Why Would NATO Contribute to Removing an Autocrat from Power? A Comparison Between NATO's Intervention in Libya and Lack of Intervention in Syria in the Wake of the Arab Spring

by

Antounia Saleh

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Name: **Antounia Saleh**

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Title: **Why Would NATO Contribute to Removing an Autocrat from Power? A Comparison Between NATO's Intervention in Libya and Lack of Intervention in Syria in the Wake of the Arab Spring**

Committee: **Chair:** **Jérémie Cornut**
Associate Professor, Political Science

Jérémie Cornut
Co-Supervisor
Associate Professor, Political Science

Alexander Moens
Co-Supervisor
Professor, Political Science

Tsuyoshi Kawasaki
Examiner
Professor, Political Science

Abstract

In order to understand NATO's influence in the modern world, in this project we ask the question of why NATO would contribute to the removal of an autocrat from power. We will do so through an epistemologically positivist approach. We will test three central theories in international relations (Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism) to determine the reasons behind why, in the wake of the Arab spring in 2011, NATO contributed to removing an autocrat in one Arab country (Libya) and not in another (Syria). This research analysis will be conducted through a review of newspaper articles on NATO's intervention in Libya and Syria published at the time of the (non) intervention, as well as an analysis of the speeches and press conferences provided by the two Secretary Generals that were directing the alliance during the time of both crises.

Keywords: NATO; Realism; Constructivism; Liberalism; Autocrat; regime change

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

This research will aim to provide a fresh perspective on why NATO would contribute to removing an autocrat from power. It will test three main theories in in international relations, Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism (Walt, 1998) to determine the reason behind why, in the wake of the Arab spring in 2011, NATO contributed to removing an autocrat in one Arab country (Libya) and not in another (Syria). It will do so through an epistemologically positivist approach.

While the research will ultimately demonstrate that the realist hypothesis is the only one of the three confirmed, it is important to highlight the fact that neither the UNSC nor the NATO mandates indicate regime change or removal of autocrats. This further will be shown through the disconfirmation of the liberal hypothesis that hypothesizes that regime change, or removal of autocrats happen when the UNSC authorizes it (see sections 4.2.2). The claim here is that NATO's intervention contributed to the removal of Gadhafi and helped achieve the goals of powerful NATO member states; not that it was within the mandate of NATO to do so.

In order to understand NATO's influence in the modern world, we analyze the interventions or lack thereof that occurred in both Libya and Syria and the outside factors that are at play influencing the Alliance's decisions on interventions, one way or the other. This research analysis will be conducted through a review of newspaper articles on NATO's intervention in Libya and Syria published at the time of the (non) intervention, as well as an analysis of the speeches and press conferences provided by the two Secretary Generals that were directing the alliance during the time of both crises. Ultimately, the research will reveal that the realist hypothesis is correct, and that NATO contributed to the removal of the autocrat in Libya and not the autocrat in Syria because it is in the interest of powerful NATO members to do so.

1.1. Research Question

The research will focus on answering the following question:

Why would NATO contribute to removing an autocrat from power?

1.2. Hypotheses

I will test for three different hypotheses:

a. Realist Hypothesis: NATO contributes to removing autocrats because it is in the interest of powerful NATO members to do so;

b. Liberal Hypothesis: NATO contributes to removing autocrats because international institutions and international laws enable it;

c. Constructivist Hypothesis: NATO contributes to removing autocrats because they are socially and discursively constructed as enemies.

1.3. Significance

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is the longest lasting and one of the most successful alliances in history. The Alliance has set the foundation for the transatlantic defense relationships for over 70 years. Its success is a result of its ability to continuously adapt to the challenges confronting the Alliance. After World War II, NATO played a central role in providing strength to the Europeans against the Warsaw Pact. During this time, it was able to bring the West together through Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, a principle in which, "an attack on one is an attack on all [and remains] the core of the alliance," (Daalder, 2006, p.106), and offered collective defence to the member states. At the end of the Cold War, NATO adapted to the new realities of the international community. As an evolved alliance, it then went from defending Western Europe in the Cold War to participating in missions of peace enforcement after 1990 and still to this day. At the end of the Cold War, NATO adapted to the new realities of the international community and began launching non-Article 5 missions; missions which do not require one of the NATO members to be the victim of an attack. The first non-Article 5 missions started in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9/11 and Libya in 2011.

So why then does a powerful defense alliance engage in operations that contribute to the removal of an autocrat in countries abroad? From an alliance dedicated to "regional security organization concerned with the collective defence of its members" (Morgan, 2017, p.1), during the cold war to "a global alliance focused on crisis management" (p.2), as it did in Bosnia in 1994, NATO was dedicated to its adaptive nature. This further affected the way NATO was viewed and the way NATO responded to international crises, especially ones that threatened NATO members. Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way (2006) explain that there is a new framework which explains the dimensions of regime change in the international community. The framework "operates along two dimensions: western leverage or the degree to which governments are vulnerable to external democratizing pressure and linkage to the West or the density of ties and cross-border flows between particular countries and western-led multilateral institutions" (p.379) such as NATO. The ties to western democracies or western-led institutions as suggested above is important to this study as it explains in further detail how the powerful members of NATO divide their interests.

Finally, for an alliance such as NATO, contributing to the removal of an autocrat from power is not a simple feat. Instead, it requires pressure and a coercive nature to demand such regime change. This is a policy which has been employed by other countries, both within and outside NATO, as well as by associations such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). For example, former US President William Clinton employed this policy against Haiti when trying to remove Raoul Cedras with "a threat of invasion" (Honig & Reichard, 2015, p.331). Not only has the US used this tool of coerciveness, but it has also been pursued by Iran when they "attempted to coerce Saddam Hussein to step down during the Iran-Iraq War" (p.331). Additionally, for the GCC, they employed this method when they tried to persuade Saddam Hussein to step down in 2003 (Honig & Reichard, 2015). For NATO however, "removal of an allied ruler as soon as [they] become a foreign policy liability, while still keeping the basic friendly orientation of the regime intact" (p.332) could be a potential factor for NATO's interference abroad. This is also in addition to the external pressures the alliance faces when they choose not to intervene or when their inaction in the face of human rights violations leads to war crimes for example.

Chapter 2.

Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks

NATO's inception is often attributed as a response to the Soviet Union; however, this is a partial truth. In fact, NATO's structure was based on its three "transformations in world affairs: first, the end of the centuries-long 'civil war;' second, the United States' post-World War II commitment to the defense of Europe against Soviet domination; and third, the peaceful termination of the Cold War" (Brzezinski, 2009, p.2-3). Moreover, unlike other alliances, NATO is unique in its ability to continuously protect its members, while preserving peace and prosperity as the alliance "members [went] from long-term rivals who formerly had sought to limit each other's power and thwart each other's schemes into long-term partners who now encouraged each other to do more for the collective effort," (Thies, 2009, 124). Following the Cold War, NATO's role changed dramatically and *because* of its ability to adapt and evolve, it defied all odds that predicted the dissolution of the alliance (Brzezinski, 2009). Ultimately it was either expansion of NATO capabilities and members or it was dissolving, and through the formation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in 1991, (Gerosa, 1992) NATO proved its resiliency to ever-changing circumstances.

