

Korea's Middle Power Diplomacy for Human Security: A Global and Regional Approach*

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This study aims to discuss characteristics and limits of Korea's human security-oriented policies in global and regional dimensions as a core tool of identifying itself middle power country. Having recognized a 'global-regional divide' in Korea's positions and leverage, the paper argues that its middle power diplomacy should distinguish the global and regional levels in planning strategies. The paper also argues that it is more realistic for Korea to pursue soft power to induce support and agreement from other states rather than hard power to muddle through regional power competition. Yet, given the possibility where its endeavor can be thwarted by its the regional dynamics of the great power politics, it is equally important for Korea to secure a sizable amount of hard power, like financial and military might. Taking the case of the human security diplomacy, which is a distinctive example of soft power strategies, the paper reviews what issues and challenges have been in Korea's quest for middle power leadership on the human security agenda, as well as to evaluate whether the country's efforts positively or adversely affect its diplomatic status as a middle power. The cases of Canada, Australia, and Japan are examined so that we may draw a lesson for Korea's middle power diplomacy. All three countries actively pursue soft power diplomacy, including the substantive contribution to human security agenda, for the sake of their international contribution and national interest. While Australia and Canada have achieved their expected objectives, Japan does not seem to have done so.

Keywords: *Korean's Middle Power Diplomacy, Soft Power, Human Security, Australia, Canada, Japan*

1. THE ISSUE

Middle power diplomacy has become a useful and practical strategy for less powerful countries in the international relations of the 21st century. Despite the lack of conceptual consensus over the term 'middle power,' an increasing number of countries, which lie between big and small powers, aspire to become normative mediators and seek compromising positions in various global disputes. They also try to expand their influence and recognition in regional and global governance.

Having been applied to the most renowned examples of middle powers such as Canada and Australia, countries' capability, function, and behavior are largely regarded as three primary factors in identifying the traits and status of middle powers status. Based on these factors, middle power diplomacy can be characterized as foreign policies of states that respect international norms and universal principles, pursue to build a coalition of 'like-minded' states, and attempt to serve as an instrumental bridge between developed and developing countries (Cooper, Higgott and Nossal, 1993; Beason, 2011). They are not revisionist states that challenge the status quo in the international order, and instead seek 'niche diplomacy' by which they specialize and concentrate their resources in specific area best able to generate

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desirable outcomes (Henrikson, 2004; Cooper, 1997).

In case of Korea, the academic and policy community has increasingly recognized the significance of middle power diplomacy as the country became the first non-western state to host the G20 Summit in 2010 and host the Nuclear Security Summit in 2012. Korea has taken an initiative in launching MIKTA in 2013, which is a consultative organization among middle powers, Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey, and Australia. These developments reflect that Korea would take on a role as a constructive rule-maker through mediating the developed and developing world and bridging the West and non-West, instead of remaining as a passive rule-taker. With the increase in numerous transnational issues that cannot be adequately addressed by big powers, there have been growing opportunities for relatively less powerful states including Korea to act more proactively.

However, four big powers in Northeast Asia, the US, China, Russia, and Japan, are heating up the regional hegemonic race among national interest-driven 'strong men,' rendering Korea's geopolitical situation to be further complicated and challenging. Korea has to face China's retaliatory economic measures in the wake of the US deployment of anti-missile defense system, the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), the thorny relationship with Japan over the statues of comfort women and other historical disputes, and North Korea's growing nuclear and missile threats. In addition, President Donald Trump's faux-pas diplomacy under the banner of 'America First' policy agitates the post-war international liberal order, generating far-reaching regional implications for the Korean peninsula. After several months of the leadership vacuum due to the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye, Moon Jae-in, a progressive who has long advocated the balancing diplomacy between the US and China and the diplomatic engagement with North Korea, was elected as the country's new president in May 2017. While Moon and Trump seem to have adopted a pragmatist approach by jointly emphasizing the strength of their bilateral alliance, particularly over how to deal with North Korea, Moon's desire for dialogues with a defiant North could strain Seoul's relations with Washington that plans to pursue a tougher pressure strategy on Pyongyang.

Indeed, the recent complicated and volatile geopolitical and geostrategic dynamics are likely to obstruct the scope and maneuverability of Korea's middle power strategies, especially in the international relations of Northeast Asia. Korea's diplomatic capacity is restricted. Korea finds it hard to develop its own strategic thoughts on middle power statesmanship and build coalitions with likely-minded states. At the regional level, the country needs to be wary of the intentions of big powers, the complex relations with its neighboring states, and precarious and uncertain behaviors of North Korea. In contrast, Korea is well-received as a full-blown middle power on the global stage as many developing countries have benchmarked its economic success and the dynamic development of Korean democracy.

Against this background, this paper aims to theoretically and empirically observe the general characteristics and restrictions of Korea's middle power diplomacy. Having recognized a 'global-regional divide' in Korea's positions and leverage, the paper argues that its middle power diplomacy should distinguish the global and regional levels in planning strategies. The paper also argues that it is more realistic for Korea to pursue soft power, which is defined as "the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants without force or coercion" (Nye, 2005: 7), in order to induce support and agreement from other states rather than hard power to muddle through regional power competition. The strengthening of soft power could supplement Korea's relative deficit in hard power, especially in Northeast Asia.

As the notion of middle power diplomacy is relatively new in the Korean policy and academic discourses, the paper intends to put an emphasis upon the domestic discussions upon accomplishments and shortcomings of the country's middle power strategies. It should be meaningful to compile the arguments and discussion of Korean scholars and policy makers over this topic, which will in turn facilitate advance this concept into a more disciplined and operational policy agenda in the Korean context.

The paper then takes the case of the human security diplomacy, which is a distinctive example of an implementation of soft power strategies, to review what issues and challenges have been laid out in Korea's quest for middle power leadership on the human security agenda, as well as evaluate whether the country's efforts positively or adversely affect its diplomatic status as a middle power. While the human security diplomacy has been actively employed by Canada, Australia, and Japan, all for their international contribution and national interest, the first two appear to have achieved the expected objectives to a substantial extent, but Japan does seem not have done so. A closer scrutiny of these divergent outcomes can provide some conclusions that may give a valuable lesson for Korea's middle power diplomacy. Theoretical and policy implications for Korea's middle power diplomacy in a rapidly changing global and regional landscape are discussed in the final section.

2. THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS ON MIDDLE POWER DIPLOMACY

2.1. The Concept of Middle Power and its Theoretical Perspective

Theoretically, the definition of middle power is yet to form a consensus as numerous opinions by scholars differ. The meaning and the role of middle power have been differently applied depending on the location and the situation of the times. However, when considering the literal meaning, the term 'middle power' describes a country possessing a midsize power compared to great powers and weak states; and a mediating position due to its bridge-like position among the nation-states. Overall, the characteristics, capacities, functions, and behaviors of a country are comprehensively assessed to be acknowledged as a middle power state.

In pursuit of the origin of the definition, J.G. Herder in 1802 used a term 'mittelmächte,' which, in German, means a middle class and a state that is geographically in the middle (Meyer, 1955). The research on 'middle power in international politics' started from Carsten Holbraad during the early 1970s. In order to criticize the simple dichotomy between great powers and the rest, Holbraad emphasized the importance of mid-sized state and argued that the role of a state depends on the power of a state. In other words, he attempted to evaluate the function of certain states by observing physical capacities like one state's economy, military, and population, and defined states that are situated between great powers and weak states as middle powers. In addition to Holbraad, Laura Neack was among those who categorized middle powers based on realist perspectives by applying 'resource powers' like military, economy, and resource endowment (Holbraad, 1971; Neack, 1992). In comparison, Giovanni Botero distinguished states based on power under the category of empire, middle kingdom, and small kingdom. Yet, structural perspectives based on realism are criticized for being too general to observe the constant changes the states go through in the international system (Y Sohn, 2016).

On the other hand, liberalist scholars emphasize the 'middlepowermanship,' which is

diplomatic behavior and intentions of certain states, as the key factor. The initial effort was by Charles de Montesquieu, a French philosopher during the early 18th century. He categorized big, middle, small-sized states and tried to link them to monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy in order to observe the national traits (Y Sohn, 2016). The liberal perspective tends to focus on the attributes of middle power by defining states that participate actively in global issue areas like human rights, peace, and the environment and respect international norms, soft power, and multilateralism as middle powers (Cooper, Higgot and Nossal, 1993).

The notion of middle power was publicly introduced with the closing of World War II. Unsatisfied with war strategies dictated by great powers, Canada, Australia and Nordic countries sought for opportunities to assert their positions in the United Nations by advocating the concepts and roles of middle power (Holmes, 1967). However, because the international society was divided by the ideological confrontation during the Cold War, the role of middle power was meager while neutralism and nonalignment diplomacy were actively employed as a diplomatic strategy by developing and underdeveloped nations. The first effort to cooperate among the middle powers was since 1983 when the ‘Western Middle Powers and Global Poverty’ project was initiated. The participants included Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, Canada, and Denmark. Through the publications of the projects, issues related to human rights emerged as the most instrumental subjects upon which middle powers could effectively exert their influence. (Pratt, 1990).

Meanwhile, middle powers are countries that have the power to assert their influence in the regional settings and have the intention to enthusiastically advocate multilateral cooperation with the countries that share similar values and purposes. To operationalize their intention, they require economic and/or military capacities that should be large enough to exert regional influence. In addition, middle powers are willing to take a role of mediator based on their ‘positional power’ from the structural power vacuum in international relations. In other words, these states assess its positional power through relational configuration formed by sustained and complex inter-state interaction. It strategically utilize such a position to function as a mediator or a broker by identifying one or two issue areas that could fill in the structural blank from the relational configuration (SB Kim, 2011).

In terms of the traits and behavior of agents, middle powers are neither strong nor weak in the international relations. It is difficult to designate which certain nations belong to this category, but it is widely accepted that Australia, Canada, Norway, and Sweden fall into it. Some scholars recognize non-western states like Turkey, Thailand, Mexico, and Argentina as middle powers (Jordaan, 2013), while others categorize the vanquished nations that accomplished economic development after the war, i.e. Germany and Japan, as middle powers (Soeya, 2006). The implication from commonalities of these states is that the status of middle power is determined comprehensively by the combination of physical capacities, international standing and reputation, relational power structure at the domestic and international level, and the leadership and credentials of decision makers.

2.2. Korean Theoretical Discourses on Middle Power Diplomacy

In recent years, there have been various academic efforts to find the Korean context of middle power diplomacy and seek theoretical and policy-wise implications. It is argued that recent US-China competition in Northeast Asia provides both challenges and opportunities for Korea to generate a new diplomatic strategy and the country should develop a more sophisticated middle power diplomacy by actively ‘double-dipping’ between the two great

powers.¹ Some argue that public diplomacy to advance middle power leadership is one of the key diplomatic strategies, along with the Korea-US alliance and Korea-China strategic Partnership. For this, 'mini-lateral' cooperative diplomacy among key middle powers is advocated for effective implementation of middle power strategies (WS Kim, 2016; CS Chun, 2017).

Academic efforts have been also given to finding Korea's position on networks that are formed by interactions between agents (i.e. states), rather than recognizing the middle power identity as a state's traits or behavioral tendencies. Those who emphasize the importance of network power argue that the structural position of Korea in the international system is critical to conduct successful middle power diplomacy (SB Kim, 2011). Middle powers are capable of planning various autonomous concepts by aligning with the states that have similar capacities and objectives and could play a discernible role in reorganizing international order in the wake of the rise of China (SJ Kang, 2015). It is also pointed out that even though Korea is a member of the OECD and has reached the world's top 10-12 economic and military power status, it was not until recently that the country was largely recognized as middle power and has pursued vigorous middle power strategies (SJ Lee, 2012). This trend reflects that network power is more important than conventional economic and military power in middle power diplomatic strategy (SB Kim, 2015; SJ Lee, 2012).

In addition, those who argue that network power comes from public diplomacy through which countries could obtain more diplomatic influences and opportunities emphasize that Korea should simultaneously implement public and government-led diplomacy to plan foreign policies from a long-term perspective and become a role-model middle power state (Y Sohn, 2012). Accordingly, Korea's middle power diplomacy should identify agendas that the country can best perform between big and small powers and shed light to its advantageous position through close partnership with other middle powers. Moreover, it is important to diversify the channels of communication from official channel among government bodies to comprehensive coalition among peoples of middle powers. While the US-style conventional top-down model of centralized public diplomacy has its merit, it is important to develop a new public diplomacy model that entails a more horizontal and interdependent network style. Also, it is equally noteworthy that cooperative and consultative relations with various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are as important as close coalition with like-minded countries (SJ Lee, 2016).

