"No future for Libya with Gaddafi": Classical realism, status and revenge in the UK intervention in Libya

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Abstract and Keywords

Abstract: Why did Britain intervene in Libya in 2011? Several explanations suggest themselves: security, R2P and status. The article shows that status was a significant motivating factor, and this demonstrates a dynamic that helps to refine a classical realist theory of intervention. The article calls for status to be seen intrinsically and instrumentally, and for more attention to be paid to the related motive of revenge. The findings suggest (though do not prove from a causal standpoint) that status may be a stronger motive than security for state decision-makers. The article's central empirical argument is that regime change in Libya was not the last stage of Britain's foreign policy of intervention. Rather, intervention was the last stage in Britain's status and revenge-driven foreign policy of regime change. Britain saw the Libya crisis as a chance to preserve its great power status and revenge Muammar Gaddafi for past wrongs.

Acknowledgments

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Section 1: Introduction

Why did the United Kingdom's Prime Minister, David Cameron, decide to intervene in Libya in 2011? Several explanations suggest themselves: security, Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and status.[1] This article will show that status was a significant motivating factor, and this demonstrates a dynamic that helps to refine a classical realist theory of intervention. The article calls for status to be seen both intrinsically and instrumentally, and for more attention to be paid to the related motive of revenge. While validating the overall framework adopted by Catherine Gegout in her work on European decision-maker motives for intervention, the findings suggest (but do not causally prove) that status may be a stronger motive than security for leaders like Cameron. This discussion leads to wider engagement with the work of Hans Morgenthau and the above suggestions for how classical realism can be improved to better understand and predict intervention.

This article argues that the Cameron government saw the Arab Spring and specifically the Libya crisis as an opportunity to display the Great Power status of the United Kingdom (also known as Britain) and punish dictator Muammar Gaddafi for inflicting humiliating and painful terrorist violence. Political leaders decided Britain should capitalize on the opportunity by supporting Libyans demonstrating and fighting for political change until Gaddafi was pushed from power. When he refused to resign, Britain's status-driven "diplomacy of anger" (Hall, 2015, p. 4) escalated steeply and rapidly to military intervention. The Libya crisis is selected as the case because it illustrates how great powers can abuse their power using tools such as the R2P to legitimize military action that might otherwise be condemned as violent aggrandizement.

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[1] Hans Morgenthau, Catherine Gegout, and other scholars prefer the term 'prestige.' However, because of its link to rank in a social hierarchy, 'status' is more commonly used in the literature. 'Status' is used throughout this article for the sake of consistency (Welch Larson, Paul, and Wohlforth, 2014, p.16).

There are four main sections to this article. The rest of the introduction summarizes the article's method (tools used, process-tracing being most important) and methodology (justification for using them), and critically reviews relevant R2P literature because it is the dominant explanation of the case. The second section discusses Gegout's work on leader motives as a conduit for rediscovering classical realism's value to intervention theory. A clear systematized definition is given of the status motive, capturing attributes most relevant to the causal process (or "mechanism"), to ensure it can be recognized in the case (Beach and Pedersen, 2016, pp. 46, 48; Beach, 2020). The third section traces the flow of status causal forces, deploying empirical tests in a detailed case study. It discusses Britain's great power status concerns that helped drive its decision to intervene (part 1 of the process) and foreign policy of pressure, status and revenge (part 2). The last section sums-up the key theoretical and empirical points.

The basis of intervention theory is eclectic, drawing on realist theory, R2P, foreign policy analysis (FPA), research on emotions in world politics, as well as other sources. Realism has been one of the dominant frameworks in the International Relations (IR) discipline since the late 1940s because its state-centred focus on anarchy and maximization of security and power has traditionally defined politics in the international arena. Realists take the state as the ontological given. Classical realism is preferred over other types of realism because it emphasizes egoism, which reveals basic human wants and needs. Human motives link reason and action, Morgenthau argues, and help researchers anticipate and retrace foreign policy decisions (2006, pp. 4-5, 10-11). Since international politics is also social, classical realists like Morgenthau have a convincing point when they argue that human nature and egoism play a crucial role in state leader decision-making on foreign policy.

The article's focus on motives builds on the IR sub-field of foreign policy analysis. In contrast with most contemporary IR theory, FPA focuses on the decision-making process and human decision-makers acting singly or in groups (Smith, 1986, p. 14; Hudson, 2005, p. 2). Its main concern is not the goal that may explain a foreign policy, but the deeper question of why

decision-makers had that priority. FPA pioneers Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck and Burton Sapin argue it is 'impossible to probe the why of state behaviour without also doing something about the motivation of decision-makers' (2002, pp. 59, 70, 114; Jervis, 2017, pp. 8-9). Despite the empirical pitfalls, insight about motives can be gleaned from what people say and do. Leaders cannot 'consistently falsify [their] motives with no consequences for ensuing decisions' (Snyder, Bruck and Sapin, 2002, p. 122). Midrange FPA theories have explored core political "operational codes" and "belief systems", unearthing patterns in foreign policy causation (Jervis, 2017, p. 9; Smith, 1986, p. 27; George, 1969, pp. 197-200). Richard Ned Lebow bases his theory of foreign policy decision-making that causes war on 'the underlying reasons why leaders go to war'. To understand war causation, 'we need to start with motives and the foreign-policy goals to which they lead' (2010, p. 14).