Moreover, when it was made clear that the UN's peacekeeping efforts were no longer enough to curtail conflicts, "NATO was increasingly called upon to provide the military clout," (Schulte, 1997, p.19), which was made evidently clear in Bosnia. By neutralizing the Bosnian Serbs' airpower, NATO enforced a no-fly zone (Schulte, 1997) albeit a complicated enforcement, this was NATO's first "combat operation in history" (Ejdus & Kovačević, p.2, 2019) since its inception during operation Deny Flight (Ejdus & Kovačević, 2019). The alliance had additionally deployed their planes to shoot down jets that belonged to the Bosnian Serbs. And as historic as this was, this was also the first area NATO intervened in which the region was not "covered by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty" (2). Moreover, it was through this operation that NATO cemented their role in future conflicts in this region.

This leads to the question of what prompts or under what conditions do alliances such as NATO decide to intervene in a conflict. According to Oudraat (2000) intervention is defined "as a coercive action intended to change the behaviour of one or more parties in the country in question" (p.419). In general, states that partake in interventions have the ability to employ two main "coercive instruments… the use of force and economic sanctions" (p.427). The use of force as defined by Oudraat includes the use of military force while the use of economic sanctions could include arms embargos or extradition of "individuals suspected of terrorist attacks" (p.424). The focus here in particular is on interventions that lead to the removal of the head of state or head of government, when this head of state or head of government is an autocrat.

There are three mainstream theories in international relations that lend themselves to the way international politics can be explained: Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism. With the purpose of understanding why NATO would contribute to removing an autocrat, we must assess how such interventions are generally explained by these three main international relations' schools of thought.

Realism primarily focusses on the concept of power and more specifically on the balance of power (Șerban, 2013). Power in this case "can be thought of as the ability of an actor to get others to do something they otherwise would not do (…) power can be conceived in terms of control over outcomes" (Keohane & Nye, 2012, p.10). Additionally, one of the two main sub-schools of realist thought, offensive realism, assumes that in order to explain the international system, states must be "rational actors pursuing strategies of survival" (Pashakhanlou, 2013, p.204).

Realism as a dominant theory in international relations has many themes, schools of thought that have arisen from it, as well as two main parents that are commonly associated with it. According to Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye (2012), there are three major themes or assumptions that are particularly important to the realist school of thought. First, realists see "states as coherent units [that] are dominant actors in world politics" (p.19) and in fact this assumption has two parts, first that states are pre-dominant actors and second that they can act as coherent units (Keohane & Nye, 2012).

The second assumption for realists, is the assumption that "force is a usable and effective instrument of policy" (Keohane & Nye, 2012, p.19) while other methods could prove to be useful, it is force that will show its effectiveness against all others. This assumption will become particularly important when we test the realist hypothesis against the NATO intervention in Libya and NATO's lack thereof in Syria.

Finally, realists value hierarchy. This third assumption stems from the second in the way that, "realists assume hierarchy of issues in world politics, headed by questions of military security: the 'high politics' of military security dominates the 'low politics' of economic and social affairs" (p.19). It is important to mention here that realist thought also stands by the presumption that leadership in a regime is most successful in a "hegemonial system: that is, when one state is powerful enough to maintain the essential rules governing interstate relations, and willing to do so" (p.37). John Mearsheimer, an offensive realist scholar, subscribes to this ideology of hegemonic capabilities, as he believes that through a hegemon in the international system a state can ensure its survival (Mearsheimer, 2001).

It is in this manner that realists use their assumptions to showcase an 'ideal' type of intervention within international politics; for example, the way NATO exerts its hegemonic capabilities, as Mearsheimer suggests is the best way for survival. For realists, Daniel Fiott (2013) explains that their primary concern for their own national interests and state of international order "will always trump the moral impulse to assist those suffering gross human-rights abuses at the hands of their government" (p. 766). This then means that realists do not consider morality as an interest to nation-states but instead concern themselves with preservation of their security. Therefore, realists consider that humanitarian interventions occur when national interests are imperiled (Boke, 2019). Ultimately, realist scholars tend to argue that although morals do not motivate realists to intervene, humanitarian interventions still provide a purpose as they "aim to maintain or increase the power and contain or reduce the power of other nations" (Boke, 2019, p.28). Morgenthau also makes note of the fact that humanitarian interventions cannot always be applied as an act of punishment (i.e., disciplining other nations for their disrespect of human rights) because a state's priorities could change overtime and the outrage, they experience now could become less important in another period of time (Fiott, 2013).

Based on this discussion I can formulate the following realist hypothesis: NATO contributes to removing autocrats because it is in the interest of powerful NATO members to do so.

The second main theory in international relations is Liberalism, which is often described by its prominent characteristics of "individual freedom, political participation, private property and equality of opportunity" (Doyle, 1986, p.1152). Generally, liberalism values the individual as the relevant actor in society, rather than the state, as realists might believe. For this reason, liberal scholars believe that the "realist perspective alone is incomplete, that it misses too many important elements" (Russett & Oneal, 2001, p.90). In fact, while realism over emphasizes the importance of power, liberal thinkers see "positive peace [resting] more on (…) democratic governance, economic interdependence and international law" (p.90).

In his article on *International Liberalism Reconsidered*, Robert Keohane (2002) denotes three critical factors that differentiate liberal paradigms from other paradigms. He explains that while focus on states has its importance, liberal thought focuses "on privately organized social groups and firms" (p.45), in conjunction with state actions, not separated from them. The second difference Keohane highlights, which is quite relevant to our research question, is on military force. Opposing realist ideology in particular, liberalism "does not emphasize the significance of military force, but rather seeks to discover ways in which separate actors (…) can organize themselves (…) and avoid destructive physical conflict" (p.45). Although the intention of NATO is not to place emphasis on destructive physical force, this is certainly what has occurred in the case of Libya, a notion that will be further explored in a later section. Finally, the difference between the liberal school of thought and other schools of thought is that, while realism "assumes that history is not progressive (…) liberalism believes in at least the possibility of cumulative progress" (p.45). Ultimately, this then reinforces the concept that liberalism in comparison to other paradigms is open to an idealistic society, where there is an evolution of conflicts in which targeted states combined with social groups for example, resolve said conflicts on their own where emphasis is not placed on military force.

To assuage the second hypothesis, we must determine how international organizations enable states in civil societies. According to Andrew Moravcsik (1992) the central "insight shared by all liberals is that states are embedded in domestic and international civil society, which decisively constrains their actions" (p.7). This means that because of the problematic and competitive nature of politics, states often concentrate on abusive political power, pushing aside individuals and private groups compelling them to act independently in order to "advance their own social and political goals" (p.7).

Liberalism then believes that any type of self-interested or (state-interested) intervention undermines "the basis for the system of international cooperation and causes instability" (Boke, 2019, p.29). Instead, liberalism asserts that humanitarian need is the only "legitimate basis for intervention" (p.29). Additionally, liberalism on interventions diverge into two different sets of scholars: cosmopolitan interventionists and liberal internationalists (Boke, 2019). The first group errs on the side of morality and the duty that a state has in order to supress a tyrannical regime. The second, errs on the side of using military interventions as a "last resort to end protracted civil wars and indiscriminate killing of civilians" (p.28); and in fact, interventions should only be employed and considered legitimate when "authorized by the UNSC" (p.28). Finally, while liberalism emphasizes international institutions and the role they play in international relations, they still recognize the failures lack of intervention can have. For example, when the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) failed to act in both Rwanda (1994) and Kosovo (1999), there was major repercussions on the purposes of humanitarian intervention (Boke, 2019). It was through these cases however that liberals continually promote the notion that states have a sense of responsibility to protect their citizens, whether it be from "massacre, ethnic cleansing, genocide [or] starvation" (p.29).

