



KOREA AS A HYBRID MIDDLE POWER

BY

MISS NATCHAYA CHAWALITCHAIKUN

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2019
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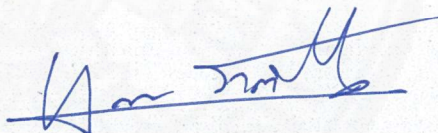
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KOREA AS A HYBRID MIDDLE POWER

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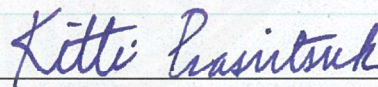
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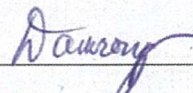
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Member and Advisor



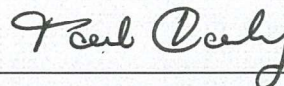
(Assoc. Prof. Kitti Prasirtsuk, Ph.D.)

Member



(Assoc. Prof. Damrong Thandee, Ph.D.)

Dean



(Asst. Prof. Tavid Kamolvej, Ph.D.)

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ABSTRACT

From President Lee Myung-Bak onward, South Korea has continually pursued various foreign policies related to middle power. Not only self-identifying as a middle power, but the Lee administration also proceeded a high-profile role in the international arena. Korea's middle power has continued in the following administrations.

This research aims to explore Korea's foreign policy, along with investigating resources, policy implementation, and limitations under the last three presidencies, namely Lee Myung-Bak, Park Geun-Hye, and Moon Jae-In. Importantly, this research employs two middle power concepts to analyze the characters and qualifications of Korea. One is the concept that distinguishes traditional and emerging middle powers (Jordaan, 2003), another is on the five characteristics of middle power (Swielande et al, 2019).

Arguably, Korea can be characterized as a hybrid middle power, possessing mixed elements of both traditional and emerging middle powers. For the five characteristics, Korea could be recognized as a limited middle power, fits only three out of five criteria, namely capability, self-conception, and status. For the systemic and regional impacts, Korea is not yet qualified. Such shortcoming is stemmed from both internal and external limitations. Internal constraints include the discontinuity caused by presidential change and a lower priority

on foreign policies. External limitations are represented by its geopolitics, the preoccupation with North Korea, and inadequate platform.

Keywords: South Korea, Middle Power, Foreign Policy, Characters, Qualifications



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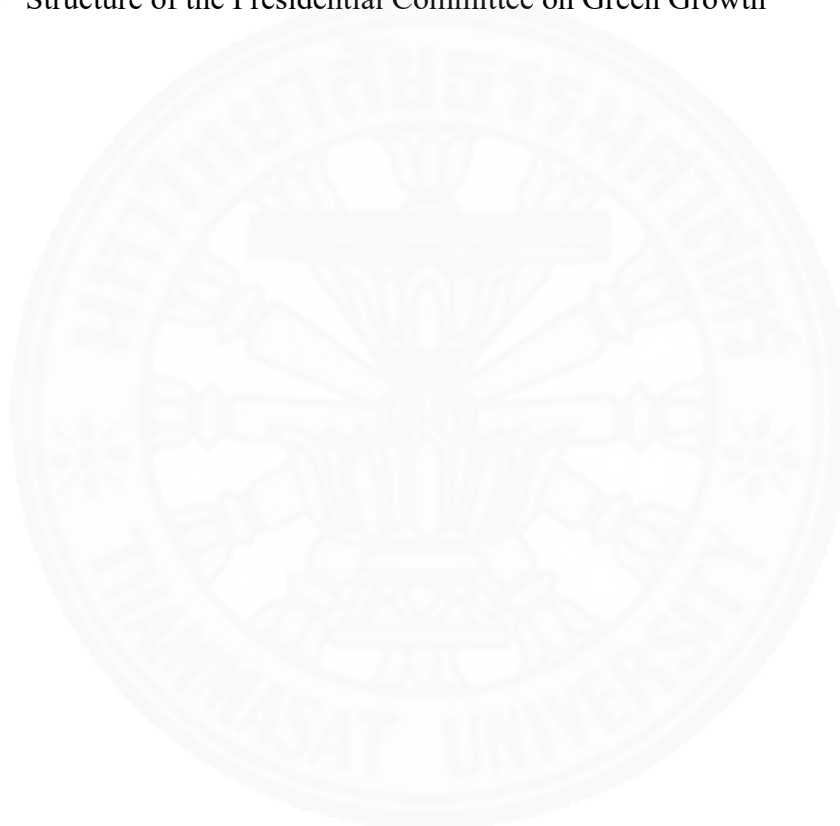
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of problem

At present, South Korea (hereafter Korea) can be considered as a middle power. According to the World Bank, Korea ranked 12th in the world's largest GDP in 2019, with the amount of \$1.642 trillion (World Bank, 2019, p. 1). It is one of the top 20 financial providers for peacekeeping and environmental protection (Oosterveld & Torossian, 2018). In terms of the development cooperation, Korea's financial aid continually rose from \$ 1.2 to 2.25 billion during 2010 – 2016. It also pays great attention to inclusive growth and development effectiveness (OECD, 2018).

During the current administration, Moon Jae-In, foreign policies remain in-line with middle power diplomacy. Seoul implemented the New Northern and New Southern Policies, aiming to deepen strategic ties with the partner countries. Recently, it also provides financial and humanitarian assistance to other countries in responding to COVID-19.

For the development of Korea's middle power identity and policy, as early as the 1980s, Korea first appeared to be like a middle power for its capability (O'Neil, 2015, p. 81). Ranked 13th largest economies, Korea is a democratic country with a substantial population. During President Kim Young-Sam (1993-1998), the government launched the Segyehwa Policy or known as the Globalization Policy to cope with the criticism for corruption. The policy consists of five essential elements: globalization, diversification, multi-dimensional, regional cooperation, and futuristic.

Later on, during the Kim Dae-Jung administration (1998-2003), as a result of the Asian financial crisis in 1997, the Segyehwa Policy was continued as a means for recovery (Saxer, 2013a, pp. 400 - 401). Moreover, Korea began to be more active in pursuing some roles at the regional level, it initiated and encouraged several platforms for cooperation and integration in Northeast Asia. However, during these administrations, there was apparently no aspiration to play a more significant international role.

President Roh Moo-Hyun (2003-2008) also continually implemented the Segyehwa policy through pressing Korea's middle power profile (O'Neil, 2015 p. 82). Moreover, this administration launched the Northeast Asian Initiative, with the aim to play a role as a hub or balancer in the region to facilitate and foster regional cooperation (Kim, 2016, p. 3). Nevertheless, in this period, Korea's foreign policy related to middle power remained unclear and fragile.

The middle power aspiration started to be more explicit and later officially adopted into foreign policy during Lee Myung-Bak (2008-2013). Though the US rebalancing strategy, which stemmed from the rivalry with Beijing, dealt Korea a difficult time, it provided an opportunity for Seoul to act as a middle power at both regional and global levels.

Global Korea was then initiated as a foreign policy strategy, with the aim to expand cooperation beyond the Korean peninsula and focus on several rising international issues such as international development and environmental protection (O'Neil, 2015, p. 82). Moreover, Korea played a role as convener, conciliator, and proactive agenda-setter in international negotiations and participated in various multilateral platforms such as the G20 and Nuclear Security Summit (Kim, 2016, p. 5).

Korea's foreign policy as a middle power has continued well into the following administrations. Under Park Geun-Hye, foreign policies were initiated, based on the philosophy of trustpolitik, consisted of three pillars: Trust-Building Process on the Korean Peninsula, the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI), and middle power diplomacy (Kim, 2016, p. 6). The Park government also actively engaged in MIKTA, which is a consultation and coordination platform among Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey, and Australia.

The current Moon Jae-In administration has continually behaved as a middle power, the main theme of its foreign policy reflected the behavior of middle power in the international community. Several policies are carried out, namely the New Northern Policy, New Southern Policy, planning to create the Peace Economy, and declaring the intention to increase the volume of official development assistance ("Address by President Moon Jae-in," 2019). In short, it can be said that Korea's aspiration and foreign policy as a middle power officially began in 2008. Importantly, this aspiration has continued until the present.

This study would explore and analyze Korea's foreign policy related to middle power, and its middle-power characters and qualification by applying the combination of the two concepts on middle power. This study would also cover the resources, policy implementation, and limitations of Korea's foreign policies.

1.2 Research questions

1. Based on the five characteristics of middle power (Swielande et al.), to what extent is Korea qualified as a middle power?
2. Considering the qualifications and policies, what kind of middle power is Korea?
3. Overall, what are the resources, policy implementation, and limitations for Korea's foreign policy as a middle power?

1.3 Research objectives

1. To study Korea's foreign policy as a middle power.
2. To use a new concept of a middle power as a tool in analyzing Korea's middle power policies and qualifications.
3. To explore and analyze the resources, policy implementation, and limitations of Korea's foreign policy as a middle power.
4. To understand the middle power characters of Korea.

1.4 Hypothesis

Given economic and cultural capability, Korea is trying to be a middle power based on international behavior.

1.5 Scope of study

This study focuses on Korea's foreign policies related to middle power, which started during President Lee Myung-Bak (2008). Thus, the time frame of emphasis for this thesis will be from 2008 to present, covering the last three

presidencies, namely Lee Myung-Bak, Park Geun-Hye, and Moon Jae-In. This study also applies the two middle powers concepts, one represents the differences between traditional and emerging middle powers by Jordaan (2003). Another is the five characteristics of middle power by Swielande et al., to study and analyze Korea's characters and qualifications as a middle power. Moreover, resources, policy implementation, and limitations will be emphasized as well.

1.6 Contribution

This thesis contributes to further the study on Korea's middle power and its foreign policies, it would focus mainly on analyzing the characters and qualifications as a middle power, along with exploring resources, policy implementation, and limitations of the foreign policies. Importantly, by combining the two middle power concepts by Jordaan (2003) and Swielande et al. (2019) as a theoretical framework, this study could potentially bring into light the new perspective in studying Korea's middle power.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical framework: Middle power concepts

There are several definitions and approaches toward middle power. Significantly, there is no universal concept in identifying middle power. This part thus introduces several middle power concepts by various scholars.

According to Adam Chapnick (1999), middle power is “a state which is neither a great nor a small power.” He provides three middle power approaches, namely functional, behavioral, and hierarchical.

The functional approach identified the middle power as a state that is capable of exerting influence in international affairs in the specific instances and different from the others. However, this approach still has some weaknesses as the functional middle power states can fluctuate in accordance with relative political and economic capabilities.

Secondly, the behavioral approach, articulated by Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal (1993), defines the middle power in according to “their tendency to pursue a multilateral solution to international problems, their tendency to have compromise position in international disputes and their tendency to embrace the good international citizen,” all of which are regarded as middlepowermanship. Likewise, Laura Neack (2002) emphasizes that middle power is a state that commits its relative affluence, managerial skill, and international prestige to preserve international peace and order, through coalition building, serving as mediators or go-betweens in international conflict management and resolution activities.

In short, middle power can be defined in respect to its behavior as a good international citizen who helps manage global problems to maintain international peace and order. Nevertheless, there is another perspective for the behavioral approach, identifying middle power by the desire for a higher international status through playing a specific role at the international level such as positioning as a regional leader or conflict manager (Chapnick, 1999, p. 76).

The third approach is a hierarchical approach, which stipulates that there are three classes of the state including great, middle, and small powers. Therefore, in order to identify the middle power, all the related information such as the number of populations, existing resources, and capabilities will be taken into consideration. Thus, middle power will be relatively compared to the other two types of power.

However, the *Rethinking Middle Power in the Asian Centuries: New Theories, New Cases* (2019), by Swielande, Vandamme, Walton, and Wilkins, argues that the middle power's approach like the one presented by Chapnick is inadequate in defining middle power since there are still some weaknesses and loopholes. Hence, they present a new definition of middle power which consists of five characteristics;

1. Capability: middle power own medium-range capacities both material and non-material.
2. Self-conception: middle power has to consider oneself as a middle power.
3. Status: the recognition of states or audiences in the system, the middle power should be recognized and respected in the international hierarchy of the states.
4. Systemic impact: middle power should have the ability to adapt, affect, or influence the specific element of the international system.
5. A country's regional impact: in terms of the regional impact, they do not explicitly say that the middle power needed to be the regional power. However, it means that middle power should either perform as a middlepowermanship in the region or successfully manage its relationship with the great powers in the region.

With this new analytical tool, the approaches toward middle power are renewed and re-identified. This concept comes up with three new approaches toward middle power including positional, behavioral, and ideational. Each approach is influenced by international relations theories, namely realism, liberalism, and constructivism.

Firstly, the positional approach represents the realist image of a middle power. It defines middle power based on its material capabilities or the quantifiable national attributes similar to what Andrew Cooper emphasized that the "middle power

is located at the middle point of the measurable capability such as population, military, and economy (Lee, 2014a, p. 2). Accordingly, considering powerful resources (territory, population, organization, and economic industry) and power capabilities, a categorization of the country's position in the international system is possible.

