Pride and junior partner disobedience in hierarchical international orders: understanding Brazil’s condemnation of Zionism as a form of racism in the UN General Assembly, 1975.

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How and why do superordinates’ attempts to promote junior partner compliance sometimes inadvertently provoke defiance? This paper refines Lake’s materialist theory of international hierarchy to elucidate how subjective, affectively-laden values—like pride, honor, and dignity—shape a junior partner’s decision to defy its superordinate. I argue that superordinate conduct that is perceived as insulting to the junior partner’s subjective, affectively-laden values can provoke junior partner disobedience. Disobedience serves as a response to protect these values in the face of the perceived offense while also seeking to prevent further breaches from occurring in the future. I illustrate the argument with a case where the junior partner had no clear material incentive to disobey its superordinate’s commands. I explain Brazil’s decision to vote in favor of UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 in 1975—which condemned Zionism as a form of racism—through this argument. US instructions to vote against the motion were considered an insult to Brazilian pride and honor. Despite initially intending to abstain from voting on the motion, key Brazilian policymakers deliberately disobeyed the US and voted in favor of the Resolution. The paper has implications for understanding international hierarchies and contemporary efforts to promote junior partner compliance.

On 17 October 1975, a Resolution passed in the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee of the UN General Assembly (‘Third Committee’) that condemned Zionism as a form of racism. The Third Committee Resolution was approved by 70 votes to 29, with 27 abstentions.[[1]](#footnote-1) This Resolution was scheduled to move to the UN General Assembly Plenary to be voted on by all UN states just a few days later. One of the states that voted in favor of the Third Committee Resolution was Brazil, which was, at the time, a military dictatorship led by President General Ernesto Geisel. Brazil’s vote in the Third Committee was met with intense international and domestic backlash. The backlash was so severe that the President ‘changed his mind in view of domestic opposition and instructed that when the vote came to the General Assembly five days later, Brazil was to abstain’.[[2]](#footnote-2) In the words of one member of the Geisel Cabinet, the President believed ‘the vote [in the Third Committee] was a mistake and the Government recognized its error’.[[3]](#footnote-3) As a result, Geisel instructed his Foreign Ministry to ensure that Brazil did *not* vote in favor of the Resolution when it arrived in the UN General Assembly Plenary Session a few days later.[[4]](#footnote-4)

However, a diplomatic note sent from the United States to Brazil on 21 October 1975 would change Brazilian intentions again. The United States, unsurprisingly, given its traditionally strong support for Israel, was one of the parties that had been critical of Brazil for its vote. Unaware of Brazilian intentions to abstain from voting on the motion in the General Assembly, the United States sent the Brazilian delegation a diplomatic cable, instructing Brazil to vote against the motion. Just a few weeks later, on 10 November 1975, the Brazilian delegation voted *in favor* of UN General Assembly Resolution 3379, which proclaimed ‘that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination.’[[5]](#footnote-5) The ‘American note’, as it has come to be known, is considered by both participants involved in this episode and many secondary accounts to be the main reason Brazil voted in favor of General Assembly Resolution 3379.[[6]](#footnote-6) The ‘American note’ was expected to generate Brazilian compliance with American wishes, but it had the opposite effect from what was intended. What was it about the ‘American note’ that drove Brazil to veer from its intended course of action to actively defy the US?

This paper builds upon David Lake’s pathbreaking work on international hierarchy to answer a general theoretical puzzle raised by this episode:[[7]](#footnote-7) how and why do some attempts by superordinates to promote compliance amongst junior partners inadvertently provoke defiance? This Brazilian episode is puzzling for Lake’s theory, which understands junior partner behavior as driven by material incentives.[[8]](#footnote-8) But this is a case where material motives appear to play no role at all in driving Brazil’s behavior.

Against this backdrop, I argue that superordinate attempts to ensure junior partner compliance can provoke defiance when such attempts are perceived to insult the subjective, affectively-laden values—such as pride, honor, and dignity—of key policymakers in the junior partner state. Such perceived insult can provoke behavior designed to correct this perceived attack on the junior partner state’s subjective, affectively-laden values and to ensure that similar breaches of these values do not reoccur. Behavior that deliberately defies the superordinate’s preferences is often understood by key policymakers in the junior partner state as serving precisely these ends. In other words, superordinate efforts to promote order and compliance can actually be self-undermining if they are taken to offend a junior partner’s subjective, affectively-laden values.

I illustrate the argument by explaining Brazil’s decision to vote in favor of UN General Assembly Resolution 3379. Key aspects of the ‘American note’—especially its tone, its public release, and the ‘fact that the note was even sent’[[9]](#footnote-9)—were considered an insult to Brazilian pride, honor, and dignity. As a result, key Brazilian policymakers decided to deliberately defy the United States’ command in order to defend these values and in a bid to prevent further breaches of them in the future. Therefore, Brazil’s second vote in favor of the Resolution had very little to do with Zionism at all; it had far more to do with defending specific values in response to American behavior. The UN General Assembly Plenary vote was simply a vehicle that served this purpose.

Through these arguments, I make two main contributions. First, the paper refines theoretical ideas about how and why junior partners comply with and defy superordinate commands. Existing theories, like Lake’s, understand junior partner behavior as motivated by material concerns.[[10]](#footnote-10) Of course, Lake himself acknowledges how this assumption is likely to be unrealistic, but justifies this move as part of a first theoretical cut for understanding patterns of hierarchy in international relations.[[11]](#footnote-11) In this sense, this paper refines his theory. Extending upon recent work in International Relations on emotions and affect,[[12]](#footnote-12) I show that ideas about pride, honor, dignity, and respect shape junior partner behavior and engagement with hierarchical authority in world politics. I illustrate this point with a case study in which the superordinate not only sought and failed to foster junior partner compliance but ended up provoking defiance.

Second, the paper illustrates this important lesson for the practice of hegemony and superordination through a case study that clearly parallels prominent aspects of contemporary international order. Despite occurring fifty years ago, the case is directly relevant to contemporary developments today and the US’s attempts to manage them. The obvious parallel here is to the protracted and increasingly tense conflict in the Middle East. Beyond just the question of Israel, Palestine, and the Middle East, the article also sheds light on previously underappreciated factors that produce disorder due to junior partner discontent in other critical contexts. In an unprecedentedly polarized world, understanding the range of variables that can produce order or disorder becomes increasingly essential. If our theories of hierarchy are also guides to policymaking, we need an account of the variety of factors that junior partners care about and the overtures necessary to ensure their compliance.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, I provide a brief account of existing understandings of superordinate-junior partner relations in hierarchical international orders. Second, I develop the paper’s main theoretical argument. The third section develops the theoretical argument by illustrating its utility in understanding why Brazil defied the United States on UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 in 1975. Fourth, I illustrate the inadequacy of alternative explanations of Brazil’s behavior in this episode. The conclusion recaps the argument while discussing its broader implications and the avenues it opens for further work in this area.