Based on this discussion I can formulate the following liberal hypothesis: NATO contributes to removing autocrats because international institutions and international laws enable it.

The third main paradigm present in international relations is that of the constructivist school of thought. Constructivism views the international system in an

entirely different light, rather than the world being shaped by concrete systems and actors, as realists illustrate, constructivism is "shaped by human action (…) [in which] social actors attach meaning to the material world and cognitively frame the world they know, experience and understand" (Adler, 1997, p.322). In its most basic form, constructivism bases its theory on society, based on cooperation, war and the international community as a whole (Adler, 1997).

One of the key thinkers in the constructivist school of thought, Alexander Wendt (1992) offers great insight on the differences between realism and liberalism and where constructivism fits on that spectrum. Wendt explains that while realists are concerned with state structure (i.e., anarchy and power), liberals' main concerns are with social interactions and institutional action. Comparatively, constructivists place emphasis on social construction, and realize that interactions give rise to organized action.

Constructivism in general is not far from the liberal view on how institutions can affect the interests of civil societies, meaning that instead of citizen identity stemming from any exogenous factor, they come from endogenous relationships. Moreover, Wendt describes how constructivists utilize social theory to explain the actions of states and how these are typically based on the meanings that constructivist social theory attaches to people. The fundamental principle of this theory is then that "people act toward objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them" (p.396). Wendt further explains that "states act differently toward enemies than they do toward friends because enemies are threatening, and friends are not. Anarchy and the distribution of power are insufficient to tell us which is which" (p.397) For example, Wendt describes a student/professor analogy that helps explain the distribution of power. If society where to push aside the meaning of a 'university,' then the power distribution between professors and students, would cease to exist. The same logic could then be applied to the US and Soviet Union disputes if they elected to end their rivalry and subsequently the Cold War (Wendt, 1992). In this manner, constructivists attach "collective meanings that constitute the structures which organize [their] actions" (p.397).

When looking at interventions, constructivists do not necessarily abide by either argument provided by realists or liberal scholars, instead they argue that "world politics was socially constructed in the sense that power constellations, rules, and institutions [are] not self-evident conditions pushing states in a certain direction, but rather products of social interaction" (Hofferberth, 2015, p.3). In this manner, it is through the internalization of norms by state actors that determine how a state might respond. In order to understand why states intervene however, Matthias Hofferberth and Christian Weber (2015) explain that it is due to the purpose behind the intervention that acts as a motivator and that the relatively recent purpose is due to a new standard and "new humanitarian goals which are explained with reference to a changed coherent normative structure" (p.17). Finally, for constructivists the competition of policy debates especially through Western discourse can act as a determinant factor for their position on intervention. For example, this is what occurred in the case of Bosnia and NATO's military intervention (Hofferberth &Weber, 2015), wherein NATO enforced a no-fly zone and neutralized the airpower of the Bosnian Serbs as part of their starting role in the Balkans.

Based on this discussion I can formulate the following constructivist hypothesis: NATO contributes to removing autocrats because they are socially and discursively constructed as enemies

Table 1.   **Overview of Hypotheses**

	Intervention	**Non-Intervention**
Realism	When powerful NATO members want an intervention	When powerful NATO members do not want and intervention
Liberalism	When international laws and institutions enable an intervention	When international laws and institutions do not enable an intervention
Constructivism	When an autocrat is socially and discursively constructed as an enemy	When an autocrat is not socially and discursively constructed as an enemy

Based on the above discussion of the theoretical frameworks, Table 1 above, explains the three hypotheses stemmed from the three main schools of thought based on how they rationalize NATO intervention or non-intervention by NATO. First, for realism

this means that NATO will intervene when powerful NATO members want an intervention, and in that same respect NATO will not intervene when powerful NATO members do not want an intervention. Second, according to liberal thought, NATO will intervene when international laws and institutions enable an intervention and conversely NATO will not intervene when international laws and institutions do not enable an intervention. Thirdly, constructivism explains that NATO will intervene when an autocrat is socially and discursively constructed as an enemy, as well, NATO will not intervene when an autocrat is not constructed as an enemy.

Chapter 3.

Research Strategy and Methodology

3.1. Epistemology, Variables and Causality

The research strategy and methodology of this project will be that of an epistemologically positivist approach. Epistemology in this case has to do with the "study of how people or systems of people know things and how they think they know things [and] it is thus concerned with the nature of knowledge [and] what constitutes valid knowledge" (Ryan, 2006, p.15). Positivist research is then the dominant research design, as it uses the "scientific method and language to investigate and write about human experiences [and is] supposed to keep the research free of the values, passions, politics and ideology of the researcher" (13). In fact, positivist research design "leads people to assume that if social research is done properly [then it will] provide a clear, unambiguous road to the causes of certain social or psychological phenomena" (13).

William P. Shively (2013) moreover explains that "theory-oriented political research is almost exclusively concerned with causal relationships" (p.73) and that this usage of theory requires three aspects: an independent variable, a dependent variable and the "causal statements linking the two" (p.73). In this research design, the independent variables are identified by the three theories that are tested: power and influence within NATO (realism); decisions by international organizations in general, and the UNSC in particular (liberalism); and discursive constructions defining perceptions of autocrats (constructivism). The dependent variable is NATO's possible interventions in the two countries involved, Libya and Syria. Finally, the causality linking the independent and the dependent variable would be the theoretical answer that explains the *why* in the question we are asking.

Shively also denotes that causal interpretations of research cannot solely come from observations, but rather they become an "interpretation of reality" (p.74). Ultimately, through case-study research Shively offers three pondering questions to consider while

conducting your research and determining the casual link. The first is that it's quite possible for causation not to be involved in any capacity (Shively, 2013). This would then mean that although they are related and coincide, there is no evidence suggesting that one variable *causes* the other. Second, the relationship observed "is a result of outside factors that cause the two phenomena at hand and thus neither of these phenomena causes the other" (p.76). This will likely be the case for this research design as there are several outside factors that prove to be potential factors as to why NATO intervened in Libya and not in Syria. Lastly, the causal link could be as a result of "one of the phenomena [causing] the other" (p.77), which offers a verifiable causal statement; however, this becomes a rather subjective notion.

3.2. Case Selection

In terms of an effective positivist research design, we must choose one of the nine different case-study selections (typical, diverse, extreme, deviant, influential, crucial, pathway, most similar and most different) as offered by John Gerring (2008). For this study, due to the hypothesis-testing nature, we are employing a most-similar case-study. In accordance with Gerring, this means that hypothesis generating research implies that the "researcher looks for cases that differ on the outcome of theoretical interest but are similar on various factors that might have contributed to that outcome" (Gerring, 2008, p.26). The ideal outcome here is that the study of the two similar cases will reveal "one or at most several factors that differ across these cases" (p.26). In this case, the research will demonstrate that although there were several similarities in the two-case studies selected, the reasoning behind the two different outcomes results from many outside factors.

For the purpose of this research, we consider that autocrats in Syria and Libya and the international political context in 2011 are most similar; given these similarities, it thus becomes crucial to understand why NATO removed one and not the other. At the start of 2011 there was an overwhelming number of protests in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, starting with the overthrow of the Tunisian President, Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali (Song, 2016), followed by the overthrow of Egyptian President Muhammed Hosni Mubarak, both presidents who had previously been in power for over two decades. These

uprisings and changes in political power provided encouragement to protests nearby in Libya and Syria. In both countries, the autocrat that ruled the country became increasingly contested by important parts of his own population. This in turn pushed them to use military force against their own population, killing hundreds of civilians. Yet, NATO intervened in one country, and not in the other. Based on these similarities and this crucial difference, Table 2 explains the logic of inference, anticipating the findings that will be presented below.