Secondly, the behavioral approach represents the liberalist image. It identifies that middle power is recognizable by its behavior. This approach focuses on two different perspectives of middle power's behavior. One is the middlepowermanship, posits that middle power would behave as a good international citizen with a managerial skill to counter international problems and maintain international peace and order. Another is the niche diplomacy, referring to the concentration of resources in a specific area that middle power has and is likely to generate results.

Lastly, the ideational approach, rooted in the constructivist image, concludes that the concept of identity plays a vital role in defining middle power. Middle power begins with self-conceptualization, whereby the state perceives itself as a middle power and acts like one. Later there would be a state of self-identification in which the middle power identity is constructed and confirmed in the collective understanding of the international community.

To study the middle power based on these three approaches, it may not be adequate to use one approach in explaining middle power. Therefore, the authors suggest that combining all three approaches together, it would offer a comprehensive definition of a middle power.

The last middle power concept is presented by Eduard Jordaan, in *The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations: Distinguishing between Emerging and Traditional Middle Powers* (2003). Jordaan emphasizes that there are two kinds of middle power, namely traditional and emerging middle powers, by adhering to constitutive and behavior differences.

In terms of constitutive differences, it defines a traditional middle power, as a wealthy and stable democratic state who adheres to egalitarianism¹ and less likely

¹ Believes that people are equally important and should have the same rights and opportunities.

to play a role as a regional influencer.² Meanwhile, the emerging middle power is a semi-peripheral and newly democratic or non-democratic state with a deep social cleavage due to inegalitarian inclination. This kind of middle power is also a regional influencer³ (Jordaan, 2003, p. 165).

This concept also presents that the traditional middle power came to exist during the cold war, while the emerging middle power, on the other hand, emerged as a middle power after the cold war.

The table below compares the traditional and emerging middle powers through constitutive differences, considering the following factors; position in political economy, political system, timing of emergence as a middle power, and regional integration and influence.

Table 2.1

Comparing Traditional and Emerging Middle Powers by Constitutive Differences

	Traditional Middle Power	Emerging middle power
position in political economy	Core	semi-periphery
political system	stable democratic states	newly or non-democratic states
time of emergence as a middle power	during the Cold War	after the cold war
regional integration and influence.	less active in regional cooperation and integration and has a low influence in the region.	always active in regional cooperation and integration and highly influential in the region

Note: Adapted from “The concept of a middle power in international relations: Distinguishing between emerging and traditional middle powers,” by E. Jordan, 2003. *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, 30(1), 165-181.

² Traditional middle power appears to be ambivalent on regional cooperation and integration.

³ Emerging middle power is often an active participant and initiator of regional cooperation and integration.

In regard to the behavior differences, the traditional middle power is likely to pursue humanistic values activities, such as participating in international development aid and promoting economic justice and equality at the international level. In brief, traditional middle power will play a role as a good international citizen at both domestic and international levels.

However, emerging middle power, as a result of a semi-peripheral status in the global political economy, prefers to perform as a reformist, especially on global economic rules and structure, at the international level. Importantly, unlike traditional middle power, emerging middle power will seek to be dominant at the regional level (Jordaan, 2003, pp. 174 - 177). Thus, by taking the disparities between the traditional and emerging middle powers into consideration, this should sharpen an analysis for Korea's characters as a middle power.

2.2 Literature review

After investigating the academic works related to the thesis, literature regarding Korea's foreign policy as a middle power will be divided into two groups. The first group is "the evolution of Korea's foreign policy as a middle power," and the second group is "Korea's issue-based middle power policy."

2.2.1 The evolution of Korea's foreign policy as a middle power

This section comprises of the literature related to the evolution of Korea's foreign policy as a middle power during each presidency.

South Korea as a Middle Power: Global Ambitions and Looming Challenges by Andrew O'Neil (2015), argues that Korea is a latecomer in middle power activism and also explains the development of Korea's foreign policy as a middle power under each presidency. The middle power identity was believed to take shape during President Kim Yong-Sam in the 1990s, along the line the Segyehwa Policy or the Globalization Policy, aiming to expand Korea's global horizons in the wake of the country formally joining the United Nations in 1991. Later, this policy continued to Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-Hyun's administrations after investigating the academic works related to the thesis, literature regarding Korea's foreign policy as a middle

power will be divided into two groups. The first group is “the evolution of Korea’s foreign policy as a middle power,” and the second group is “Korea’s issue-based middle power policy.” Under Roh Moo-Hyun, Korea adopted an assertive policy to seek a more active role in the region. Then during Lee Myung-Bak and Park Geun-Hye governments, this identity was more prominent. Several foreign policies and activities related to middle power were launched and carried out. One of the examples is Global Korea, it aimed to leave behind the old habit of Korea’s policy that narrowly focused on the Korean peninsula and expanded the scope of foreign policy to the global level.

Becoming and Being a Middle Power: Exploring a New Dimension of South Korea’s Foreign Policy by Jojin V. John (2014) provides brief information on the development of Korea’s middle power identity. Jojin states that this identity had an appearance around the 1990s when Korea successfully hosted Summer Olympic in 1998 and consecutively co-hosted the FIFA World Cup in 2002 (John, 2014, p. 329). It presented that Korea has a capability and could be recognized as a middle power. Then, under Roh Moo-Hyun, Korea attempted to play a balancer role in Northeast Asia. The article also addresses the paradigm shift in the scope of Korea’s foreign policy that occurred in 2008. At this period, Global Korea was initiated with the aim to pursue more roles at the global level and express its commitment to international contribution. Korea thus started to participate in specific international issues such as development cooperation, environment, and climate change.

South Korea’s Middle Power Diplomacy Changes and Challenges by Sung-Mi Kim (2016) mentions that various successive governments applied the middle power aspiration as one of the main foundations for Korea’s foreign policy initiative. This article provides the development of Korea’s foreign policies as a middle power under Roh Moo-Hyun, Lee Myung-Bak, and Park Geun-Hye. During President Roh Moo-Hyun, the middle power concept was expressed through the ‘Northeast Asian Initiative’ with an attempt to be a hub and play a balancer role in the region to facilitate economic and security cooperation. Next, under Lee Myung-Bak, the Global Korea was implemented with the objectives to increase Korea’s international influence and recognition along with improving its national image by playing a role as the convener, conciliator, and proactive agenda-setter in international negotiations and many

multilateral platforms. Lastly, Park Geun-Hye administration initiated foreign policy based on ‘the philosophy of trustpolitik,’ consisting of the Trust-Building Process on the Korean Peninsula, Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative, and middle-power diplomacy. Moreover, the Park’s administration also participated in MIKTA.

2.2.2 Korea’s issue-based middle power policy

In the second section, it covers Korea’s issue-based middle power policy, which comprises of various literature that covers different areas of foreign policy related to middle power, namely international development, security, and international reform.

East Asian Security and South Korea’s Middle Power Diplomacy by Chae-Sung Chun (2014) addresses a security aspect of Korea’s middle power diplomacy. As a result of the American rebalancing strategy in East Asia, this led to tension between the United States and China. Under a high level of suspicion and fear, there was then a security dilemma within the region. This engendered both difficulty and opportunity for Korea. Though it is essential for Korea to handle great powers’ rivalry and a potential military clash; nevertheless, it allowed Korea to act as a prominent middle power. Korea delivered a security strategy which comprises of six essential elements; reducing mutual strategic mistrust, developing issue-specific dispute settlement mechanism, developing the multilateral institution, importing globally established norm for the region, creating a cooperative network among like-minded states to strengthen its position, and supporting the regional reform security. This strategy might not directly respond to Korea’s national interest; however, it provided Korea a long-term interest in improving its image at the international level.

Globalization, National Identity, and Foreign Policy: Understanding ‘Global Korea’ by Jojin V. John (2015) explains that Global Korea, a foreign policy strategy under President Lee Myung-Bak, has a strong emphasis for Korea to achieve ‘Seonjugguk’ or an advanced nation status. This status allows Korea to participate in agenda-setting on a number of global issues such as development cooperation (ODA Policy), climate change, and environment. Moreover, Global Korea was used as a critical mechanism of Korea’s national identity construction as well.

South Korea as Global Actor: International Contribution to Development and Security by Philipp Olbrich and David Shim (2012), refers to a foreign policy strategy under Lee Myung-Bak government, Global Korea which aimed to achieve global visibility and recognition and at the same time expand Korea's influence. There are various issues under the Global Korea strategy; however, this article focuses on two issues: development and security.

In terms of development cooperation, under the Global Korea strategy, Korea provided official development assistance to the other countries, developed the plan, and ensured efficiency assistance. In 2009, Korea was accepted into the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This could be considered as a big success in its ODA policy. Furthermore, Korea shared the country's experiences in economic development as well. Then, for the security perspective, Korea plays great attention to the development of its military capability and international security. It participated in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation (UNPKO) by sending troops to various international conflicts and providing the engineering and medical staff for civil reconstruction afterward.

Canada-Korea Middle Power Strategies: Historical Examples as Clues to Future Success by Seung Hyok Lee (2014a) provides a comparison between Korea and Canada. The article introduces the unique middle power behavior so-called 'niche diplomacy', emphasizes that middle power is likely to concentrate in specific areas to best generate return worth having rather than try to cover the whole field. Also, the article presents four significant aspects of Korea's middle power policies, namely conflict mediation, peacekeeping, international institutional reforms, and international development.

For the conflict mediation, though Korea pursued the leadership position, its target was limit only to Northeast Asian. Furthermore, Seoul expressed the regional leadership by setting up the permanent secretariat for the Korea-China-Japan Trilateral Cooperation Meeting in 2011. In terms of peacekeeping, Korea sent personnel for the peacekeeping missions alongside other middle powers such as Canada and Australia. Korea also played some active roles in various international forums. For stances, in terms of development assistance, Korea delivered the ODA policy to utilize

its national image and act as a bridge between the western donors and developing countries by proposing a development agenda to ensure aid effectiveness.

Middle Power in Action: The Evolving Nature of Diplomacy in the age of Multilateralism by Sook-Jong Lee, Chae-Sung Chun, Hyeon-Jung Suh and Patrick Thomsen (2015) mentions that as a result of the American rebalancing strategy and the dynamic change in the world, it is an opportunity for the middle power to play more role at the international level. Middle power identity thus became prominent in Korea's foreign policy in 2008. Various policies were implemented. This article explains the MIKTA, which is a part of Korea's middle power diplomacy, refers to the development of the middle power network at both the global and regional levels.

MIKTA aims at pursuing a facilitator role in launching initiatives and implementing global governance reform by building a firm, providing the development guideline, and sharing development experiences. MIKTA member countries also stated that MIKTA is not a middle-power grouping, but it is a group of like-minded states who work together on issues of common interest. MIKTA is a tool for states to make an affecting change and a mean to pursue a more considerable influence in the world. For Korea, it believed that MIKTA would bring new cooperation in the future.

South Korea's (incomplete) middle power diplomacy toward ASEAN by Brandon Howe and Min-Jong Park (2019) introduces Korea's middle power diplomacy toward ASEAN. Since the past, there have been a few policy implementations toward ASEAN, such as the development cooperation (ODA Policy), and experience sharing. Nonetheless, Korea's middle power diplomacy toward ASEAN is still incomplete as Korea mostly portrayed itself as a developer and bridge builder. It can be said that Korea only focuses on a niche area where it has a relative interest. Hence, to enhance its role as a middle power and further the engagement in this region, President Moon Jae-In initiates the "New Southern Policy" to concentrate more on people-center diplomacy. This initiative focuses on the three Ps, including people, prosperity, and peace. Furthermore, Korea commits to bring cooperation and engage more with ASEAN and India.

All this literature deal with the evolution of Korea's foreign policy as a middle power and Korea's issue-based middle power policy. However, Korea's characters and qualifications as a middle power remain questionable. There has not

been an in-depth study of the dimensions of resources, policy implementation, and limitations. There are also quite limited works covering the current president, Moon Jae-In. Thus, this study will apply the two middle power concepts, one by Jordaan (2013) and another by Swielande et al. (2019) to explore and analyze Korea's foreign policies related to middle power, its middle power characters and qualifications, along with studying resources, policy implementation and limitations during Lee Myung-Bak, Park Geun-Hye, and Moon Jae-In.

2.3 Research methodology

This study is a qualitative research which is based mainly on documentary and descriptive analysis. In terms of data collection of this study, it would be gathered from both primary and secondary sources.

1. Primary sources

Korea's policy statement, the president's speeches, and the official government report.

2. Secondary sources

Existing academic works, textbooks, papers, articles, and past government interviews.

Accordingly, this study would deepen the understanding of Korea's foreign policies related to middle power. It would give priority to analyze the characters and qualifications, by applying the two middle power concepts. One is the constitutive and behavior differences between the traditional and emerging middle powers by Jordaan (2003), with the aim to answer the question, what kind of middle power is Korea? Another concept is the five characteristics of middle power by Swielande *et al.* (2019), intending to assess Korea's middle-power qualifications. Moreover, this study would investigate the resources, policy implementation, and limitation of Korea's foreign policy as well.

2.4 Chapter outlines

This study comprises of five chapters, Chapter 1 first emphasizes the statement of problem and includes the research questions, research objectives, hypothesis, scope of study, and contribution.