**Hierarchy**

Hierarchy has (re)emerged as a central concept in IR theory over the past two decades. Bially Mattern and Zarakol identify two main definitions of hierarchy: a narrow definition that considers hierarchy as a form of legitimate authority, and a broader definition concerned with all forms of vertical stratification.[[13]](#footnote-13) This paper is concerned with the former. It uses David Lake’s pathbreaking contributions developed over the past few decades as its main inspiration and foil. Of course, there are many other excellent contributions that have added to our understanding of the form and effects of legitimate authority in world politics.[[14]](#footnote-14) Nevertheless, as Sharman states, ‘arguably, no scholar has done more than David Lake to both systematically critique the dominant state sovereignty–international anarchy couplet, and provide an innovative and suggestive alternative frame of reference’.[[15]](#footnote-15) Lake has also done the most work interrogating the incentives that drive junior partner—or what he calls ‘subordinate’—behavior in hierarchical international orders.

Following Lake, I understand hierarchy as ‘a dyadic relationship between two polities that varies across pairs within any system from complete anarchy to full dominance’.[[16]](#footnote-16) Therefore, hierarchy is a spectrum, not a binary. Its intensity and the forms it can take can vary considerably. At its core, hierarchy is a type of authority relationship composed of two actors: a dominant actor and a subordinate. Existing research uses a range of synonyms to refer to these types of actors. The dominant actor in this relationship has also been labeled a ‘superordinate’, a ‘hegemon’, a ‘ruler’ or even a ‘metropole’. Similarly, subordinate actors have been referred to as ‘junior partners’, ‘clients’, the ‘ruled’, and or simply ‘subordinates’.[[17]](#footnote-17) I follow this literature in using these synonyms but generally stick primarily to ‘superordinate’ and ‘junior partner’.

Lake conceptualizes hierarchy as a form of ‘social contract’, or what others have called a ‘bargain’, between these two parties.[[18]](#footnote-18) Such a social contract between a ruler and the ruled sees the superordinate party provide political order to the latter, while the latter ‘grant[s] legitimacy to the ruler and compl[ies] with the restraints on their behavior necessary for the production of that order’.[[19]](#footnote-19) Hierarchy provides benefits for both sets of actors. The hegemon provides and bears the costs of social order in exchange for the junior partner’s legitimation of the hegemon’s dominance.

*Junior partners*

Analyses of hierarchical and hegemonic orders explain why actors comply with certain arrangements that put them in a subordinate, or junior partner, position. Lake, for instance, argues that states are willing to be junior partners in a US-centric hierarchical international order because doing so allows these states to reap benefits that outweigh the costs of subordination.[[20]](#footnote-20) Lake highlights two main benefits of being a junior partner. First, junior partners can piggyback on the security apparatus of a hegemon. For example, in contemporary terms, accepting subordination allows a state to come under the American security umbrella, enabling such states to ‘outsource’ many of the costs of providing their own security.[[21]](#footnote-21) The second benefit is improved access to and terms in the hegemon’s economic market.[[22]](#footnote-22) Junior partners end up with better economic bargains than they would otherwise by acquiescing to the hegemon. Of course, there are costs associated with being a junior partner. Lake notes that the biggest of these are sovereignty costs but that junior partners are often willing to pay such costs in exchange for enhanced security.[[23]](#footnote-23)

As part of their acquiescence to a superordinate, junior partners are expected to engage in what Lake terms ‘symbolic obeisance’. The main act of symbolic obeisance that Lake considers is following a leader into war, also noting that this is almost certainly the costliest form that this behavior can take.[[24]](#footnote-24) One could deduce other forms that symbolic obeisance could take that are far less costly: voting with the superordinate in multilateral forums, verbally supporting the international order that the hegemon creates and sustains, and treating a leading state’s leaders with respect.[[25]](#footnote-25) These are not particularly costly instantiations of symbolic obeisance, incurring effectively none of the substantial ‘sovereignty costs’ that accompany security arrangements. Symbolic obeisance by junior partners is one of the ‘new class of behaviors expected’ by Lake’s theory of international hierarchy.[[26]](#footnote-26)

Lake contrasts symbolic obeisance with its opposite, which he labels ‘civil disobedience’. Such disobedience can take several forms, as Lake indicates; there are many ways that we can cut into this concept. Lake uses various synonyms and cognate concepts to refer to disobedience throughout his 2009 book on hierarchy in international relations, the publication that devotes most attention to questions of junior partner disobedience: alternate labels include ‘insubordination’, ‘undercompliance’, ‘resistance’, and ‘defiance’.[[27]](#footnote-27) All refer in some way or another to behaviors or conduct on the part of a junior partner that does not conform with the hegemon’s wishes, preferences, or commands on a particular issue.

The examples Lake uses to consider junior partner defiance and its consequences are often extreme, including cases where the United States has lost all authority because a subordinate state seeks to ‘exit’ US hegemony or informal empire.[[28]](#footnote-28) Such cases are used to illustrate how defiance will often require the hegemon to punish a noncompliant subordinate. In other words, when subordinate disobedience is considered, it is theorized in reference to how the superordinate actor will respond to such perceived violations of the ‘social contract’ and take action to ‘discipline’ wayward subordinates. Less attention is paid to the drivers of subordinate defiance or to less ‘severe’ (non-‘exit’) forms of defiance. Lake briefly alludes to other forms of disobedience such as ‘rule violations, insubordination, or possibly even defiance’.[[29]](#footnote-29) Lake provides some useful clues for understanding how and why a subordinate actor would engage in disobedience in the first place. He tantalizingly suggests ‘[i]n day-to-day interactions… subordinates will under-comply, perhaps inadvertently, in acts of “everyday” resistance or in open defiance, and dominant states will overreach or ask too much from a subordinate given the social contract’.[[30]](#footnote-30) Under what conditions might this occur? What types of ‘overreach’ can trigger open disobedience when there appear to be extremely low or no costs to obeisance? The following section begins to develop an original account of one set of factors that can trigger junior partner defiance.

**Subjective, affectively-laden values and junior partner disobedience**

This section develops a theoretical account of how subjective, affectively-laden values shape junior partner disobedience in hierarchical international orders. I begin by outlining what subjective, affectively-laden values are. I then turn to consider how these values can shape junior partner disobedience. The third part of this section is dedicated to methodological questions about the observability of these dynamics and case justification.

*Subjective, affectively-laden values and IR*

There is now a substantial body of work in IR exploring how emotions shape world politics.[[31]](#footnote-31) Following Todd Hall,[[32]](#footnote-32) I use the term ‘subjective, affectively-laden values’ to refer to certain values held by actors that are intrinsically tied to personal feelings and emotions. These include values like pride, honor, and dignity, all of which are deeply personal. They are rooted in internal feelings and evaluations of self-worth and respect. But while these values are subjective, they also have a profoundly inter-subjective component to them. They are bound up with the perceptions and treatments that others afford us and can often guide human conduct and serve as goals or central ideals that people and communities pursue. As I discuss below, these values are important because perceived violations of such values can push actors to act in ways that they would not otherwise do.