More importantly, a consistent pursuit of middle power policies regardless of who holds office should be assured in order to foster trust and support from the international community. For example, it was argued that President Lee Myong-bak's 'Green Growth' policy was neglected, if not replaced, by succeeding Park Geun-hye's 'Creative Economy,' and 'NAPCI' (Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative), while all these policies and initiatives were designed for enhancing Korea's international status and influences. The success of middle power diplomacy in issue areas like international development, transnational environmental issues, and technological innovation depends on the consistency of visions and policies that go beyond a regime. There are also concerns that democratic advancement in the Korean society hinders a relative autonomy of the government due to

¹ "International Power Dynamics and Challenges for the Korean Peninsula in the G2 era: The US-China Rivalry won't Cause Military Clashes and Korea Requires refined 'Yangdari (Fence-Sitting)' Diplomacy" Special Talks by Youngsun Ha and Jongwook Chung, *The Donga Ilbo*, November 9, 2012.

the big influence of the civil society. When certain interest groups become dominant in the state-society relations, public media and certain interest groups can disrupt the government's implementation of foreign policy objectives (SB Kim, 2015).²

1.3. The Characteristics and Limits of Middle Power Diplomacy

One of the most recognized features of middle power diplomacy is a so-called 'niche diplomacy' as middle power states find specific issue areas that are not and cannot be dictated by great powers and concentrate their full efforts on it to take relative advantage (Cooper, 1997). Former Australian foreign minister Gareth Evans was a pioneer and champion of this strategy since the mid-1980s. The newly developed nations especially favored this strategy in order to bolster their international confidence and advance their international reputation (Evans, 2012). In this case, middle powers should acknowledge their relative limits of resources and technologies, understand the difficulty in taking over the leading role in certain fields, and require patience in advancing mutually cooperative policies in the longer-term perspective. The reasons why middle powers opt for inter-state cooperation are as following.

First, middle power diplomacy aims to expand the country's influence through coalitions with like-minded states. Strong bond and confidence among middle powers tend to strengthen when they are related with protectionism of great powers, chaos in international institutions, or distrust of the hegemonic states. Middle powers would try to cooperate with one another to accomplish their diplomatic goals through international organizations or regional multilateral frameworks. For instance, Korea, Spain, Mexico, Italy, and Canada established the 'Coffee Club' to prevent G4 countries (Germany, Japan, India, and Brazil) from becoming permanent members of the United Nations (UN) Security Council.³ Korea-led consultative organization, MIKTA, under the Park administration, can be also regarded as middle power diplomacy scheme that rallies cooperation among similar sized states through coalition building, although its future is uncertain as a new administration has taken over in Korea. In general, middle powers prefer multilateralism since it decreases the possibilities that they will be bullied by great powers while it increases their leverage through collective actions.

Second, middle powers recognize their inferior position in the area of hard power compared to great powers but utilize soft power like norms and attractiveness to become responsible and recognizable actors in international society. In particular, they try to contribute to global issues like climate change, peacekeeping and conflict prevention activities, official development assistance (ODA), and refugee protection. They also attempt to play the agenda-setting and norm-spreading roles in humanitarian assistance and

² In addition, numerous theoretical approaches to Korea's middle power diplomacy can be recognized: an explanation in terms of the units of analysis or functions (CW Kim, 2013; SH Lee, 2009); an examination as a means to perform normative diplomacy (JS Kim, 2013); an approach in terms of values and methods of dealing with global issues (MK Koo, 2015; TE Song, 2015; YW Lee, 2015; BS Shin, 2015); a strategy linked to regional integration (YJ Choi, 2009; HS Yoo, 2011); a comparative analysis with other middle powers (JK Kim, 2014). All these domestic discourses of middle power diplomacy provide useful instruments wherefrom academic and policy implications drawn.

³ United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, "Uniting for Consensus" Group of States Introduces Text on Security Council Reform to General Assembly, July 26, 2005, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2005/ga10371.doc.htm>.

international development (SJ Lee, 2014). These fields are more favorable to middle power states because they enjoy relative advantage over great powers in terms of ethical legitimacy and persuasive power.

Third, middle power diplomacy starts from the recognition that in addition to physical abilities and assets, attraction is one of the most important factors that measures national power. They prefer to utilize public diplomacy to advance communications and sympathize with people of other nations through diverse programs and to foster a favorable circumstance on the global stage (SB Kim, 2011).

Despite various advantages of middle power diplomacy, these countries could face limitations and challenges as they strive to take initiatives in global affairs. Most of all, since there is no global consensus on the concept of middle power, any countries can declare themselves as middle powers and cause confusions and disputes in organizing the characteristics and traits of 'self-designated middle powers.' Furthermore, the issue of membership could emerge as a controversy when a coalition or consultative body of middle powers is made. For instance, when launching MIKTA, there was a controversy over whether to include Canada, which is a member state of the G7, into MIKTA or not. It is virtually impossible to be either wholly objective or politically neutral when determining the boundaries of such coalition.

Although the diplomatic circumstance is more auspicious for a middle power state in multilateral settings rather than bilateral settings where it needs to directly face great powers on its own, it is also hard to make decisions in one voice with numerous nations with diverse priorities and interests. It is highly difficult for a middle power not only to negotiate with other states over how to deal with issues and settle issue-related controversies, but also to cope with conflicting interests and situations of individual middle powers in multilateral fora. In addition, great powers' active engagement in both bilateral and multilateral diplomacy also challenges and weakens the leverage of middle power diplomacy. Great powers tend to pursue their own legitimacy through the UN and other transnational organizations, as well as exercise pressure on weak and middle powers through fiscal incentives or diplomatic pressures for their favor. Thus, middle powers are caught in a dilemma over how to take a leading role in certain areas since it may cause concern among great powers (SW Lee, 2015).

The logics and arguments that support middle powers' advantage in bridging other states and accumulating more ethical and normative legitimacy should not be taken for granted (YJ Choi, 2011). Such advantages would differ based on an individual state's diplomatic capability in contributing to international development and conflict resolution, and mediating the interests of both great powers and weak states. In other words, middle powers not only need specialists to engage in effective diplomacy, but also require generalists that can reconcile various fields. In order to do so, it requires heavy investments in both time and money. After all, great powers are far more capable of securing specialists and generalists.

To summarize, middle power diplomacy was initiated to secure diplomatic autonomy and increase leverage over great powers through coalitions and network building by Canada, Australia, and Nordic countries. Korea and other ASEAN nations tried to follow such paths as the late-runners. However, there are limitations in clarifying relations with great powers, supplying public goods to satisfy the global expectations, and aligning interests among like-minded states through issue networks. For middle powers to induce support from developing nations and cooperation from great powers, it should comprehensively review its capacity, resources, expertise, geopolitical traits, and major issue areas and expand mutual cooperation by thoroughly planning diplomatic goals, purposes, and strategies. Nevertheless, capacities to

find and manage new agenda and resources to support such activities are necessary in order to take leading roles in certain issue areas. Middle powers' pursuit of their goals could be stalled due to their limited resources and capabilities that fail to satisfy anticipated objectives.