For Chapter 2, theoretical framework, particularly the middle power concepts, and literature review would be elaborated. In terms of the theoretical framework, this study would first introduce the middle power concepts by Adam Chapnick, then following with the other two middle power concepts by Swielande et al. (2009) and Jordaan (2003) consecutively. For the literature review, it would be divided into two main parts; the evolution of Korea's foreign policy as a middle power and Korea's Issue-Based Middle Power Policy. Lastly, this chapter would end with the research methodology.

Chapter 3 presents the development of Korea's middle power since the 1980s. It also divides Korea's middle power into three main periods, namely an early stage of a middle power, a rising period of Korea's middle power, and the continuity of Korea's middle power diplomacy.

Chapter 4 covers resources, policy implementation, and limitations for Korea's foreign policies related to middle power. The resources part presents two kinds of assets Korea possesses including tangible and intangible resources. In terms of policy implementation, it divides the policy implementation in accordance with each presidency. Lastly, this chapter would also investigate both internal and external limitations that Korea has encountered.

Chapter 5 offers an analysis of Korea's characters and qualifications, emphasizing that Korea is a hybrid and limited middle power respectively. This chapter would provide a conclusion for this thesis as well.

CHAPTER 3

THE DEVELOPMENT OF KOREA'S MIDDLE POWER

This chapter explores with Korea's foreign policy under each presidency, covering from Roh Tae-Woo to the present, to analyze if some active or middle power elements have been presented.

Korea's middle power aspiration is stemmed from its bitter experience of being a backward country, as one of the poorest countries in the world. It had been humiliated by others, along with suffering from the great power rivalry (Lincan & Voicila, 2015, p. 55; Karim, 2018, p. 13). After acquiring some capability, Korean elites, practitioners, and scholars expressed an attempt to be an international player and to strategically take a role as an influential country, positioned between the great and small powers. This shows the determination to play a larger role at the international level and think beyond being an alliance with the United States (O'Neil, 2015, p. 81). It was thus essential for Seoul to come up with the middle power concept, in order to articulate its foreign policy and to pursue proactive diplomatic roles (Kim, 2016, p. 2; Jojin, 2014, p. 326).

Seoul came to articulate its foreign policy in the late 1980s, after attaining considerable economic power. Until then, the country had focused on economic development and security on the Korean Peninsula. It first appeared to be like a middle power during the 1980s, when its GDP ranked 13th in the world. Seoul embarked on democratization in the later 1980s during the Roh Tae-Woo administration (1988-1993), which organizing the famous Seoul Olympics in 1988. This administration also proposed the Consultative Conference for Peace in Northeast Asia, though not that successful (Saxer, 2013a, p. 401). Though, Korea could be acknowledged as a middle power in terms of capability, its aspiration and behavior were quite vague.

3.1 An early stage of Korea's middle power

An early stage of Korea's middle power covers three presidencies, namely Kim Yong-Sam, Kim Dae-Jung, and Roh Moo-Hyun. This period shows that though Korea has the capability and some aspirations to act as a middle power, most of the foreign policies under these three administrations were short-lived and not that actively implemented.

3.1.1 Kim Yong-Sam (1993-1998)

After Korea joined the United Nations in 1991, there emerged a shift in its scope of the foreign policy. Unlike the previous presidency, which focused on Northeast Asia, Kim Yong-Sam set the foreign policy direction and interest at both global and regional levels. The middle power aspiration was thus taking shape (O'Neil, 2015, p. 81). The Segyehwa Policy, or the Globalization Policy, was formally announced at the APEC Summit in 1994, consisted of five essential elements; globalization, diversification, multidimensional, regional cooperation, and futuristic orientation. Importantly, foreign policy's direction was expanded beyond Northeast Asia for the first time. Korea aimed to enhance multilateral security cooperation in the region and simultaneously tried to drift away from the U.S. shadow (Saxer, 2013a, pp. 400-401).

Korea started to engage in some activities related to middle power. It participated in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation (UNPKO) for the first time in 1993. Korea then sent the first peacekeeping operation unit of 250 army engineers for road repairing battalion in Somalia. In 1994, it provided a medical and engineer team to West Sahara. Seoul also offered a peacekeeping cooperation troop unit of 600 engineers to Angola in the following year (Ko, 2012, p. 292). Korea was later selected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in 1995, and continually joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1996.

Korea was also recognized as a middle power by the international community in regard to its capability. Korea's economy was rapidly growing. Its annual GDP reached \$508 billion, surpassing several leading countries including the

Netherlands, Australia, and India (O'Neil, 2015, p. 81). Nonetheless, as a result of criticism against the government's alleged corruption, the Segyehwa Policy lost support and barely had any further progress (Saxer, 2012a, p. 401).

3.1.2 Kim Dae-Jung (1998 – 2003)

Due to the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, Kim Dae-Jung decided to continually use the Segyehwa Policy as a mechanism to cope with this economic crisis. After recovering from this crisis, the government tried to apply the globalization to strengthen Korea's influence at the international level. It then increased the financial contribution to the United Nations budget from 0.69% in 1994 to 0.95% in 1998 (Saxer, 2013a, pp. 401 - 402). Kim Dae-Jung also invited all citizens to take a role as an active agent of national reform and strived to be the global citizen, who participate in the trend of globalization (Saxer, 2013b, p. 186).

As a result of the financial crisis, this presidency paid more attention to cooperation with Northeast and Southeast Asia. It is committed to shape and encourage cooperation through multilateral activities within the region. After the establishment of the ASEAN+3 in 1997, Korea then began to seek an active role to deepen regional integration. It thus initiated the East Asian Vision Group (EAVG) in 1998, with the objectives to create the vision for the East Asian cooperation and integration in addressing the regional challenges, while advancing mutual understanding and trust. It was also trying to take a leading role in establishing an advisory committee for East Asian Study Group (EASG) in 2000, and the East Asia Focus in 2003. In addition, Korea hosted the third ASEAN-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in 2000.

Kim Dae-Jung later shifted the direction of foreign policy to Northeast Asia (Karim, 2018, p. 356). The Sunshine Policy was implemented as a mechanism for engaging North Korea, in the aim to end the hostility and Pyongyang's isolation. This policy comprised of three basic principles including no toleration of North Korean armed provocation, no South Korea efforts to undermine or absorb the North, and an active South Korea with the attempts to promote reconciliation and cooperation between the two Koreas (Levin & Han, 2002, pp. 23 - 24).

In 2000, Kim Dae-Jung made an official visit to Pyongyang and met North Korea's leader at that time, Kim Jong-Il. It was the first meeting since the division of the two Koreas. This significant event was known as the Inter-Korean Summit.

Kim Dae-Jung also proposed a peace-building process for the peaceful coexistence of the Korean peninsula. Accordingly, after the meeting, the government of the two Koreas expanded several peacebuilding activities, covering development, economic cooperation, social-cultural exchange, and humanitarian assistance. Later, Korea built a regional consensus with the North in 2002. Consequently, president Kim Dae-Jung was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in the same year for the attempt to lay the foundation for peaceful reunification of the two Koreas. This thus highlighted Korea's ability to handle the Northeast Asia security and beefed up a reputation in the international arena.

3.1.3 Roh Moo-Hyun (2003 – 2008)

Given geographical constraints, Korea was always a minor player in the region. It was surrounded by various great powers and experienced many invasions and confrontations. Nonetheless, Roh Moo-Hyun took advantage of the country's geography to enrich Korea's position at the regional level. This presidency proposed the Northeast Asia Initiative, intending to make Korea a regional financial and transportation hub (Kim, 2016, p. 4).

In brief, a middle power aspiration was believed to express through the attempt to pursue a role as a regional economic hub, connect, and economically cooperated with its partners. There were several projects that Korea tried to implement under this initiative including attempting to build a peace regime with North Korea, trying to enhance cooperation with other major powers, seeking to be a regional financial and banking hub, planning to pursue strategic foreign direct investment, and proposing the South/North Korean railway project (Presidential Committee on Northeast Asian Cooperation Initiative, 2004, pp. 22-28). Apart from the economic aspect of foreign policy, Korea also tried to fix the national image and expand its influence at the international level. Korea thus developed a soft power strategy by creating the National Image Committee (O'Neil, 2015, p. 82).

The Roh Moo-Hyun administration also attempted to reduce tension between China and the United States, and between China and Japan, by seeking a balancer role, with the main objective to promote regional peace and stability. Korea started to pursue greater autonomy from the United States and simultaneously strengthened its relationship with China. However, there were still several challenges for Korea. Firstly, there was a division between the conservative and progressive groups at the domestic level (Kim, 2016, pp. 4-5). The other constraint was a skepticism from many other countries within the region such as China and Japan, which did not support or accept Korea to play a more significant role in this region (Jojin, 2014, p. 330).

The preoccupation with North Korea also lessened Roh Moo-Hyun's attention to other areas of foreign policy. Hence, in this period, though Korea's capability without any doubt was surely a middle power, as it was successfully recuperated from the Asian Financial Crisis; however, by focusing and attempting to generate several initiatives in Northeast Asia, Korea's global role was then deteriorated, and the bilateral relations with other countries were worsened as well (Saxer, 2013a, p. 404).

3.2 Lee Myung-Bak (2008 – 2013)

During President Lee Myung-Bak, Korea listed as the 15th world's largest GDP, surpassing \$1 trillion in 2010. The size of the military budget was continually increased and finally positioned the 12th in the world, with the amount of \$28 billion (Yul, 2012, p. 79). Its population also scaled up to 49 million in 2011 and likely to exceed 50 million (Saxer, 2013a, p. 397). Therefore, under this administration, Korea's capability as a middle power was even more apparent in the international community

It was during this presidency that Korea's self-identification as a middle power appeared to be more explicit. Middle power identity was more prominent. It influenced and adopted into foreign policies. Middle power's declaration could be reflected through its foreign policy strategy, the Global Korea, and its increasingly active international role.

Two main factors led to the rise of Korea's middle power aspiration. The first one is the shift of balance of power. The global power structure has changed during

the past decade. The great powers, specifically the United States, started to decline. While a number of other emerging powers, such as China, the European Union, and Japan, have become more prominent. This resulted in a fluid international space that allows more states to pursue some roles both regionally and globally. Though this phenomenon dealt Korea a difficult time, as it has to manage the relationship with the great powers, but this also believed to be an opportunity for a middle power like Korea to seek a room to take a more significant role (Yul, 2012, p. 80).

The rise of new global issues represents another essential factor. It was referring to the rise of global trends, focusing on various international problems such as climate change, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, food security, environmental protection, and poverty. It showed that the traditional global governance led by the great powers might not be appropriate in coping with these global problems. Therefore, this was an opportunity for middle powers to seek an active role in settling these new global issues (Yul, 2012, pp. 80-81).

Under President Lee Myung-Bak, Korea was materially ready to perform as a middle power, and its middle power aspiration was more substantial than before. Thus, it was a chance for Korea to showcase its capability, cope with the existing global problems, and pursue some roles at both regional and global levels.

The scope of Korea's middle power policy shifted from regional to global oriented. The new foreign policy strategy, Global Korea, was announced during the presidential visit to the United States. This policy reflected the intention to become a leading international player. It referred to the vision of Korea to leave behind a habit of the diplomacy that narrowly focused on the peninsula and started to perceive the global arena as a platform for foreign policy and national interest (Jojin, 2014, p. 326). Therefore, Korea paid more attention and pursued diplomatic activities at the global level, with objectives to increase Korea's international influence and recognition, and boost its national image.

3.2.1 Global Korea: Focusing on the international issues

Under the Global Korea strategy, Korea began to pursue an active role in various international issues. For international security, which is one aspect of

Korea's foreign policy under the Lee presidency, Seoul focused on participating in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation (UNPKO). It offered 3,000 military units for overseas missions and established the Peacekeeping Operation Centre for military training (Jojin, 2014, p. 334). Korea took part in peacekeeping operations in various international hot spots, namely Afghanistan, Lebanon, South Sudan, Somalia, and the Kashmir region. It also worked together with other states including Canada and Australia. Later, Korea became one of the top ten-largest contributors to the UN peacekeeping budget, along with playing a role as a determined actor in post-conflict stabilization (Snyder, 2012, p. 6).

In terms of international development, Korea was the first aid recipient that successfully transformed into a donor country and was also accepted into the DAC. Accordingly, Korea enthusiastically engaged in international development activities, with the view that ODA would contribute to global peace and development. Such approach demonstrated a broader vision and proactive interaction with the international community.