The subjectiveness of these values also has another quality: often, these values can link people or collectives to certain qualities, principles, or abstract ideas. For example, they can be a key constitutive element in the attachments between people and collectives; a key feature of nations and nationalism is the pride people feel for their national community.[[33]](#footnote-33) Such values have a largely symbolic quality and, for this reason, Hall suggests that these values can imbue particular issues—that might have no tangible, material stakes—with high importance for actors.[[34]](#footnote-34) When a matter comes to be understood as a question of one’s honor, dignity, or pride, the meaning of that matter may transform for its protagonist.[[35]](#footnote-35) In a similar vein, Wolf notes that these affectively-laden values also function to allow humans to prioritize certain goals or principles over others.[[36]](#footnote-36)

I refer to pride, honor, dignity, and respect collectively as subjective, affectively-laden values for two reasons. The first is that disentangling them empirically is extremely difficult; even analytically, there is significant overlap between these values. Is it really possible to separate “pride” from a desire for “respect?” Policymakers experiencing and evoking such values will often use them interchangeably, making it almost impossible to ascertain and isolate the precise political effects of each of these values individually. However, this is not necessarily a problem for the second reason I subsume these values under one conceptual heading: violations of any of these values tend to have similar effects. Indeed, these values are similar both in their content and in the reactions that their violation precipitates in actors. I develop this point in the following subsection of the paper.

These values are *subjective* in the sense that their intensity, and whether they are felt at all, can differ from individual to individual and collective to collective. There may even be variation in how individuals within groups or communities feel about their own collective. Some individuals care a lot about their personal pride, honor, and dignity; others less so. In many cases, people feel intense pride and anxiety about the importance or treatment accorded to their state in international politics; others feel complete apathy. These values are subjective and their intensity is variable across people, time, and space. What one person may consider a question of honor may not necessarily be considered as such by someone else. Whether or not such values are likely to take hold and shape political outcomes—in our case, junior partner defiance—is an empirical question that depends on the actor(s) involved.

Additionally, these values are *affectively-laden* precisely because of their content and emotional charge. They animate people to do things that they would not otherwise do. Soldiers will often march into battle and potentially certain death because of abstract notions of honor and pride for their country. Because of their content, these emotionally charged values also can and often do shape perceptions about what actors see as important and worth ‘fighting for’. This does not necessarily mean that action driven by such values is ‘irrational’ or ‘emotional’. Behavior that seeks to defend these values can be strategic too, in the sense that it is ‘ends directed’; the ends that the behavior is geared toward are often the defense of these values.

Importantly, for our purposes, the activation or triggering of these values can fuel affective responses that shape the behavior of both individuals and collective actors like states. Several recent studies have illustrated the importance of such seemingly ‘non-material’ factors in shaping state behavior in world politics.[[37]](#footnote-37) These studies have shown how particular subjective, affectively-laden values can come to the fore and influence states’ foreign policies. It is often following the violation of these values that we can observe their effects in international relations. Barnhard, for instance, has shown how actors who experience humiliation to their national dignity and status will often take highly risky, brash, and otherwise unexpected risks to restore their honor.[[38]](#footnote-38) Similarly, Schulz and Thies have illustrated how boosts in national pride created by international recognition can open possibilities for domestic political change.[[39]](#footnote-39)

The next subsection leverages and builds upon these contributions to consider how subjective, affectively-laden values can shape junior partner disobedience in hierarchical international orders, driving them to defy authority in ways that they might not have done otherwise.

*How subjective, affectively-laden values shape junior partner disobedience*

Subjective, affectively-laden values are likely to influence a junior partner’s decision to defy its hegemon when these values have been violated or insulted. Often, these values may lie ‘dormant’ in the background of decision-making, taking a backseat to more tangible questions of physical security or wealth acquisition. These values and their political effects can be awoken and activated—and begin to shape decision-making—precisely when they are perceived to be breached. Given that we are dealing with junior partners in hierarchical international orders disobeying their hegemon over such values, the provocation or insult will probably come from some behavior from or command made by the superordinate.

Hegemonic commands, as Lake and others note, are part and parcel of the practice of superordination and are a crucial ordering mechanism used by hegemons in hierarchical international orders.[[40]](#footnote-40) Commands might take the form of polite requests or outright orders; like hierarchy, commands exist on a spectrum. But the form the command takes is also likely to shape whether or not a junior partner feels as though their values have been contravened or disrespected by the superordinate. A politely articulated request is far less likely to be perceived as rude and impolite than a brusque or offensive request. The latter is, by definition, disrespectful and more likely to be understood as such. By articulating commands in a way that the junior partner perceives as disrespectful, the hegemon is opening itself up to potentially being symbolically disobeyed. Again, the emphasis here is on the junior partner’s *perception* of whether or not such behavior violates these values; the same command might be perceived differently by different actors. With this said, an actor who is strongly attached to their own subjective, affectively-laden values is likely to be more sensitive to potential insults. The style of communication can be as important of the substance of that communication.

These values also mediate the response to acts that violate them. People who suffer perceived violations of their honor, dignity, or pride take courses of action that seek to restore these values. Actions taken to respond to such violations are often understood as ‘corrections’ to such breaches. For our purposes, when a superordinate breaches a junior partner’s pride or honor, disobedience can be perceived as a means of correcting such an offense.[[41]](#footnote-41) Anger is an emotion that often animates people who feel they have been wronged along one or more of these dimensions. Indeed, attempts to lash out or seek revenge can often be understood as attempts to restore the dignity that has been unjustly snatched away.[[42]](#footnote-42) As Wolf has detailed, one of the expected behaviors of those who are angered by apparently unjust attacks on their dignity is open defiance of ‘commands or requests made by supposed offenders’ in order to ‘score symbolic victories over offenders’ and ‘put offenders “back in their place”’.[[43]](#footnote-43) Violations of a junior partner’s subjective, affectively-laden values are therefore likely to prompt disobedience as an attempt to restore the offended actor’s dignity, pride, and honor.

In its most explicit form, Junior partner disobedience triggered by perceived insults to key subjective, affectively-laden values will involve the direct defiance of a hegemon’s explicit commands. Where a hegemon commands or instructs its junior partner to act in a certain way, and the command (and/or its delivery) is offensive to key policymakers in the junior partner state, the subordinate will deliberately disobey those orders. This may well involve a junior partner deliberately changing its behavior or an intended course of action in response to the perceived insult to these values. In such a case, the junior partner state will deliberately change its behavior to defy the superordinate actor that has caused the offense.

This means that these subjective, affectively-laden values can also alter actors’ preferences. For example, when these values become activated, a particular issue or matter will take on new and/or intensified meaning for its protagonist. Apathy may give way to decisive preferences, or settled preferences may even be reversed in response to a hegemon’s (perceived) rudeness. When an issue becomes a ‘matter of honor’ or when one’s pride is on the line, it can become something larger and more symbolic for its protagonists. Hall labels this phenomenon ‘dispute inflation’: a phenomenon whereby the perceived stakes of a dispute or offense take on intensified importance for actors.[[44]](#footnote-44) In the case study that follows, for example, when US instructions to Brazil to vote against UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 were deemed offensive and insulting to Brazilian pride, Brazil decided to vote in favor of the motion because the vote itself took on a new and broader meaning. For Brazil, Resolution 3379 was no longer merely about racism or Zionism. The Resolution became understood as a matter of Brazilian pride, defined by the need to defend Brazilian honor. In the end, Brazil’s vote had very little to do with Zionism.

