural products respectively, the majority of which are on destination to China (Dade & Zhengyan Sun, 2021). Economic delinking from China would be traumatic for Western provinces. In fact, the economic repercussions of the bans have been felt across Canadian prairies which produce and export almost all of Canada's canola (Sun, 2020). Richardson International Ltd. and Viterra Inc., the two canola exporters targeted by the ban, are respectively from Winnipeg and Regina.

The government has worked hand in hand with Western provinces throughout the case with both levels of government having a shared interest in seeing market access to China resumed for Canadian farmers and ensuring the viability of the industry through market diversification. Provincial governments were namely part of the Canola working group and worked with the federal government on financial-support programs (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, 2019a; Chase, 2019a).

Findings

Canada's dependence on global trade as well as the enduring attraction of multilateralism and quiet diplomacy were most influential on government decision making throughout the case. The government took immediate action to resolve trade disputes with Beijing that affected its most important exports to the Chinese market. Foreign policy decisions made clear the importance of the Chinese market for Canadian agricultural products and the Canadian economy writ large by advocating for resumed market access as opposed to divesting exports away from China. In doing so, the government relied extensively on the WTO to voice its dissatisfaction with the PRC's trade practices as is customary when bilateral negotiations come to a dead end. Canada regularly makes use of the multilateral body to advance and defend its economic interests including against great powers for which the organization provides the best prospects of a positive settlement given Ottawa's relative lack of leverage.

A resort to multilateralism is in line with Canada's own perception of its position in the balance of power, a middle power anchored in the tenets of the Liberal International Order. Government decision making has reflected a realization of power asymmetry by forgoing unilateral retaliatory action against Beijing and seeking a multilateral resolution to the case.

Societal actors have also influenced government decision making but their interests largely mirror existing commitments from the federal government in that they both recognize the importance of the Chinese market for the Canadian economy, despite calls to delink the entirety of Canadian supply chains from China and clear indications that Chinese bans were entirely as retaliation for the arrest of Meng Wanzhou. However, lobbying from agricultural groups has played an important part in leveraging further financial support for Canadian farmers affected by the bans while emphasizing the need to continue market diversification in Asia to avoid overreliance on one market.

The Canadian government further displayed its intention to continue positive economic engagements with Beijing by adopting a simultaneous quiet diplomacy approach to the case. The government has refrained from overtly criticizing China for its agricultural bans, again despite the diplomatic component they bear. Multilateral and bilateral efforts have been almost entirely carried through bureaucratic channels to avoid politicizing the case and downplay spillovers into other areas of the bilateral relationship. In doing so, the government showcased that economic engagement with Beijing would persist as an all-weather element of the bilateral relationship given the vested interest Canada has in expanding its market opportunities in Asia with China at the center.

Canadian foreign policy decision making in the economic relations issue area is, thus, far from a balancing approach that would see it delink almost entirely from the Chinese market. Nor is it an instance of bandwagoning as hopes of a bilateral economic partnership were crushed with the arrest of the two Michaels and now completely off the table. Instead, what we are currently witnessing is a continuation of Canada's policy of engagement. That is, a commitment by the Canadian government to continue growing economic engagements with China while pursuing market diversification opportunities in Asia to limit future possibilities of economic retaliation. Furthermore, China has officially applied to accede to the CPTPP, a move Canada has yet to oppose, increasing the prospects of a de facto free-trade agreement between Ottawa and Beijing (Reuters, 2021). Canada's trade relationship with Beijing can, therefore, be said to lean towards hedging in adopting both containment and engagement policies to economic relations. Economic considerations have, however, always been the positive element in Sino-Canadian relations but what about its antithesis in the relationship?

Case 4–Human Rights: Xinjiang

From the onset of bilateral relations, human rights in China have always been an area of malaise for Canadian politicians who sought to balance economic interests with a Chinese view of human rights that is inherently different from Western conceptions. The case of Xinjiang appears to be no outlier to this element of friction between Ottawa and Beijing. Reports of the PRC's human rights violations in XUAR are, to date, the most serious human rights accusations against Beijing, hence carrying a high potential for a balancing approach that would see Ottawa purposely work to contain China. Below is an examination of the Canadian government decision making on the case. The findings reflect a) all six independent variables believed to have a determinative effect on the conduct of Canadian foreign policy via the data collection questions established during the methodology phase; b) the timeline of the case (see Figure 1); and c) the most compelling generalizations on the outcomes of the case as well as alternative perspectives according to primary and secondary sources. These findings are subjugated to the theoretical framework illustrated in Table 1 (see methodology) to determine whether Canadian foreign policy decision making on the case meets the threshold of balancing, bandwagoning, or hedging, providing an explanation for which variables have been most influential in generating those results.

Summary

“Since 2017, the government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has been holding Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other ethnic groups in internment camps throughout Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), Northwestern China” (Xinjiang Documentation Project, n.d., para 1). Information about the situation in Xinjiang began to catch the attention of the international community in the spring of 2018 when the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD), in conducting a periodic review of China's practices, condemned China's actions against ethnic minorities in the region (Maizland, 2021). Internment camps are believed to

facilitate cultural genocide and mass violations of human rights of over a million Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other ethnic groups, but official and reliable information is scarce due to the opacity of the Chinese political system (Xinjiang Documentation Project, n.d.). CCP officials maintain that internment camps are vocational training centers combatting religious extremism in the region (Maizland, 2021). Reports from survivors however point to instances of rape, mass surveillance, forced labour, torture, forced sterilization, and more (Maizland, 2021). The world has since turned its attention to China, condemning its human rights practices and demanding unfettered access to Xinjiang to investigate the allegations. In January 2021, the United States became the first country to declare China's activities in Xinjiang as amounting to crimes against humanity and genocide. Pressure on the international community to emulate Washington has since mounted with Canada following suit a month later that year (Chase, 2021b). The fate of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other ethnic groups, however, has remained unchanged (Chase, 2021b).

Independent Variable 1: Societal Interests & Actors

Are there groups with shared interests in the issue area? What are the groups' interests? How influential are the groups?

Since 2018, civil society has called for the government to publicly condemn China's violation of human rights publicly, calls that later escalated in demanding government action against the PRC. Canada's moral obligation as a self-proclaimed champion of human rights and home to large Chinese and Muslim diasporas are often cited in justification for government action. Similarly, CSOs see Canada's response to China's flouting of human rights obligations under international law as critical for the viability of long-term engagement with Beijing and as antithetical to Ottawa's effort to foster a rules-based international order (Caroline, 2021; MLI, 2021; Robertson, 2020; Potter, 2020).

Civil society has pressed the Canadian government to impose sanctions on CCP officials and companies who facilitate state-repression in Xinjiang (including Huawei), ban imports of goods made with forced labour in XUAR, grant asylum to Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities fleeing state

repression, lead international calls for unfettered access granted to the UN in Xinjiang, and boycott and/or relocate the 2022 Beijing Olympics (Caroline, 2021; MLI, 2021; Robertson, 2020; Potter, 2020; Chase, 2021a). In late 2020-early 2021, these calls reached new heights. As information from the region became more available and international scrutiny intensified, CSOs called on the Canadian government to recognize China's actions as amounting to crimes against humanity and genocide (Matthews & Lamensch, 2020; MLI, 2021).