Table 3.1

Overview of Korea's Official Development Assistance (ODA)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Growth rate	Share
ODA	696 (53%)	802 (15%)	816 (2%)	1174 (44%)	1325 (13%)	1597 (21%)	1755 (10%)	14.3%	100.0%
ODA/GNI (%)	0.07	0.09	0.1	0.12	0.12	0.14	0.13	-	-
Bilateral Cooperation	491 (31%)	539 (10%)	581 (8%)	901 (55%)	990 (10%)	1183 (19%)	1310 (11%)	13.3%	74.6%
Grants	358 (38%)	369 (3%)	367 (-1%)	574 (56%)	575 (0%)	715 (24%)	809 (13%)	12.1%	(61.8%)
Concessional Loans	132 (13%)	171 (30%)	214 (25%)	327 (53%)	415 (27%)	468 (13%)	501 (7%)	15.3%	(38.2%)
Multilateral Cooperation	206 (161%)	263 (28%)	235 (-11%)	273 (16%)	335 (23%)	414 (24%)	446 (8%)	17.8%	25.4%

Note: 1. Current amounts of disbursement.

2. Increasing rate year-on-year is presented in (%).

3. Growth rate represents compound average growth rate from 2010 to 2013 after joining DAC.

4. The last column represents the share to total ODA.

Source: OECD QWIDS, <http://stats.oecd.org/qwids/popularqueries.html>

Note: Reprinted from "South Korea's development assistance and economic outreach towards Southeast Asia," by S. Kwak, 2015, p. 157.

According to Table 3.1, it shows an overview of Korea's ODA provision from 2007-2013, which kept on increasing year by year. At the beginning of Lee Myung-Bak presidency in 2008, Korea's ODA worth \$816 million, which is 0.09% of the country's gross national income. It has continually increased, and finally reached \$1,755 million, 0.13 % of the country's gross national income in 2013. Even though it is still lower than a DAC average of 0.32%, but Korea still made a great impression in its development cooperation and also showed its willingness to raise the ODA budget in the future.

Furthermore, in his vivid speech; Lee was not shy to proclaim Korea as a middle power.

Korea is well-positioned to talk about the problem of the global economy. Because we are a middle power nation that has successfully risen from being one of the poorest countries in the world.

(Jojin, 2014, p. 33)

Korea was eager to share its development experiences with other countries through several initiated programs, namely the Knowledge Sharing Program (KSP), the Development Experience Exchange (DEEP), and World Friend Korea Volunteer Organization (Howe, 2015, p. 3). For instance, the KSP worked with various international organizations, in supporting and implementing approximately 98 projects on knowledge and development experiences sharing. Moreover, the KSP cooperates with many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, such as Angola, Ghana, and Ethiopia, for economic cooperation, and partnership for skill development especially in applied sciences, engineering, and technology (Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2018, pp. 12, 18).

Meanwhile, the international environment was a significant dimension of Korea's middle power policy. Korea was a determined player in environmental protection and climate change. In 2008, the president established the Presidential Committee on Green Growth. In the following year, the Green Growth Strategy was officially initiated with two key elements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support green innovation (Shim & Flamm, 2012, p. 10).

Seoul later enacted the Framework Act on Low Carbon Green Growth and came up with the Five-Year Plan for Green Growth (Bradford, 2015, p. 14). At the G20 Summit in Seoul, green growth was proposed as an alternative economic development strategy, which increasingly gained ground internationally (Jojin, 2014, p. 337). Hence, by proposing the Green Growth, Korea became a proactive agenda-setter on the global environmental issues.

Korea also launched the East Asia Climate Partnership (EACP) in 2008 to assist developing countries in dealing with climate change and promoting green growth. There were several areas that Korea focused on, namely water resource management, waste management, low-carbon energy, low-carbon cities, forestation, and biomass (Jojin, 2014, p. 337). The Green Growth Strategy was advocated in the OECD and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

At the East Asia Climate Forum in 2010, President Lee Myung-Bak announced the establishment of the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) in Seoul. At the Rio+20 conference, the GGGI was elevated to an international organization under the United Nations, the first of its kind hosted by Korea. In 2012, Korea was selected to host the United National Green Climate Fund Secretariat to promote low-emission and climate-resilient development pathways (Karim, 2018, p. 358).

Under the Green Growth Strategy, the Lee government also expressed the goal to mitigate the emission up to 30% by 2020. With its capability and resources in technological advancement, Korea then promoted and invested in environmental technology and renewable energy (Mo, 2016, p. 591). It planned to invest and export technology for clean energy. Moreover, Korea committed approximately 2% of its GDP to support the knowledge and technological foundation to sustain a green growth economy as well (World Bank, 2012).

3.2.2 Global Korea: Pursuing niche diplomacy

Niche diplomacy refers to the concentration of resources in a specific area that middle power has and is likely to generate results (Lee, 2014, p. 5). In this period, apart from pursuing a role as good international citizenship, Korea also adopted niche diplomacy.

For example, for its development cooperation, Korea tried to focus and encourage aid effectiveness. In 2011, it hosted the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan. Korea actively promoted development projects and aid effectiveness, primarily based on its economic development experiences. Seoul presented that aid should be used as a catalyst to leverage other development financings. Thus, it would create an environment whereby other countries could realize their own potentials for growth and development (OECD, 2011, p. 11).

Moreover, this forum marked progress in coordinating and engaging in the South-South Cooperation partners under the principle of common but differential commitments and voluntary participation in the partnership (OECD, 2011, p. 12). Korea sought a role as a bridge between developed and developing countries. To this end, the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation was established in 2012, to replace the existing OECD working party on aid effectiveness (Keeley, 2012, p. 164).

3.2.3 Enriching Korea's position as a middle power

Under the Lee administration, Korea tried to enrich its position as a middle power. It played a role as a convener, conciliator, and proactive agenda-setter in international forums (Kim, 2016, p. 5).

In 2009, Korea initiated the New Asia Initiative, aiming to increase its engagement with Asia. It tried to expand and deepen its relationship with Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and Oceania (Shim & Flamm, 2012, p. 10). According to the president's spokesperson, this initiative has an objective to open a new era of Korea's closer integration and cooperation with all countries in the Asia Pacific in terms of economic, security, and cultural perspectives (Na, 2013).

Apart from the regional integration, Korea enriched its middle power position through the engagement in various international events including the G20 Summit (2010), the Fourth High-Level Forum (HLF) on Aid Effectiveness (2011), and the Nuclear Security Summit (2012) (Shim & Flamm, 2012, p. 4).

Korea also adopted public diplomacy. The Presidential Council on National Branding (PCNB) was then established in 2009. It sought to use culture and national branding as an approach to enhance the other's perception of the country. In

2010, this diplomacy was officially implemented. Several complementary projects were initiated, namely the Korea Public Diplomacy Forum, Public Diplomacy Policy Division, and an appointment of the first ambassador for public diplomacy (Istad, 2016, p. 59).

In short, during Lee Myung-Bak government, the middle power identity was prominent and adopted into Korea's foreign policy. Korea started to expand its foreign policy to the global arena rather than narrowly focused on the Korean Peninsula. Global Korea was then initiated and implemented as a means for Korea to play more roles at the global level. Furthermore, Korea also pursued niche diplomacy and played a leading role in various international issues such as international development, security, and environmental protection.

3.3 Park Geun-Hye (2013 – 2017)

Korea's foreign policy as a middle power has continued well into the following administration, under President Park Geun-Hye, the foreign policy based on the philosophy of trustpolitik, comprised of three pillars (Kim, 2016, p. 6).

1. Trust-Building Process on the Korean Peninsula sought to develop the inter-Korean relations, establish peace on the peninsula, and lay the ground for the reunification (Minister of Unification, 2013, p. 11).
2. Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI) aimed to move beyond the Asian Paradox⁴ by accumulating a practice of dialogue and cooperation to build trust on the basis of shared vision and recognition (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.-b, p. 8).
3. Middle power diplomacy represented an objective to contribute peace and development of the global community beyond the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia, along with seeking a larger role in dealing with various global challenges (Yun, 2013).

⁴ Disconnect between growing economic independence and a backward political and security cooperation.

In comparison to the previous presidency, who portrayed Korea as a middle power, Park Geun-Hye was reluctant to play a role as a middle power actively. This resulted from a fear that the middle power identity might provoke misunderstanding with the United States and China. Hence, among the three pillars, the middle power diplomacy was not that prioritized (Kim, 2016, pp. 6 - 7). However, this government still expressed its foreign policy's objective regarding middle power identity. One of the foreign policy objectives was to become a responsible middle power contributing to world peace and progress (Kang, 2013, p. 1).

In 2013, at the sideline meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), held by Mexico, the foreign ministers of Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey, and Australia agreed to initiate and launch MIKTA, a cross-regional informal consultation group. Though MIKTA countries came from diverse regions and cultures, they have a lot in common. All member states are a part of the G20. They also shared values of democracy and a free-market economy. Moreover, they are like-minded on various global challenges. Therefore, with the willingness and capabilities, MIKTA countries had an intention to cooperate, to address the complex challenges in the international community like terrorism, refugees, sustainable development, climate change, gender equality, and health security (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.-a, p. 3).

MIKTA adheres to the purposes and the principles of the UN charters and other recognized universal norms. The member states emphasized that they will work together to generate a consultative platform to create mutual understanding, ensure bilateral ties, find common grounds for cooperation, and launch the initiative and implement the global governance reform. Furthermore, MIKTA also aimed to play a bridging role between developed and developing countries in order to reduce the gap between these countries, advance discussion on global issues, and find the creative solution for both regional and global challenges (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.-a, p. 25).

MIKTA generated an annual Foreign Ministers' Meeting. So far, they have produced several joint statements on global issues such as the Ebola outbreak, North Korea's nuclear proliferation, climate change, terrorist attacks, and the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 (Schiavon & Dominguez, 2016, p. 500).

As the chair from 2014-2015, the Park administration took responsibility to host the first Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) of MIKTA in 2015. Korea attempted to play a pivotal role, to enhance its position as a responsible middle power. It also made an effort on solving international problems by planning to set the global agenda and improve the consultative mechanism for MIKTA, along with strengthening the solidarity among the member countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015a)

Korea also organized the 5th MIKTA Foreign Ministers' Meeting in the same year. Afterward, Korea arranged the MIKTA Young Professional Camp in Seoul and Jeonju, serving as a platform for the younger generation to share knowledge and create dialogue. This event was expected to forge intellectual networking, understanding, and meaningful discussion for the vision and future, along with promoting related activities, building bonds, encouraging cooperation with the younger generation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015b).

3.4 Moon Jae-In (2017-present)

Under Moon Jae-In, Korea has no self-declaration as a middle power. However, the president mentioned the middle power many times on several of his speeches.

For instance, during the New Year Press Conference in 2018, the president emphasized that

As a middle power standing tall in the international community, the Korean government was able to announce the New Northern Policy and the New Southern Policy. I was also able to continue to stress the need for dialogue in inter-Korean relations.

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018)

Moreover, while proposing the government budget for 2020, the president once again mentions the middle power during his speech

Our evolution into democracy and responsible middle power is the outcome of the beads of sweat shed by the people of all generations.

(Cheong Wa Dae, 2019)

This highlighted that the Moon administration acknowledges and advocates Korea's position as a middle power. Moreover, by considering its hundred Policy tasks and the main theme of foreign policy, Korea's foreign policy somehow wedded to middle power diplomacy (Howe & Park, 2019, p. 125). In other words, its foreign policy still remains in line with previous middle power policies.

Foreign policy under the Moon government was identified as a Northeast Asia Plus Community of Responsibility (NAPCOR), concentrating on peace and prosperity. There are three main pillars under this foreign policy strategy including;

1. Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Platform (NAPCP): enhancing multilateral cooperation in Northeast Asia.
2. New Northern Policy (NNP): strengthening the connectivity with Eurasia.
3. New Southern Policy (NSP): elevating the relation with ASEAN and India (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017).

Among the three pillars, Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Platform and New Northern Policy have been included as a part of Korea's foreign policy since the past. While the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Platform resembled the previous policy of President Park Geun-Hye, the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI), New Northern Policy is embedded in Korea's foreign policy in almost every past government (Lee, 2019, p. 3).

Under the New Northern Policy, Korea desires to create an economic community with peace and prosperity. It set up the 9-Bridge Strategy to put cooperation projects across nine different sectors. So far, Korea grows a closer link to Russia. These two countries increase their economic exchanges. Moreover, Korea proposed the Regional-Specific Strategy toward Central, Western, and Eastern Region including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Central Asia, and the three provinces of China. It attempted to promote technological cooperation and joint investment in universities, research institutes, and public organizations, along with encouraging economic integration as well.

The New Southern Policy was, by far, a new addition to Korea's foreign policy. This policy announced during Moon Jae-In's visit at the Indonesia-Korea Business Forum in Jakarta in 2017. He emphasized that through the New Southern

Policy, the relationship between Korea and ASEAN + India will be heightened to the same level as the one with Korea's four strategic partners like the United States, Russia, China, and Japan (Howe & Park, 2019, p. 118).

This policy is based on the idea of a people-centered community in which Korea proposed the Three-Ps, including People, Prosperity, and Peace. Moreover, this policy attempts to generate people to people connection, contribute to the Peace across Asia, and bring about the community of co-existence and prosperity.

Next, public diplomacy, one of Korea's foreign policy strategies, receives more attention and implements during this administration. It seeks international recognition, elevates relations, with other countries, and improves the national image. In 2016, the Public Diplomacy Act officially passed. Later Korea's First Basic Plan on Public Diplomacy (2017-2021) served as a guideline for Moon Jae-In government. It is based on this following vision "Attractive Korea Communicating with the World Together with Citizens" (Choi, 2019, p. 18).