These dynamics illuminate a core strategic aspect of junior partner disobedience. In this context, disobedience is not merely an irrational response to a perceived violation of values. Rather, it is also an attempt to prevent further contraventions of those values in the future. Such defiance can be understood as an attempt to change or establish specific rules and norms of conduct that the junior partner considers appropriate. This form of defiance can be thought of as an attempt to transform what would otherwise be a *subjective* ‘logic of appropriateness’ into an *intersubjective* ‘logic of appropriateness’. Logics of appropriateness are often taken to be intersubjective, shared, or ‘*collective* expectations of appropriate behavior.’[[45]](#footnote-45) However, actors might have diverging ideas about what appropriate behavior is. Subordinates may engage in symbolic defiance to signal their preferences about appropriate and/or inappropriate conduct to the hegemon. Such behavior can be interpreted as an attempt to produce a norm against certain behavior. This serves as a form of ‘voice’, to use Hirschman’s language.[[46]](#footnote-46) These proposed rules or norms are intended to protect the junior partner’s subjective, affectively-laden values and to ensure they are not violated into the future.

*Studying these dynamics empirically*

How can we evaluate the analytical purchase of this theoretical account? And, relatedly, how can we be reasonably sure that the dynamics theorized above play a decisive role in shaping junior partner behavior? This section answers these two interconnected questions. I begin with the latter, focusing on the potential observable implications of this theorization of junior partner defiance.

There are two interrelated ways we could be confident that the dynamics set out above are indeed shaping a case of junior partner disobedience. First, we would observe a scenario where certain hegemonic conduct appears to provoke a change in a junior partner’s behavior or the intended course of action that a junior partner intends to take. Likewise, for the dynamics above to be considered ‘in play’, we would knowledge of what a junior partner’s behavior or intended course of action was *before* certain hegemonic conduct produces this change. Of course, the hegemonic conduct in question would also have to have offended the subjective, affectively-laden values of the junior partner. Careful historical analysis would ideally reveal that key policy- or decision-makers in the junior partner state perceived the hegemon’s behavior as violating its subjective, affectively-laden values.

Second, and relatedly, we would also observe textual or verbal references to violations of those subjective, emotionally laden values as reasons, motives, or justifications for the junior partner’s shift in behavior. References to pride, respect, dignity, honor, or other such values are key here. For example, an actor might say that a form of hegemonic conduct was humiliating or offensive to the junior partner’s values, and that, to correct that insult, it was necessary to adopt a particular measure to correct that violation. Beyond this, we might also expect to observe relevant actors suggesting that the act of disobedience itself was ‘about’ more than just that specific act itself. In brief, the specific act of disobedience would be conceived of as not merely a correction of and response to the perceived attack on their values, but also about ensuring that such an insult is not repeated. Language about ‘sending a message’ or ‘letting them know that we cannot be treated this way’ would be indicative of this more long-term framing.

I illustrate the analytical purchase of my argument by examining a case of junior partner disobedience in US-Brazil relations in 1975. I examine how the dynamics considered above played a key role in Brazil’s decision to vote in favor of UN Resolution 3379, which condemned Zionism as a form of racism. Brazil’s vote directly defied the United States’ explicit instructions. This is a useful case to explore these dynamics for several reasons. First, there was no obvious material incentive for Brazil to engage in disobedience, allowing me to clearly illustrate the analytical purchase of the paper’s theoretical argument. The lack of material incentives also enables me to address the most prominent alternative explanation for junior partner disobedience. Second, there is ample historical material—both primary and secondary—written about this episode, allowing for full consideration and illustration of the ways subjective, affectively-laden values can shape junior partner disobedience. Third, the stakes of this vote were considered incredibly high by the US. Therefore, the case represents a significant instance of a hegemon deliberately attempting to cultivate compliance and order, albeit unsuccessfully in the case of Brazil. Fourth, the case itself has notable contemporary parallels and is an ancestor of similar issues on which the US will likely seek junior partner compliance in the near future. Finally, I further underscore the analytical purchase of my argument by showing how it more comprehensively accounts for Brazil’s behavior in this episode vis-à-vis alternative explanations.

**Case study**

This section empirically illustrates the paper’s core theoretical argument. To this end, I examine Brazilian defiance of the United States in the UN General Assembly in 1975. The specific instance I examine involves the US demanding that Brazil vote against UN Resolution 3379, a Resolution that defined and condemned Zionism as a form of racism. As I show below, despite initially planning to abstain from voting on the Resolution, Brazil ended up voting in favor. Why?

Brazil used the UN General Assembly Plenary vote on UN Resolution 3379 to signal its disapproval of being commanded to vote against the motion by the United States. The US’ insistence that Brazil vote with the Americans insulted key Brazilian policymakers’ subjectively, affectively-laden values like pride, dignity, and honor. To correct this perceived infringement and ensure the United States did not cross this line again, Brazil directly defied the US’ commands.

*A brief history of the US-Brazil junior partnership*

A key premise of my argument is that, in the mid-1970s, Brazil could reasonably be considered a junior partner of the US. This brief section establishes this premise.

Historians have argued that Brazil’s attitude towards the US in the early twentieth century was that of an ‘unwritten alliance’.[[47]](#footnote-47) The *coup d’etat* that brought the Brazilian military to power in 1964 was accompanied by the pronouncement by Brazil’s ambassador to the United States that ‘what is good for the United States is good for Brazil’.[[48]](#footnote-48) And when that same individual, Juracy Magalhães, assumed the role of Foreign Minister in 1966, he declared that ‘Brazil gives special importance to its relationship with the United States, recognized as the leader of the Free World and the principal guardian of the fundamental values of our civilization’.[[49]](#footnote-49) As with most US-backed military dictatorships during this period, the US ramped up economic aid, approved financial loans, and increased military assistance to Brazil after the *coup* took place.[[50]](#footnote-50) During the period of 1964-1970, only Vietnam and India received more US aid than Brazil.[[51]](#footnote-51)

On the back of unprecedented economic growth, often labelled the ‘Brazilian miracle’, Brazil became more assertive in its foreign policy in the 1970s.[[52]](#footnote-52) US-Brazil relations drifted slightly as Brazil sought more autonomy and independence in world politics, but the US and Brazil continued to cooperate in bringing down leftist forces in South America.[[53]](#footnote-53) As Tanya Harmer has noted, left-leaning actors in South America considered Brazil to be Washington’s ‘most loyal collaborator’.[[54]](#footnote-54) And although this more independent stance led to more clashes with the US on issues like nautical borders, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and trade disputes, Hurrell argues that ‘[i]t would be wrong to overdramatize the divergences of the 1974-1977 period’.[[55]](#footnote-55) Brazilian policymakers continued to rhetorically recognize the United States as the ‘leader of the Western world’, of which Brazil was considered a member.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Brazil’s relations with the United States in late 1975 were certainly not as close or as loyal as they had been in the mid-1960s, and Brazil was not an unfailing conduit for the US’ will in this period, as recent histories have shown.[[57]](#footnote-57) Nevertheless, there were still strong signs that Brazil considered itself a junior partner or follower of the United States, and more continuity than change in the relationship between the two states. Such was the ‘state of play’ in US-Brazil relations when Resolution 3379 was tabled in the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly in 1975.