The government was lobbied by a number of domestic groups including the World Uyghur Congress, Uyghur Canadian Solidarity, Uyghur Rights Advocacy Project, International Support for Uyghurs, and the National Council of Canadian Muslims. Canadians of Muslim faith are an important demographic in the country and yield a certain level of influence on policymakers, having namely held discussions with government officials on the case and holding a rally on Parliament Hill in November 2021 with MPs and Senators from all major parties in attendance (Chase, 2021e).

The opinion of Canadians has mostly followed the pulse of civil society in the case. A 2021 poll by Nanos Research for the Globe and Mail showed that 83 % of Canadians either supported or somewhat supported the unanimous vote by the HoC, declaring Chinese activities in XUAR as amounting to genocide (Chase & Fife, 2021b). 59 % of respondents also disapproved of the decision by Cabinet to abstain in the February 22, 2021, vote, a move that was decried as kowtowing to Beijing by civil society (Chase & Fife, 2021b; MLI, 2021). 70 % of Canadians also showed support for the relocation of the 2022 Beijing Olympics and 62% were in favour of joining the United States in imposing economic sanctions against the PRC (Chase & Fife, 2021b). The poll also found 69% of Canadians either supported or somewhat supported fast-tracking refugee applications from Uyghurs and other Muslims feeling XUAR (Chase & Fife, 2021b).

Independent Variable 2: Dominant Ideas

Is there a dominant ideational framework at play? Are there any competing ideas in the decision making apparatus?

Who shares those ideas, how influential are they, and who drives them?

Government decision making points to the predominance of internationalism and multilateralism in handling the case. Multilateralism has been preferred as a mechanism to foster liberal norms and principles of human rights internationally and in support of Canada's self-perceived role as a progressive contributor to the order. Throughout the case, the government has extensively relied on UN channels to condemn and pressure the PRC on its human rights record and has coordinated actions with its allies. Most UNHRC statements, G7 communiqués, the genocide motion, the imposition of sanctions and other related measures, and the diplomatic boycott of the Olympic games were all carried out in coordination with like-minded countries, principally members of the FYEV grouping.

Quiet diplomacy is another important ideational framework at play throughout the case but was largely abandoned following the arrest of the two Michaels. Before bilateral relations soured over the issue of the 3 Ms, the government focused its efforts on "backdoor diplomacy", holding conversations with Chinese officials over human rights practices at the bureaucratic, ministerial, and head of state levels. That approach later evolved into less frequent dialogues and was limited to bureaucratic channels.

The case also shows the overarching role that functionalism plays in government decision making. With a vested interest in the proliferation of liberal norms of human rights and having championed a number of international initiatives on the topic, the Canadian government has sought to play an influential role in altering Chinese behaviour. Civil society, parliamentarians, and the Canadian public have espoused the need for government action from the very onset, a representation of the weight the idea of Canada as a champion of human rights carries in Canadian foreign policy.

Independent Variable 3: The Prime Minister & Cabinet

How influential/involved is the political executive in the case? Are there any constraints on the power of the executive?

Are there known shared or disparate views between the PM and the Cabinet?

The Executive is remembered most for its abstention from the February 22, 2021, HoC vote which unanimously declared the events in XUAR as amounting to crimes against humanity and genocide (Chase, 2021b). Prime Minister Trudeau, at the time, expressed his discomfort over the use of the term “genocide” to label Chinese human rights violations in Xinjiang, calling it “extremely loaded” and advocating for an independent investigation by the international community before coming to such conclusions (Chase, 2021b). In abstaining from the vote, the Executive resorted to the decades-old “Parliament will decide” formula by dissociating itself from carrying the entire burden of the policy decision. On the day of the vote, Minister of Foreign Affairs Garneau released a statement noting that the vote in Parliament, free of the party’s whip, represents the view of Parliament and that Canada continues to advocate for independent investigations and coordination with the international community on China’s violations of human rights (GAC, 2021a).

Cabinet’s abstention from the vote was criticized as kowtowing to Beijing in the face of its detention of the two Michaels. The fate of the two Canadians, indeed, appears to have played a pivotal role in constraining government decision making as Ottawa had not shied away from raising the ongoing activities in Xinjiang prior to their detention. Concerns over the treatment of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other ethnic groups were discussed with the PRC at the highest levels as early as 2016, including during the visit of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang to Canada, the Prime Minister’s first two visits to China, the Governor General’s visit to Beijing in 2017, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs’ visit to China in August 2017 (GAC, 2020b). The Prime Minister and Premier Li also used the Canada-China Annual Leaders’ Dialogue in November 2018 to discuss human rights issues in XUAR (GAC, 2020b).

Following the arrests of the Michaels, government action was redirected to multilateral fora with most bilateral communications on the topic halted with the exception of a foreign ministers meeting in Japan on the margins of the G20 in November 2019 (GAC, 2020b). Multilateral efforts have primarily been carried under the umbrella of the UN and the G7. Minister Champagne and Garneau have both held calls with UNHCHR Michelle Bachelet in August 2020, March 2021, and July 2021 where they reiterated Canada's concerns with human rights violations in XUAR and Ottawa's commitment to human rights issues and support for the UNHRC (GAC, 2021b; GAC, 2021h). Human rights abuses in Xinjiang featured in the 2019 and 2021 G7 communiqués from foreign and development ministers but never made it to the leader's statement (GAC, 2019; GAC, 2021e). The communiqués affirm G7 members' concerns with the human rights abuses in the region and demand for independent and unfettered access by the UNHCHR for investigation (GAC, 2019; GAC, 2021e). The ministers also committed to addressing the issue at home through import/export management, support for businesses, and awareness campaigns (GAC, 2019; GAC, 2021e).

In January 2021, the government implemented several measures related to human rights abuses in Xinjiang in coordination with the UK (GAC, 2021). The measures include the imposition of imports restrictions of goods produced with forced labour; a Xinjiang Integrity Declaration where Canadian companies vow to be aware of the human rights situations in Xinjiang and to follow all domestic and international law; a business advisory and enhanced advice for firms wishing to do business in XUAR; an awareness campaign; export controls of goods and services that could be misused for the purposes of government surveillance, repression, arbitrary detention, or forced labour; and funding of a comprehensive third-party analysis of areas of exposure to forced labour involving Uyghurs (GAC, 2021). Additionally, on March 22, 2021, Canada imposed sanctions, in coordination with the U.S., the UK, and the EU, against four CCP officials and one entity under the *Special Economic*

Measures (People's Republic of China) Regulations, “based on their participation in gross and systematic human rights violations in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region” (GAC, 2021c, para. 1).

Finally, in December 2021, the government announced a diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Beijing Olympics citing China’s violation of human rights in Xinjiang (Turnbull, 2021). In doing so, Canada followed the lead of other FYEV partners in the U.S., the UK, and Australia who had already announced a boycott of the games (Turnbull, 2021).

Independent Variable 4: Parliament & Election Cycles

How influential/involved is Parliament in the case? What are the key international affairs committees involved? What’s the composition of the House of Commons? Is there an election component to the case?