Table 2.   Logic of Inference

	Is the hypothesis verified in most similar case 1?	**Is the hypothesis verified in most similar case 2?**	Conclusion
Realist hypothesis	Yes	Yes	Hypothesis is confirmed
Liberal hypothesis	No	Yes	Hypothesis is disconfirmed
Constructivist hypothesis	Yes	No	Hypothesis is disconfirmed

The findings in Table 2 follow a logic of inference that builds on the overview of the three hypotheses explained in Table 1. Ultimately, this table showcases that the realist hypothesis is the only one which can be verified. This is due to the fact that in the case of Libya or most similar case 1, NATO intervened because powerful NATO members wanted an intervention and likewise in the case of Syria or most similar case 2, NATO did not intervene because powerful NATO members did not want them to do so. As a result, the realist hypothesis is confirmed in both case studies.

Thus, following this logic both the liberal and constructivist hypothesis are disconfirmed. First, the liberal hypothesis assumes that NATO contributes to removing autocrats because international institutions and international laws enable it. While we have explained that NATO conducts *interventions* when it is enabled by international institutions and international laws, it is not enabled to remove autocrats. In fact, the UNSC resolution used in Libya, clearly stated that Gadhafi should not be removed nor overthrown and yet this is precisely what occurred. This then means that while an intervention occurred in Libya, the liberal hypothesis cannot be verified in most similar case 1. Accordingly, even

though an intervention did not occur in Syria, nor was the autocrat removed, the liberal hypothesis in most similar case 2 is verified, due to the fact that as a collective institution, both NATO and the UNSC decided that it would have a much worse impact to remove Al-Assad than it would to keep him in his place.

Finally, for the constructivist hypothesis, it presupposes that NATO contributes to removing autocrats because they are constructed as enemies, and while this may be true to the extent that both autocrats, Gadhafi and Al-Assad respectively, were constructed as enemies to the international community, it was only Gadhafi that was removed and only Libya that had an intervention within its borders by NATO. The same could not be said for Al-Assad and Syria, and therefore draws the conclusion that while the constructivist hypothesis has merit and could be true, it was not verified in most similar case 2 due to the fact that there was no intervention nor was the autocrat removed.

3.3. Sources of Data

This research analysis will be conducted through a review of newspaper articles on NATO intervention in Libya and lack of intervention in Syria published at the time of the (non) intervention, as well as an analysis of the speeches and press conferences provided by the two Secretary Generals that were directing the alliance during the time of both crises.

A review of newspaper articles as well as speeches provided by the two Secretary Generals, will give this research a distinctive perspective as these sources of data offer first-hand accounts of the events which transpired. Furthermore, newspapers often act as "artefacts of the commercial and political world" (Reah, 2002, p.3), and due to their free nature, they often provide a reconstruction of the events that occur in the international community. For example, newspapers play a central role in the political system, as they represent "purposeful actors in the political process, linking parties, voters, and the government together, and pursuing specific political goals" (Pasley, 2002, p.4). An analysis of such purposeful actors will produce distinctive information on the way in which newspapers, especially form different regions, recount the events.

During the time of the Libyan intervention and the Syrian crisis, there were two NATO Secretary Generals: Anders Fogh Rasmussen (2009-2014) and Jens Stoltenberg (2015-). We will explore the public speeches, interviews and other official statements expressed by these Secretary Generals (SG) to determine possible answers as to why NATO intervened in Libya and not Syria. This will further be done by comparing the common phrases such as the need for a UN mandate (or legal basis) and NATO's Responsibility to Protect (R2P), used by both SGs. Additionally, Rasmussen's term as Secretary General was especially interesting as both the Libyan and Syrian conflicts occurred during his time (Alkopher, 2016).

Chapter 4.

Analysis and Findings

4.1. Case Studies

4.1.1. Case Study 1. NATO intervention in Libya

This section will focus primarily on the uprising in Libya and the factors that led to the protests by the citizens of Libya and how that transitioned into a military intervention by NATO. In many ways the military operation conducted by NATO, also known as Operation Unified Protector (OUP) set the precedent for future relations between NATO and the Middle East.

Shortly after the revolt of the Tunisian people and the regime change of Ben Ali, Colonel Muammar Gadhafi conveyed his surprise and ultimate regret, for Ben Ali because he thought that Ben Ali was the best President for the Tunisians (Dunne & Gifkins, 2011). Aside from the Libyan opposition, who were strongly averse to Gadhafi and wanted to remove him from power, Libyans largely attributed their sense of "national identity to Gadhafi" (Van Genugten, 2011, p.63). In part, this was largely due to the fact that Gadhafi had given the Libyan people a purpose, a sense of belonging and a "strong feeling of citizenship" (p.63). In addition to this, Gadhafi's belief was that this feeling of citizenship would be the foundation of the Libyan people's survival and through his ambitious efforts he was considered progressive since Libya had not yet "seen a central authority prior to colonial rule" (p.63).

However, the drawback from this was the fact that due to Gadhafi's repressive tactics which revolved around him there was a level of uncertainty, especially when it came to the fact that after his decades of rule, the system could collapse. It was not until "[Gadhafi's] brutal repression and lethal use of force on protesters" (Erdağ, 2017, p.29) began to escalate that both the UN and the European Union (EU) placed an embargo late in February of 2011. This in turn led to the Libyan revolution on March 17, 2011 (Gaub, 2013), when the rebel forces united to oust Gadhafi's "powerful mechanism for control

and manipulation, punishment and reward" (Genugten, 2011, 63), because the death toll had reached a pinnacle. Moreover, these protests did not remain in one region but rather spread throughout the country and brought the opposition together under the National Transitional Council (NTC) which later "declared itself the representative of the Libyan people" (p.29). The NTC was further recognized as an official governing body by other countries, such as China and Russia in September of 2011, and they remained as such "until [their] dissolution on August 8, 2012" (p.29).

Following the lead of the League of Arab States', the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), was prompted to make a decision. On March 17, 2011 the same day as the start of the revolution, the UNSC had "declared a no-fly zone over Libya and authorized 'all necessary measures' to protect civilians" (Saleh, 2020), authorizing their second resolution in this region, resolution 1973. Although this course of action is rare and only put in place twice prior, in Bosnia in 1992 and Iraq in 1991 (Dunne & Gifkins, 2011) it was essential at the time. Just a few days later, on March 22, 2011 (Dunne & Gifkins, 2011), NATO agreed to take-over the mission and "enforce the arms embargo against Libya [and further] announced it would take over all military aspects of [the] UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 1973" (p.vii). This is when Operation Unified Protector had effectively been put into motion and it was not until Gadhafi's death in October of 2011 that Libya turned a new page in its history.

The UN mandate agreed that the crisis in Libya constituted "a threat to international peace and security" (Alkopher, 2016: 61), thus forcing the UN and subsequently NATO to act. Additionally, in light of this the UN condemned the Libyan government for their refusal to comply with both the previous UN resolution 1970 and the insistence of the Arab community surrounding them to ensure civilian protection. Following this, Rasmussen prompts the public that NATO did not only intervene for the purposes of ensuring civilian protection but ultimately because of the security challenges that the crisis represents. As well, Rasmussen reminds the population of the "place of human security in NATO's security vision (…) 'the new Strategic Concept that we adopted late last year (…) identifies crisis management as one of NATO's core tasks (…) floods, food shortages and riots'" (p.61). This again alludes to the fact that the conflict was not solely a humanitarian crisis.