*The Brazilian vote in the Third Committee*

Although Brazilian symbolic disobedience reached its precipice on 10 November 1975, when it directly defied the US and voted in favor of UNGA Resolution 3379, our story begins weeks earlier in the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly. On 3 October 1975, the Somali delegate to the UN’s Third Committee proposed amending the Charter of the UN’s forthcoming *Decade Against Racism*. The proposed amendment was to include a section in the Charter condemning Zionism as a form of racism. The Somali delegation then proposed an independent draft Resolution to the Third Committee, which condemned Zionism as ‘a form of racism and racial discrimination’.[[58]](#footnote-58) On 17 October, the Resolution was approved by 70 votes to 29, with 27 abstentions, with Brazil being one of the parties voting in favor of the motion.[[59]](#footnote-59)

The reasons why the Brazilian delegation voted in favor of this motion are highly opaque. Historians and analysts of this episode offer competing explanations for the vote. In the words of Breda dos Santos and Uziel, ‘Unlike the discussions about the vote in the Plenary a few weeks later, records about this initial decision are difficult to find’.[[60]](#footnote-60) Some scholars contend that the vote was born out of a desire to signal solidarity with Arab states amidst concerns about the price of oil,[[61]](#footnote-61) others consider it a mere diplomatic mistake in which unclear instructions led the Brazilian delegation to vote along the same lines as other Latin American states, who they believed (erroneously) would vote—in their majority—for the Resolution.[[62]](#footnote-62) Even those with close ties to the inner circle of foreign policy decision-making disagree on why Brazil voted for the motion. Foreign Minister Silveira—who was in London when the vote in New York took place—speculated in an interview many years later that ‘Arab solidarity’ was the motivation behind this initial vote.[[63]](#footnote-63) In contrast, Hugo de Abreu, who was the Head of the Military Office in the Geisel Government Cabinet, would write that the vote was, in fact, an error that came about because ‘Itamaraty [the Brazilian foreign ministry] failed when it did not warn the President about the appendix [condemning Zionism as a form of racism] inadequately grafted onto a formal condemnation of racism’.[[64]](#footnote-64)

This—principled or erroneous—initial vote was met with immediate condemnation. There was a swift backlash against both the Resolution in general and also, more specifically, against Brazil’s vote in favor of such a Resolution. The United States lambasted the Resolution as an ‘obscene act’ as well as a ‘supreme act of deceit’ and ‘warned that it would imperil the world of the United Nations’.[[65]](#footnote-65) Members of US Congress sought to prevent any further American funding of the United Nations if the Resolution passed in the Third Committee was also passed in the UN General Assembly’s Plenary session.[[66]](#footnote-66) Chile—another state that also voted in favor of the Resolution in the Third Committee—became a lightning rod for public criticism. A US official to the United Nations publicly accused Chile of selling its vote to Arab states, adding that ‘the fascists in Chile and some like‐minded military regimes are lining up with the anti‐Semites’.[[67]](#footnote-67) Although Brazil was not subject to the same level of public criticism as Chile was, US diplomats lobbied Brazil to reverse its vote in the upcoming UN General Assembly vote on the Resolution. Andrew Hurrell suggests the Brazilian government faced severe criticism ‘both at home and abroad by voting in the UN in support of Resolution 3379’.[[68]](#footnote-68) Before examining the crux of this criticism, it is worth considering how key Brazilian decision-makers viewed the vote in the Third Committee as an error that they would rectify in the UN General Assembly weeks later. The post-Third Committee backlash also came from within the Brazilian government and policy establishment.

Despite scholars disagreeing about Brazilian motives for voting in favor of the Resolution in the Third Committee in October 1975, they agree that President Geisel was—at least initially—planning to change the Brazilian vote on the same Resolution when it was to be tabled in the UN General Assembly just days later. Hurrell argues that the day after the vote in the Third Committee, the domestic backlash in Brazil drove Geisel to decide that Brazil would abstain on the motion when it was tabled in the General Assembly.[[69]](#footnote-69) Likewise, the Head of the Military Office in the Geisel Cabinet would say, in reference to the Third Committee vote, ‘Our position was a mistake, and the Government itself recognized its fault, gradually trying to correct the incorrectness of the vote’.[[70]](#footnote-70) Likewise, Goés’ account of the incident is as follows:

The following day, having considered the political error in the vote, Geisel asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to change its adopted position on the matter. This vote was cast in the Third Committee (Political Committee) and only five days later the definitive vote would take place in the General Assembly. Brazil was going to backpedal on its original vote, as the President realized he had made his decision with haste and with insufficient information, leading him to make a mistake.[[71]](#footnote-71)

Thus, in the wake of the first vote, President Geisel decided very quickly, after voting for the Resolution that labeled Zionism as a form of racism in the Third Committee, that Brazil would not do the same in the UN General Assembly. In other words, Brazil planned to abstain from voting on the Resolution in the General Assembly.[[72]](#footnote-72)

However, on 10 November, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted Resolution 3379, which ‘determines that zionism [sic] is a form of racism and racial discrimination’.[[73]](#footnote-73) Brazil was one of the 72 states who voted for the Resolution, despite just weeks earlier regretting its decision to condemn Zionism as a form of racism in the Third Committee. Indeed, as shown above, Brazilian policymakers universally considered the initial vote in the Third Committee to have been a mistake, and were determined to abstain or vote against the equivalent motion in the General Assembly. Why, then, did Brazil vote in favor of Resolution 3379 for a second time?

*The ‘American note’*

On 21 October, the US State Department sent a note to Brazil and other Latin American states that had voted in favor of the Third Committee Resolution. The note condemned the implications of the Third Committee’s resolution, stating that ‘the characterization of Zionism as a form of racism and racial discrimination not only grossly misrepresents the nature of Zionism but also encourages that form of racism known as anti-semitism’. It went on to insist that the recipient of the note—in this case Brazil—‘will instruct its delegation to vote against approval of that Resolution when it comes to the vote in the General Assembly’.[[74]](#footnote-74) The US was instructing Brazil, in no uncertain terms, to reverse its vote.