Therefore, it is important to assess why cooperation is required for middle power diplomacy, when and how middle powers should cooperate, and what strategies are required for effective and sustainable middle power collaboration. Numerous countries have long strived to find commonalities and similar identities of middle powers. Recently states tend to find commonalities and cooperate through specific issues related to economy, culture, resource and others. The most representative example is the Cairns Group for Fair Trading Agricultural Exporters that is led by Australia. This group aims to fully liberalize the agricultural prices by exporting without any subsidies or tariffs to agricultural products. It has 15 members and was formed in 1986 in Cairns, Australia, before the negotiations for the Uruguay Round began.⁴ In case of the APEC, although great powers like the US participate, it was established after the Korea-Australia summit in 1989 when they successfully formed a consensus in forming a multilateral cooperative regime. This is a showcase for middle powers to successfully cooperate and take initiatives in achieving their intended objective in the midst of great power rivalry in the multilateral setting.

3. KOREA'S PURSUIT OF MIDDLE POWER DIPLOMACY: ACHIEVEMENTS AND LIMITS

Korea has accomplished both economic development and economic democratization in half a century to become a role model for underdeveloped and developing countries. However, until the early 1970s, Korea's national capacity was behind that of North Korea in all indicators including military power and economic well-being. The Korea-US alliance that was born out of the Korean War in 1953 became the mainstay of Korea's defense against North Korean aggressions.

As the capitalist and communist blocs sought détente in the early 1970s, Seoul and Pyongyang signed the Joint Communiqué in July 1972, the first official joint statement on the principles and methods for peaceful unification. Since the late 1970s that Korea started to far exceed North Korea in terms of economic and social development. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*, the public policy or practice of reforming and opening the political and economic system, provided an opportunity for the Roh Tae Woo administration in 1988 to propose a Asia Peace Consultation Conference including the US, the Soviet Union, China, Japan, and both Koreas (Schoff, 2006). His policy of 'Nordpolitik' with the demise of the Soviet bloc obtained the diplomatic recognition by China and Russia. Yet, it was unfeasible for Seoul to take an initiative in enforcing a policy toward North Korea and regional powers. This limitation continued to linger on when the succeeding Kim Administration proposed the establishment of Northeast Asian Security Dialogue (NEASED) as Seoul's regional strategies were largely pursued along the same vein of the US's East Asian policies.

Globally, however, with the enhancement in Korea's diplomatic capabilities and status, there were visible achievements such as the entry into the United Nations in 1991 and the OECD in 1996. In these processes, Korea became an active member of multilateral

⁴ The Cairns Group, "An Introduction," <http://cairnsgroup.org/Pages/Introduction.aspx>.

organizations and successfully transformed itself from a recipient state to a donor state within just half a century. Also, Korea has eagerly sought to take a bridging role between developed and developing nations.

The Kim Dae-Jung administration attempted to raise a 'Korean voice' in its great power relations at the regional level. President Kim actively put forward his visions to establish an East Asian community, which does not include the US, through establishing the non-governmental EAVG (East Asian Vision Group,) and the government-led EASG (East Asian Study Group).⁵ Moreover, Kim's effort to overcome the traditional US-Japan-Korean trilateral alliance was succeeded by the succeeding Roh Moo-Hyun administration's vision to become an East Asian hub state beyond the Korea-US alliance. The 'Sunshine Policy' of peaceful engagement with North Korea from 1998 and 2008 also reflected these two progressive presidents' aspirations to gain diplomatic leverage to autonomously deal with North Korea.

However, their policies toward North Korea and East Asia caused distrust of the US who considered their policies as having anti-alliance and anti-American elements. Washington blatantly opposed Roh's 'balancer in Northeast Asia' doctrine. China was also displeased with Roh's proposal of Korea as a new business hub for the region. Domestically, such policies engendered serious discrepancy and confrontation between conservatives and progressives. The confrontation has not only continued but has intensified until today. Credit should be given to these two progressive governments' intention and efforts to strengthen and exert its self-sufficient leverages in inter-Korea relations and regional power politics, but the lack of strategic understanding of the complexity of geopolitics, the insufficient domestic capacity to turn itself into a regional hub state, and the lack of leadership to persuade the international and domestic opposition resulted in a limited success of such attempts.

The Lee Myung-bak administration prioritized revitalizing the alliance with the US, recognizing the harsh reality that Korea still remains a 'Cold War Museum' with North Korea continuing to increase military provocation. The Korean wave driven by the increasing global popularity of Korean culture and the 'high-tech miracle' which boosted the country's soft power, while the Lee administration also energetically sought for middle power diplomacy under the slogan of 'Global Korea' and engaged in various multilateral meetings tackling global agendas. For example, during Lee's tenure, Korea joined OECD/DAC in 2009, became the first Asian country to host the G20 summit in 2010, and hosted the 4th High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011 and the 2nd Nuclear Security Summit in 2012.

The Park administration also championed middle power diplomacy by establishing MIKTA at the global level and promoting NAPCI at the regional level. The country firmly established its status as a middle power by accomplishing the 11th place in both economic and military powers (IMF, 2017; GFP, 2017). However, the actual vision and objectives for global and regional activities were unclear, causing controversial academic and policy debates on its practicality and effectiveness. Moreover, after Park's impeachment, most of her policies quickly lost the momentum and it remains to be seen if the newly-established progressive Moon Jae-in administration will scrap the regional and global agendas and policies of his ousted conservative predecessor.

The two previous conservative administrations sought various ways of strengthening Korea's middle power leverage and status, but both found it extremely difficult to overcome

⁵ EAVG was formed with experts from civil sectors of 13 countries in ASEAN+3; and EASG was formed with government officials.

geopolitical restraints due to the intensifying great power competition owing to the rise of China and the growing threats caused by North Korean missile and nuclear developments. Also, they were not successful in establishing follow-up measures and garnering public support to uphold the country's 'middlepowermanship' as a hosting nation in numerous significant international meetings. Korea has often found it difficult to pursue typical strategies of Western middle powers who seek roles as mediators and agenda setters due to its geopolitical limit; however the country's middle power strategies are different from those of emerging middle powers that are mostly regional powers and have authoritarian governments, opposed to democratic norms and universal principles such as human rights issues (Jordaan, 2003).