Parliament has been highly involved in the issue of human rights in XUAR. The issue has been the subject of discussions in the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (SDIR) and CACN, although most reports and activities operated through the former due to its existing engagement on the issue that dates back to the Harper years. Both committees have received multiple briefings on the human rights situation in Xinjiang from civil society, government officials, as well as witnesses, and survivors. The SDIR sponsored a study on the case in 2018 with subsequent updates in 2020 and 2021 where it describes the extent of human rights violations in XUAR as related to the subcommittee by witnesses and experts (Azoulay & Naef, 2018; SDIR, 2020; Spengemann, 2021). The reports also repeatedly stated Canada’s responsibility to act upon the violations in accordance with its role and interests in the Liberal International Order and given its leadership as a defender and champion of human rights.

The 2021 update concluded that the human rights violations by the PRC amount to crimes against humanity and genocide, as defined in the 1948 *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (Spengemann, 2021). The report made 15 recommendations to the Executive, most of which followed the measures already adopted by the government in January 2021 in coordination

with the UK (the recommendations were most likely shared with the Executive prior to its release) (Spengemann, 2021; GAC, 2021). The government agreed to all but five recommendations, namely refusing to label the acts as genocide citing the need for an international independent investigation to distinguish between the current evidence of violations and potential genocide (GoC, 2021).

Actions by parliamentarians have been spurred by the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC). IPAC is an international cross-party group of legislators working towards reform on how democratic countries approach China (IPAC, n.d.b.). Irwin Cotler (LPC) and Garnett Genius (CPC) serve as co-chairs on the IPAC team with an additional 27 Canadian legislators of all stripes serving as members (IPAC, n.d.a.). The organization has conducted coordinated campaigns on multiple fronts, including around the events in Xinjiang and the 2022 Beijing Olympics (IPAC, n.d.b.).

Party unity on the case has been near impossible to enforce for the government. On February 22, 2021, the HoC unanimously adopted a motion, sponsored by Michael Chong (CPC), declaring the PRC's human rights abuses against Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other ethnic groups in XUAR as amounting to crimes against humanity and genocide (Chase, 2021b). In the same month, 20 Canadian politicians of all stripes spearheaded an open letter to the International Olympic Committee asking for the 2022 Beijing Olympics to be relocated, fearing that China will use the event to shore up its international image (Chase, 2021a). Months later in November 2021, similar calls would be made by MP Sameer Zuberi (LPC) and MP Alexis-Brunelle Duceppe (BQ) at the general assembly of the World Uyghur Congress where they sponsored a resolution calling on the Olympics to be postponed until an independent investigation is carried out (Chase, 2021d).

All in all, the case spreads across the 42nd, 43rd, and 44th session parliament with a slight intensification during the 43rd sessions. Increased international attention lined up with the descent of the Liberals to a minority government, partly accounting for the intensification of pressures coming from opposition members. Nonetheless, there has been no electoral component as the case never

became the subject of debate during election cycles nor was the decision to allow a free vote on the HoC genocide motion timed with the start of the 2021 election campaign.

Independent Variable 5: Foreign Affairs Bureaucracy

What are the predispositions of the foreign policy bureaucracy on the case? How influential are the key bureaucratic departments/agencies?

Bureaucratic influence on the case has been almost entirely carried through UN channels. The government first expressed its concerns about the situation in XUAR at the UNHRC in March 2018 where it urged Chinese authorities to respect the right to freedom of religion and freedom of belief and expression of Chinese Uyghurs (Azoulay & Naef, 2018). Canada has since made several statements of its own and sponsored joint statements/letters on the human rights situation of Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other ethnic groups in China in both the UNGA and UNHRC including in September 2018, November 2018, March 2019, July 2019, March 2019, September 2019, October 2019, and June 2020 (GAC, 2020b).

More recently, in June 2021, Canada delivered a joint statement on the human rights situation in Xinjiang at the 47th Session of the UNHRC (GAC, 2021f). The statement was sponsored by Canada and Australia and endorsed by 44 countries (including all FYEV and G7 members), reiterating the signatories' grave concerns with the human rights abuses in Xinjiang but stopping short of labeling it as genocide (GAC, 2021f). The statement also urged China to allow immediate and unfettered access to XUAR for independent observers, including the UNHCHR, and to implement the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's 8 recommendations related to Xinjiang (GAC, 2021f).

Government communications and appearances before Parliamentary committees continuously claim that Canadian diplomats have pressed their concerns with Chinese officials privately in bilateral and multilateral settings. Bureaucrats also maintain that GAC has been working with both like-minded and non-traditional partners, including members of the Organization of Islamic

Cooperation, to coordinate pressures on Beijing and gather evidence of human rights violations in Xinjiang (Azoulay & Naef, 2018).

Independent Variable 6: Federalism

What are the global interests of the various provinces in relation to the case? Are the interests shared or disparate across provinces? Do those interests compete against the interests of the federal government?

Federalism has had no influence on the case. Issues of human rights are a domain provinces typically do not interfere in, principally because their interests are shared with the federal government.

Findings

Once again, government decision making points to the durability of the middle power image in its response to human rights abuses in Xinjiang. Multilateralism has been preferred as a mechanism to foster internationalist objectives of liberal human rights norms and principles and in support of Canada's self-perceived role as a progressive contributor to the order. Throughout the case, the government has extensively relied on UN channels to condemn and pressure the PRC on its human rights record all the while coordinating joint actions with its allies. Indeed, the government has made extensive use of the UNHRC and UNGA as well as the G7 and FYEV groupings to voice its concerns with China's practices in XUAR and in adopting measures to exert diplomatic pressure on Beijing. In line with the middle power status, Canada has refrained from adopting unilateral action be it the HoC declaration of genocide, the boycott of the 2022 Beijing Olympics, or the special economic measures which were all adopted alongside FYEV partners.

Furthermore, the case shows the overarching influence that functionalism plays in government decision making. With a vested interest in perpetuating liberal norms of human rights and having championed a number of international initiatives on the topic, the Canadian government has sought to leverage its capabilities in altering Chinese behaviour both multilaterally and bilaterally. The Trudeau

administration has led multiple diplomatic actions at the UNHRC and UNGA against China's human rights practices and has used a quiet diplomacy approach bilaterally, holding conversations with Chinese officials over human rights practices at the bureaucratic, ministerial, and head of state levels. The latter approach was largely abandoned following the arrest of the two Michaels, once again showcasing the large influence the diplomatic spat had on other areas of the bilateral relationship.

Finally, Parliament has been highly influential in steering government decision making a certain way. The HoC led efforts to label the PRC's human rights abuses against Uyghurs, Kazakhs, and other ethnic groups in XUAR as amounting to crimes against humanity and genocide, despite the abstention of the entire Cabinet to the vote. The House also led calls to boycott the 2022 Beijing Olympics which was later adopted by the government. Similarly, SDIR's recommendations to the government with regards to the events in Xinjiang were almost entirely adopted and were reflected in subsequently adopted policies. The high level of parliamentary influence reflects the endurance of Canada's self-perceived role internationally as that of Western middle power.