The Brazilian President and foreign ministry were incensed by what would come to be known as the ‘American note’.[[75]](#footnote-75) The Brazilian Foreign Minister at the time of the vote, Antônio Azeredo da Silveira, points to the ‘American note’ as the decisive factor determining Brazil’s decision to vote in favor of Resolution 3379 in the UN General Assembly. When asked about what factors pushed Geisel to cast the Brazilian vote in favor of the Resolution, Silveira asserted:

I think the important factor was *exclusively* the American note… The real and effective decision of the vote in the Plenary, was the American note, without a doubt. That was what moved President Geisel.[[76]](#footnote-76)

But what did the note do? Why was it so offensive? In his oral history, Silveira explicitly mentions his President’s pride in understanding this episode, linking it to questions about the level of respect that he believed his country deserved. Brazil defied the US precisely because the Americans had violated these values of pride and respect. Silveira explains:

He [Geisel] was a man who was very proud of Brazil’s position. He knew perfectly that I would not throw myself at the feet of the Americans, that I am going to ensure a level of respect that Brazil deserves.[[77]](#footnote-77)

In short, Brazilian policymakers believed that the American instructions to vote against the motion in the General Assembly were demeaning and disrespectful. To signal their discontent and rejection of hegemonic conduct that they considered unacceptable, the Brazilians doubled down on their original vote, despite initially intending to abstain from voting on the Resolution when it made its way to the General Assembly. For example, Breda dos Santos and Uziel argue that:

The perception that Brazil was having its arm twisted by Washington to change its vote was apparently decisive in galvanizing Geisel’s decision not to change his position… the President was disgruntled… and felt that national honor demanded that Brazil should not yield to pressure.[[78]](#footnote-78)

Goés’ account makes a similar observation, remarking that despite the original vote in the Third Committee being a ‘mistake’ from which President Geisel intended to ‘backpedal’, Geisel ‘did not do so… because… the North American State Department, through a spokesperson, criticized Brazil’s [original] position, hurting Brazilian national pride’.[[79]](#footnote-79)

A range of US diplomatic cables reporting on how the ‘American note’ was received illustrate that key Brazilian policymakers were deeply offended by the US’ instructions. One US diplomatic cable stated that ‘Itamaraty’s testy reaction to [the] US note [was] based on part alleged publicity but also on [the] fact that [the] note was even sent, characterizing [the] note’s language as “arrogant (insolito) and surprising”’.[[80]](#footnote-80) Even though President Geisel was initially intent on abstaining in the General Assembly vote, after voting in favor of the anti-Zionist motion in the Third Committee, the American note was decisive in shaping Brazilian decision-making. Take, for example, another State Department cable lamenting that Brazil was insulted by the American instructions; the cable observed that the American orders were unintentionally going to ‘make it more difficult for Brazil to reverse voting [its] stand.’[[81]](#footnote-81) Another cable from 4 November described how sources within the Brazilian foreign ministry had said that ‘Even if GOB [Government of Brazil] had any intention of reconsidering its position, “it would have been definitively eliminated by the undue intervention of the United States”’.[[82]](#footnote-82) US diplomatic cables about the ‘American note’ evidence the growing realization that their message had been miscalculated and had offended key Brazilian policymakers. The State Department archives show the Americans’ dawning understanding this offense undermined the US’s mission to get Brazil to change its vote.

The ‘American note’ was an affront to key Brazilian policymakers’ subjective, affectively-laden values. Brazil’s resulting act of disobedience served broader social purposes and was conceived of in strategic terms; Brazil’s General Assembly vote in favor of the Resolution was not ‘about’ Zionism, racism, or Middle-Eastern politics but was instead ‘about’ Brazil’s pride and honor, and the respect and treatment which it expected from the US. As dos Santos and Uziel outline, there were much broader considerations at play: considerations pertaining to US-Brazil relations in general. Silveira, in an extension to his account of the ‘American note’ being decisive in the Brazilian vote condemning Zionism in the General Assembly gestures at this. It was not simply about the vote, but rather about more general concerns about how the United States ought to treat Brazil in general and in the future. Indeed, the vote itself was an act that sought to ensure that Brazil and its values were respected by the Americans; they would not be subject to what Silveira would come to label ‘paternalism and condescension’.[[83]](#footnote-83) In directly defying the US, Silveira and Giesel publicly refused to ‘throw [Brazilian pride] at the feet of the Americans’, and sought to ‘ensure a level of respect that Brazil deserve[d]’ in future interactions.[[84]](#footnote-84)

Secondary accounts of this case make similar remarks about the meaning of the vote. For instance, Breda dos Santos and Uziel state that the Brazilian ‘vote has to be understood not as a simple indignant reaction to a purported offense to national pride, but rather in the broader framework of the relations between the two countries’.[[85]](#footnote-85) Foreign minister Silveira’s account of the episode corroborates this, highlighting that the vote for Resolution 3379 was strongly strategic and deliberate, and not a mere outraged response. The hardening of the Brazilian position and the subsequent protest vote for Resolution 3379 in response to the American note, in the words of Silveira, ‘was a way of putting *relations with Kissinger on the footing they deserved…* if there was *no firm response, they would want to impose other things*’.[[86]](#footnote-86) Spektor captures this sentiment in his own analysis as well, stating that Brazil’s disobedience communicated that ‘it would be simply impossible for any Brazilian leader to sustain a political partnership with Washington unless the Americans were careful about demonstrating “respect” and “equality”’.[[87]](#footnote-87)

A US diplomatic cable sent after Brazil’s fateful vote in favor of UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 suggests that Silveira himself was disappointed with the way that the US had communicated and that the ‘American note’ was the major obstacle to Brazilian compliance. The cable states that Brazil may well have complied had the note taken another, more respectful form that had not offended Brazilian subjective, affectively-laden values. The cable reports that Silveira himself told US diplomats in Brasilia that ‘it would have been better if the US position on the Brazilian vote on the Zionism Resolution had come to him [Silveira] as a *letter from the Secretary* instead of as a note’. It would go on to say that Silveira ‘added that a letter from the Secretary might have made it easier for him “to do something”’.[[88]](#footnote-88) This is also revealing, suggesting the means of commanding junior partners is also crucial. The Brazilians would have preferred a ‘letter from the Secretary’ instead of a note ‘through a spokesperson’.[[89]](#footnote-89) This further illustrates that key Brazilian policymakers cared deeply about the respect that their country was given. Levels of treatment lower than this were affronts to their pride, dignity, and honor. Silveira had signaled that this is what would be expected in the future.

**Alternative explanations for Brazil’s behavior**

I now turn to three alternative explanations for Brazil’s decision to vote in favor of UN Resolution 3379, none of which are as analytically solid as the account I have developed in this paper.

*Alternative explanation 1: Arab oil*

The first alternative explanation of Brazil’s behavior is materialist, suggesting that Arab oil was a major factor influencing Brazil’s decision to vote in favor of Resolution 3379. Material considerations are the default explanation of junior partner behavior in hierarchical international orders, as per Lake’s account.[[90]](#footnote-90) We can extrapolate then that the most likely reason that a subordinate would disobey is for material reasons, with the oil motive being the main explanation for Brazil’s behavior made by commentators at the time. For example, the oil motive was also offered up to explain Brazil’s vote by State Department officials and media outlets at the time.[[91]](#footnote-91) The *New York Times*, for instance, claimed ‘Brazil’s conscienceless military dictators are seeking Arab oil and investments with their vote’.[[92]](#footnote-92)

The logic of this explanation is that Brazil was strongly incentivized to take ‘pro-Arab’ stances to get better deals on oil and investment. Arab states were major oil producers at the time and Brazil had made recent efforts to cozy up to them diplomatically to ensure better oil prices and trade conditions.[[93]](#footnote-93) Brazil attempted to broker deals with Arab oil exporters to ensure predictable prices and supply in order to shield itself from the impact of sudden price increases.[[94]](#footnote-94) In another note concerning the World Conference on Energy earlier in 1975, Silveira would advise President Geisel that due to ‘the vulnerability of our position, [and] the dependence on external sources of petroleum supply, it is not recommended that we run the risk of antagonizing the negotiating parties [namely, Arab states]’.[[95]](#footnote-95) In other words, relations with Arab states had previously conditioned and shaped Brazilian behavior in multilateral forums.