FPA has experienced a 'cognitive revolution' pointing to the strong role of emotion in decision-making. Emotions are 'implicit and ubiquitous' in IR and world politics, but under-theorized (Hudson and Vore, 1995, p. 211; Crawford, 2000, pp. 116-118). Emotions display the boundedness of rationality and are 'necessary to rationality' (Hudson and Vore, 1995, p. 211; Mercer, 2006, p. 288). Decision-makers are not rational utility maximisers as depicted in most IR theories, nor are they 'necessarily irrational if they are not rational in the classical sense' (Crawford, 2000, p. 156). The growing literature on emotions is important to the article, for state leader motives have emotional qualities and are interpreted emotionally. To fully understand power and love, for example, Morgenthau argues that first we need to recognize that such phenomena shade into each other and are constitutive of human subjectivity and human nature (Solomon, 2012, pp. 202-204). According to Neta Crawford, a path-breaking researcher on emotions, the 'perceptions of others and the attribution of their motives will depend on actors' pre-existing emotions, and emotional relationships among actors'. Arguments incorporating status, revenge, power and similar emotion-infused phenomena can be used with, or independent of human nature, and across levels of analysis (Crawford, 2000, p. 119; Mercer, 2006, p. 288).

The status motive can have considerable impact on foreign policy decision-making. According to research, status and revenge cause war even when security and economic interests are not threatened, in contrast to what rationalist (for example, neoliberalism and neorealism) and power transition theories would expect (Lebow, 2010, pp. 10-12, 181, 185). Status is omnipresent in power politics, but much like emotions, it has been neglected by IR scholars until recently (Lebow, 2010, p. 16; Dore, 1975, p. 203). Morgenthau, says William E. Scheuerman, believed 'contemporary scholarship unfairly discounted politics of prestige in the international area, misleadingly associating them with arcane political practices destined to be washed away by a rising liberal democratic tide' (Scheuerman, 2009, p. 110). There now exists a nascent literature using status as an explanatory variable in world politics (for example, Welch Larson, Paul and Wohlforth, 2014).

This brings the article to its hypothesis, namely that status was a significant factor in the United Kingdom's decision to intervene in Libya. The article uses theory-testing process-tracing to update confidence about this causal process: is it present and did it function as expected in the Libya case? Table 1 presents the hypothesized causal process, which is based on existing status theorization used here as a heuristic device:

Table 1:

Initial cause	Part 1 of process	Part 2 of process	Outcome
Pre-Libya crisis – from 11 May 2010	Pre-Libya crisis – from mid-2010 to early 2011	Libya crisis – from 15 February 2011	Libya crisis – from 19 March 2011
David Cameron forms Coalition Government	British political elites express deep concern about and desire to maintain Britain's great power status	Cameron government displays great power status and satisfies appetite for revenge on Libya's leader	Britain and key allies militarily intervene in the Libya crisis

What is being traced is not the events, but this theorized causal process linking the initial cause to the outcome. Each part contains entities engaging in activities. The activities are what is crucial. Transmitting causal forces to the outcome (like cogged wheels, one turning the next), the activities are the producers of change. As such, they should leave observable traces (Beach and Pedersen, 2016, pp. 39, 49). The status causal process is not theorized as a sufficient cause of the outcome by itself but is regarded as a systemic factor generalizable to the population of intervention cases (Beach and Pedersen, 2016, pp. 15-16, 39). The article's goal is to test a midrange classical realist and status theory of intervention applicable across space and time (Beach and Pedersen, 2016, pp. 12, 54; and Beach, 2020).

Before turning to classical realism and the conceptualization of status, the article discusses why R2P is inadequate and incapable of explaining Britain's intervention in Libya through a review of relevant literature. The R2P literature on the Libya intervention falls into several groupings. Many scholars regard Libya as a R2P success story. Tim Dunne and Jess Gifkins argue that Resolutions 1970 (26 February) and 1973 (17 March), the latter authorizing the intervention, demonstrated the United Nations Security Council's ability to give effect to R2P (2011, pp. 515, 525). Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams argue a 'politics of protection' was behind Resolution 1973, with regional bodies claiming the gatekeeper mantle (2011, p. 826; Bellamy, 2011, p. 263). For Thomas G. Weiss, 'Libya was a new high-water mark for R2P' (2016, p. 228). Paul Tang Abomo argues in a recent book that R2P was the 'driving force behind US intervention in the Libyan civil war' (2019, p. 2).

The intervention's role in Gaddafi's overthrow has led to more critical assessments. Manuel Fröhlich says that R2P has changed the international debate, but his 'middle road' assessment notes that R2P was instrumentalized to facilitate regime change (2016, pp. 327-330; Adams, 2016, pp. 772-773, 779). Tim Dunne and Katharine Gelber argue 'the R2P norm was present explicitly and implicitly' in Security Council reasoning on Libya, but 'failed… because those taking action did not maintain consistent argumentation in relation to R2P' (2014, pp. 328, 343).