Strategically speaking, Canada has a long history of engagement with China on matters of human rights. By far, the largest irritant in the relationship. Canadian foreign policy decision making on the case has continued Ottawa's historical approach. The government has used a quiet diplomacy approach bilaterally while working multilaterally with like-minded countries to denounce China's human rights record. In this sense, Canadian efforts cannot be said to amount to bandwagoning by the sheer number of international attempts that have gone into challenging the PRC's human rights record. Nor can it be said to amount to a form of balancing, otherwise, the Executive would have followed in the U.S.' steps in declaring the events in Xinjiang as genocide, irrespective of the need for an independent international investigation. A true balancing effort would also not have necessitated the use of the "Parliament will decide" formula on the genocide motion. Perhaps more importantly, Canadian policy decisions have been directed towards strengthening liberal human rights norms of

the order, as opposed to a concerted effort to undermine China geopolitically. Once again, the government's approach is best seen through the lens of a hedging strategy even in the face of its strongest condemnation of Beijing. Can the same be said for an issue area where Canada's capabilities are marginal such as in defence?

Case 5–Defence: South China Sea

The case of the South China Sea poses as a bit of an outlier in that, by virtue of its integration into the American security apparatus and China’s flouting of maritime international law, Canada would be expected to unequivocally side with Washington in the defence domain. Yet, the lack of defence policy investments in the region or even the government’s uneasy relationship with a U.S.-centric FOIP concept points to a strategic reaction other than balancing. Below is an examination of the Canadian government decision making on the case. The findings reflect a) all six independent variables believed to have a determinative effect on the conduct of Canadian foreign policy via the data collection questions established during the methodology phase; b) the timeline of the case (see Figure 1); and c) the most compelling generalizations on the outcomes of the case as well as alternative perspectives according to primary and secondary sources. These findings are analyzed according to the theoretical framework illustrated in Table 1 (see methodology) to determine whether Canadian foreign policy decision making on the case meets the threshold of balancing, bandwagoning, or hedging, providing an explanation for which variables have been most influential in generating those results.

Summary

In July 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) at The Hague ruled against Chinese maritime sovereignty claims in the South China Sea, in a case brought against Beijing by the Philippines under UNCLOS (CFR, 2022). The ruling found the Nine-Dash Line—a nine lines u-shaped outline bringing about 90 percent of the South China Sea under Chinese sovereign control—to be invalid under international law. China, which measures its “historical” claims through the Nine-Dash Line, refused to accept the court’s ruling (CFR, 2022). The arbitration case became a juncture point for Asian maritime defence. China has been building artificial islands with military assets and infrastructure within its self-claimed Nine-Dash Line while concurrently making use of militias to extend its control

over a key economic corridor of global trade (Morton, 2020). Chinese activities in the South China Sea post-Hague ruling have sparked international concerns over adherence to maritime international law in a body of water where over one-third of global trade transits (CFR, 2022). In the last years, the United States has increased freedom of navigation operations (FONOPS) in an attempt to enforce principles set under UNCLOS, despite not being a member of the maritime regime, and prevent territorial abuses by coastal states (CFR, 2022). China opposes FONOPS. Beijing extends its interpretation of international law in regulating the activities of foreign militaries around its artificial islands and self-claimed exclusive economic zones (EEZs); these claims are largely rejected by the international community (Morton, 2020). Canada, which has a vested interest in trade liberalization, global peace and security, and adherence to international law, including in the maritime domain, has sought to carefully increase its engagement in the region without antagonizing either regional hegemon in Washington and Beijing. The intensification of the U.S.-China rivalry has increasingly rendered this act challenging.

Independent Variable 1: Societal Interests & Actors

Are there groups with shared interests in the issue area? What are the groups' interests? How influential are the groups?

Most CSOs share an agreement that Canada's current commitment to regional defence is inadequate for the current geopolitical shift. Canada's lack of defence clout in the region is a recurring point and societal actors believe it to be an impediment to the variety of policy options available to the government. Bolstering Canada's military presence in the region would necessitate heavy investments into the defence budget if resources were reallocated to the Indo-Pacific theatre without sacrificing the entirety of Ottawa's commitments in the Atlantic (MacDonald & Vance, 2020). Canada's historical commitment to Atlantic defence is an impediment to further action in the Indo-Pacific given Ottawa's relative defence budget and foreign policy resources (Lerhe, 2021a; MacDonald & Vance, 2020). Canadian options for regional defence are perceived to range from status quo to

selective engagement. Full-scale engagement is out of line with Canada's historical commitment and capabilities (Lerhe, 2021a). Under these options, CSOs would like to see an increase in Canadian presence in the region through institutional membership that seeks to bolster international norms, rules of conduct, and international law (Nagy, 2021; MacDonald & Vance, 2020; Kawasaki, 2016; Lerhe, 2021a).

Societal actors are worried that Canada's standoff approach to the region will leave it out of the decision making circles that will steer the direction of the next century of international relations. Given Ottawa's core interest in trade liberalization, global peace and security, and the adherence to international law, including in the maritime domain, CSOs believe the issue of regional defence cannot be overlooked. Societal actors marry increased engagement in the region to the concept of an Indo-Pacific strategy, albeit a minority of actors argue instead for the continuation of the current Asia-Pacific framework (see Reeves, 2020). Within this debate, ensuring geopolitical stability in the body of water through the proliferation of international law and liberal norms is unanimous, but proponents of the Indo-Pacific approach suggest that objective could be attained through Canada's joining the QUAD, AUKUS, or by expanding FYE activity to regional defence (Berkshire-Miller, 2021; Nagy, 2021; Lerhe, 2021b). CSOs equally recognize the need for close engagement with ASEAN in regional defence and had long pressed for Canada's adherence to the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (Grinius, 2016).

Independent Variable 2: Dominant Ideas

Is there a dominant ideational framework at play? Are there any competing ideas in the decision making apparatus?

Who shares those ideas, how influential are they, and who drives them?

Multilateralism has been the operational tool of choice for the Canadian government as evidenced by the almost entirety of its actions being conducted multilaterally. Other than GAC's statements on the PCA ruling, all government messaging has been carried through the G7. Even

Operation PROJECTION, the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) freedom of navigation operations in the Asia-Pacific, is done on the basis of cooperation with like-minded foreign navies in the region with no unilateral action (DND, 2021b).

Government decision making also points to the predominance of internationalist objectives by calling for a multilateral approach to conflict resolution in respect of international law and liberal norms and principles of the order. In fact, the government has repeatedly advocated for a solution based around the tenets of UNCLOS which would simultaneously reinforce support for the established order and advance Canadian interests in its own territorial disputes and reliance on regional trade. Canada's preference for internationalist objectives is also a reflection of its own position within the regional balance of power where it hopes to contribute to progressive reforms of the order without antagonizing either Washington or Beijing.

Finally, functionalism is an underlying aspect of the government's approach to the issue. Canadian interests in the region are vast but involvement has been particularly absent in the last decade by extension of Ottawa's existing commitment to Atlantic defence and limited capabilities. In recognition of its lack of influence on the issue, the government has pushed for a multilateral approach to the case, in hopes that other like-minded players will de facto work to support its interests.

Independent Variable 3: The Prime Minister & Cabinet

How influential/involved is the political executive in the case? Are there any constraints on the power of the executive?

Are there known shared or disparate views between the PM and the Cabinet?