What is worse is that there exists a diplomatic dilemma on how to harmonize the strategic partnership with China and traditional alliance with the US, as China is challenging America's hegemonic status. If Korea is to function as a mediator between the US and China through balanced diplomacy, Korea's regional and international influence would be strong as ever. However, Korea is now caught between the US's pressure to take on a larger share of the defense burdens and China's retaliation against Korea's acceptance of THAAD deployment. This dilemma will not be easy to overcome even if the Korean president is capable and charismatic. Meanwhile, Korea needs to avoid falling into a trap-like situation of becoming 'a shrimp stuck between two whales.'

Considering that Korea's national interests are maximized when Northeast Asian region is in equilibrium, Korea needs to develop its middle power strategy based on establishing the 'core triangular' relations of both Korea-Japan-China and Korea-Japan-US relations. In search of such mini-lateral cooperation, enhancing the bilateral relations with Japan needs to be preceded (Rozman, 2007). These overlapping mini-lateral cooperative arrangements would provide better circumstances for Korea to seek for more options in performing middle power diplomacy rather than being caught hostage in bilateral relations with great powers. Such regional strategies can be understood in the context of post-Cold War 'regional collective security multilateralism' by which East Asian states overcome the US-led hub-and-spoke alliance. Those who argue that East Asian countries should be free from dichotic choices between hegemonic powers call for regional states to be open to choose partners based on issue areas, like 'choosing the US for security and China for economy,' and yet warn that these kinds of cooperation cannot be permanent and constant (Tow and Limaye, 2016). Therefore, Korea needs to establish its reputation as a responsible and advanced middle power by guaranteeing consistent policies to formulate a multilateral order both in the regional and global arenas regardless of administrative changes. By this way, Korea would be able to free itself from being sandwiched between the US and China and become a full-fledged middle power.

2. MIDDLE POWER LEADERSHIP IN HUMAN SECURITY AGENDA: LESSONS FROM AUSTRALIA, CANADA, AND JAPAN

The post-Cold War international community has been putting more emphasis on the significance of non-military, non-traditional threat to national, regional, and global security. Nontraditional security risks include threats to individual human beings that are caused by political, military, economic, environmental, and humanitarian problems both among states and within a state. Such risks, whether from violent armed conflict, governments' oppression

or incapacities, or unequal distribution of development, have imperiled the wellbeing, if not the survival itself, of individuals or specific groups. In this regard, the term 'human security,' which was publicized with the release of the UN Development Program (UNDP)'s *Human Development Report* in 1994, has become a major agenda for the discourse and practice of international relations in efforts to illuminate human rights abuse and other sources of human afflictions that were sidelined in the Cold War security agenda.

The concept of human security was more clearly materialized as Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy at the UN General Assembly in 1996 stated human security as a people-centered view of security that "includes security against economic privation, an acceptable quality of life, and a guarantee of fundamental human rights" (Axworthy, 1997: 184). He also emphasized human security as "a new measure of global security," which focuses on the safety of the individual through the respects for human rights, the rule of law, good governance, social justice, and environmentally sustainable development. Security between countries is necessary, but not sufficient enough to guard people's security (Axworthy, 1997).

Just as human security became a new form of Canadian foreign policy in the 1990s, several countries such as Australia, the Netherlands, and Norway have actively promoted human security agenda as niche areas of their middle diplomacy. In May 1998, Canada and Norway signed the Lysøen Declaration to enhance a bilateral cooperation and consultation for action on human security, which was developed into a multilateral network constituting 13 middle power states and several NGOs with the establishment of the Human Security Network in September in the same year (Small, 2001).

Diversification of global order and intensification of global interdependence, developing countries have gained more leverage in raising their voice in numerous international agenda. With the response to the global financial crisis in 2008-2009 and growing recognition that emerging-market states should more adequately engage in global economic governance, the Group of Twenty (G20), which is the premier international forum of the governments and central bank governors from 20 major economies, has emerged as a replacement for the narrow circle of the Group of Seven (G7) nations of industrialized democracies. It has been controversial if G20 is efficient and representative enough to evolve from a short-term crisis response to a more established mechanism of addressing longer-run challenges and if the role of the G7 is still to play a substantial role in global economic governance. Yet, the rise of the G20 reflects an increasing necessity of reforming the international system that conforms to the changing international situations. It also challenges the notion of middle powers as mere followers of big powers in global issues.

There is also a growing consensus that the middle power status would be highly efficient in tackling human security agenda. It is because middle powers could utilize their soft powers to persuade other countries more effectively because they enjoy relative ethical advantage over great powers. Behringer assessed the capacity of middle powers in pursuing human security agenda on the international stage characterized by American hegemony. Citing the cases of human security initiatives taken by like-minded Western middle powers, he argues that the success of these initiatives depends heavily upon the reaction of the US: either expressing a strong resistance or giving explicit or tacit consent based on its subjective consideration that the initiatives pose challenges to America's primary national interests (Behringer, 2012). Although it is debatable whether the US as a hegemon is the only object to be defied by middle power states in exercising their leadership in human security agenda, their middlepowermanship, by developing and prioritizing human security agenda enable

them to prove themselves not as followers of great powers, but as significantly important actors in the changing global security environments.

In this vein, it would be helpful for rising middle power states to learn lessons from the experiences of other advanced middle powers like Australia and Canada when they engage in humanitarian and security issues such as the environment, disease, refugees, and terrorism. Australia has been at the very forefront in the human rights issues in global society. Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, Australia sought for active engagement in spreading the values of human rights and democracy across the globe. To note, the leadership was highly important to sustain consistency in developing and implementing Australia's policies that boosted the country's middle power status throughout the cabinets under Prime Ministers Paul Keating (1991-1996) and during the Keating Cabinet of the 1990s and John Howard (1996-2007). Under the leadership of these two Prime Ministers, Australia has pursued multilateral and cooperative methods to expand its international influence and reputation in various issues including human rights and human security. As a result, Australia could heighten its reputation as a 'proactive power.' Upon the inauguration of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in 2007, Australia set 'pivotal power' as their key foreign policy. Rudd increased comprehensive and multilateral cooperation with Asian countries, emphasized middle power diplomacy through the United Nations and other international and regional institutions, and strongly advocated global contribution and the observance of universal norms (Ungerer, 2008). However, when Prime Minister Tony Abbott was inaugurated in 2013, the strong anti-immigrant policy, including the refusal of asylum seekers, initiated by the Liberal government succeeded in rallying support from the domestic citizen. This policy demoted Australia's reputation as a responsible country to inhumane country, resulting in damaging its traditional image as a cosmopolitan state and a model middle power.⁶ It seems that such stance would not change as the following Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull also holds similar stance to the previous cabinet.⁷

Canada, on the other hand, succeeded in proliferating international norms of human rights in global society. Canada, a middle power, was able to lead in setting the agenda and forming opinions, was that the issue Canada focused on was international norm. Canada's doctrine of human security became the most representative foreign policy during the second half of Lloyd Axworthy's tenure as the Canadian foreign minister from 1996 to 2000 (Small, 2016). Its formulation of human security agenda as its foreign policy objective started from such experience and confidence that Canada is well capable and adept with multilateralism and 'inventive' foreign policy (Bosold, 2007).