Far from a model, Alan J. Kuperman argues the intervention was launched based on misinformation about mass atrocities, it prolonged and escalated violence, and led to regime change (2013, pp. 133-136; Hobson, 2016, pp. 442, 451). These sources are not clear about R2P's role in the intervention and regime change; instead, they offer general explanations, such as there was a 'manipulated mandate' and/or 'incompatibilities' in implementation (Adams, 2016, p. 779; Fröhlich, 2016, p. 327).

The regime change aspect calls attention to uncertainties concerning R2P and using armed force. In several works, Aidan Hehir argues that Security Council and state decision-making still fluctuate based on interest calculations, despite the R2P (2019, pp. 39-40, 126-127; 2013, pp. 157-158). Robert A. Pape notes that R2P is too vague about 'degree of harm, acceptable costs and lasting security' to reliably address massive humanitarian emergencies (2012, pp. 50-52). Roland Paris argues that 'Few scholars [are asking] … "How, exactly, was the use of military force expected to prevent mass atrocities and to uphold the principles of R2P?"' (2014, pp. 569-570). Sarah Brockmeier et al. note that Libya reignited debates about R2P, such as when using armed force is appropriate, how it should be used and how much force is appropriate to protect civilians (2016, pp. 131-132).

Drawing on such findings, R2P is seen as a tool of power politics. Simon Chesterman says R2P's significance is primarily 'political – and, importantly, rhetorical' (2011, p. 281). Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Vincent Pouliot argue that R2P's political influence was limited to framing the Libya crisis and moral justification of intervention (2014, pp. 898-899; Steele and Heinze, 2014, p. 91). Susannah O'Sullivan argues that R2P scholars focus too much on normative development and obscure, 'the material interests of great power states and the history of colonial interventionism' (2015, p. 32). Mobilizing 'R2P as a justification for the Libya mission paradoxically allowed the West to claim the moral high ground,' Roland Paris argues, 'while in practice casting aside the "baggage" of this broader responsibility' (2015, pp. 147-148). Robin Dunford and Michael Neu argue that R2P 'legitimizes a moralistic militarism' and cannot 'become a genuine

moral tool in the hands of selfish states within the regimes of power that presently characterize global politics' (2019, p. 115).

Something besides R2P is needed for a viable military intervention theory. Consider the counterfactual: what if Gaddafi had resigned after the initial British/French/American airstrikes in late March 2011? If the interveners had not forced regime change and had left behind a stable state, then no one would be questioning the R2P's role because its centrality and efficacy would seem unquestionable. R2P appears to explain why Britain (and France) championed and joined the intervention; however, this is correlation and not causation. The cause of the intervention, regime change, and Libya's post-intervention chaos cannot be adequately explained by R2P. We need a superior explanation that accounts for intervenor foreign policy decision-making and not just primarily the normative domain. This is where classical realism and status theory, with Gegout as the start-point, makes its contribution.

Section 2: Classical Realist Theory of International Intervention

Brief discussion of Catherine Gegout's theory

Gegout is influenced by classical realism, particularly that of Hans Morgenthau, whose work examines statecraft and power politics. Her theory in *Why Europe Intervenes in Africa* sees foreign policy on intervention as a matter of 'high politics' (2017, pp. 40-42). She identifies a hierarchy of four leader motivations for military intervention in Africa since the late 1980s. Gegout ranks security, 'a constant for determining intervention', as the prime motive. Next, she ranks status, arguing that security and status are 'often primary motives' and 'weight' must be given to both (2017, pp. 3-5, 8). This article, while it adopts her basic framework, finds that status should be ranked first. Indeed, Gegout's theory should be viewed as a status theory. Security and status are on almost the same level in her model. The two motives vary across her Africa case studies, security primary here and status there (2017, pp. 293-296). It is not clear whether Gegout is undervaluing

status or just adopting somewhat unconsciously the traditional realist foreign policy hierarchy with security at the top.

Gegout ranks economic gain below security and status, and humanitarianism last. The motive of economic gain has not mattered to Britain's interventions, has mattered less to France's since 2003, and has mattered to the European Union just once (the Gulf of Aden, 2008-present). European intervenors just 'make sure they do not harm their economic interests' (2017, p. 5). Humanitarianism can be an important motive only if the other three motives are protected. Gegout is sceptical about humanitarian intervention 'guided by a sentiment of humanity' and the R2P given the conditions prevailing in global politics. An intervention is humanitarian/R2P-driven when they are the primary motives. Accordingly, Gegout argues, 'no European intervention in Africa between 1986 and 2016 was humanitarian'. For Britain in the Libya case, she argues, humanitarianism mattered only in conjunction with security and status, the primary motive (2017, pp. 32-33, 234).