This plan consists of four main goals including to improve Korea's status and image by using cultural resources, to disseminate accurate information about Korea, to construct a friendly and strategically favorable environment for Korea's policies, and to empower agents of public diplomacy and encourage collaboration among them (Ayhan, 2017, p. 17).

Under Moon Jae-In administration, public diplomacy is articulated in the PyeongChang Winter Olympics Games, as a tool for an establishment of the groundwork for peaceful dialogue between the two Koreas to reduce nuclear tensions in the region and to enhance Korea's international image (Choi, 2019, p. 20). Apart from initiatives discussed above, Korea also behaves as a middle power in other aspects, such as planning to create the peace economy and declaring the intention to increase the ODA volume ("Address by President Moon Jae-in," 2019).

President Moon Jae-In also tried to improve the relationship with North Korea during the Inter-Korean Summit in 2018. The two leaders met and had a handshake over the military demarcation line (France-Presse, 2018). Seoul then attempted to play a role as a mediator between Washington and Pyongyang. Nonetheless, the United States-North Korea negotiation did not yield any further

agreement. The relationship between Korea and North Korea, and between North Korea and the United States are thus worsening now.

Currently, Korea is among the countries that effectively contain the pandemic, COVID-19. Korea is capable of developing the test kits, it has already exported and donated these kits to several countries. Korea announced that it would invest approximately \$500 million to support vaccine development (Khaliq, 2020). Korea also offered \$400 million to emerging nations in the aims to help them develop and push the health programs against COVID-19 (Park, 2020).

Seoul also plans to provide humanitarian assistance over 34 countries in Africa, the Middle East, the European Union, and Central Asia. Korea pledged to continue on providing humanitarian assistance based on the pandemic situation. Moreover, as the chair of MIKTA this year, Korea along with other MIKTA countries expressed their solidarity to overcome the COVID-19 and was committed to join the global policy coordination (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020).

In short, under the COVID-19 situation. Korea is capable of handling this infection and providing international contributions such as testing kits, humanitarian assistance, and financial contribution to many countries. This signifies its behavior as a middle power, acting as good international citizenship and actively responding to this global problem.

3.5 Conclusion

This part presents a conclusion of the development of Korea's middle power policies from Roh Tae-Woo to Moon Jae-In government. The table below provides information regarding Korea's geographical focus and foreign policies and activities of each presidency.

Table 3.2

Development of Korea's Middle Power Policies and Activities from Roh Tae-Woo to Moon Jae-In

Presidency	Geographical Focus	Applied foreign policy/activities
Roh Tae-Woo (1988 – 1993)	Regional Level	Organizing Seoul Olympics (1988).
		Proposing the Consultative Conference for Peace.
		Trying to manage the multilateral engagement in the region.
Kim Yong-Sam (1993 – 1998)	global and regional level	Implementing the Segyehwa Policy
		Participating in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation for the first time.
		Selected as non-permanent member of the UNSC (1995)
		Joining the OECD (1996)
Kim Dae-Jung (1998 – 2003)	Mainly regional level and some global level.	Increasing the financial contribution to the UN budgets
		Initiating East Asian Vision Group (1998)
		Willing to Play a leading role in the advisory committee for East Asian Study Group (2000), and East Asia Focus (2003)
		Hosting the Third ASEAN-Europe (ASEM) Meeting (2000)
		Launching the Sunshine Policy
Roh Moo-Hyun (2003 – 2008)	Regional Level	Initiating the Northeast Asia Initiative.
		Making an effort to pursue a balancer role between the great powers, aiming to reduce the tension.
Lee Myung-Bak (2008 – 2013)	Global Level	Implementing the Global Korea: international development aid, security, environmental protection

Presidency	Geographical Focus	Applied foreign policy/activities
		Playing a role as the convener, conciliator, and proactive agenda-setter in the international negotiations and multilateral platform.
		Engaging in various international events including, hosted the Nuclear Security Summit (2012), became the first non-G8 country to host the G20 Leader Summit (2010), and hosted the Fourth High-Level Forum (HLF) on Aid Effectiveness (2011)
		Participating in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation
		Accepted into the DAC
		Presenting the Green Growth strategy, launched the East Asia Climate Partnership, encouraged technology for clean energy and hosted the GGGI
		Public Diplomacy
Park Geun-Hye (2013 – 2017)	Mainly regional level but still involved at the global level.	Philosophy of Trustpolitik: Trust-Building Process on the Korean Peninsula, NAPCI, and middle power diplomacy
		Joining the MIKTA
		Continually pursuing ODA Policy and Green Growth
Moon Jae-In (2017 to present)	Mainly regional level, but still involved at the global level.	Expressing foreign policies based on Northeast Asia Plus Community of Responsibility (NAPCOR): NAPCP, NNP, and NSP.
		Public Diplomacy
		Planning to create the Peace Economy and declaring the intention to increase the ODA

Presidency	Geographical Focus	Applied foreign policy/activities
		Continually pursuing ODA Policy and Green Growth
		Effectively responding and providing international contribution for COVID-19

During Roh Tae-Woo, Korea's capability could be considered as a middle power. However, its behavior and aspiration were not apparent. It was not until Kim Yong-Sam's presidency that Korea came to show its middle power aspiration. The next president, Kim Dae-Jung advocated the performance as a middle power, more purposively, trying to play a leading role in the region and encouraging cooperation and initiatives. Importantly, he pursued the Sunshine Policy to create a dialogue and groundwork for the peace process on the Korean Peninsula. The Roh Moo-Hyun government, meanwhile, launched the Northeast Asia Initiative, to facilitate more cooperation in the region and to position Korea as a hub for financial and transportation. During these three presidencies, it can be classified as the early stage of a middle power.

Later, Korea entered the period of a rising middle power under the Lee presidency. Its capability even increased. Middle-power's aspiration and behavior came to be more explicit. Korea had an official self-identification as a middle power. This identity was prominent and influenced Korea's foreign policies. Comparing to the previous administrations. Its foreign policies are incorporated with various global and regional issues. One of the most significant foreign policies strategy, the Global Korea, were implemented, in the aim to expand the scope of foreign policy at the global level.

Accordingly, it was during Lee Myung-Bak that Korea's middle power capability was matched by its aspiration and behavior. Korea's aspiration revealed the characters of middle power by hosting high-profile summits, actively playing a role of good international citizen, and pursuing a niche diplomacy. This posture has continued to the following administrations as most foreign policies as a middle power have been sustained.

Park Geun-Hye and Moon Jae-In presidencies can be labelled as the continuity of middle power diplomacy. Under the Park administration, responsible middle power represents key objectives in Korea's foreign policy. Middle power aspiration was persisted as a few relevant foreign policies were carried out, though in a different scope. However, compared to the previous government, middle power's performances were not that outstanding, due to domestic controversy and great power rivalry.

Currently, under Moon Jae-In, Korea's foreign policies are aligned with middle power diplomacy, though without an official declaration of a middle power. The scope of foreign policy is regionally oriented, focusing on New Northern and New Southern Policy, owing to heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula. This administration has paid more attention to North Korea, rendering other policies slipped into a lower priority and have limited progress. Moreover, Korea's role as a mediator between the United States and North Korea is also not that successful. Recently, Korea was able to shine in handling the COVID-19 quite effectively. As a middle power, it is committed to provide international contributions and assist other countries in coping with the pandemic.

The Park and Moon administrations have continually pursued several middle power policies, though apparently less articulated and less emphasized during both presidents. Despite the aspiration of being a middle power, their foreign policies were not that outstanding if compared to the previous Lee government. Under Park Geun-Hye, foreign policies were more regionally oriented, and the middle power diplomacy was not prioritized. During the Moon government, Korea pays more attention to its relationship with North Korea. Thus, other policies, including the middle power one, slip into lower priority. Moreover, the New Northern and New Southern Policies are hardly relevant to its middle power aspiration. They tend to develop relations and cooperation with only some specific countries that Korea has some economic interests, such as Vietnam, Indonesia, and Russia.

CHAPTER 4

RESOURCES, POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, AND LIMITATIONS

This chapter investigates the resources, policy implementation, and limitations of Korea's policies related to middle power under Lee Myung-Bak, Park Geun-Hye, and Moon Jae-In. Analyzing all the three aspects shall provide more understanding of Korea's foreign policy, particularly as a middle power.

4.1 Resources

Resources refer to assets available for government or related agencies in initiating and implementing foreign policies. This section presents two types of resources; tangible and intangible resources in terms of soft power.

4.1.1 Tangible resources

There are two tangible resources, namely financial resources and technological advancement, which can be considered essential assets supporting Korea's foreign policies as a middle power.

4.1.1.1 Financial resources

Given the status among the Top 15 world's largest economies, Korea possesses a considerable amount of budget to pursue foreign policy initiatives. Accordingly, financial resources can be utilized as essential assets in implementing middle power policy.

Several examples explaining how financial resources could be recognized as a significant asset in launching and carrying out foreign policies.

(1) International development

It was during Lee Myung-Bak that Korea became active in implementing development cooperation. Its ODA increased by 65% from \$700 million to 1.2 billion in 2008 (Olbrinch & Shim, 2012, p. 2). Korea thus accepted into the DAC in the following year. It has made progress in adding up its financial aid. Accordingly, Korea provided the largest amount among the DAC member in 2012, contributed

approximately 1,597 million, \$1,183 million to bilateral aid, and \$414 million to multilateral aid (Howe, 2015, p. 26; Roehrig, 2013, p. 641).

Table 4.1

Korea's ODA (2015-2018)

Year	Amount of ODA provided	
2015	\$1.9 billion	0.14% of GNI
2016	\$2.25 billion	0.16% of GNI
2017	\$2.2 billion	0.14% of GNI
2018	\$2.4 billion	0.14% of GNI

Note: Adapted from “Oda Korea beautiful sharing, wonderful growing,” by Korea Official Development Assistance, 2008, “Korea in development co-operation report 2018: Joining force to leave no one behind.” by OECD, 2018. and “South Korea profile.” by D. Tracker, n.d.

According to Table 3, it represents the amount of ODA that Korea provided from 2015 to 2018, entailing that Korea always enthusiastically engages in development cooperation and provides the financial aid. In 2019, Korea set its ODA budget at \$2.8 billion, along with expressing its willingness to increase the ODA to 0.2% by 2020 and 0.3% by 2030 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018; OECD, 2018, p. 18).

(2) Contribution to international organizations

As a middle power, Korea has provided a financial support, both assessed and voluntary contributions to several international organizations. For instance, in 2017, Korea offered an assessed contribution of \$51.4 million and a voluntary contribution of \$24.4 million to the United Nations.

Table 4.2

Example of Korea's Assessed and Voluntary Contribution to the International Organization (2008-2017): In Millions of Dollars

Year	International Organization					
	UNESCO		WHO		ILO	
	assessed	Voluntary	assessed	voluntary	assessed	voluntary
2008	39.7	7.3	10.0	13.6	6.9	1.2
2009	52.9	10.3	10.0	13.6	6.9	1.0
2010	47.9	9.5	10.2	2.3	8.8	1.5
2011	53.0	18.9	10.2	3.4	9.3	2.0
2012	53.4	21.5	10.4	5.4	9.7	1.5
2013	50.8	14.8	10.4	9.8	9.2	2.1
2014	50.8	9.2	9.5	16.8	7.6	2.2
2015	54.1	16.0	9.0	7.9	7.6	5.3
2016	50.8	56.3	8.9	11.6	7.3	4.0
2017	51.4	24.2	9.3	21.6	7.9	2.0

Note: Adapted from “Korea’s contribution to the UN.” Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, 2020.

According to Table 4, it shows the financial contribution that Korea provided to some international agencies. Apart from these organizations, Korea has continually offered financial support to others such as the Food and Agriculture Organizations, World Intellectual Property Organization, and International Telecommunication Union.

As a member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), apart from delivering bilateral aid to the developing countries, Korea also provides some financial contribution to the OECD through the multilateral aid. In 2016, Korea offers 31.1% of its ODA to OECD, accounted for \$6.9 million (Korea Official Development Assistance, n.d.).

Korea also commits to the maintenance of world peace and security. Thus, Seoul makes some contribution to international security by providing financial assistance to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO). Korea steadily offers financial support and currently positions at Top ten financial contributors to the UNPKO (Congressional Research Service, 2020, p. 1).

Table 4.3

Top Financial Contributors to the UN Peacekeeping in 2020

Country	Percent	Country	Percent
1. <i>United States</i>	27.89	6. <i>France</i>	5.61
2. <i>China</i>	15.22	7. <i>Italy</i>	3.31
3. <i>Japan</i>	8.56	8. <i>Russia</i>	3.05
4. <i>Germany</i>	6.09	9. <i>Canada</i>	2.73
5. <i>United Kingdom</i>	5.79	10. <i>S. Korea</i>	2.27
Rest of Membership, Total Percent: 19.48			

Source: U.N. document, A/73/350/Add.I, December 24, 2018.