The Executive has limited its involvement in the case and has generally reiterated the comments of the bureaucracy on the importance of upholding international law and Canada's commitment to peaceful resolution of the issue. Prime Minister Trudeau has never been directly implicated in the issue pointing to its relatively low importance for his government. Statements from the Prime Minister on the South China Sea have come under the umbrella of G7 Summit

communiqués since 2016 (GAC, 2021k). Similarly, during the visit of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Ottawa in 2019, PM Trudeau noted that both have a “shared vision for maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific region based on the rule of law” (PMO, 2019, para.5). The use of the FOIP concept marked a sharp departure from government messaging which has historically limited its approach to “Asia-Pacific”. It is also worth noting that the FOIP concept did not feature in G7 Summit leaders’ communiqués until 2021 but has been used by the G7 foreign ministers since 2017 (G7 Research Group, 2017).

In fact, Canada has tagged along with G7 foreign ministers since 2016 in calling on China to respect the Hague ruling and encouraging the parties to negotiate a code of conduct in the South China Sea that would see the enforcement of a UNCLOS-based maritime order (GAC, 2021k). The foreign ministers have also long advocated for a halt to unilateral escalatory actions and the importance of enforcing freedom of navigation (GAC, 2021k). In September 2020, Minister of National Defence Sajjan delivered a keynote address during the 12th annual Conference on the South China Sea where he stated that “Canada will always seek to work with our trusted allies and partners to uphold the rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific region, including in Southeast Asia. Canada favours a multilateral approach to problem-solving and supports dialogue and cooperation, based on mutual respect between nations” (DND, 2020). Additionally, in his April 2021 CACN hearing, Minister Sajjan said that “Canada opposes land reclamation projects and building outposts in disputed areas for military purposes [...] and we will continue supporting our allies and partners in the Asia Pacific region, especially in the face of unilateral actions that undermine peace and stability” (DND, 2021a).

There is, therefore, inconsistency in government messaging between the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defence. Whereas the visit of Shinzo Abe in 2019 marked a departure in PM Trudeau’s messaging from “Asia-Pacific” to “Indo-Pacific”, the Minister of National Defence has used the two concepts interchangeably since 2016. The forthcoming Indo-Pacific strategy points to

the FOIP concept having dethroned the historical Asia-Pacific framework in government decision making, a move that may hinge more closely on the American approach to the region (Chase & Fife, 2022).

Independent Variable 4: Parliament & Election Cycles

How influential/involved is Parliament in the case? What are the key international affairs committees involved? What's the composition of the House of Commons? Is there an election component to the case?

The South China Sea case spreads across the entirety of the Trudeau government if we use the 2016 PCA ruling as a base point, although it is worth noting that territorial disputes in the region go back decades. Parliament activity started reflecting Canadian worries with regional defence as early as 2016 following GAC's PCA ruling statement and the June 2017 release of *Strong, Secured, Engaged* (SSE) (GAC, 2016; DND, 2019).

Nonetheless, influence from Parliament has been limited. Despite being the subject of debates in all three sessions of Parliament, the issue never made its way to the HoC other than through committees with scrutiny coming almost entirely from Conservative members. There also appears to be no intensification of the case following the Liberal party's descent to minority status in 2019 nor any electoral component given the absence of mentions in any of the parties' platforms in 2019 and 2021 (Maclean's 2019; Maclean's, 2021).

The issue has been the topic of conversation at the Standing Committee on National Defence (NDDN), the FAAE, CACN, and the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (AEFA). The views are standardized across the committees: China's activities in the South China Sea are seen as both militarily and economically coercive as well as disruptive to a UNCLOS-based maritime regime (Levitt, 2018). China's refusal to abide by the 2016 ruling creates a sense of worry from policymakers who recognize the importance of the body of water for

global/Canadian trade but also for the precedent it sets for maritime territorial disputes, including in the Arctic and the Northwest Passage (Levitt, 2018).

The Senate debated a motion urging the government to address China's hostile activities in the South China Sea in 2016 (Senate of Canada, 2016). The motion was not unanimous in its adoption with some senators questioning the benefit of increased government action for Canadian interests and/or the merits of increased actions in comparison to what was already being done (Senate of Canada, 2016). Out of 78 votes, 43 voted "yea", 29 voted "nay", and 6 abstained, reflecting the disparity of opinions (Senate of Canada, 2016). The grand majority of "yeas" were of Conservative affiliation whereas most "nays" came from independent or Liberal senators (Senate of Canada, 2016). The motion never came to fruition in the HoC.

Independent Variable 5: Foreign Affairs Bureaucracy

What are the predispositions of the foreign policy bureaucracy on the case? How influential are the key bureaucratic department/agencies?

Despite joint involvement from GAC and the Department of National Defence (DND) on the issue of the South China Sea, there is consensus in the bureaucracy on the extent of Canada's role in regional defence. Both departments, however, have played different roles. GAC has played a limited role other than pressing for a diplomatic solution to the issue. In July 2021, in commemoration of the 5th anniversary of the PCA ruling, the department stressed the need for a peaceful resolution to the territorial disputes in accordance with International Law, urged China to respect the ruling, and criticized Beijing "escalatory and destabilizing actions" in the South China Sea (GAC, 2021). This was a significant attitude shift from the 2016 statement from the department where the government instead encouraged *all* claimants to respect international law, abide by the ruling, and refrain from land reclamation/militarization; coming short of calling China by name (GAC, 2016). It is worth noting

that the 2016 statement predates the deterioration of bilateral relations and occurred around the time when hopes of a bilateral economic partnership still loomed large in policy circles.

Conversely, CAF/DND's role in the issue has primarily focused on the enforcement of international maritime law via de-facto freedom of navigation operations, although it does not use that terminology. Through Operation PROJECTION, the CAF/DND has for objective to foster global peace and security by conducting training, exercises, and engagements with foreign navies and other international security partners across the world and, more recently, primarily in the Asia-Pacific region (DND, 2021b). As a result, Halifax-class frigates have been routinely deployed in the region since 2018 (DND, 2021b).

DND and GAC have repeatedly made known that their joint efforts in the region are aimed at enhancing Canada's ability to promote multilateralism, support the established international order, and contribute to global peace and security in the Asia-Pacific (DND, 2021a). Both departments see Canada's regional presence as a demonstration of its steadfast commitment to free navigation in accordance with international law (DND, 2021a). Additionally, government rhetoric is in line with its defence policy, *Strong, Secured, Engaged*, released in 2017. The issue of the South China Sea is only mentioned once throughout SSE where the government reaffirms Canada's reliance on a rules-based international order and the maintenance of free and open access to international waters as a trading nation and influential member of the order (DND, 2019). SSE also highlights the need to peacefully manage and resolve territorial disputes in accordance with international law, while avoiding potentially escalatory actions (DND, 2019).

Independent Variable 6: Federalism

What are the global interests of the various provinces in relation to the case? Are the interests shared or disparate across provinces? Do those interests compete against the interests of the federal government?

Federalism had no influence on government decision making. National defence is the sole responsibility of the federal government with no implications from provinces.