Political and Ethical Imperatives in Tension in Classical Realism

Realists such as Gegout and Morgenthau do not adopt the liberal-progressive vision of humanity and politics favoured by R2P advocates. Morgenthau, a leading classical realist to whom the article now turns, believes politics is rooted in human nature that is knowable, fixed since ancient times, and prone to wickedness. Corruption and selfishness taint the best of intentions, even outcomes treated as successes. Morgenthau says human nature is driven by the will to power, a trait which impels people and states to amass scarce resources to guarantee survival and stimulates an unlimited and potentially unreasonable appetite for glory and power (Tellis, 2006, pp. 608-609). Rationality is not that of the rational actor model. It is an expectation placed on researchers and prescriptive assumption that while leaders do not always behave rationally, they should, given the supreme importance put on interests in power politics (Barkin, 2006, p. 588). Morgenthau said that 'the conception of the national interest is subject to all the hazards of

misinterpretation, usurpation, and misjudgement' of which state leaders are capable (Morgenthau, 2000, p. 292).

Morgenthau argues in *Politics Among Nations* that states use status as a means to foreign policy ends. Since he sees status as 'an instrumentality', he does not consider it at odds with rational statecraft (Morgenthau, 2006, pp. 83, 94-95). The theoretical primacy of the individual tends to drop out in Morgenthau in favour of a state amalgam, and he does not use human nature causally to explain behaviour of states (Tellis, 2006, pp. 608, 611, 615). This is a difficulty when using classical realism to analyse the Libya intervention, one this article seeks to address, because status in both its intrinsic and instrumental aspects galvanised British leaders. Power politics under classical realism (or as Richard K. Ashley prefers calls it, the 'balance of power scheme') is far richer than Morgenthau allows, because of the human motivation element. The scheme takes a practical cognitive structure and is learned, social, and part of the diplomatic tradition. Within the international community, power politics is a consensually recognized scheme whose parties stand 'not as economic individuals and not as history-less states-as-actors, but as statesmen who expect that their understandings can secure recognition within the overall community of statesmen' (Ashley, 2000, pp. 1606-1608).

This rightly puts the focus back on egoism, for both human nature and anarchy are needed to explain pattern and consistency in power politics, including intervention decisions. This insight is all too easily obscured by attempts to "capture" or abstract from the balance of power scheme. The scheme's meaning lies in its practical state, which is resistant (but not immune) to abstraction (Ashley, 2000, p. 1607). For his part, Morgenthau had a darker, more European view of international politics. He sought to tame optimism in the United States about human nature. More than most scholars who followed him, Morgenthau links the necessary evil of politics to human nature and the will to power (Jervis, 1994, pp. 854, 868). Afraid that the perennial laws of competition for power and status would lead in the nuclear era to humanity's annihilation, he

called for the eventual transformation of the existing conditions of world politics (Scheuerman, 2009, pp. 137-138).

Morgenthau identified a tension between political and ethical imperatives, while noting that foreign policy requires prudent subordination of morality to the national interest and the specific circumstances at hand (Morgenthau, 2000, pp. 297, 299). The question is how to respond to this tension. The method he recommended was rooted in Judeo-Christian ethical thought, particularly St. Augustine of Hippo. The tension can be further defined as follows: it is impossible to achieve moral perfection given the selfishness and corruption necessary for political success, but leaders must do the best they can, for there are partial realizations. Morgenthau believed leaders must remain mindful of this dialectical tension, this antimony, and in pursuing interests strive to cause minimal harm (Murray, 1996, pp. 89-90, 97-98). His morality has a transcendental quality, but as a practical strategy it stresses compromise, humility, self-limitation and tolerance, whereby states accept certain moral constraints on their pursuit of power and status (Murray, 1996, pp. 101, 104).

Conceptualization of Status: Intrinsic, Instrumental, Primary Motive for War

How do we know that status matters to publics and state leaders, and just what is status and the related motive of revenge? Consistent with the process-tracing method, the article will provide a definition of what the theoretical concept of status includes, so that it can be recognized when the causal process is operationalized in the case study. Research has found that leaders and states care intensely about status. Leaders frequently project their emotions and psychologies onto their political communities and feel better when these communities win victories. Individuals and states develop expectations about "deserved" status through peer group observation (Renshon, 2016, p. 525; Lebow, 2010, p. 16). Humans are good at determining their rank in social hierarchies and forming conclusions about status satisfaction. Domestic publics consume status by transference and vicarious association with their states. There is a strong belief among scholars

that status is significant to the IR discipline and to real-world outcomes for states, leaders and publics (Renshon, 2016, p. 524; Lebow, 2010, p. 16; Pu, 2019, pp. 19, 24).

Status and revenge are powerful motives. Revenge, Lebow argues, is related to status and like status causes anger, but revenge is more emotional and has different roots. Revenge is distinctly triggered by slights to standing. Occasionally status and revenge can reinforce each other, as in the Libya case (Lebow, 2010, p. 185). Status has intrinsic and instrumental aspects, the former having received less attention from theorists until recently. In the intrinsic sense, status 'describes many actors' beliefs about what many other actors also believe', argues Jonathan Renshon. It is based on common beliefs that are not simply convergent but known to be shared. Status has implications for identity, for beliefs 'rely on shared agreement among a community about where each actor stands in some hierarchy' (Renshon, 2016, p. 519). As Thomas J. Volgy et. al and Renshon note, the key communities are not global, or even international, but selective "clubs", such as Europe and the circle of great powers in Britain's case (2011, p. 7; 2016, pp. 515, 523).