Nonetheless, as Prime Minister Stephen Harper from Conservative Party ruled for 10 years (2006-2015), Canada focused on traditional alliance policies to strengthen its conventional security, and shied away from humanitarian issues and R2P. Although "the prime reason for the U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan was to destroy the terrorist network responsible for the September 11 attack and topple the Taliban regime" (Jalali, 2007: 23), Harper administration allegedly sent its troops for combat purposes as a member of NATO. As the war intensified, more news about civilian casualties caused by Canadian forces fighting in Afghanistan as well as the casualties suffered by the Canadian forces were

⁶ "Tony Abbott Sticks to 'stop the boats; in face of claims people smugglers paid," *The Guardian*, June 14, 2015.

⁷ "Australia and Human Security: Why Turnbull Has to 'Do a Merkel,'" *The Diplomat*, February 15, 2016.

reported in huge numbers. As a result, the government faced fierce criticisms from both the domestic and international audiences. Although Canada built better relations through fighting side by side with the US its traditional ally in the war on terror, such actions jeopardized its international reputation as a 'helpful fixer', 'honest broker' and 'international do-gooder' (Cooper, 1997).

In October 2015, the Liberal Party succeeded in winning the Cabinet, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was inaugurated. It is predicted that Canada would return to humanitarian issues. What is more promising is that Prime Minister Trudeau declared that it would accept additional Syrian refugees. The international society is now expecting a return of the "multicultural and compassionate" Canada.⁸ Already, as a year has passed by, there are a series of positive feedbacks to Trudeau's foreign policy. Most of the comments by the media and experts express both hopes and concerns for his foreign policies.⁹ Canada's aggressively open acceptance of Syrian refugees and engagement in global issues could be the beginning of its return to a responsible middle power but it remains to be seen as Canada's relations with the US still continue to linger as the biggest liability and concern for Canada's foreign policy.

The active engagement of Japan in the arenas of human security also provides some lessons for middle power states' roles in global and regional affairs, particularly in terms of financial contribution to human security policies. Notably, Japan's contribution to human security is largely based on its financial contributions both regionally and globally. Such engagement to human security is mostly in forms of funds and ODA. In terms of multilateral cooperation, Japan initiated the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS). Since 1999, the UNTFHS has committed over \$350 million to projects in over 70 countries around the world (UNDP, 2017). Japan's bilateral ODAs have been also provided to developing nations to improve human conditions (Konrad, 2006).

However, there are clear shortcomings in Japan's human security diplomacy since international recognition for Japan's huge financial contribution to various human security initiatives has been meager, compared to its actual contributions. As Japan's military structure is exclusively for self-defense, stipulated by the post-war Japan's 'pacifist' constitution of 1947, particularly Article 9, Japan has attentively sought a reactive approach in security and diplomacy, focusing on peaceful means of foreign policies, such as foreign aid, economic and financial investment and contribution, and cooperation in the non-military range of action. In this vein, Tokyo's human security diplomacy, together with its environmental diplomacy and global peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities, have been an operational tool for expanding the country's international influence and reputation by emphasizing its 'comprehensive' role in global and regional security. Also, Japan has distanced itself from other middle power's activities such as Canada's emphasis on the freedom from fear approach, arguing the freedom from fear approach as "justification for the use of force in situations with massive human rights violations" could be controversial depending on individual states' positions and views

⁸ "We are Back: New Canadian PM Justin Trudeau Promises to Restore his Country's Reputation as Compassionate and Constructive," *South China Morning Post (Luxehomes)*, October 21, 2015, <http://www.scmp.com/news/world/article/1870607/were-back-new-canadian-pm-justin-trudeau-promises-restore-his-countrys>.

⁹ "Trudeau's foreign policy vs. Harper's: There is little difference," *The Globe and Mail*, March 8, 2017, (URL=<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/trudeau-taking-foreign-policy-cue-from-tory-playbook/article34241539/>).

(Atanassova-Cornelis, 2005: 66).

Although human security has been Japan's proactive foreign policy agenda as it prioritizes humanitarian and non-military security issues, its focus on human needs and human development rather than civilian protection from persecution and armed conflicts has often been regarded as being somewhat vague and impractical policies that do not adequately reflect the reality of global and regional human security challenges. There are also domestic criticisms that chide the Japanese government being too international for such human security issues. After the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake/Tsunami incident, up to 300,000 people were internally displaced from their homes. Unlike its devoted financial contribution to the international society, domestic efforts to resolve similar crises were criticized as being highly inadequate (FGC, 2012). The case of Japan illustrates that there it is important to maintain and preserve consistency in both domestic and international stances when a nation aspires to strengthen its position as a responsible nation. The country should present its clear vision, directions, and expertise in pursuing human security diplomacy in accordance with its massive financial contribution.

5. KOREA'S HUMAN SECURITY DIPLOMACY ASA MIDDLE POWER STRATEGY

5.1. Korea's Global and Regional Human Security Diplomacy

It was not until the Kim Young-sam administration that academic and policy discourses for international contribution and leadership started to emerge in Korea. The first regionally recognizable attempt to emphasize human rights and democracy was made by the Kim Dae-Jung administration, which was inaugurated in the midst of the 1997-98 Asian financial crises. President Kim called for the establishment of a regional comprehensive security system and peace-building mechanism based on the respect for human rights and promotion of democracy. The Korean academic community has also begun to emphasize the need for incorporating human security challenges related to human rights, refugees, terrorism, the environment, financial instability, and national re-building into the national policy agenda for security and diplomacy (IT Hyun and SH Kim, 2001; SW Lee, 2007; HS You, 2011).

The Roh Moo-Hyun administration in 2004 applied a comprehensive security concept to its security policy and incorporated non-military threats into national security agendas. It also sought active roles in multilateral dialogues on human security discourses in order to promote Korea's international reputation, promote national interests of Korea, and lead in agenda setting and implementations activities (YS Han, 2004). This was an effort to alleviate the inflexible security policies that were monopolized by military security, and to diversify Korean diplomatic options through non-traditional security issues.