Rasmussen additionally delivered several speeches and press conferences in which he reiterated the necessary conditions that need to be met in order for NATO to intervene. For example, in a speech he gave in the Netherlands he spoke on the fact that the unfolding crisis in Libya is of the utmost importance to NATO and that the alliance would proceed to act remarkably quickly. This was done however on the merit of three principles according to SG Rasmussen. These included the fact that the Libyan crisis provided a "demonstratable need for NATO's help; a clear legal mandate, and a solid support from the region" (Rasmussen, 2011) and these three principles were continuously repeated by Rasmussen during his time as SG. Rasmussen also highlighted one additional factor, that democracy is what would win in the end, and if it is the will of the people in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region then it would be an element the alliance could not ignore (Alkopher, 2016).

The overall significance of this mission was threefold, first, it was the first intervention into the Arab world which utilized the Responsibility to Protect doctrine and applied it to "support Libya's civilian population against a murderous regime" (Gaub, 2013, p.ii). Second, the NATO mandate set out was considered achieved, but several arguments speculated whether this achievement of the mandate was the original intention or if it occurred only by accident. Finally, although the mission was considered an overall success it was not without its critiques. The most remarkable aspect of the response to the protests and overall crisis in Libya was the decisive international responses provided by the United Nations' Security Council (UNSC). Although it was believed by some that the democratic transition occurring in Libya would not be easy, and instead it was "likely to be protracted and fragile" (p.62), the UNSC made it clear that there was going to be a Responsibility to Protect (R2P) mandate set forth.

Incumbent Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg expressed his support for the UN in a public statement on May 13, 2019 for their continuous work in Libya, "to broker a truce and to find a political solution to the crisis" (Stoltenberg, 2019). However, in a similar manner to Rasmussen, Stoltenberg made it exceptionally clear that while NATO is prepared to "help Libya build effective security institutions (…) and effective security services under the civilian control of the government" (Stoltenberg, 2019) this will only be

conducted at the *request* of the Libyan authorities, no sooner, and only if the security conditions in the region permit such assistance. Moreover, through discussion with the Libyan Representative, Ghassan Salamé (Stoltenberg, 2019) there was a verbal agreement made which outlined that although the military intervention in Libya in 2011 had its merits and overall large successes, it was clear that the same military solutions could not be applied again to the current crisis in Libya.

4.1.2. Case Study 2. NATO lack of intervention in Syria

Syria's uprising in comparison, commenced around the same time as the Libyan revolution, as part of the Arab Spring uprisings, wherein the Syrian citizens wanted to reform their country under the tyrannous rule of Bashar al-Assad (Bhardwaj, 2012). Under the Al-Assad regime, Syrians had suffered human rights abuses, "high unemployment rates, declining standards of living and nearly 50 years of emergency rule" (Nepstad, 2013, p.344). Approximately a year after the revolution transitioned into a full-fledged uprising, the United Nations claimed that the death toll in Syria had reached a count of approximately one hundred civilians a day (Buckley, 2012). Additionally, in March of 2012 the death toll as reported by the UN had mounted to over eight thousand (Buckley, 2012). However, this did not deter Al-Assad in any way. Instead, Al-Assad continued his refusal of stepping down and surrendering his power, as well his government refuted the notion that there were any crimes against humanity committed. Instead, Al-Assad referred to the Arab Spring as a "foreign conspiracy" (Bhardwaj, 2012, p.85) rather than an uprising conducted by his own people. In doing so, he further continued with his government's lack of accountability and neglectful commitment to a non-violent state. According to Navi Pillay, one of the human-rights representatives in the UN, it was because of the neglect of the international community that the Syrian government felt encouraged to continue to subject their citizens to an overwhelming amount of violence (Buckley, 2012).

Within the UNSC there have been several disagreements on whether they should have authorized an intervention into Syria, and in fact there was three separate "Western-supported draft resolutions" (Garwood-Gowers, 2013, p.610) proposed to the council all maintaining non-forcible measures in order to aid the Syrians against the Al-Assad regime,

but each one was vetoed by both Russia and China. The debates among the rest of the council however, revolved around two main issues: "first, how to interpret [the] events on the ground, and second, how to respond to the violence" (p.610). Where the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) states argued that the violence occurring within Syria had a legitimate basis within the context of the Al-Assad government, the West categorized the conflict as a "brutal repression of pro-democracy protesters" (p.610). Due to these irreconcilable perspectives on the conflict occurring on the ground, an appropriate response for how to act was not agreed upon, and thus the UNSC was unable to pass a resolution even a weak one that wanted to "merely [condemn] the ongoing violence and [warning] of possible sanctions against Syria if civilian casualties continued" (p.611). Finally, the inability for consensus within the UNSC on this matter, can be understood for a number of different perspectives. For example, the aftermath of the Libyan intervention caused a rift between the Western and non-Western members of the council and further showcased the potential abuse of power that came following the agreement on the Libyan operation.

This of course is not the sole reason for the lack of response by the UNSC, but rather it conveys that there was a lesson that certain UNSC members learned from the intervention in Libya that they did not want to repeat in Syria. This in turn suggests that while Libya could have been the model country and "the beginning of a new era of international cooperation" (p.613), it was instead an uncharacteristic departure from the norm.

Comparatively, the hesitation for NATO's intervention in Syria followed many of the same reasons as the UNSC. Primarily, this included how some NATO members would become "particular targets of Russian and Chinese criticisms" (Morris, 2013, p.1275) had they allowed for involvement in Syria. For example, given that Turkey and Syria were already involved in a Civil War, and the Russia-Syria ties were getting increasingly stronger, this would not bode well for Turkey-Russia relations (Morris 2013). Despite this however, France, Germany and the UK still tried to persuade their allies to "secure passage of a non-coercive resolution" (p.1275) and when that was subsequently denied, France "accused Russia of merely wanting to win time for the Syrian regime to crush the

opposition" (p.1275). Ultimately, the common denominator between these two institutions and their hesitations regarding intervention in Syria can be attributed to anxiety toward Russian actions. Samuel Charap (2013) explains that Russia does not believe the UNSC or any international organization for that matter, "should be in the business of either implicitly or explicitly endorsing the removal of a sitting government" (p.35). Nor should these organizations do anything to "weaken the role of secular strongmen in the Middle East" (Stent, 2016, p.106). In fact, Russian President Vladimir Putin has expressed his opposition to NATO's intervention in Libya as he blames the disorder in the Arab region on the West (Stent, 2016).

Moreover, Rasmussen made evidently clear that NATO's "international responsibility [is not] unconditional" (Alkopher, 2016, p.62) and this was further demonstrated by the alliance's lack of response in Syria. Ultimately Rasmussen made it clear that "NATO has no intention whatsoever to intervene in Syria (…) [rather he] urges the Syrian leadership to accommodate the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people, introduce freedom and democracy" (p.62), as he believed this was the only feasible way forward.