Status anxiety is triggered when leaders sense a deficit or decline, such as Cameron's concern about Britain's second-class status due to intense international competition. Since status is about position, and high esteem by definition a scarce commodity, there are winners and losers in this game. To change perceptions and affirm "deserved" status, responses need to be dramatic, public, and salient (Renshon, 2016, pp. 523, 526). War initiation and even victory will not bolster status unless the war has been authorized by an appropriate international entity. Great power status is a special category. It is confirmed by leadership of collective efforts to protect core international community norms, not by selfish actions like status display (Lebow, 2010, pp. 18, 98, 183). These points shed light on why Britain used humanitarianism and R2P to denounce Gaddafi, and why it worked until the last moment to get Security Council authorization (therefore at least tacit US support) for the intervention.

Research shows the link between war initiation and status is active. States need to reveal capabilities that exceed expectations and provide new information on where they should be

positioned in a hierarchy. According to Renshon: 'The strategy works: states that initiate and win conflicts receive substantial and statistically significant boosts in their status ranks after both five and ten years' (2016, p. 515). Lebow supports these findings. His dataset covers wars from 1648-2008 with at least 1,000 deaths and one great power protagonist (94 wars with 107 motives). For 62 wars, status was the primary or secondary motive, revenge caused 11 additional wars. Security caused 19, economic gain 8 and "other" causes (reducible to fear, interest and standing at the domestic level) motivated 7 wars. 'Standing is consistently a leading motive,' Lebow argues, 'something not true of other motives' (Lebow, 2010, pp. 104-108, 113).

Section 3: Great Britain and the Libya Intervention

British Concern and Desire for Great Power Status (Part 1 of Causal Process)

Now the article turns to the first part (of two) of the status causal process. "Smoking gun" tests (where passage confirms but failure does not undermine the hypothesis), and "hoop" empirical tests (which provide more inferential value as the hoop the hypothesis jumps through narrows), will be used to update confidence on this part. Britain's intervention in Libya surprised many (Daddow and Schnapper, 2013, pp. 332, 342; Honeyman, 2012, p. 133; Goulter, 2016, p. 52; Beech, 2011, p. 360), so account evidence (which refers to the content of empirical material, for example, speeches) pointing to status concern as motivating Cameron's foreign policy prior to the intervention would pass the "smoking gun" test. Such evidence can be found. While Cameron knew that Britain's world rank was slipping, he did not intend Britain to settle for second-class status (Daddow, 2015, p. 308). In November 2010, Cameron stressed that 'We have the resources – commercial, military, and cultural – to remain a major player in the world'. He added, 'Few countries on earth have this powerful combination of assets, and even fewer have the ability to make the best use of them… So, I reject this thesis of decline' (Cameron, 2010a). British civil

service elites held a similar view: they believed Britain retained a role as a police officer of the world (Honeyman, 2012, p. 133). An image of Britain's greatness was cultivated in and outside the country. The year 2012 saw the debut of 'Britain is GREAT' – one of the most ambitious national branding and promotion exercises ever undertaken by the United Kingdom or any country, a new approach to soft power and public diplomacy (Pamment, 2015, pp. 260-261).

Account evidence shows that status was vital to the Cameron government's ideology. Its liberal-conservative ideology held that Britain's foreign policy should be measured and modest, but still perceived Britain as a great power (Daddow, 2015, pp. 304-306). British decision-makers believed that attraction and persuasion should be the primary means to external ends, leveraging soft power skills and qualities to approximate a great role (Daddow, 2015, pp. 308-309; Daddow and Schnapper, 2013, pp. 332-333). Yet despite the soft power talk, two of Cameron's highest-profile foreign policy decisions of 2010-2015 (whether to use armed force in Libya and Syria) revolved around hard military power (Daddow, 2015, p. 310). British leaders saw armed force as indispensable, even though the austerity policy (concerned about the national budget deficit, Cameron had imposed deep government-wide spending cuts, including on defence) was seeing state capabilities diminish both in relative and absolute terms. They were determined not to shrink from great power responsibilities and roles, including costly traditional displays such as war initiation (Daddow, 2015, pp. 311-312).

The "hoop" test relies on pattern and account evidence to update confidence in the presence and operation of the first part of the status causal mechanism. The hoop is small, given that the test is for repeated instances of the Cameron government perceiving its foreign policy through a status prism and choosing policy tools based on the tools' status relevance. Growing numbers of policies and tools were filtered through the status motive – the pattern evidence being looked for. The first example is the UK-France Summit Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation (2010), which provided financial and budgetary gains paramount to Britain's maintenance of global reach and power status (Ostermann, 2015, pp. 338-339, 341). It supported

the special relationship with the United States, prop to Britain's great power ambitions since 1945. It also suited the cautious attitude of liberal-conservatives regarding Europe and Britain's indifference toward European Union military actorness (Ostermann, 2015, p. 340; Daddow and Schnapper, 2013, p. 338). The intervention was an early occasion to breathe life into the accord. Second, at the Security Council, the R2P was picked-up. Britain and France imposed R2P-relevant evidence and frames to help establish their diplomatic competence and authority. They skilfully employed the R2P as a frame favouring Security Council activism, making dissent impossible (Goulter, 2016, p. 51; Adler-Nissen and Pouliot, 2014, pp. 899-900). The third example, this time deselecting a tool, involves the European Council, political authority of the European Union, which had been negotiating with Libya since 2008. The European Commission (an arm of the Council) and Libya agreed to a Migration Cooperation agenda covering human trafficking and border surveillance in October 2010 (European Commission, 2008 and 2010). Britain and France side-lined this agenda once the opportunity presented to promote status and power interests at Gaddafi's expense.