Findings

The endurance of dominant ideas like multilateralism, internationalism, and functionalism has resonated throughout the government's handling of the South China Sea case. The government has been more of an observer than participant in Asia-Pacific regional defence due to its existing commitment to Atlantic security and limited defence capabilities. Canada's reluctance to shift its defence commitment away from the Atlantic theatre reflects the importance of its alliance system for its foreign policy. Functionalism has, therefore, pushed the government to defer entirely to multilateralism in the advancement of its interests on the case. In doing so, the government has relied extensively on the G7 to promote internationalist objectives in the South China Sea that would see a multilateral approach to conflict resolution in respect of international law and liberal norms and principles of the order. More specifically, the government has advocated that any solution be based on the tenets of UNCLOS which would simultaneously reinforce support for the established order and advance Canadian interests in its own territorial disputes as well as its reliance on global trade.

Canadian foreign policy decision making has been extensively wary of antagonizing either of the regional hegemony. In respect of the middle power status, Canada has adopted a hands-off approach that seeks to reinforce elements of the order rather than adopt a policy position that would sacrifice its maneuverability against the U.S. or China. However, this strategic ambiguity might come to an end with the forthcoming Indo-Pacific strategy which may officially adopt the FOIP strategic framework. Nonetheless, this remains speculation for now as the strategy has yet to be released, and given that prior uses of the FOIP concept by the government have refrained from adopting a U.S.-centric vision. Canada's approach to the South China Sea can, therefore, be said to follow along the historical policy of engagement in adopting a hedging approach to Beijing. Canadian commitment to

the maritime regime in the Asia-Pacific is as much about providing objection to China's flouting of international law as it is about the prospective repercussions it carries for other Canadian interests such as the Northwestern Passage and even the Arctic. Canadian strategic interests in the case are anchored in the Liberal International Order and have rejected U.S.-led containment policies and Chinese territorial claims. Incidentally, Canada's strategic anchor in the order has proven to be a repeating point across all cases.

Synthesis

Each issue area was investigated independently, using the standardized set of data collection questions put forward during the methodology phase. Through these investigations, I have provided context-dependent generalizations about Canada's approach to its relationship with China in domains of importance to the broader triadic relationship between Ottawa, Beijing, and Washington. The results were unanimous in determining that Canadian foreign policy decision making in all five cases met the threshold of hedging as opposed to mainstream international relations theory's prescriptions of balancing or even bandwagoning. These results are showcased in Table 3 below in reflection of the theoretical framework depicted in Table 1. This chapter makes use of the common analytical framework to compare the findings of each case and to build a synthesis of Canada's approach to the U.S.-China rivalry that, once more, demonstrates the predominance of the hedging option.

Aggregated Results and Conclusion

The results of each case study exhibit a variation in the level of influence domestic and bureaucratic environment determinants have played on Canadian foreign policy decision making. The Prime Minister and his Cabinet, the foreign affairs bureaucracy, Parliament and election cycles, and societal interests and actors have all played an influential role at some point across the five cases but never persistently. Similarly, despite the review of the literature pointing to federalism being an important determinant of Canadian foreign policy, not once have Canadian provinces proven influential on government decision making. Even in the economic relations issue area, a realm provinces are typically more involved in, Prairie governments have deferred to the federal government's course of action. The lack of legislation-related issues might account for this lack of influence.

Conversely, international environment determinants, that is, the two parameters of geostrategic position and capabilities as well as dominant ideas (domestic environment) have

consistently influenced Canadian foreign policy decision making. These determinants have, in turn, operated as the most influential generators of the Trudeau government's hedging approach to the U.S.-China rivalry.

Canada's geostrategic position sets the constraints and opportunities for Canadian foreign policy decision making by upholding the middle power image and its related interpretations of Canada's role in the world. By virtue of its position within the balance of power, Canadian foreign policy decision making, in its approach to Sino-Canadian relations, has made extensive use of multilateralism to limit power asymmetries between itself and Beijing and to reinforce existing commitments to the Liberal International Order. In fact, the Trudeau government sought to advance internationalist objectives in its resolution of disputes with China, be it the release of the two Michaels, the agricultural bans, coercive actions in the South China Sea, or human rights violations in Xinjiang. The Huawei case is the only case where Ottawa did not resort to multilateralism.

The United Nations, the G7, and the FYEV were the multilateral fora of choice for the government in reflection of the importance its self-perceived role as a Western middle power plays for the conduct of its foreign policy. When joint efforts were undertaken, the Trudeau government relied on its closest allies to reiterate its commitment to the tenets of the Liberal International Order and to call on China to respect these core norms, rules, and principles. It is worth noting that the government showed a preference for joint actions carried out either without the United States or with Washington as part of a larger grouping. Nonetheless, Canada's geostrategic position also stressed the overarching influence of Canada-U.S. relations in its approach to China. American geopolitical interests loomed large across all five cases, pushing for the Canadian government to adopt a more hawkish framework to its bilateral relationship with Beijing. The outcomes of the cases, however, point to the Trudeau government prioritizing an attenuated approach by the contrasting nature of its

policy choices compared to Washington. Therefore, although continentalism played an influential role, care is of the essence in conflating actions in support of the order with American geopolitical interests.

Canada's international ranking equally prompted the continuity of functionalism for Canadian foreign policy. This is best reflected by the contrast of its response to the human rights and defence issue areas, the Canadian government leveraged its capabilities when its cards were strong and largely relegated the task to allies when its card were weak. Having championed a number of initiatives and self-perceived as a fierce defender of human rights, the Trudeau government dedicated efforts to lead on the Xinjiang issue both multilaterally and bilaterally. Conversely, Canadian capabilities are relatively limited in matters of Asia-Pacific defence. In response, the government has entirely dedicated its efforts to multilateral fora in hopes that its marginal contributions will nonetheless reap the benefits of the group.

In further reflection of the impact of its capabilities, Canadian foreign policy decision making was also influenced by the country's dependence on the American market and global trade. Indeed, in its handling of the agricultural bans, Huawei, and the South China Sea, the Trudeau government repeatedly emphasized its vested interest in trade liberalization/stability supported by the established rules of the order. Although a bilateral economic partnership with Beijing is no longer in the government's interest, the importance of the Chinese market for the Canadian economy in terms of viable alternative to the American marketplace continues to weigh on foreign policy decisions. Positive economic engagement continues to be preferred to economic delinking, albeit market diversification strategies in Asia are now married to the former.

Finally, the influence of quiet diplomacy, an enduring aspect of Sino-Canadian relations, significantly impacted Canadian foreign policy decision making. The approach proved especially influential in the Executive and the foreign affairs bureaucracy's handling of all five cases with the exception of the South China Sea. The government tried to limit policy spillovers from one issue area

to another by making use of backdoor diplomacy to avoid politicizing the cases. The quiet diplomacy framework is largely responsible for the government's disregard of retaliatory measures proposed by societal actors and Parliament. Furthermore, the consular cases of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor were undeniable constraints on government decision making which worked to reinforce the adoption of backdoor diplomacy. The administration of Justin Trudeau largely refrained from antagonizing the PRC while the Michaels were behind bars to avoid negative spillovers on their case. The arbitrary arrest and detention of the two Canadians is widely seen as the catalyst for the deterioration of Sino-Canadian relations. The 3 Ms case reflects the influence the two had on the diplomacy issue area but also their large impact on the Huawei and Xinjiang cases.