The Lee Myung-bak administration also engaged in diplomatic efforts to protect and promote human rights through multilateralism and global governance. During his term, President Lee initiated and participated in numerous multilateral activities as an effort to enhance Korea's global influence in normative humanitarian issues. Korea ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in December 2008. In 2009 alone, the country participated in the 2nd Consultative Meeting for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to protect the rights of people with disabilities, joined and served as a vice chair of the 53rd Commission on the Status of Women, and signed a general treaty with the UNICEF to bolster mutual partnership. From 2009 to 2011, Korea served as a two-year

term executive council member of the UNICEF.

The Park administration continued to engage in international multilateral mechanisms and activities. At the UN General Assembly in 2015, the Korean delegation announced that it would actively contribute to Syrian humanitarian crisis and international development through summit meetings on PKO and development. Also, Korea promised to donate \$100 million for 5 years to empower global health security measures, and provide \$200 million for adolescent girls in developing countries. Seoul served as a chair for the 2016 session of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Indeed, Korea's commitment to human rights, humanitarian affairs, and development issues could function as an effective strategy for Korea's middle power diplomacy. Therefore, Korea's global approach to human security agenda should aim for both international contribution and maximization of national interests. Yet, it is almost impossible to make a global contribution alone. As the recent global issues are becoming more transnational and are crossing boundaries, the importance of 'global governance process' must be emphasized since individual nation's reactions and responses may not be enough for certain issues. In this process, the principles of cooperation and communication, consensus and mediation, and multilateralism should be adhered to and respected.

The lessons taken from the afore-mentioned cases of Australia and Canada is that it is important to develop issue areas that are relatively advantageous for Korea and engage in niche diplomacy between big and small powers through a coalition with like-minded middle powers and actively participate in multilateral diplomacy. Contribution to alleviating poverty in underdeveloped countries through ODA and sharing Korea's past experiences of economic development with them will be one of the sensible ways of pursuing a unique and exemplary middle power strategy. The two countries' cases also represent the critical importance of the leader's vision and drive, as well as of the policy consistency that can be maintained regardless of regime change, to undertake core national foreign policies.

At the regional level, although the notions and principles of human security insure both 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want' for all persons, it seems to be more efficient for Korea to tackle the problem of insecurity in Northeast Asia, through the perspective of freedom from poverty and to advance its role in regional development of human rights conditions and cooperation. Since most developing and undeveloped nations in East Asia have relatively authoritarian political systems and are sensitive to external intervention, carefully calibrated approaches are required. Providing advanced technologies and economic support to these countries is likely to be more pragmatic than enforcing normative social and political changes intended to trigger movements for democratization. If Korea is to approach the issue through the perspective of freedom from tyranny, it would agitate authoritarian states and lead them to perceive such donation as an activity intended to stir the civil society for political change. This may eventually have a detrimental effect on sustainable cooperative relations.

A useful lesson can be drawn from Australia's foreign policies for human security that have varied based on the geopolitical locations. Despite Australia's vigorous participation in multilateral meetings like the Commonwealth and UN for humanitarian issues, its behavior has changed when it engaged in human rights issues in the Asia-Pacific region (Wilkinson, 2017). Australia has opted to resolve the issues through the bilateral channel. More specifically, its affirmative behavior in multilateral meetings tends to change into a more dovish diplomatic stance when it comes to bilateral relations. This two-track strategy based on geopolitical consideration implies that such policies can be modified by balancing the universal value and

national interest.

Korea can utilize such tactics of two-track policy through the Saemaeul ODA project, a financial assistance project equipped with monetary and strategic support to developing nations. The past experience of Saemaeul movement during the 1960s-70s of Korea have provided a source of inspiration to numerous developing countries for its successful achievement of both economic prosperity and social integrity in the wake of a devastating 3-year war which annihilated almost every economic infrastructure. Since the primary objective of the Saemaeul movement was to modernize rural agricultural villages, it has provided a useful policy tool to several developing nations in Southeast Asia and other regions where a big portion of the national populace heavily reside in impoverished rural villages. Another important objective of the project is to improve the income structure of the national economy so that the living standards of rural parts of the underdeveloped countries, as well as their human rights condition, can improve (OPM, 2011).

4.2. Korea's Human Security Policy toward North Korea

The Korean governments' policies toward North Korea have undergone a major shift since the late 1990s when the progressive Presidents Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-Hyun remained reluctant to criticize North's human rights violation, emphasizing Seoul's 'special relations' with Pyongyang. They claimed that a new approach was needed to break the deadlock in inter-Korean relations. Thus they selected only three out of a total of seven human security issues set forth by the UN, which were food, health, and the environment. They were selected because these three issues were considered the type of issues that would not agitate North Korea and thus would not inhibit South-North cooperation.

Nevertheless, it was quite a hasty decision to shy away from the North Korean human rights issues, due to concerns for deteriorating South-North relations. Korea should remind itself of the diplomatic and bargaining power of West Germany before the unification. Such power was derived from Germany's respect for the fundamental principles for universal values: human rights and liberty. Korea should remember that despite its efforts to communicate with East Germany, West Germany held a high standard on human rights, and held onto its belief that human rights should be respected at whatever cost. Korea should also internationalize the discourses on North Korea humanitarian issue, and discretely prepare and implement concrete action plans that address the issues of refugee protection, regardless of domestic politics and the status of the inter-governmental relations between Seoul and Pyongyang.

It should be noted that approaching North Korea through the human security perspective is one way to prioritize the individual security and welfare of North Korean people. The current North Korea's human insecurity is closely related with economic hardship, food shortage, diplomatic isolation, leadership succession, and nuclear development, which are a result of from the problems of the one-party dictatorship and socialistic planned economy that are inefficient and parochial. Thus, the cooperation scheme should not be 'tailor-made' cooperation type that works in favor of the North Korean regime, intended to merely sustain friendly inter-Korean relations. In this context, it is encouraging to note that the Commission of Inquiry (COI) report on February 2014 stated that the rights of the North Korean people are being systematically and broadly violated by the Kim Jong-Un regime. The report also states that such violations are indeed a crime against humanity and R2P cannot be applied

to such cases.¹⁰ Furthermore, the United Nations decided to open a field office to observe North Korean human rights conditions in Seoul on June 2015, with aims to effectively collect information and monitor North Korean humanitarian issues.