Cameron's remarks towards the end of the intervention, the fourth example or "hoop", are vivid traces of how great power status not only motivated Cameron but also framed his assessment of his foreign policy. Cameron recalled encountering 'dispiriting' obstacles when first calling for a no-fly zone over Libya on 28 February (three days after France's Nicholas Sarkozy). 'It was that too many thought Britain actually couldn't do something like that anymore… That our best days are behind us. That we're on a path of certain decline. Well I'm here to tell you that it isn't true.' This speech was given shortly before the intervention ended, on 5 October 2011. Cameron felt triumphant. In the same speech, he said Britain is small, but powerful. Spirit has made Britain what it is: 'a small country that does great things; one of the most incredible success stories in the history of the world' (Cameron, 2011a). The Libya crisis was an opportunity to affirm British grit and influence on world events. The United States was willing to let European powers lead. Gaddafi was friendless on the Security Council, his military weak. Libya was close to Britain,

very close to air bases in Italy. Libya's key cities and roads obligingly lined the coast and were edged by flat desert expanse.

Britain Displays its Great Power Status (Part 2 of Causal Process)

For Britain, the Libya crisis' significance was its connection to the Arab Spring. The government expected an active role against Gaddafi to translate into broad influence in the Middle East and North Africa region's new political context. Britain must 'seize this chance to fashion a better future for this region,' Prime Minister Cameron told the House of Commons. 'What is happening in the wider Middle East is one of those once in a generation opportunities, a moment when history turns a page. That next page is not yet written' (Cameron, 2011b). Cameron was suggesting Britain draft text about a fresh start between their two peoples. Foreign Secretary William Hague called for a 'bold and ambitious' policy response, 'commensurate with such a degree of change' (Hague, 2011a). The Arab Spring protestors aspire to the rights and freedoms Britons take for granted. Britain can be a 'magnet for positive change,' Hague noted. The region wants 'civil society and open political systems', and soft power can achieve an 'across-the-board elevation of the British national relationship' (Hague 2011a and 2011b; Cameron, 2011b).

The "hoop" test for part 2 of the status causal process involves, as mentioned, pattern evidence, in the form of three rounds of escalating pressure on Gaddafi. The goal of each was to show international leadership and influence by guiding the Libya revolution to a "successful" post-Gaddafi conclusion. The British government adopted a negative view of Gaddafi after violence erupted in Libya on 15 February 2011. Gaddafi refused to resign, but Britain dared not broach regime change. 'No', Hague said. 'A UN resolution, specifically addressing regime change, would not be successful'. Escalating pressure was necessary; for Britain's status motive in wanting his removal did not waver or change. As Hague noted one day before the intervention: 'We have said all along that Qadhafi must go'… (Hague, 2016; United Kingdom Government, 2011a). The first round of pressure (15-28 February) covers the denunciation of Gaddafi and United Nations

Security Council Resolution 1970 of 26 February. The second round (28 February to mid-March) saw Britain demand Gaddafi resign or face a no-fly zone. Looming defeat of the revolutionaries led to a third round (mid-March to end October), of tighter sanctions and military intervention authorized by Resolution 1973 of 17 March.

During the first round, the Cameron government was preoccupied with evacuating thousands of British citizens working in Libya. For a while it appeared that Gaddafi, assuming he did not receive external support from erstwhile partners (such as Britain), would soon be overthrown by Libyan revolutionaries. As revolutionary fighters seized significant territory, Britain condemned Gaddafi for attacking civilians and urged him to respect people's right of protest. On 19 February, Foreign Secretary Hague said that reports of Gaddafi's use of heavy weapons and snipers 'are clearly unacceptable and horrifying'. He called 'on the authorities to stop using force.' Speaking on the 20th to Gaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam, who called seeking support, Hague 'expressed alarm' at the targeting of civilians that deserved 'world-wide condemnation', and 'strongly encouraged the Libyan government to embark on dialogue and implement reforms' (United Kingdom Government, 2011b and 2011c). Cameron stressed on 23 February that 'our first priority today must be to get British nationals and British people out of Libya,' but the 'appalling scenes' in Libya 'cannot be allowed to stand' (United Kingdom Government, 2011d).