Note: Reprinted from “United Nations issues: U.S. funding of U.N. peacekeeping.” by Congressional Research Service, 2020, p. 1.

(3) Environment

Korea was the very first country to adopt the Green Growth Strategy. In 2008, Korea dedicated 80% of its fiscal stimulus plan to green growth projects, especially on infrastructure and transportation. After launching the Five-Year Plan for Green Growth in the following year, Korea committed 2% of its GDP for the creation of knowledge and technological foundation to sustain a green growth economy, along with trying to achieve several future goals; building 1 million green homes by 2020, developing the world’s first Nationwide smart grid system, and increasing the country’s renewable energy by 2030 (World Bank, 2012).

In spreading this strategy, Korea provided financial assistance with the amount of \$800 million, pledging to use about 30% of the budget to boost green energy, bring about the conversation on environmental issues, and develop projects on green growth (World Bank, 2012). With the creation of the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) in Seoul around 2010, Korea put an initial contribution of \$10 million to develop the organization and share the best practice with

other countries (Lee, 2016, p. 10). Furthermore, Korea invested approximately \$1.15 billion in climate technology, aiming to save energy and resources (Jung 2015, p. 229, 231).

Apart from international development, contribution to international organizations, and environment, financial resources can support other aspects of Korea's foreign policies as well. For instance, economic power and financial resource can help boost Korea's role in MIKTA. For the New Northern and New Southern Policy, the financial asset applies to deepen the engagement with other countries as well (Ha & Ong, 2020, p. 4). Korea continually offers a financial support to the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKFD), with the aim to carry out projects with ASEAN. Recently, in responding to the COVID-19, Korea provides financial assistance to many nations that suffer from the pandemic. Accordingly, this resource allows Korea to implement its foreign policies smoothly and act in accordance with its middle power aspiration.

4.1.1.2 Technological advancement

Considering technology advancement, Korea is regarded as a 'global leader' in this field. Its investment in technology and R&D is among the highest in the world. Technological advancement is a vital resource for Korea's middle power policies. One example is its Green Growth Strategy, technological advancement is applied to prosper the climate technology. The Park administration was being supportive to advance this resource. Korea then invested and used six technologies to combat climate change, aiming to meet an expected voluntary target for mitigation of greenhouse gas emission (Jung, 2015, p. 229 - 231). Moreover, it projected to utilize this technology to create the value for its economy, combining with other industries such as manufacturing and IT.

Technological advancement is used for the development and implementation of other foreign policies and activities related to middle power as well. For the development cooperation, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), has applied innovation, technological advancement, and R&D to implement and support its projects in many developing countries such as water management, transportation, and the Creative Innovative Values (CTS).

Moreover, for the New Northern and New Southern Policy, the technological advancement is an important asset to strengthen relationships and expand cooperation with the other countries. For example, in engaging with India through the New Southern Policy, Korea proposes to use its technological advancement in lifting cooperation, conducting a joint research, and maximizing the strength of both countries.

4.1.2 Intangible resources

Intangible resources here pertain much to soft power. According to Joseph Nye, Soft power is an ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments, or an ability to get others to want the outcomes that you want. Soft power resources refer to assets that produce such attraction which can encourage cooperation and support foreign policy implementation (Nye, 2004, p. 6). Nye posits three major resources of soft power, namely culture, values, and foreign policy (Nye, 2004, p. 11). Korea's soft power resources can be recognized as follows;

Table 4.4

Korea's Soft Power Resources

Resources of Korea's Soft Power	
Culture	Korean Wave
Values	Korea's development model.
foreign policies	International roles

Note: Adapted from "The South Korea's soft power: Strengths and limitations," by K. Prasirtsuk, 2018.

Among these soft power sources, Korea is known for its cultural resources, especially the Korean Wave or Hallyu. This term was coined by Chinese journalists around the 1990s, reflecting the rise of Korea's popular culture, specifically the TV series "What is Love All About", in China and Taiwan (Dal, 2012, p. 5). This term does not only cover popular culture, but it includes films, drama, music (K-POP), Korean traditional dress (Hanbok), language, and Korean foods as well (Jang & Paik, 2012).

As a result of globalization and the development of digital technology and social media, the Korean Wave expanded and gained popularity beyond Asia. This led to an opportunity for Korea in exporting the cultural products to international markets and improving its national image both domestically and internationally. The other, soft power resources such as values and foreign policies are essential for Korea's foreign policy as well.

Overall, these resources not only generate soft power, but also significant assets for Korea's foreign policies in various aspects. Firstly, Korea is surrounded by several great powers, including the United States, China, Japan, and Russia. Comparing to these countries, Korea possesses limited hard power resources, which are the obstacles for its foreign policies and roles in the international arena. Soft power resources would thus fulfill this gap and allow Korea to implement policies beyond the limit of its existing tangible resources.

For instance, with only tangible resources, Korea's development cooperation might be limited. Korea might be able to provide ODA to developing countries and offer some development projects. However, once Korea applied its soft power resources, such as economic development model and its ambition to pursue sustainable development, this generates more opportunities for Korea in expanding its ODA policy through sharing its development experiences, playing a role as a bridge between developed and developing countries, and creating projects in accordance with SDGs for developing countries.

Moreover, soft power resources, especially successful economic development, democratic value, and promotion of sustainable development, assist Korea in gaining international acceptance and enhancing its middle power status. These values advocate Korea in taking a position in various international issues. For example, the value of Green Growth helps Korea to achieve international recognition as an active player in the international environment.

Soft power resources also help Korea to boost its relationship with other countries. With the cultural resources, Korea's image at both international and domestic levels are revived. Moreover, these resources encourage cooperation and develop the relationship with other countries as well. This can be seen in the New

Southern Policy, President Moon Jae-In highlighted tourism and interest in Korean pop-culture in MOU with Thailand and Myanmar.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Korea tried to concentrate on public diplomacy, trying to reach out to the foreign public through arts, knowledge, media, and language (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.-c). During the PyeongChang Winter Olympics games, apart from the sports diplomacy, Korea also applied its cultural resources especially the Korean Wave, sending several artists to perform in North Korea, with the aim to exchange their cultures and build trust.

Moreover, a leader's visit to other countries also assists Korea in developing its friendship with others. During Lee Myung-Bak, Park Geun-Hye, and Moon Jae-in, all these three presidents made an official visit to ASEAN. These visits allow policies to operate presentably. Under the Lee's administration, a presidential visit to ASEAN encouraged a deeper cooperation with the member states in various aspects such as green growth, ODA Policy, and New Asia Initiative.

Likewise, Park Geun-Hye also visit Vietnam, this improved their relationship and bolster coordination as well. Currently, Moon Jae-In made an official visit to all ASEAN countries and India, in the aim to further the New Southern Policy. These visits lay a foundation for the cooperation with ASEAN countries and India. Korea finally established the one-stop service center for Korean businesses, aiming to boost economic cooperation with Myanmar and also expand cooperative projects with many other countries.

In brief, soft power resources are needed for the initiation and implementation of Korea's foreign policies related to middle power. With these resources, Korea can improve its national image, boost its relationship with others, gain international acceptance, act beyond its tangible resources along with playing a role in accordance with its middle power identity.

To summarize, the resources for Korea's foreign policies can be divided into two main categories, namely tangible and intangible resources. The tangible resources cover financial resources and technological advancement, while the intangible resources represent three sources of soft power, which are also an important asset for

Korea's foreign policies. The combination of these resources provides more options available for policies' initiation and bring about a productive result for Korea's foreign policies as a middle power.

4.2 Policy implementation

This section explains the policy implementation of Korea during each presidency. Policy Implementation refers to a process that translates the goals and objectives of policy into action. The structure of Korea's policy implementation is the top-down approach, referring centralization process of policymaking in which both the agenda-setting and decision-making were determined 'from above' or made by central or a hierarchically high-rank actor, such as government, president, and the executive branch, then followed by lower rank officers.

The vision and direction of Korea's foreign policy are mainly deterred by the president, who is also chief of foreign policymaker. The executive including the president, prime minister, and related departments would work together through the State Council to refine the direction of policies. Then, they will altogether develop foreign policy strategy and pass it to the National Assembly for consent and ratification. Once the National Assembly approved the foreign policy, the Executive Branch will distribute the power to all executive ministries and related agencies. Mostly the new agency/committee will be set up under the provision of either the president or prime minister.

4.2.1 Policy implementation during Lee Myung-Bak

Under Lee Myung-Bak, a number of foreign policies were implemented. Accordingly, there are various policy implementation structures, aiming to carry out several foreign policies including development cooperation, green growth, and public diplomacy.

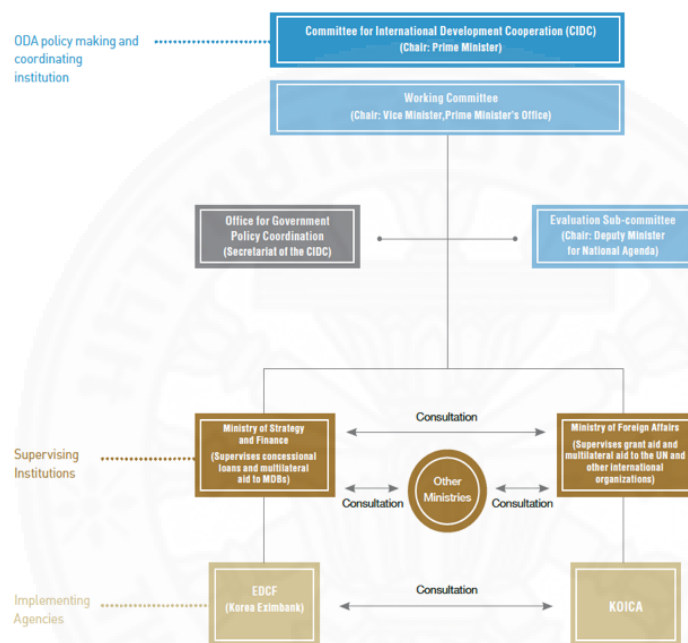
4.2.1.1 Development cooperation

For development cooperation, Korea enacted the Framework Act on International Development Cooperation and established the Committee for International Development Cooperation (CIDC). This committee is responsible

for deliberating and making decision on framework and the annual comprehensive implementation plans, along with evaluating the policies and its progress based on the framework act (Korea Official Development Assistance, n.d.).

Figure 4.1

Structure of the Committee for International Development Cooperation



Note: Reprinted from “ODA Korea beautiful sharing wonderful growing,” by Korea Official Development Assistance, 2018

Various agencies cooperate under the CIDC, the Prime Minister serves as a chair of the committee. The Ministry of Strategy and Finances and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are the supervising institutions. They consult and cooperate among themselves and with other related ministries. The Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) and Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), are in charge of carrying out the ODA policy and related activities.

Under this presidency, Korea was quite active in development cooperation. After its establishment, CIDC tried to create a greater synergy between grants and loans by enacting the Strategic Plan for International Development Cooperation and Mid-term ODA Policy for 2011-2015. Korea committed to increase the

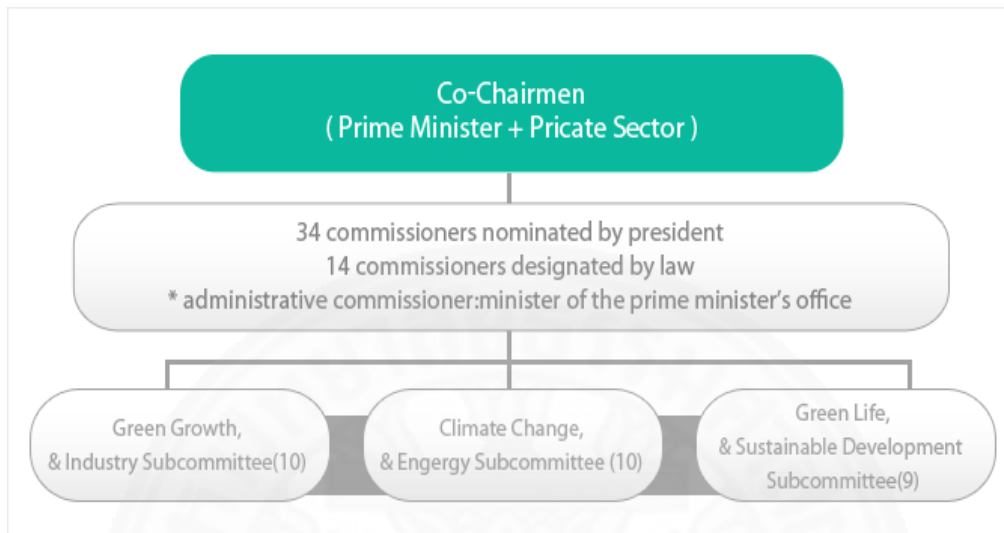
volume of its ODA from time to time, the amount thus grown significantly. Financial aid was allocated to less developed countries and priority partners, with the objective to improve economic and social infrastructure.