Domestically, Korea has also chosen to empower North Korean human security issues by passing the “North Korean Human Rights Law” in March 2016, which went into effect just three months after.¹¹ Based on this law, Korea has established a new organization called, “North Korean human rights documentation center,” which documents cases of human rights violations so that the voices of victims could be recorded. Korea is the first country to install such organization that can record the actual cases of human rights violation.¹² Such efforts can be considered as a process of internalizing the issues related to North Korean human rights violations, as well as raising international attention to these issues.

Hoping for a collapse or regime change of North Korea is not a reliable strategy due to its far-reaching negative consequences on the Korean peninsula and beyond. The expected negative consequences are the possibility of losing control of the nuclear weapons and missiles and unleashing of a huge refugee inflow. Thus, the most viable option appears to be one that induces ‘positive’ change within North Korea in military, economic, social, and humanitarian terms. Still, the question of how to bring about North Korea’s internal change entails a strategic dilemma not only in the conventional military security domain but also in the domain of human rights and human security issues. If Seoul attempts to tackle North Korean human rights violations or refugee issues, either bilaterally or multilaterally, such approach is very likely to result in severely antagonistic response from Pyongyang. Pyongyang will likely claim infringement of its sovereignty. Seoul thus needs a pragmatic strategy that is more balanced, that is part of a bigger roadmap wherein a comprehensive list of diplomatic give-and-take in inter-Korean relations is incorporated. By engaging in close consultation and cooperation with its ally, the US, Korea should strive to uphold its own principled approach in formulating its policy toward North’s ongoing activities that form crimes against humanity. Human rights and human security-related issues should not be sidelined in the course of crafting a comprehensive North Korean policy, no matter how severely threatening North Korea’s traditional military activities may be.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examines the characteristics and limits of Korea’s human security-oriented policies in global and regional dimensions, used as a core tool of identifying itself as a middle power country. Although successive Korean administrations have strived to navigate toward finding a balance between the Korea-US ‘strategic alliance’ and the Korea-China ‘strategic partnership,’ finding such ideal balance has proven to be difficult. This imposes constraints

¹⁰ UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, A/HRC/25/63, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIDPRK/Pages/ReportoftheCommissionofInquiryDPRK.aspx>.

¹¹ “Korea passes North Korean Human Rights Law,” *Radio Free Asia*, http://www.rfa.org/korean/weekly_program/ad81ae08c99d-d480c5b4c90db2c8b2e4/askquestion-03022016155441.html.

¹² “[News Coverage] Korea starts to pressure North Korea’s human rights condition through implementing North Korean Human Rights Law,” *VOA Korea*, <http://www.voakorea.com/a/3529859.html>.

on Korea's middle power diplomacy. What is worse has been that growing rivalry between Washington and Beijing has led to a severe narrowing of the options for Seoul on issues like the North Korean nuclear issues.

In this context, we recommend that Korea should diversify and expand its diplomatic playing fields to non-traditional security issues, especially human security agendas, as a strategy to increase its soft power as well as hard power capacities, and to obtain an advanced middle power status in certain issue areas. The strengthening of the nations' comprehensive power would help prevent Korea from being dictated by the region's big powers' interests and their hegemonic race. In addition, fast-track diplomacy has been recognized as an effective middle power strategy to organize a coalition of countries and NGOs with similar values and objectives. It can also lead to an agreement on a treaty that can efficiently resolve specific issue areas like human security where great powers cannot monopolize due to the conspicuous lack of legitimacy and ethical reputation. As seen in the cases of the Ottawa Process in 1997 which created a treaty banning the use of anti-personnel land mines and the ratification of the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2002 (Lawson, 1998), the international agreement produced by fast-track diplomacy of a cohort of middle powers and NGOs could further refute the realist perception of middle powers as mere followers of hegemonic powers' leadership on international security agenda (Behringer, 2005).

At the global level, the country should proactively pursue the leadership role in important transnational issues through the United Nations and other international institutions. Such contributions should follow the pursuit of soft power by abiding by basic universal norms and principles, convincing other states and people with the country's 'attractiveness' to communicate and sympathize with others. It should be also noted that the 'consensus-based diplomacy' of conventional global forums may not be a practical option. While it could enjoy universal legitimacy and acceptance in the international community, it often fails to yield tangible returns (Behringer, 2005). Instead, it would be sensible for Korea to employ the 'fast-track diplomacy' option which enables countries to strengthen their national ability to adapt to an increasingly complicated and rapidly changing world by the virtue of the speed of their foreign policy decisions (Baru, 2014). Therefore, the endeavor of leading middle powers such as Canada and Australia to utilize the soft power of persuasion, niche diplomacy, and fast-track diplomacy and successfully address issues that affect human security should be used as a benchmark to strengthen Korea's middle power strategy.

At the regional level, it is more realistic for Korea to seek a facilitating role in establishing a collective security cooperative mechanism for directing the courses of region's economic integration and addressing the imperatives of security stabilization in Northeast Asia. Yet, Korea should be cautiously aware of the possibility where its endeavor to develop a multilateral framework can be thwarted by its lingering bilateral disputes with neighboring countries and/or the dynamics of the great power politics. Thus, it is equally important for Korea to secure a sizable amount of hard power, like financial and military might, in addition to strengthening and expanding its socio-cultural influences, intellectual capabilities, and other elements that form soft power.

Based on these assessments of the experiences of other successful middle powers, it can be concluded that active participation on the issue of human security would be a great opportunity to enhance Korea's soft power. Previously, Korea had gradually increased its engagement of global humanitarian issues through multilateralism by joining related international organizations and participating in them by serving in important roles and

positions in conferences and summits. However, unlike its active presence on the global stage, domestic-level changes in terms of social perceptions and understanding are still lacking as Korea is being criticized for contradicting itself on refugee issues. Although Korea officially signed the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees and the 1967 UN Protocol on Refugees, respectively, it was only in February 2002 that it first accepted a foreign refugee. Even this decision was made in the wake of the international criticism for hosting no single refugee while it actively called on the international community for the legal and humanitarian protection of North Korean escapees.

Moreover, such enthusiasm to contribute to human security should be consistent regardless of the regime. Even the middle power models like Australia and Canada have suffered reputational crisis due to the changes in their national positions and policies in middle power diplomacy that differed, depending on the type of regime that they were dealing with. Long-term perspectives and sustainable plans for effective middle power diplomacy should be formulated and implemented. It should be also noted that the case of Japan illustrates the importance of consistency in domestic and international postures when a country endeavors to increase its leverage and position as a responsible and influential nation. To give meaning to its substantial financial contribution and have it appreciated by recipient countries, Korea should offer a robust vision, clear policy directions, strong political will, and demonstration of its expertise in undertaking human security diplomacy.

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