This notion of non-intervention in Syria was also repeated by the current Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg. Regarding the Syrian crisis however, Stoltenberg had a few differing opinions when compared to those of Rasmussen. Where Rasmussen expressed that there was no aspiration for NATO to intervene in Syria under any circumstance, Stoltenberg explains that while intervention may not be the answer, there is a possibility for a move "towards a political solution [but] the first requirement is to stop the fighting" (Banks, 2020). Additionally, where the alliance was unanimous in their support for intervention in Libya, the same could not be said for the crisis in Syria. For example, when Turkey used their military to invade Syria and attack the Kurds, it was the French government who warned the alliance of the risk of "falling into irrelevance on foreign policy unless it finds a stronger and more coherent way to respond to what they see as unpredictable allies" (Banks, 2020). Ultimately, the disagreements present within NATO itself does not bode well to meet the three criteria Rasmussen set out for intervention to

occur again in the Middle East region: demonstrable need, legal basis and the responsibility to protect doctrine.

Again, due to the fact that NATO did not intervene in Yemen, Bahrain and Syria the same way it did in Libya, many "accused the West of a double standard, and asserted that the intervention supposedly intended to protect dissidents was actually intended to protect oil interests" (p.87). While the assumption could hold merit, there were several possibilities for the West's inaction.

4.2. Test of Hypotheses

4.2.1. Test of Hypothesis 1

As identified above, the realist hypothesis presupposes that NATO contributes to the removal of autocrats because it is in the interest of powerful NATO members to do so. This means that according to realists, NATO contributed to the removal of Gadhafi from power because powerful NATO members wanted to do so and did not contribute to the removal of Al-Assad because powerful NATO members did not want to do so. In order to test this realist hypothesis, we must answer two questions. First, did powerful NATO members want to remove Gadhafi; and second, did powerful NATO members not want to remove Al-Assad? Finally, given that this hypothesis is the most controversial and the only one confirmed, we will additionally dig deeper into NATO's objectives for their intervention in Libya.

According to Sarah Brockmeier et al., (2016), the United States, France, Germany and the United Kingdom, four specific powerful NATO members did in fact want to remove Gadhafi from power. For example, in June of 2011 France decided to "airlift weapons to Libyan rebels" (Charbonneau, 2011) in the hope that the armed rebels would use them to overthrow Gadhafi. And in fact, this was the "first time that a NATO country bombing Libya has openly acknowledged [this]" (Charbonneau, 2011). Moreover, the UK claimed that although the UN resolution would not allow for Gadhafi to become a target, former British Prime Minister David Cameron said that the view of the UK is clear "there is no decent future for Libya with Colonel [Gadhafi] remaining in power" (BBC News,

2011). Not only this, but other sources within Cameron's government told the BBC that "under the UN resolution, there was the power to target him if he was a threat to the civilian population" (BBC News, 2011), which is ultimately proven to be the case later on.

Similarly, while they remained unnamed this "demand [to overthrow Gadhafi] was supported by a number of countries" (Brockmeier, 2016, p.121). This was largely due to the fact that "by using violence against his citizens, [Gadhafi] had lost legitimacy to rule the country" (p.121). And although supporting countries such as Germany "did not support the use of force in Libya" (p.121), they did agree that Gadhafi's power should be relinquished immediately. However, it must also be reiterated that while removal of Gadhafi from power was of utmost importance, regime change was widely opposed by alliance members, especially as regime change was viewed as a political goal rather than a "humanitarian argument [for] protecting civilians" (p.121). This explains why, in the two UNSC mandates pertaining to the Libyan intervention as well as in NATO's own stated mandate, neither the UN nor the Alliance call for regime change or the removal of Gadhafi. As it will be explained below, "rather than pursuing a cease-fire, NATO and its allies rejected [a] peaceful path and instead sought to overthrow [Gadhafi]" (Kuperman, 2013, p.114).

Aforementioned, we have interpreted that the UN mandate (UNSCR 1973) did not call for regime change or for the removal of Gadhafi. The resolution did "authorize Member States (…), acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements (…) to take all necessary measures (…) to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya" (UN Security Council Resolution 1973, 2011). Based on this paragraph, some may consider that the removal of Gadhafi was authorized by the UNSC, given that the expression 'all necessary measures' is traditionally used to authorize the use of force by the UNSC. On the contrary, the resolution here is interpreted as not authorizing Gadhafi's removal for two interrelated reasons.

First, the UNSC Resolution 1970, which UNSC Resolution 1973 builds upon, condemns the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya government for their "crimes against humanity, [and their] systemic violation of human rights, including the repression of peaceful

demonstrators" (UN Security Council Resolution 1970, 2011). However, resolution 1970 still reaffirms its continuous commitment to "the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya" (UN Security Council Resolution 1970, 2011). This implies that although the Security Council criticizes the Libyan government for its actions, it does not deny Libyan sovereignty and its right to govern itself as an independent nation. This also implies that the UNSC's intention was not changing the Libyan regime nor removing Gadhafi.

Second, in resolutions 1970 and 1973, the Security Council puts a lot of emphasis on the protection of civilians, and humanitarian assistance; it does not mention regime change. It first expresses its "determination to ensure the protection of civilians and civilian populated areas and the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance and the safety of humanitarian personnel" (UN Security Council Resolution 1973, 2011); and later in the resolution gave an indication about what this implies. For the action of external forces, the UNSC considers "that the establishment of a ban on all flights in the airspace of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya constitutes an important element for the protection of civilians as well as the safety of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and a decisive step for the cessation of hostilities in Libya" (UN Security Council Resolution 1973, 2011); for the action of the Libyan government, the UNSC "demands that the Libyan authorities comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law and take all measures to protect civilians and meet their basic needs, and to ensure the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian assistance" (UN Security Council Resolution 1973, 2011). Nowhere in this resolution does the UNSC suggest that a change of regime by external forces is necessary to protect civilians in Libya; on the contrary, it asks that the Libyan government take appropriate measures to protect civilians, suggesting that this government should stay in place.

As for the removal of Al-Assad, powerful NATO members did not want to remove him from power. Likewise, President Al-Assad dismissed all calls from both the US and European countries for him to step down (Wilson & Warrick, 2011). Even when British Prime Minister David Cameron, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel "in a joint statement (…) called for Assad to step aside saying he should

'face the reality of the complete rejection of his regime by the Syrian people'" (Ukman & Sly, 2011) he referred to them as 'meaningless.' Al-Assad also "declared that Syria's ailing economy could withstand escalating international sanctions" (Shadid & Bakri, 2011) and instead of succumbing to such pressures he reassured the Syrian people that they would come out of the crisis and that he was not worried.

While former US President Barack Obama and former British Prime Minister David Cameron decided in 2011 "that [Al-Assad] had to go" (Alam, 2019, p.2), there were several reasons for Al-Assad's removal not occurring. First, as referenced previously, Al-Assad was not removed due to the fact that there was Russian involvement within Syria which NATO members did not want to confront. For example, in Syria in 2015, "Moscow decided to get involved militarily to help Bashar Al-Assad win back the territory he had lost" (p.3). This was further coupled with the fact that NATO members were distracted with the terrorist attacks that occurred in Brussels from the fighters that had been directly linked to Syria (Alam 2019).

Second, among the powerful members of the alliance, there was a risk that removal of an autocrat from the Middle East could very well "result in increased terrorism and Islamist groups" (p.4), especially as this was part of a "self-fulfilling prophecy as the Syria war raged" (p.4). In addition to this, former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak warned the US that removal of any 'strongmen' could result in Islamist group leaders blowing "themselves up in major European cities" (p.4), and due to this already occurring in Brussels, the alliance did not want to take the risk.