At end February, the Gaddafi government had consolidated its Tripoli power base, and most Britons had been evacuated. From Cameron's point-of-view, a second escalation was timely and necessary. In a major speech in the House of Commons on 28 February, Cameron denounced Gaddafi's 'murderous regime' (that is, criminal, if not evil), declaring that Libya's 'current leaders' should 'face the justice they deserve' (Cameron, 2011b). Cameron endorsed President of France Nicholas Sarkozy's call for a no-fly zone over Libya's airspace. He said that Britain must 'cut off oxygen from the regime'. Gaddafi must 'go now' (Cameron, 2011b). On the telephone on 8 March, Cameron and US President Barack Obama agreed Gaddafi must resign as soon as possible. Cameron touted the 27-state European Union's call on 10 March. Hague demanded a new Tripoli

government on 7 and 16 March (Hague, 2011b; Hague, 2011b; United Kingdom Government, 2011e; United States Government, 2011). In the *International Herald Tribune* in April, Obama, Cameron and Sarkozy, the leaders of the states contributing the most to the intervention, wrote that while the mission is civilian protection, they could not 'imagine a future for Libya with Qaddafi in power' (Obama et al., 2011). This was not anything new. It was another public expression of Britain's foreign policy goal, driven by its status motive. Cameron used the 'no future' phrase twice after a press conference in Brussels on 11 March. He used it in the House of Commons on 28 February, 18 March and 21 March (United Kingdom Government, 2011f; Cameron, 2011b, 2011c and 2001d).

The Cameron government had trouble with the third escalation: intervention. Obama and US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates believed a no-fly zone would not be effective in preventing a massacre (Becker and Shane, 2016, p. 1). Britain's Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir David Richards also believed Britain needed to expand its military involvement to be decisive – 'clout, not dribble' – but had a 'hell of a job' persuading Cameron (Richards, 2014, n.p.). The crisis, however, had become a race between Gaddafi, seeking to crush the revolution, and international actors led to this point by Britain and France, seeking to stop him. With Saif al-Islam predicting fighting would soon be over, Cameron was compelled to focus on foreign policy ends. The Security Council authorized 'all necessary means' to 'protect civilians and civilian populated areas'. Resolution 1973 permitted a scope and degree of armed force far exceeding previous no-fly zones since the Cold War, including northern Iraq, Bosnia and Kosovo, enough (with US backing) to turn the tables on Gaddafi. 'This was,' Cameron writes in his memoirs, 'what I'd wanted from the beginning' (Cameron, 2019, pp. 275, 278; United Nations, 2011, operative para. 4; Schmitt, 2011, pp. 50, 56-57).

Britain Satisfies its Appetite for Revenge (Part 2 of Causal Process)

Why did Britain pursue this foreign policy of pressure and diplomacy of anger? The article's hypothesized causal process, to repeat, is that status was a significant factor behind Cameron's decision to intervene in Libya. There has been limited discussion of revenge. It is expected that the account evidence of revenge will have less certainty because of its "dark" nature. It is possible in contemporary international politics to enjoy partial revenge and appear just if there is a restrained approach to casualties and damage and revenge is not explicitly declared. An example of a war of revenge is Israel in the 2006 Israel–Hezbollah War in Lebanon (Löwenheim and Heimann, 2008, pp. 720-721; Lebow, 2010, p. 188). Revenge is neither necessary nor sufficient for the status causal process to operate. Revenge is less generalizable than the main status causal process because revenge is linked to humiliating slights to standing, and great powers rarely have that sort of history with the states in which they intervene (for example, the US did not when intervening in Somalia in 1992-1993).

Cameron's foreign policy involved turning against Gaddafi, with whom modest trade, diplomatic and security ties had been restored by Tony Blair's government (1997-2007). Yet Gaddafi remained an unloved "rogue leader" in Britain, blamed for terrorism, a man Cameron viscerally disliked and 'never supported' (Seldon and Snowdon, 2015, pp. 98-99; Onderco, 2014, pp. 172-173; Cameron, 2011b). Now Gaddafi stood in the way of Britain's great power status interest, at a time the Cameron government considered as significant as the fall of the Communist East Bloc some twenty years before. If Gaddafi kept power, he might be a threat. British leaders also feared Gaddafi's revenge. 'Do we want a situation where a failed pariah state festers on Europe's southern border,' Cameron asked, 'creating a dangerous and uncertain world for Britain and for all our allies as well as for the people of Libya?' Gaddafi's Libya would be 'a potential source for terrorism in the future,' noted Hague, 'a danger to the national interest of this country' (Cameron, 2011e; Hague, 2011c).

The Cameron government had made trade promotion its top priority – but Libya was an exception. In July 2010, Hague, in one of his first speeches as Foreign Secretary, announced plans

to 'inject a new commercialism', putting 'diplomatic weight behind British enterprise'. 'This is a matter of vital national importance. In the words of our Prime Minister, our Ambassadors will now be economic as well as political Ambassadors for Britain' (Hague, 2010). Trade with Libya, limited after years of frozen ties, was welcome. Yet as Foreign Office Minister Alistair Burt stressed in October 2010, 'commercial considerations have not, and will not, play any part in constraining our approach to pursuing our wider political dialogue, including on legacy issues or raising human rights concerns'. Burt said, 'Libya's dark past… cannot be forgotten. Outstanding legacy issues, such as the WPC Fletcher investigation, have the full attention of the current Government' (Burt, 2010). These statements are key traces of the causal forces in play – the Cameron government remained angry at Gaddafi for what he had done to Britain. It put this anger ahead of economic gain. Cameron hated him. Now the article will suggest that Britain used intervention to vent this emotion.