Korea also formulated the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for the priority partner countries, with the aim to provide a basic guideline for a productive delivery of aid at the country level. Korea offered humanitarian assistance for several post-conflict countries as well. Seoul pursued niche diplomacy through enhancing aid effectiveness. It organized the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) at Busan in 2011. It made an effort to strengthen the partnership with many other donor nations through the ODA consultation meeting. Korea also offered several projects and training programs along with sending volunteers and experts, to support the ownership and capacity development of the partner countries (Government of the Republic of Korea, 2012, pp. 5 - 12).

As one of the recipients that successfully transformed into a donor country, Korea then expanded its development cooperation projects by sharing its development experience to the international arena. Under the CIDC, Korea attempted to be a responsible member of the global community. It actively complied and followed the international development standards, increasing its contribution to a number of multilateral organizations, adding up to the volume of multilateral ODA, and participating in a leading global discussion on international aid (Government of the Republic of Korea, 2012, p. 14).

4.2.1.2 Green growth

One of Korea's national visions under Lee Myung-Bak is "Low Carbon Green Growth". The Framework Act on Low Carbon Green Growth thus carried out, along with the creation of the Presidential Committee on Green Growth (PCGG) in the early Lee administration. This committee consists of Korea's Committee for Combating Climate Change, National Energy Committee, and the Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development (Presidential Committee on Green Growth [PCGG], n.d.).

Figure 4.2*Structure of the Presidential Committee on Green Growth*

Note: Reprinted from “Green growth,,” by PCGG, n.d.

This agency takes charge in deliberating major national policies related to green growth, evaluating the performance, being a platform for cooperation among the related administrations, and discussing topics related to Green Growth as a national think tank, along with participating in the global green growth communication.

Korea continually spends a good amount of financial capital on Green Growth. According to the World Bank, Korea committed 2% of its GDP for initiating knowledge and technology foundation for sustainability and green growth economy (World Bank, 2012). The PCGG played a pivotal role in public-private cooperation for green growth by establishing a network for the comprehensive integration and communication. In 2009, it also created the legal and regulatory foundation for Green Growth through the National Strategy for Green Growth and the Five-Year Green Growth Plan (Global Green Growth Institute, 2011. pp. 33-36).

Green Financial was introduced as a fundamental element for Green Growth. Several financial institutions provided a loan to support green business,

technology, and infrastructure. Furthermore, with the objective to reduce the GHG emission, Korea established the greenhouse gas inventories as a prior step for the mitigation policy (Global Green Growth Institute, 2011. p. 47). The agency encouraged the public to become active in green growth by creating the green building, transportation, and eco-city planning, along with increasing awareness on climate change at both domestic and global levels.

Korea also promoted green technology innovation. It started to invest in R&D to develop this technology, responding to the potential future demand as well. Upon the establishment of PCGG, Korea laid a good foundation for both legal and institutional structures in dealing with international environmental problems. It began to be one of the active players for green growth at home and abroad. Importantly, the overall performance was quite impressive.

4.2.1.3 Public diplomacy

During the Lee government, Korea adopted the public diplomacy and national-branding strategy, aiming to improve Korea's undervalued national brand. Hence, the Presidential Council on National Branding (PCNB) was established in January 2009 (Presidential Council on National Branding, n.d.). The PCNB has a vision to utilize the international status and the national esteem, to lay a foundation for reliable and unified Korea. With the annual budget of \$5.8 million, it established five main points on international cooperation, corporate and information technology, culture and tourism, the global community, and overall coordination, along with delivering 50 initiatives (Markessinis, 2009).

In terms of its performance, Korea's rank in the national branding index increased during this administration (Choi & Kim, 2014, p. 19). The government used Korean Wave as both cultural goods for exportation and a tool for the development of the national image. There were plans to set up about 150 Korean language schools abroad, with the purpose to promote cultural exchanges. At the domestic level, the King Sejong Institute, the language school, was created to spread information about Korea. This committee also hosted the meeting for discussion of the project, aiming to make Seoul a truly global city.

Korea tried to promote its tourism by increasing and improving investment, infrastructure, facilities, and services. However, Korea still met some constraints, caused by limited funding. Furthermore, the PCNB delivered volunteer programs abroad through the World Friend Korea (WFK), Korea International Co-operation Agency (KOICA), and many other related departments. The number of volunteers increased significantly. For WFK, the amount of 4,000 volunteers scaled up every year (Choi & Kim, 2014, pp. 9-13).

4.2.2 Policy implementation during Park Geun-Hye

This part covers the policy implementation's structure during Park Geun-Hye administration especially on the philosophy of trustpolitik and MIKTA.

4.2.2.1 The philosophy of trustpolitik

There were three sub-foreign policies under the philosophy of trustpolitik. For the Trust-Building Process on the Korean Peninsula, a strategy for engaging with North Korea and encouraging peace in the peninsula, the Ministry of Unification is the main responsible agency. An evolving North Korea policy was proposed, with an objective to create a unification policy that sustains regardless of the changes in government (Jung & Park, 2015, p. 14). Accordingly, the Park government expressed the willingness to communicate with North Korea. Nonetheless, the policy did not have any further progress and there was no cooperation and commitment from North Korea either.

In terms of the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI), it was under the provision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Korea attempted to promote this initiative to regional stakeholders. MOFA and Korea's Institute of Foreign Affairs on National Security (IFANS) also held the NACPI fora, consisting of the Seoul-based ambassador and a representative from various international organizations, to promote and bring about an understanding and cooperation. Nonetheless, this policy hardly has any practical result (Kim, 2017, p. 4). Korea also adopted middle power diplomacy as a part of the trustpolitik strategy. In respect to the great power rivalry, this initiative was slipped into lower priority.

4.2.2.2 MIKTA

It was during Park Geun-Hye that Korea officially joined MIKTA. The domestic agencies who responsible for MIKTA are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Korea's Institute of Foreign Affairs on National Security (IFANS). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, specifically the foreign minister, is in charge of engaging with other members through the MIKTA foreign ministers' meeting, which held up to three times a year. Furthermore, MOFA cooperates with other member states to deliver the joint statement when needed.

Since its establishment in 2014, Korea has positioned as a chair of MIKTA twice. It was the 2nd chair of MIKTA from September 2014-August 2015 and currently, it positions as the 7th chair. Ministry of Foreign Affairs held the First Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) of MIKTA in 2015, aiming to develop consultative mechanisms and scale up the solidarity among member states. However, as a result of the inadequate platform and less cooperation among the member states, there was not that much progress on this.

Later, Korea organized the 5th MIKTA Foreign Ministers' Meeting in the same year, with the objective to consolidate understanding and cooperation among the MIKTA member states. Afterward, MOFA and IFANS also organized the MIKTA Young Professional Camp in Seoul and Jeonju, as a platform for the new generation of member states to share knowledge and encourage dialogue.

4.2.3 Policy implementation during Moon Jae-In

In this section, it covers policy implementation under the current administration, Moon Jae-In, especially on the New Northern Policy, New Southern Policy, and the Public Diplomacy. For the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Platform (NAPCP), it is quite similar to the NAPCI of the previous government. So far, there is rarely any progress from this strategy.

4.2.3.1 New northern policy

New Northern Policy or knowns as the Northern Economic Cooperation is a part of the main national foreign policy under the Moon administration. The Presidential Committee on Northern Economic Cooperation was formed in 2017, under the provision of the president. It is a platform for

cooperation and policy implementation. Since its establishment, several committee meetings are held. There are discussion and planning which bring about the major policy strategies and tasks. In December 2019, the Committee organized the International Forum for Northern Economic Cooperation, in the aim to encourage multilateral cooperation.

The committee presents the 9-Bridge Strategy, to push cooperation projects across nine sectors; gas, railways, ports, power generation, North Pole Route, shipbuilding, agriculture, fisheries, and industrial complex. It also supports Korea in cooperating with Russia. In 2018, Moon Jae-In made an official visit to Moscow and met President Vladimir Putin. They discussed and agreed to establish a complete denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula and to cooperate in economic and infrastructure projects (Goldstein, 2018).

After that, the Blue House has maintained the contact with Russia's Far East Development Ministry to support business and integration. The total trading volume between the two countries is scaling up. Russia then becomes a significant partner for the New Northern Policy. In the current year, the President also attempts to expand this policy by engaging more with Russia, Mongolia, northern provinces of China, and countries in Central Asia.

4.2.3.2 New southern policy

In regard to the New Southern Policy, the Executive Branch implements this policy through the Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy, a special committee under the Presidential Commission on Policy Planning. The committee consists of the vice-minister from various administrative ministries such as the Ministry of Economy and Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior and Safety, and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy. It has the authority to develop the core strategies, design a key agenda, manage coordination among related agencies, and review and assess the performance and progresses. It adheres to the concept and vision of building a "people-centric community of peace and prosperity." (Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy, n.d.).

This committee is both a platform of cooperation among the related domestic and international agencies, to support the engagement with ASEAN + India (Ha & Ong, 2020, p. 2). Apart from the people-to-people engagement, the

committee also forms the Business Federation in New Southern Policy, with the aim to encourage economic integration by supporting communication among companies, businesses and related stakeholders (Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy, 2020, p. 23).

President Moon Jae-In made an official visit to all ASEAN members and India. The cooperation and integration are deepening accordingly, total trade volume also increases. Though Korea offers financial support for ASEAN through the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund and various projects are initiated, only 14 projects are ongoing (ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund, 2020). Later, Korea also hosted the ASEAN-Republic of Korea Commemorative Summit in Busan (2019), both ASEAN and Korea commit to cooperate more on political-security, economic, socio-cultural, and people-to-people agenda, in the aim of bringing global peace, security, prosperity, and sustainable development.

4.2.3.3 Public diplomacy

Under Moon Jae-In, Public Diplomacy is put back into priority again. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs then set up the Committee on Public Diplomacy. This committee held the first meeting in 2019 and came up with the First Basic Plan on Public Diplomacy (2017-2021), serving as a guideline for this initiative. There is notable success in this period. Korea organized the PyeongChang Olympics Games, which showcased its capability, supported its international image, and also laid a foundation and groundwork for a peaceful dialogue between the two Koreas.

People-to-people engagement is one of the pinpoints for New Southern Policy. In encouraging connectivity with ASEAN, Korea thus applies public diplomacy by delivering several activities to support the New Southern Policy through the ASEAN-Korea Centre (AKC). This organization has generated several projects between ASEAN and Korea. It organizes the ASEAN Youth Network Workshop (AYNW) and has formed the Council of ASEAN Professors in Korea (CAPK). It also launched the event, ASEAN-Korea Train, consisting of 200 representatives from all ASEAN countries and India, intending to implant the New Southern Policy and to strengthen Korea's public diplomacy (Anantasirikiat, 2019).

Currently, Korea also applies public diplomacy campaign through sharing information related to COVID-19 to other countries, specifically on how to respond and handle this pandemic.

In brief, the policy implementation of Korea is formulated in accordance with the top-down approach. President is in charge of deterring the vision and direction of the main foreign policy strategy. Among the last three administrations, there are a number of platforms for policy implementation.

President Lee enthusiastically offered some budget and actively carried out several foreign policies. Furthermore, there was some impressive achievement at both domestic and international levels. For example, Korea actively pursued Green Growth. It uses both financial capability and technology to support the implementation for Green Growth. Korea came up with several initiatives in dealing with international environmental problems.

While, under the Park Geun-Hye, Korea made some progress in creating the structure for its foreign policies, encouraging cooperation, and hosting international events to create dialogue for integration. Nonetheless, it rarely has any practical progress. This is caused by domestic controversy and great power rivalry which are the main obstacles for Korea's foreign policies.

In the current administration, Moon Jae-In, various policies are carrying out. Korea initiated several structures for policy implementation. However, these policies do not generate much international or regional impact. The foreign policies related to middle power were less emphasized and directly concentrated on a specific areas and targeted countries. For example, in response to the New Northern Policy, though there are some achievements, it is not only limit to economic cooperation with Russia.

4.3 Limitations

This section presents imitations of Korea's foreign policies as a middle power during Lee Myung-Bak, Park Geun-Hye, and Moon Jae-In, which divides into two main parts including internal and external limitations.

4.3.1 Internal limitations

Internal limitations represent domestic constraints that Korea has encountered, namely lack of continuity and less prioritized on foreign policies.

4.3.1.1 Lack of continuity

According to Article 66 of the Korea constitution, it mentions that “the term of office for the President shall be five years, and the President shall not be re-elected” (The Constitution of the Republic of Korea, 1987, p. 22). Though Korea’s middle power aspiration has continued throughout the number of presidencies, foreign policies have kept on changing. Some of them, such as the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI), only changed the name but the essence remains the same.

Table 4.5

Policy Priority in Each Presidency

President	Foreign policies
Lee Myung-Bak	Global Korea Strategy: development cooperation, Green Growth Strategy, and international security.
	Participated in international forums
	Public Diplomacy
Park Geun-Hye	Trustpolitik: Trust-Building Process on the Korean Peninsula, Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI), and middle power diplomacy.
	Joining MIKTA.
	Continually pursuing ODA Policy and Green Growth.
Moon Jae-In	Northeast Asia Plus Community of Responsibility (NAPCOR): Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Platform (NAPCP), New Northern Policy, and New Southern Policy
	Public Diplomacy
	Continually pursuing ODA Policy and Green Growth.