Cumulatively, structural level factors and dominant ideas in Canadian foreign policy have generated a strategic approach to Canada-China relations that marries both engagement and containment policies. In the previous section, I identified how the government response to each case falls within the hedging category as opposed to balancing or bandwagoning. These results are represented in Table 3 below and have been greyed out in a darker tone to reflect their position vis-à-vis their initial point in Table 1. The findings of this research point to the Canadian government having adopted a hedging approach to the U.S.-China rivalry. Canadian foreign policy decision making, despite being in contradiction to traditional international theories, is consistent with Canada's policy of engagement towards China which emphasizes the need to work constructively with Beijing and the irrationality of containment for Canadian interests.

In fact, structural level theories, in treating middle powers like Canada as policytakers in the same manner as lesser powers, forgo their very role as supporters and builders of the Liberal International Order and, hence, their strategic commitment to enforcing its core tenets even in the absence of an American buttress. The current state of Canadian foreign policy exhibits an approach to great power competition anchored in the established order that recognizes the drawbacks of both

balancing and bandwagoning in light of the framework Washington and Beijing have adopted to their rivalry.

Dominant ideas of multilateralism, internationalism, functionalism, and quiet diplomacy, as well as structural factors of geostrategic position and capabilities, have generally exerted more influence on government decision making with regards to its relationship with Beijing, showcasing the enduring strength of the middle power role in Canadian foreign policy and its implications for Ottawa's response to hegemonic competition. Relying exclusively on a structural-level framework would not have generated the same results. Traditional international relations theories pre-ordain a balancing role for Canada in the U.S.-China rivalry. Only by using a framework that recognizes the arguments of the middle power research program such as foreign policy analysis can we conclude that theoretical prescriptions of balancing and bandwagoning are insufficient in accounting for Ottawa's current strategic outlook.

Canada's prolonged policy of engagement with China continues to find a home in hedging as a mixture of engagement and containment policies that ought to make the most out of Canadian interests by reinforcing existing commitments to the Liberal International Order.

Table 3

Case Results Against Table 1

	Diplomacy	Security	Economic Relations	Defence	Human Rights
Bandwagoning	Reject calls to undermine China and work to have	Allow unfettered investments and activity from Chinese	*Pursue a bilateral economic partnership	Reject FOIP concept and provide no objection	Adopt a policy of non-intervention

	Beijing’s place in global governance-making recognized.	companies, including SOEs, and monitor the threat of Chinese interference.	with China and continue to increase trade levels.	and/or encourage regional resolution to disputes and maritime rule of conduct.	where Canadian position is made known but Chinese sovereignty over domestic affairs is recognized.
Hedging (Engagement Policy)	Engage with China on a case-by-case basis and in reflection of independent Canadian international interests; work to further integrate	Manage economic activity from Chinese companies/SOEs while protecting critical sectors such as high technology from Chinese influence.	Increase trade with China through existing multilateral arrangements such as the WTO, the CPTPP, and RCEP.	Limit Canada’s involvement in territorial disputes while working multilaterally for the proliferation of an UNCLOS-	Use a quiet diplomacy approach bilaterally while working multilaterally with like-minded countries to denounce China’s

	China into the Liberal International Order.			based maritime order.	human rights record.
Balancing	Nurture the relationship with the U.S. by assisting Washington in undermining China and ground Canadian foreign policy in a liberal democracy ideological compass.	Reject economic activity from Chinese SOEs and limit that of private firms; increase national security against Chinese influence; support U.S. security efforts.	Decouple from the Chinese market and pursue alternatives in Asian democracies.	Adopt a U.S.-centric FOIP vision; undermine China's maritime interests; join QUAD and/or AUKUS	Support all U.S. efforts to undermine the CCP's rule in China.

*Economic relations are the only issue area where the policy of engagement hinges closer to bandwagoning than hedging.

In reflection, the conclusions of this research should provide a thoughtful contribution to Canadian foreign policy and international relations theory by virtue of its empirical nature amidst the dominance of current normative conceptualizations of the research question. Representations of the

research problem in mainstream media present Canada's options as black or white; a dichotomous dilemma where Ottawa must choose between supporting a declining hegemon or sacrificing Canadian values in siding with China. These two options are also increasingly polarized domestically for political gains, a perilous enterprise where any policy choice outside the balancing framework evokes the echoes of McCarthyism¹⁴. This study avoids this pitfall by demonstrating the viability of a third option where Canada can hedge against the two hegemons in defense of its national interests which are rooted in the stability of the current order. With bandwagoning arguably impossible given Canada's historical relationship with Washington, hedging offers favourable prospects in light of the U.S. retreat from global leadership, increasingly transactional foreign policy, and deliberate undermining of the order. Canadian policymakers should take these elements into consideration when examining their country's approach to the evolving balance of power. Canadian policymakers should apply the contributions of this study through a clear foreign policy strategy that would guide the country's conduct abroad.

In demonstrating the viability of the hedging option, this research simultaneously confirms the need for realist and liberal theorists to look beyond the traditional dichotomy of balancing and bandwagoning or even beyond great powers and lesser powers in theorizing states' responses to hegemonic competition. Mainstream international relations theories must recalibrate their conception of middle power which ascribes a preordained status quo role to that grouping of states, in contradiction to empirical evidence such as this study. Middle powers have more agency than lesser powers in their strategic dealings and are only aligned with the reigning hegemon to the extent that it secures their interests. The groundwork for recalibrating hegemonic transition theories already exists. These theories already speak of the alignment of non-great powers as conditional upon the provision of public goods by the hegemon and the normative character of the system. They also note that,

¹⁴ Named after U.S. Senator Rep. Joseph McCarthy, the term has been coined to depict the practice of making accusations of disloyalty, subversion, and treason of pro-Communist nature.

conditional upon their existing position in the order and how their interests are best served, non-great powers make strategic alignment decisions.

The shortcoming of hegemonic transition theories is in situations such as the one we are currently witnessing; when the reigning hegemon is declining and challenging the established order in a similar fashion to the rising power. In such instances, balancing and bandwagoning remain the only options available in *theory*. However, in *practice*, middle powers can double down in their strategic commitment to the established order if they are satisfied with their position within it. The Liberal International Order becomes sort of a hegemon in itself behind which these states rally.

Further research on this topic should seek to integrate these shortcomings into theory, starting with Liberalism as a natural starting step given the proximity of the arguments of Ikenberry (1998) and Keohane (1984) who contend that the order can operate in the absence of a hegemon. Later work should seek to achieve similar objectives with the realist school, departing from conceptions of middle power based on material capabilities which should, at the very least, distinguish that category of states from other lesser powers in their strategic alignment. Other research should seek to examine the viability and longevity of a hedging approach to the U.S.-China rivalry. Is the strategy rewarding? Is the strategy only an intermediate solution until geopolitical competition becomes too intensive and the experiences of the Cold War are replicated? How are Washington and Beijing reacting to this strategic positioning from other states? Are the U.S. and China recalibrating their approach to address middle powers' concerns or are they coercing them into taking sides? Additionally, future research should seek to answer a similar research question from the perspective of non-Western middle powers such as Turkey, Iran, South-Africa, and Brazil. How are these middle powers reacting to the U.S.-China rivalry? To what extent are these middle powers' geopolitical interests anchored in the established order? Surely, we can expect differing results given the often revisionist nature of middle powers like Turkey and Iran.