One of the major issues with this explanation is that it does not explain inconsistencies in Brazilian voting patterns on ‘pro-Arab’ issues, even on the same day. For example, Brazil’s delegation was absent from the General Assembly when voting took place on two Resolutions that sought to empower Palestine on 10 November 1975.[[96]](#footnote-96) These were Resolutions 3375 and 3376. The former sought to allow the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in any UN-led peace efforts ‘on an equal footing with other parties’ in the Middle East.[[97]](#footnote-97) Meanwhile, Resolution 3376 sought to further progress on the ‘Question of Palestine’, expressing concern that Palestinians had still not been granted the rights associated with self-determination including ‘national independence and sovereignty’.[[98]](#footnote-98) All three of these extremely pro-Arab Resolutions were voted upon on the very same day, but Brazil only voted for Resolution 3379 (declaring Zionism to be a form of racism). In short, Brazil’s actions were not as ‘pro-Arab’ as the ‘Arab oil’ alternative explanation suggests; this alternative explanation has difficulty accounting for why Brazil voted in favor of Resolution 3379, but not Resolutions 3375 and/or 3376, despite all three Resolutions being spearheaded by Arab states. The account offered in the paper provides more analytical leverage for understanding why Brazil voted for UN General Assembly Resolution 3379, in direct defiance of American instructions.

*Alternative explanation 2: ideology*

Another explanation is that ideology—not subjective, affectively-laden values—was the key factor explaining why Brazil voted in favor of Resolution 3379 and defied the US.

‘Ecumenical and responsible pragmatism’ has come to be known as the official ideology of the Geisel government’s foreign policy.[[99]](#footnote-99) As part of this foreign policy, there was a deliberate move away from what had historically been referred to as ‘automatic alignment’ with the United States.[[100]](#footnote-100) This was intended to give Brazil more flexibility in its foreign relations and allow it to pursue a more independent foreign policy.

The problem with this explanation is that it does not help us understand why Brazil completely reversed its planned course of action relating to the Resolution after receiving the American note. This alternative explanation is unable to account for why Brazil did not simply abstain when the Resolution was tabled in the General Assembly. My account provides a better understanding of this development: offenses to particular values strongly incline actors to take action to correct offenses to their subjective, affectively-laden values. These values can be volatile and, when violated, drive actors to respond in ways that they would otherwise have done.

Likewise, one could argue, as the Chief of the Military Office in the Geisel Government Cabinet did, that voting in favor of Resolution 3379 in a bid to defy the US was actually a *betrayal* of ecumenical and responsible pragmatism. He states that ‘from the perspective of “responsible pragmatism”, the Brazilian vote was also a mistake’.[[101]](#footnote-101) After all, prior to American meddling, Geisel had decided to abstain on Resolution 3379, a decision which could be seen as the one most consistent with the doctrine of ecumenical and responsible pragmatism. An abstention could be seen as keeping Brazil ‘out’ of a matter which was not integral to its foreign policy goals. Was voting for or abstaining on Resolution 3379 most compatible with Brazilian ideology? This question itself might point to the indeterminacy of accounts that stress ideology more generally. Ideology is itself a vague analytic concept, while specific ideologies are often extremely flexible and malleable. Indeed, any and all behaviors might have been compatible—and justifiable—in terms of ‘ecumenical and responsible pragmatism’. An explanation which is compatible with all possible outcomes provides limited analytical insight.

*Alternative explanation 3: was really Brazil a junior partner of the US?*

The final alternative explanation would simply be to declare that Brazil was *not* a junior partner of the United States, nor did it want to be. According to the logic of this explanation, Brazilian defiance of the US was simply a way of asserting and signaling its lack of interest in such a partnership. However, the evidence suggests that Brazilian policymakers did not totally reject any and all kinds of hierarchical relationship to the United States. Rather, Brazil attempted to promote a certain kind of superordinate-junior partner relationship while rejecting other forms.

As the case study illustrated, there were indeed certain types of subordination that Brazil found unacceptable. Silveira wrote a note to President Geisel concerning the US-Brazil bilateral relationship a few months after Resolution 3379 was passed, articulating Brazil’s willingness to follow the US but not be subordinated to it. Silveira argued that ‘it is worth highlighting the distinction between leadership and command’. ‘The former’, he outlined, ‘has ethical content and is exercised between *equals*’. Meanwhile, ‘the latter… involves a relationship of subordination’. Brazil would ‘accept that the US has through its own operational capacity, the role of leader of the Western world. Brazil does not accept, however, American leadership divorced from ethics, resulting in command’.[[102]](#footnote-102) This is entirely consistent with the theoretical account developed in this paper. Silveira makes it clear that American command—like that which manifested in the ‘American note’ in the case study above—was simply unacceptable because it represented ‘leadership divorced from ethics’. Such actions were understood to violate Brazil’s values (or what Silveira calls ‘ethics’) and were simply unacceptable to Brazil.

And, while Silveira explicitly states that Brazilian subordination under the US was unacceptable, his distinction between ‘leadership’ and ‘command’ qualifies this assertion. Brazil accepted US leadership and therefore, logically, committed or acquiesced to being a follower of the United States. Likewise, Silveira made it clear that Brazil considered itself part of the Western world, of which the US was the leader.[[103]](#footnote-103) However, Brazil would not accept certain types of subordination—‘command’—which it considered a violation of its subjective, affectively-laden values. American insistence on making Brazil vote against Resolution 3379 was a case of the type of subordination that offended these values and so, as per the theoretical argument developed in this paper, it is unsurprising that Brazil would actively resist such overtures.

Likewise, in February 1976, just a few months after voting in favor of Resolution 3379, Brazil signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United States. Henry Kissinger—one of the chief architects of the MoU—understood the document as establishing a ‘special relationship’ between the US and Brazil. Scholars of hierarchy frequently understand such ‘special relationships’ as a type of hegemon-junior partner relationship.[[104]](#footnote-104) Brazil did not entirely reject its hierarchical relationship with the United States, but rather it tried to promote a certain form of superordinate-junior partner relationship, while seeking to reject other forms.

**Conclusion**

This paper has offered an account of how subjective, affectively-laden values can influence how and why junior partners deliberately disobey their superordinates in hierarchical international orders. In doing so, it sought to expand and build upon David Lake’s theoretical framework for understanding hierarchy in world politics. The paper’s main argument is that subordinate disobedience can be provoked by hegemonic actions that are perceived to insult the pride, honor, and dignity of the junior partners. As a response, junior partners will disobey their superordinate. Disobedience serves as both a corrective to the perceived offense and as a means to ensure that further breaches of those values do not reoccur. I illustrated these dynamics by showing how they provide a compelling explanation of why Brazil voted in favor of UN Resolution 3379.