Official anger over these slights focused on Lockerbie and jailed bomber Abdelbaset al-Megrahi. The Cameron government said that releasing al-Megrahi in 2009 was a flawed Scottish Government decision taken on compassionate grounds (United Kingdom Government, 2010a). However, Cameron was personally outraged, as evidenced by his emotional word choice on various occasions in his official capacity as prime minister. At a press conference in the US in July 2010, he said freeing the 'mass murderer of 270 people' was 'completely wrong', and 'neither should that callous killer have been given that luxury' to die at home in bed (United Kingdom Government, 2010b). There are 'red lines we must never cross', he declared in October 2010, such as 'the biggest mass murderer in British history, set free to get a hero's welcome in Tripoli' (Cameron, 2010b). He stated in the House of Commons on 7 February 2011, one week before the revolution, that al-Megrahi should have died alone (that is, suffered more) in prison. Cameron denounced the Gordon Brown government (2007-2010) for 'facilitating' al-Megrahi's release, implying (without clear evidence) that national dignity had been subordinated to economic gain in Labour's 'game plan' (Watson and Whittell, 2011, p. 3).

Cameron hurled his sharpest barbs at Labour for having dealt with Gaddafi. The remarks show how status and revenge can reinforce each other. Cameron believed that al-Megrahi's release was a disgrace and Labour had further humiliated Britain by ingratiating the country with Gaddafi to secure his co-operation. 'No. It was wrong, it undermined our standing in the world, and nothing like that must ever happen again' (Cameron, 2010b). Al-Megrahi's return home on a Gaddafi aircraft produced joy in Libya and dismay in the United States and Britain. According to Christian Fraser, BBC correspondent in Tripoli, Libyan authorities saw the return as 'further evidence of [Gaddafi's] growing stature on the international stage' (Fraser, 2009). On 5 October 2011, by which time Gaddafi had been brutally killed, Cameron said 'This past year we've been subjected to a sort of national apology tour by Labour. Sorry for sucking up to Qadhafi' (Cameron, 2011a).

British leaders did not consciously frame the intervention as an act of revenge, but revenge was a powerful secondary motive. Gaddafi's speech threatening the revolutionaries on 22 February 2011 'stirred something' in Cameron and his Chief of Staff, Ed Llewellyn. 'To us, raised in the 1980s', Cameron writes in his memoirs, 'he was "Mad Dog" Gaddafi, a horrific figure in modern history who sold Semtex to the IRA, ordered the downing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie in Scotland, and admitted responsibility for the murder of PC Yvonne Fletcher in London. We knew what he was capable of' (Cameron, 2019, pp. 274-275). This was Cameron's vengeful start-point, and end-point, too. 'And don't let anyone say this wasn't in our national interest. Remember what Qadhafi did', he told a Conservative Party conference in October 2011. 'Let's be proud of the part we played in giving the Libyan people the chance to take back their country' (Cameron, 2011a). The interveners claimed that the mission was protection. But it 'was more than that, and everyone knew it', writes Robert F. Worth. The West 'had signed Qaddafi's death warrant' (Worth, 2017, p. 43).

Section 4: Conclusion

This article has examined Britain's foreign policy on the Libya crisis of 2011, combining classical realism and status theory. The central theoretical argument in this article is that status was a significant motivation for Prime Minister Cameron's decision to intervene militarily in Libya. This article uses Gegout's framework, but the findings suggest status may be more significant than security. R2P is too vague and weakly supported concerning the use of armed force across borders to be used in an intervention theory; its key role has been to legitimate violent selfish behaviour – such as Britain's pursuit of status in Libya – under cover of "moralism", which is different from morality (Geuss, 2015, pp. 11-12). The central empirical and foreign policy argument is that regime change in Libya was not the last stage of Britain's foreign policy of intervention. Rather, intervention was the last stage in Britain's status and revenge-driven foreign policy of regime change. Britain saw the Libya crisis as a chance to display and preserve great power status and revenge Gaddafi for past wrongs.

Three theoretical points are made that have implications for classical realist and status intervention theories. First, a two-part status causal process (or "mechanism") has been conceptualized, operationalized, and empirically tested to trace the flow of causal forces from initial cause (Cameron taking office) to outcome (Libya intervention). Account and patten evidence were found; "smoking gun" and "hoop" tests passed; the causal process confirmed. Second, mostly pertaining to classical realism, is that the tension between political and ethical imperatives must not be neglected in the study and conduct of foreign policy. Without this awareness, as with Britain in the Libya case, states can take status too far and cause status-driven wars contributing to the evil in the world. Third is the need for deeper engagement with status theory, in particular the article's core point that status must be considered in both intrinsic and instrumental terms.

The article's status discussion contains familiar aspects but is mostly novel. It shows Britain did not constantly seek higher status. Cameron was driven by anxiety to halt further decline and

preserve existing status, not an increase as most of the status literature leads one to expect. Status is seen as mattering to leaders and peoples both intrinsically and instrumentally, and as relative to specific communities. Importantly, status in this article is not simply bloodless signalling and display of power and capability, and high-minded pursuit of "deserved" ranking. This is found in Cameron's decision-making on the Libya intervention, along with one additional factor that also drove Britain forward. This factor is more personal and much darker and angrier: pitiless revenge.

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