Finally, unlike in Libya where Gadhafi had little to no support in the international community, Al-Assad had a large number of supporters which caused American officials to argue amongst themselves on whether his removal would cause more harm than good. For example, the US Senate Armed Services Committee and Henry Kissinger called "for a proper understanding of the desire to bring democracy to Syria through a military intervention [given] that Assad had more support than any other groups fighting him" (p.5).

All of this essentially means that while powerful NATO members wanted to remove Gadhafi, the same cannot be said for Al-Assad. This confirms the validity of the

realist hypothesis, since Gadhafi was removed, and Al-Assad was not removed, from power.

As we have mentioned previously throughout this paper, while both the UN and NATO mandates did not include regime change nor autocrat removal in Libya, there is still extensive evidence that indicates that "NATO's primary objective, starting early in the intervention, was to help the rebels overthrow [Gadhafi], even if this escalated and extended the civil war and thereby magnified the threat to Libya's civilians" (Kuperman, 2013, p.115). According to Alan Kuperman (2013), there are several elements that help explain NATO's actions especially as they pertain to NATO's contribution in removing Gadhafi from power and NATO's lack of protection of Libyan civilians. However, we will focus on three of them in particular: NATO attacking retreating forces and civilians alike who were not considered threats but rather supporters of the regime; NATO aiding the rebel forces through authorization of arms transfers; and NATO's unwillingness to "strike a peace deal during the bombing of Libya" (Chigozie et. al., 2013, p.5).

First, approximately two weeks into NATO's intervention in Libya in March of 2011 (Gaub, 2013), "NATO began attacking Libyan forces that were retreating and therefore not a threat to civilians who were far away" (Kuperman, 2013, p.113). According to reports offered by Kareem Fahim and David D. Kirkpatrick (New York Times), these Libyan forces were retreating from Ajdabiya, northeastern Libya (Fahim & Kirkpatrick, 2011), for fear of being bombed by NATO ally warplanes. Not only this, but while these airstrikes were occurring in Gadhafi's hometown of Sirte, located between Tripoli and Benghazi (Sly & Wilson, 2011), forces were continuously bombed although they were believed to have presented no threat to any civilians, as they were in fact supporters of the regime (Kuperman, 2013). Through the UN's Responsibility to Protect mandate, protection of the Libyan civilians should have been at the forefront (Thakur, 2013), however this was ignored in favor of aiding the rebel forces keen on overthrowing Gadhafi (Kuperman, 2013).

Second, in order for NATO to contribute to the removal of Gadhafi, they aided the rebel forces by authorizing arms transfers, this in turn "significantly extended the war and

magnified the harm to civilians" (Kuperman, 2013, p.114). For example, mid-April and well into May of 2011, the French were air-dropping weapons and shipping "antitank missiles to rebels" (p.114). Further, as an act of legitimizing the rebels, on March 10th of 2011 "France recognized the National Transitional Council as the legitimate government of Libya… [a council consisting of] civilians and former members of the [Gadhafi] regime" (Mwagwabi, 2011, p.3). Meanwhile, the UK announced in the beginning of March that they would "send experts able to give military advice into east Libya [in hopes of bolstering] the anti-Gaddafi uprising" (Wintour & Norton-Taylor, 2011). Additionally, the US under the Obama administration was "secretly [giving] its blessing to such arms transfers (…) [as well as] approving covert aid to the rebels" (Kuperman, 2013, p.114).

Finally, while NATO could have used their arms deals as leverage for the rebel forces to engage in a cease-fire and negotiate with the regime as the regime had been offering to the rebels, protection of civilians could have been ensured (Kuperman, 2013). Instead, there is no evidence to suggest this was the case. Rather, through NATO members offering significant signals of support toward the rebels, by providing aid, missiles and military advice, the rebel forces were legitimized without having to engage in any kind of cease-fire conversations with Gadhafi's regime (Kuperman, 2013).

The third element that helps explain NATO's contribution to the removal of Gadhafi is NATO's unwillingness to strike a peace deal. On the 26th of May, the Libyan government "offered not merely a cease-fire, but negotiations toward a constitutional government and compensation to victims" (Kuperman, 2013, p.115) to which the rebel forces vehemently denied as they had been emboldened by the aid and military power, they received from powerful NATO members. By mid-June, the bombing attacks on Benghazi showed no signs of stopping. Instead, they had begun to unfold across "the major fronts: near Brega in the east, along the road from Misrata to Tripoli" (Chigozie et. al., 2013, p. 5). Moreover, as another attempt to end this civil war, Gadhafi's son, Saif al-Islam spoke on behalf of his father and "declared that [Gadhafi] would be amenable to holding open elections and cede power if he lost" (p.5). This however was met with resistance by the US State Department as they viewed this as a ploy designed to give Gadhafi's regime a reason to continue their offensive tactics (Chigozie et. al., 2013).

4.2.2. Test of Hypothesis 2

In the case of the liberal school of thought, the liberal hypothesis necessitates that NATO contributes to removing autocrats because international laws and institutions enable it. This means that according to liberals, NATO contributed to removing Gadhafi from power because international laws and institutions enabled it and did not contribute to removing Al-Assad because international laws and institutions did not enable it. With the purpose of assessing this hypothesis we must answer two questions. First, whether international laws and institutions enabled Gadhafi's removal; and second, whether international laws and institutions enabled Al-Assad's removal.

We have already determined that the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1973, which authorized "member states to take forceful measures to protect Libyan civilians" (Ulfstein & Christiansen, 2013, p.159) and that NATO was further authorized to take over the mission under this mandate. However, within the mandate, there was no circumstance that included Gadhafi to be removed or overthrown. Furthermore, state leaders from three NATO countries (the US, the UK and France) all acknowledged that their "duty and [their] mandate under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973 are to protect civilians and [they were] doing that. It is not to remove Gadhafi by force" (p.165). While this was the primary goal, and it was a necessary caveat in order to "secure passage of the resolution – gaining abstentions from Moscow [and] Beijing… [it was] also helpful to Washington, as it allows the United States to be 'for' the resolution, yet vague about the level and duration of any US military engagement" (Volker, 2011).

Nonetheless, overthrowing the Gadhafi regime was an "illegal use of force [and that] overstepping the mandate may have [had] a negative effect on the credibility of the responsibility to protect in future gross human rights violations" (p.159). Moreover, according to the International Criminal Court (ICC), NATO's excessive use of force was to be "examined impartially and independently by the ICC's Office of Prosecution" (p.161). Although the international community expressed a sort of relief – especially the United States, as President Obama "backed NATO action [and] called for him to go" (Mardell, 2011) – by Gadhafi's regime toppling, this was not the intent. Thus, for the liberal

hypothesis, international laws and institutions did not enable Gadhafi's removal, which further disproves this hypothesis.

Furthermore, where the UNSC approved a mandate to protect the Libyan civilians and further condemn the Libyan government for its "brutalities against its own people" (p.160), the same mandate did not occur in Syria. Not only did the UNSC hesitate to repeat the actions in Libya in Syria, but NATO members additionally attempted to at the very least agree on condemning the Syrian government for their actions, however both institutions were met with antagonism. Instead, there was a general understanding that removal of an autocrat such as Al-Assad, would have had a worse impact than just allowing him to continue.

All this precludes the liberal hypothesis from being true. International laws and institutions did not enable the removal of Al-Assad, and he was not removed, confirming the validity of the liberal hypothesis in this case. If, however this hypothesis was true, the removal of Gadhafi would have been enabled by international institutions such as the UNSC and international laws such as the ICC. This was not the case; the hypothesis is thus disconfirmed.