Finally, it is important that the results of this research regarding Canada's current strategic orientation not be exaggerated. At best, this study is a small timestamp in a constantly evolving phenomenon. The international system is far too unpredictable and fast-changing for any assessment of this kind to hold eternally. For one, the plight of the two Michaels may have accounted for much of the current inertia which, by default, might have brought this analysis to the hedging conclusion. Recent events in Ukraine might also result in a “rally behind the flag” effect; the flag being that of the U.S. as leader of the liberal democratic West against authoritarianism. The forthcoming Canadian approach to China, born out of the Indo-Pacific strategy, could also hinge closer on the side of balancing with government messaging increasingly framing the evolving balance of power as a struggle between liberal democracy and authoritarianism. Again, the events in Ukraine fueling that narrative to China’s detriment. Maybe this will end up being the subject of a Ph.D. Who knows?

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Appendix A

Hegemonic Transition Theories

Theory	IR Tradition	How States React to Hegemonic Competition	How Hegemony Transitions
Balance of Power Theory	Realism	States will seek to balance the rising power by building coalitions or, on the contrary, will recognize that their interests are better served by challenging the hegemon leading to their bandwagoning (Waltz, 1979).	Relative power equilibrium ushers peace whereas power disequilibrium makes conflict inevitable because rising powers' dissatisfaction with the status quo is seen as a constant (Waltz, 1979). States seek to maximize their security as power maximization will ultimately lead them to conflict (Waltz, 1979).
Balance of Threat Theory	Realism	Contingent upon their positioning within the international structure and their analysis of the level of threat, states will choose to either challenge or accept the rising hegemon (Walt, 2013). States of lesser power are more inclined to bandwagon with the rising power, especially when their geographic position makes them prone to the offensive capabilities of the rising power and distant from allies, whereas stronger states will seek to protect the status quo (Walt, 2013).	Refutes Waltz's (1979) conception that power imbalances in favour of one great power lead to an international reaction to restore balance (Walt, 2013). States react against perceived <i>threats</i> (seen as aggregate capabilities, geography, and perceptions of aggressive intentions) from rising hegemons, not just relative coercive power (Walt, 2013).
Offensive Realism	Realism	Proposes a third option to balancing and bandwagoning. Through buckpassing, a great power purposely relays the balancing task to another party to steer away from confrontation with the rising power (Mearsheimer, 2014). When the threat from the rising power becomes too great and/or when the party receiving the buck fails to act, such strategy is quickly replaced by balancing (Mearsheimer, 2014). In a bipolar structure, balancing is the only option available against a rising	The anarchic structure of the international system is such that power maximization is the only way to ensure survival (Mearsheimer, 2014). Issues of relative gains and collective action make balancing operations challenging in the face of a threatening rising power (Mearsheimer, 2014). States are, therefore, less concerned with security maximizing than strengthening their capabilities to safeguard against other powerful actors (Mearsheimer, 2014). A

		great power as there is no one to pass the buck to (Mearsheimer, 2014). In unipolar moments, other great powers are too weak to receive the buck, leading to common balancing against the rising threat (Mearsheimer, 2014). Multipolarity is most attractive for buckpassing as multiple states can receive the buck (Mearsheimer, 2014).	race to the top is the catalyst for hegemonic change.
Hegemonic Stability Theory	Realism	Support for the hegemon is conditional upon its relative provisions of economic and security guarantees for lesser powers compared to what the rising power offers (Gilpin, 1981).	The presence of a single hegemonic power is what leads to long-lasting periods of peace (Gilpin, 1981). Whoever can exercise the most power—a mix of economic might, military capabilities, political strength, and prestige—and whoever expresses the greatest capability to lead will inevitably rise as the dominant entity, effectively shaping the world order to its interests and values (Gilpin, 1981). The hegemon creates a global regime “defined as sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations” (Krasner, 1983, p. 2). The hegemon maintains its position atop of the international hierarchy for as long as it uses its overall power to bear the supply of public goods and loses its primacy when it stops to do so and/or relatively to another rising power (Gilpin, 1981). The stability period ends with the orchestration of a new order by the rising power (Gilpin, 1981).
	Liberalism	Conditional upon their adherence with the normative character of the order and the provision of public goods, states will support the current order or work to its	Add consent to lead as a layer to the unidimensional vision of the realist school (Keohane, 1984). Non-great powers and institutions have more agency than the realist

		reform (Ikenberry, 1998; Keohane, 1984). States also seek to create complex interdependence with great powers to decrease vulnerability in multiple realms beyond security at a low cost (Keohane, 1984).	school prescribes. The self-reinforcing character of institutions, working for the provision of common goods, secures the consent from lesser powers to support the established order (Ruggie, 1982; Ikenberry, 1998; Keohane, 1984). International orders are perceived as capable of operating in peace without a hegemon by virtue of the normative power of institutions to usher consent across global actors (Ruggie, 1982; Ikenberry, 1998; Keohane, 1984).
Power Transition Theory	Realism	Integrates international and domestic factors. The varying commitment of national-level variables to the current global order determines a state's level of satisfaction with its position within the hierarchy and, by extension, its position with regards to the hegemon and rising power (Organski, 1958; Organski & Kuegler, 1980).	The international order is both static and dynamic. Hegemony transitions from one hand to another, often through war, when the relative political, military, and economic capabilities attain homogenous levels between two hegemonic states and/or when the rising power has overtaken the declining hegemon (Organski, 1958; Organski & Kuegler, 1980). Contrarily, gaps in relative growth rates create a static hierarchic structure that favours peace (Organski, 1958; Organski & Kuegler, 1980). Peaceful hegemonic transition is possible when the rising power is, in large part, content with the status quo (Organski, 1958; Organski & Kuegler, 1980).

Appendix B

Strategic Options Spectrum



1. *Balancing* is a composite of efforts and means to constrain both the current and future capabilities of a rising power. Balancing typically involves building up one's independent capabilities to ensure self-reliance as well as a deliberate strengthening of interstate cooperation in the form of arrangements and alliances aimed at containing a rising hegemon believed to be threatening (Waltz, 1979).
2. *Hedging* represents a mixture of countering and engagement policies which brings it along a fine line between the traditional dichotomy of balancing and bandwagoning. Hedging is a response to a security *risk* rather than a security *threat* and should be examined from the lens of a risk management strategy whereas balancing and bandwagoning denote security strategies in response to security *threats* (Haackle, 2019). Hedging is not mutually exclusive from balancing and bandwagoning. It is possible that an actor once perceived to represent a *risk* becomes a *threat* and equally possible that a country once not thought to represent much of a *risk* evolves into a *threat* (Haackle, 2019).
3. *Bandwagoning* offers an antithesis to balancing by representing a set of efforts and means to further one's relations with the rising power as opposed to the current hegemon (Waltz, 1979). Bandwagoning is thus a recognition that the interests of the state are better served through closer alignment with the rising power because the costs of opposing it exceed the benefits (Waltz, 1979).