

# CIVIL SOCIETY, MIDDLE POWERS, AND R2P: AN ANALYSIS OF CANADA'S RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS IN DARFUR

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This article addresses the question of why Canada has taken initiatives on a number of issues related to human rights and human security, but has not provided strong international leadership to resolve the grave humanitarian crisis in the Western Sudanese region of Darfur, despite intense lobbying by civil society groups. Why has Canada not demonstrated leadership on this issue? Why were civil society groups campaigning on different issues more successful in influencing Canada's foreign policy? Two concepts developed by social movement researchers can help to answer these questions: the structure of political opportunities and framing. When civil society groups frame their causes in ways that resonate with national and international foreign policy priorities, and when they have allies in key positions in government, they are much more likely to join forces with governments and to influence their policy.

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## INTRODUCTION

Middle powers are defined as non-nuclear powers that are politically and economically significant actors and that enjoy respect in the international community.<sup>1</sup> They are "good international citizens with the resources and motivation to focus on complex global issues such as persistent conflict and Third World poverty,"<sup>2</sup> and they take initiative on issues that the great powers are reluctant to address. Middle powers are often key allies for global civil society; scholars who are interested in the relationship between middle powers and global civil society have argued that "middle powers are developing beyond their conflicted historic role as the lieutenants of the great powers and the selective champions of peace and justice, and entering creative high-impact partnerships with powerful coalitions of non-state actors."<sup>3</sup> They have also maintained that many middle powers have developed the role and the identity