4.2.3. Test of Hypothesis 3

Ultimately, the constructivist hypothesis assumes that NATO contributes to removing autocrats because they are socially and discursively constructed as enemies. This means that according to constructivists, NATO contributes to removing Gadhafi from power because he was constructed as an enemy and did not contribute to removing Al-Assad because he was not constructed as an enemy. In pursuance of testing this final constructivist hypothesis, we must ascertain between two notions. First, did NATO construct Gadhafi as an enemy; and second, did NATO construct Al-Assad as an enemy?

Due to Gadhafi's continuous use of violence and human rights violations against his own people in order to secure power, his removal was constructed as socially acceptable. This was shown when former Secretary General for NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen expressed that following Gadhafi's death "freedom is the biggest force in the

world" (Rasmussen, 2011) and that it would be up to the new Libyan government on whether they wanted to investigate Gadhafi's death. This gave way for Gadhafi to be socially and discursively constructed as an enemy of NATO. Not only was this an end to the continuous violence demanded, but with the establishment of the no-fly zone, and the destroying of the Libyan air force as a result (Boller, 2017), Gadhafi was deposed as a tyrannous leader. In this way Gadhafi was constructed as an enemy to the international community, primarily to his own people through human rights violations, and secondly to the Arab world as an antagonistic leader with no regard for "diplomatic convention and [an] inflexible insistence on the absolute righteousness of his own policies and philosophies" (Campbell, 2021, p.974).

Similarly, NATO constructed Al-Assad in the same manner, as an overall enemy to the alliance and the international community as a whole. For instance, Western powers began to characterize the Al-Assad regime as a "brutal repression of pro-democracy protestors" (Garwood-Gowers, 2013, p.610). Al-Assad, much like Gadhafi, repressed the democracy of his citizens, and condoned the civilian causalities that persisted within Syrian borders (Garwood-Gowers, 2013). Further, due to Al-Assad's repressive behaviour, the Arab League additionally called for Al-Assad to step aside and allow for a regime change (Garwood-Gowers, 2013). Moreover, the UNSC attempted to "respond to the continuing violence… [with a] Western-supported draft resolution endorsing the Arab League's plan for President Assad to step aside in a 'Syrian-led political transition to a democratic, plural political system'" (p.611), but this proved to be futile as it was vetoed by both Russia and China.

Finally, to cement the notion that Al-Assad was socially and discursively constructed as an enemy, the Obama administration in 2011 "issued an executive order immediately freezing all assets of the Syrian government" (Ukman & Sly, 2011). The US government also repeatedly condemned the Syrian government claiming that Al-Assad had lost all legitimacy and that if Al-Assad kept going as he was then important international players such as Turkey or King Abdullah (of Jordan) would take notice, claiming that at that point "there is no way the Assad regime can ignore it" (Ukman & Sly, 2011).

This is where the similarities come to an end. Where NATO's construction of Gadhafi as an enemy enables its intervention, an intervention in Syria did not occur, despite both autocrats being constructed as enemies in similar manners. Ultimately, this means that the constructivist hypothesis is inaccurate, because NATO followed through on their construction of Gadhafi as an enemy and intervened to protect the Libyan citizens but were unable to follow through in Syria after the alliance had constructed the Syrian autocrat as an enemy.

4.2.4. Comparison of the three hypotheses

Table 3.   Overview of Findings

Question	Libya (intervention)	Syria (non-intervention)	Conclusion
Did powerful NATO members want to remove the autocrat?	Yes	No	Realist hypothesis is confirmed
Did international laws and institutions enable the removal of the autocrat?	No	No	Liberal hypothesis is disconfirmed
Did NATO construct the autocrat as an enemy?	Yes	Yes	Constructivist hypothesis is disconfirmed

The above table combines the first two tables, an overview of the three hypotheses and an explanation of the logic of inference respectively and demonstrates how an intervention in Libya and lack of intervention in Syria in combination with the removal of the Libyan autocrat, showcases the confirmation of the realist hypothesis. The findings of this research are three-fold: first, NATO intervened in Libya because powerful NATO members wanted to remove the Libyan autocrat and in the same respect, NATO did not intervene in Syria because powerful NATO members did not want to remove the Syrian autocrat. Second, international laws and institutions did not enable the removal of the autocrat in Libya: the removal of Gadhafi thus disconfirms the liberal hypothesis.

Lastly, NATO did not intervene in Syria despite of the fact that it constructed Al-Assad as an enemy, and this disconfirms the constructivist hypothesis. Based on these three

conclusions, only the realist hypothesis is confirmed, and both the liberal and constructivist hypotheses are disconfirmed. The realist hypothesis was thus proven and showcased in the way that NATO acted in both cases, through intervention in Libya and non-intervention in Syria, this was not displayed in the liberal and constructivist hypotheses.

For the liberal hypothesis to have been confirmed, international laws and institutions had to enable the removal of Gadhafi. For example, when the UNSC approved a resolution in Libya for the responsibility to protect mandate, they also would have had to approve an amendment for the autocrat to be removed and for the regime to have changed.

In addition, for the constructivist hypothesis to have been confirmed, NATO would have had to have intervened in Syria, based on the notion that Al-Assad was constructed as an enemy. This would have been the case if NATO constructed Al-Assad as an enemy and followed-up on this construction by intervening and protecting Syrian citizens through the removal of Al-Assad.

Chapter 5.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to provide a new perspective on why NATO, one of the longest lasting and most successful alliances in history, would contribute to the removal of an autocrat from power. This research attempted to answer this question using the three main theories in international relations, Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism. In order to determine why in the wake of the Arab Spring occurring in 2011, NATO would remove the autocrat from Libya, and not the autocrat from Syria, this research tested three hypotheses: the realist hypothesis which assumes that NATO contributes to removing autocrats because it is in the interest of powerful NATO members to do so; the liberal hypothesis which supposes that NATO contributes to removing autocrats because international institutions and international laws enable it; and finally the constructivist hypothesis which presumes that NATO contributes to removing autocrats because they are socially and discursively constructed as enemies.

By testing these three hypotheses, this research therefore concluded that the realist hypothesis is the only verified hypothesis due to the fact that NATO contributes to the removal of autocrats when it is in the interest of powerful NATO members to do so; and thus, NATO removed Gadhafi from Libya, and not Al-Assad from Syria.

Additionally, while each international relations theory defines interventions and the international community in a different manner, they could be considered theories which complement each other and which build upon one another.

When applied to this particular research, the complimentary facets of these theories can be applied in terms of why NATO intervened in one Arab country and not the other. For instance, putting aside the fact that the realist hypothesis is the only valid one, it is arguable whether the intervention in Libya would have been enabled if not for Gadhafi being constructed as an enemy as the constructivist hypothesis suggests. In this case, constructivist variables would have been necessary, but not sufficient as displayed by the

research, given that Al-Assad was also constructed as an enemy but there was no intervention in Syria. This implies that constructivism and realism could work together. Similarly, the UNSC resolutions on Libya contributed to NATO's intervention; this intervention in turn resulted in Gadhafi's removal. We can think that without UNSC resolutions on Libya, NATO would not have intervened, this in turn may let us think that liberal variables are necessary but not sufficient, and that realism and liberalism may be complimentary in important ways.

However, for the purposes of this particular research, we are focussing on their incompatibilities as well as making an active choice to oppose the theories, and not consider them compatible or complimentary; as most IR literature follows this logic.

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