The factors that the paper theorizes and highlights for understanding junior partner disobedience provide lessons for US policymakers today. The resurgence of populism and militarism in contemporary politics is likely to bring leaders into power across the globe who are themselves incredibly proud and sensitive to how their country is treated on the world stage. Heeding the lessons from this paper can help US policymakers and other global leaders ensure ‘slam dunk’ cases of compliance are not turned into ‘own goals’. In a world increasingly polarized and divided,[[105]](#footnote-105) avoiding these ‘own goals’ is critical.

This paper is meant as an exploratory first cut into how these types of affective factors shape authority relations between superordinates and junior partners in world politics. There are undoubtedly other ways that subjective, affectively-laden values influence—and have influenced—superordinate and junior partner relations. For example, worries about ‘national honor’ precipitating an uprising in Cuba were central to the United States abrogating the Platt Amendment to the Cuban constitution in the 1930s.[[106]](#footnote-106) Further research could examine how superordinate respect for and sensitivity to junior partner ideas about pride, honor, and dignity has fostered order where hegemons might not have otherwise been able to do so. Likewise, further work might explore how material goods are used by superordinates to ‘make up for’ violating the junior partner’s pride or honor.

This paper’s theoretical arguments and case study also have implications for our understanding of international hierarchy and authority relations more generally. The exercise of international authority is certainly contingent on a range of factors. Lake’s account—and those that build upon it—have convincingly shown that junior partners accept their subordinate position because they benefit materially. This is almost certainly the case most of the time. Violations of junior partner’s pride, honor, and dignity, however, can undermine superordinate authority. Being authoritative means being conscious of the limits that can undermine that authority. This paper has presented another set of factors that superordinates—like the United States—ought to be deeply conscious of when exercising authority.

1. Yohanan Manor, *To Right a Wrong: The Revocation of the UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 Defaming Zionism* (Shengold Books, 1997), 18-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Andrew Hurrell, *The Quest for Autonomy: The Evolution of Brazil’s Role in the International System* (Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão, 2013), 301 fn. 668. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Hugo de Andrade Abreu, *O Outro Lado do Poder* (Nova Fronteira, 1979), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Walder de Goés, *O Brasil do General Geisel: Estudo do processo de tomada de decisão no regime militar-burocrático* (Nova Fronteira, 1978), 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. United Nations General Assembly (1975) ‘Elimination of all forms of racial discrimination’, 10 November 1975, A/RES/3379. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Antônio Azeredo da Silveira, *Azeredo da Silveira: Um Depoimento*, ed. Matias Spektor (Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 2010), 126. Abreu, *O Outro Lado do Poder*, 51; Goés, *O Brasil do General Geisel*, 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. David A. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (Cornell University Press, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. In his own words, Lake articulates that 'I maintain that at its root, authority rests on the largely material exchange of order for compliance and legitimacy. If the ambition is to understand hierarchy in the modern world, I do not believe that ideas and norms are a particularly promising avenue down which to travel'. Ibid., xi. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. US Consulate in Rio de Janeiro to State Department, ‘Reaction to US note on Brazilian Vote in UN condemning Zionism’, 25 October 1975. Document number: 1975RIODE03495. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid., 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. For a very selective snippet of this growing subfield, see Emma Hutchison and Roland Bleiker, "Theorizing emotions in world politics," *International Theory* 6, no. 3 (2014); Grant Dawson, "Classical Realism, Status, and Emotions: Understanding the Canada/Saudi Arabia Dispute and Its Implications for Global Politics," *Global Studies Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (2021); Karl Gustaffson and Todd H. Hall, "The Politics of Emotions in International Relations: who gets to feel what, whose emotions matter, and the “history problem” in Sino-Japanese relations," *International Studies Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (2021); Neta C Crawford, "The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships," *International Security* 24, no. 4 (2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Janice Bially Mattern and Ayşe Zarakol, "Hierarchies in World Politics," *International Organization* 70, no. 3 (2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton University Press, 2011); Evelyn Goh, *The Struggle for Order: Hegemony, Hierarchy, and Transition in Post-Cold War East Asia* (Oxford University Press, 2013); J. C. Sharman, "International hierarchies and contemporary imperial governance: A tale of three kingdoms," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 2 (2013); Michael Mastanduno, "Partner Politics: Russia, China, and the Challenge of Extending US Hegemony after the Cold War," *Security Studies* 28, no. 3 (2019); G. John Ikenberry and Daniel H. Nexon, "Hegemony Studies 3.0: The Dynamics of Hegemonic Orders," *Security Studies* 28, no. 3 (2019); Andrew Phillips, *How the East was Won: Barbarian Conquerors, Universal Conquest and the Making of Modern Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Sharman, "International hierarchies and contemporary imperial governance," 195. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, 61. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*; Evelyn Goh, "Contesting Hegemonic Order: China in East Asia," *Security Studies* 28, no. 3 (2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ibid., 138-39. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Ibid., 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid., 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Ibid., 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid., 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Ibid., 32; On the notion of 'exit', see Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Harvard University Press, 1970), Ch. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ibid., 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. For a selective snippet, see Hutchison and Bleiker, "Theorizing emotions in world politics."; Emma Hutchison, *Affective Communities in World Politics: Collective Emotions After Trauma* (Cambridge University Press, 2016); Todd H. Hall, *Emotional Diplomacy: Official Emotion on the International Stage* (Cornell University Press, 2015); Gustaffson and Hall, "The Politics of Emotions in International Relations." [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Todd H. Hall, "On Provocation: Outrage, International Relations, and the Franco–Prussian War," *Security Studies* 26, no. 1 (2017): 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Deborah Welch Larson and Alexei Shevchenko, "Status Seekers: Chinese and Russian responses to US primacy," *International Security* 34, no. 4 (2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Todd H. Hall, "Dispute inflation," *European Journal of International Relations* 27, no. 4 (2021). [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Reinhard Wolf, "Debt, dignity, and defiance: Why Greece went to the brink," *Review of International Political Economy* 25, no. 6 (2018): 836. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Barry O’Neill, *Honor, Symbols, and War* (University of Michigan Press, 1999); Reinhard Wolf, "Respect and disrespect in international politics: the significance of status recognition," *International Theory* 3, no. 1 (2011); Carsten-Andreas Schulz and Cameron G. Thies, "Status cues and normative change: How the Academy Awards facilitated Chile's gender identity law," *Review of International Studies* 50, no. 1 (2023); Wolf, "Why Greece went to the brink." [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Joslyn Barnhart, *The Consequences of Humiliation: Anger and Status in World Politics* (Cornell University Press, 2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Schulz and Thies, "Status cues and normative change: How the Academy Awards facilitated Chile's gender identity law." [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations*; Goh, *The Struggle for Order*, 75. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Wolf, "Why Greece went to the brink," 837. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Oded Löwenheim and Gadi Heimann, "Revenge in international politics," *Security Studies* 17, no. 4 (2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Wolf, "Why Greece went to the brink," 837. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Hall, "Dispute inflation." [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
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