President	Foreign Policies
	Providing international contribution and assistance to other countries in dealing with COVID-19.

According to Table 4.5, it entails that Korea's foreign policies are shifted in accordance with the presidential changes. Though some policies continue until the present, the main national foreign policies always change. This might result from a different scope of foreign policy during each presidency. Under Lee Myung-Bak, middle power aspiration was pretty strong, and the direction of foreign policies was located at the global level. Accordingly, Korea launched the Global Korea strategy and focused on various international issues such as climate change, international development, and security.

As the presidential change, the foreign policies as a middle power under the Park and Moon administrations were also shifted and began to be less emphasized. During Park Geun-Hye, Korea behaved as a middle power in participating in MIKTA. Nonetheless, the main national foreign policy under the philosophy of trustpolitik was not that articulated. Two out of three foreign policies were more regional-oriented, and the middle power diplomacy also got the least attention. After the Park administration, MIKTA then slipped into a lower priority. The current government, Moon Jae-In comes up with the new framework of foreign policy. He adopts the Northeast Asia Plus Community of Responsibility focusing on three different sub-policies.

Lack of continuity could explain why most of these policies were often initiated and then fade away. With only a five-year term of Korea's president, a political transition and presidential changes will bring about the new set of foreign policy. Accordingly, the previous policies were then passive and received less attention.

4.3.1.2 Lower priority on foreign policy

Apart from the lack of continuity of foreign policy, Korea possesses another internal constraint, its lower priority on foreign policy. Under each presidency, though several policies were initiated, some of them were not being

implemented seriously and hardly have any progress. There were some foreign policies that Korea highly determined to carry out, such as the Global Korea Strategy. Korea put its capability and vigorously took part in various international issues. However, Korea sometimes lacks a determination, its foreign policies were not in the most important consideration.

This could be reflected in lack of budget and limited attention to a certain policy. For example, during the Park Geun-Hye administration, her grand foreign policy strategy the philosophy of trustpolitik, consisting of three sub-policies. All initiatives had their own ground and eventually possesses some implementation plans and frameworks. Nonetheless, these policies lack the financial support and were never prioritized by the government. Later, they died down without much progress.

Likewise, under the Moon administration, there is some financial budget supporting the implementation of the New Northern and New Southern Policy. Nonetheless, this government seems to prioritize its policy toward North Korea. Accordingly, though there are some plan and frameworks, but the New Northern and New Southern Policy generate beneficial outcome only to some extent.

4.3.2 External limitations

External limitations cover regional and international constraints for Korea, including its geopolitics, tension with North Korea, and inadequate platform.

4.3.2.1 Geopolitics

Since the Lee Myung-Bak administration, Korea had self-conception as a middle power and has continually implemented foreign policies related to middle power at both regional and global levels. Nonetheless, there are several limitations that Korea has encountered. Since the past, geopolitics always remain as an unsolvable challenge. There are two kinds of constraints, generated by Korea's geopolitics; great powers rivalry and large regional players in Northeast Asia.

(1) Great power rivalry

Korea's position can be explained as "shrimp located among the whales and in imminent danger of getting hurt when the big whales around it begin to fight" (Shim, 2009, p. 6). This refers to Korea's geographical difficulties, as it was

encircled among various great powers; the United States, China, Japan, and Russia. Hence, an option for its foreign policies is quite limited. Importantly, its impact at both regional and international levels is lacked as well.

Though under President Lee Myung-Bak, the United States rebalancing strategy might generate some opportunities for Korea to act as a middle power, a tension between the United States and China always poses challenges on Korea's foreign policy. Both the United States and China are important an alliance of Korea in both economic and security perspectives. Moreover, they are also important actors assisting Korea in regard to tension with the North (Stokreef, 2014, p. 12). The United States and China are competing for the position at both the regional and global levels (Kim, 2014, p. 15). China becomes more assertive from time to time, and the United States is responding to the rise of China. Moreover, in the case that the relationship among these great powers is worsening (Mo, 2017. p. 604), this would generate some constraints for Korea to effectively play a role as a middle power or implement its foreign policies.

Park Geun-Hye administration could be best-described challenge that Korea faced. The government was reluctant to actively play a role as a middle power and carry out middle power policy. Middle power aspiration seems to be less prominent. This resulted from a fear that Korea's middle power identity and policy might provoke a misunderstanding with the United States and China (Kim, 2016, pp. 6-7). Accordingly, it can be said that being surrounded by great powers, Korea's foreign policies and activities then became somewhat limited.

(2) Large regional players in Northeast Asia

Korea's position in Northeast Asia is somehow limited and not that dominant. Northeast Asia is home to some of the world's largest economies. China and Japan consecutively ranked as the 2nd and 3rd, while Korea positions at the 12th (World Economic Forum, 2018). Furthermore, it is one of the world's most heavily materialized regions (Mo, 2017, p. 597).

The relationship between Korea and other Northeast Asia countries, especially China and Japan, is pretty strained. This mainly resulted from everlasting tension from the historical dispute and remaining territorial conflicts (Chun, 2014, p. 10). Korea is a country with present economic and material capability along

with having a robust middle power aspiration and a willingness to play more roles in the region. Nevertheless, compared to other countries, Korea is the weakest out of all (Lee, 2016, p. 6).

Korea tried to encourage cooperation through Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative, aiming to overcome an Asia Paradox, New Asia Initiative, and Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Platform, along with proposing and encouraging the Trilateral Cooperation to promote peace and prosperity with China and Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.-b). However, the result of these initiatives was not that fruitful. Korea barely received an adequate attention and willingness for cooperation from other countries. This resulted in Korea's incapability to pursue a leading role or effectively behave as a middle power in the region, entailing that Korea rarely possessed a regional impact.

4.3.2.2 Preoccupation with North Korea

Tension with the North has posed challenges to Korea's foreign policies since the past. This continual tension takes away the attention and resources of Korea to fully participate and implement its foreign policies. Whenever the tension or threat from North Korea arises, Korea would find the needed to respond immediately. Thus, Korea has struggled to achieve its global agenda or implement its policies and activities (O'Neil, 2015, p. 87).

The instability created by tension exposes the need for Korea to spend resources on dealing with North Korea. This can be seen from the sinking of Cheonan in 2012. After this incident, Korea started to invest in antisubmarine warfare capability (Synder, 2012, p. 8). However, without the tension with North Korea, all these resources could be used to support and further its middle power policies.

During Park's government, though Korea delivered "trustpolitik" aiming to create the new era of peace on the Korea Peninsula and design trust-building between the two Koreas, this policy hardly generated any result. Hence, constraints from North Korea still remain until present s (Stokreef, 2014, p. 14). During Moon Jae-In, tension with North Korea is also a constraint for the New Northern and New Southern Policy, Korea paid more attention to its cooperation and activities toward North Korea. Thus, other foreign policies were slipped into a lower priority.

4.3.2.3 Inadequate and ineffective platforms

The last external limitation is an inadequate platform, especially when Korea cooperates or joins with other countries multilaterally. One of the interesting examples is MIKTA. After joining MIKTA, Korea positioned as the chair from 2014 to 2015. It then held the Senior Officials and Foreign Ministers' Meeting, with the attempt to consolidate cooperation among the member states. Nonetheless, the framework and platform hardly carried on. Any discussion was likely to stick at the brainstorming stage and rarely came to action. Accordingly, MIKTA's performance was not as outstanding.

Likewise, during the current administration, Moon Jae-In, Korea provides quite a big amount of budget to the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF), to support projects between ASEAN and Korea. Nevertheless, only 14 out of 420 programs have been approved and implemented such as ASEAN-ROK Technical and Vocational Education and Training for ASEAN Mobility (TEAM), Disaster Risk Management Capacity Building Project for AMS, and ASEAN – Korea Music Festival (ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund, n.d.). These are stemmed from an inadequate and ineffective platform of cooperation, as the related stakeholder are not being active in launching initiative or carrying out foreign policies.

In conclusion, during Lee Myung-Bak, Park Geun-Hye, and Moon Jae-In, there are two kinds of limitations that Korea has encountered, namely internal and external limitations. Internal Limitations represent the domestic constraints of Korea, consisting of a lack of continuity and a lower priority on foreign policies. While the external limitation comprises of the geopolitics, tension with North Korea, and inadequate platform. All of these limitations have posed challenges and made it difficult for Korea to productively implement its foreign policies related to middle power. Moreover, these resulted in a limited regional and systemic impact.

CHAPTER 5

WHAT KIND OF MIDDLE POWER IS KOREA?

This chapter combines and applies two middle power concepts in assessing the middle power's characters and qualifications of Korea. One is the concept that distinguishes traditional and emerging middle powers by Jordan (2003), another is the five qualifications of middle power by Swielande et al. (2019). This chapter would provide a conclusion for this thesis as well.

5.1 Korea as a hybrid middle power

Eduard Jordaan (2003) provides constitutive and behavior distinctions between traditional and emerging middle powers as displayed in the table below;

Table 5.1

Constitutive and Behavior Differences of the Traditional and Emerging Middle Powers

	Traditional Middle Power	Emerging Middle Power
Constitutive Differences		
position in political economy	Core	semi-periphery
political system	stable democratic states	newly democratic or non-democratic states
timing of emergence of middle power	during the Cold War	after the Cold War
regional integration and influence	less active in regional cooperation, low influence in the region	Always active in regional cooperation, highly influential in the region.
Behavior Differences		
Behavior	pursues humanistic values activities/ good international citizenship	seeks to play a dominant role at the regional level.

Note: Adapted from “the concept of a middle power in international relations: Distinguishing between emerging and tradition middle powers,” by E. Jordan, 2003. *Politikon: South African Journal of Political Studies*, 30(1), 165-181.

Considering this middle power concept, Korea can be regarded as a “hybrid middle power” whose characters locate between traditional and emerging middle powers, not either one of them. For the constitutive differences, Korea possesses elements of both kinds of a middle power. While, in terms of the behavior differences, Korea fulfills the traditional middle power element.

Constitutively, Korea emerged as a middle power after the cold war from a semi-periphery. It thus fulfills two elements as an emerging middle power namely timing of emergence of a middle power and position in political economy. Nonetheless, while taking the political system and regional integration and influence into consideration, it could be said that Korea possesses some traditional middle power elements as well.

For the political system, Korea could be regarded as a stable democratic country. One of the examples is the political chaos during the Park government. Public opinion mattered. Moreover, there was no force power to intervene. Thus, the impeachment process went according to the system.

In regard to regional integration and influence, during the last three presidencies, though Korea has attempted to play some roles at the regional level, but as a result of the difficulty posed by its geopolitics and the preoccupation with North Korea, Seoul’s position and activities in the region are somewhat limited. Its influence in the region is relatively low. Hence, by considering this aspect of constitutive differences, Korea obtains an element as a traditional middle power.

For behavior differences, Korea’s behavior represents the traditional middle power element. It has acted as a good international citizen and pursued globally oriented foreign policies. Seoul has also paid attention to various rising global problems such as international development, environment, and security. For instance, Korea actively implements the ODA Policy in providing international assistance and sharing its economic development experiences with others. Importantly, Korea also takes an active role in several international forums especially hosting the G20 summit.

Though Korea sometimes tries to pursue some roles at the regional level and attempts to implement some regionally oriented foreign policy, it is rarely capable of playing a ‘dominant’ role in the region. This results mainly from constraints generated by its geopolitics, specifically large regional players such as China and Japan,

and the preoccupation with North Korea. Accordingly, there is somewhat limited emerging middle power element in Korea's behavior.

In short, in terms of the constitutive differences, Korea possesses both elements of the two kinds of a middle power. For its position in political economy and time of emergence, Korea fulfills some elements as an emerging middle power. Nevertheless, Seoul renders two aspects as a traditional middle power as it is a stable democratic state who has a low regional influence. Moreover, in respond to the behavior differences, Korea corresponds to a character of the traditional middle power. Accordingly, Korea does not specifically qualify as any kind of middle powers. It could be recognized as a "hybrid middle power", that contain both characteristics of the traditional and emerging middle powers.

5.2 Korea and its limited middle power qualifications

This part assesses Korea's middle power qualifications by applying the middle power concept presented by Swielande et al., namely the five characteristics of middle power including capability, self-conception, status, systemic impact, and a country's regional impact.

5.2.1 Capability

Capability indicates that middle power should own medium-range capacities, both material and immaterial (Swielande et al., 2019, p. 19). Adhering to this characteristic alone, it might be inadequate to appropriately identify one as a middle power, but capability could not be overlooked, as it is an important resource that enhances middle power status and at the same time, supports foreign policy implementation.

For Korea, it fulfills this qualification as a middle power, on both material and immaterial capacities.

5.2.1.1 Material capability

Korea possesses financial resources, population, human capital development, military capabilities, and technological advancement. All of them assist Korea in enhancing middle power position and supporting its foreign policies. In

terms of financial resources, it is one of the significant assets for Korea in behaving as a middle power and strengthening its status at the international level.

Though in terms of its territorial size, Korea is a fairly small country, but as reached a number of 50 million in 2012, its population is considerably large (Lee, 2012, p. 1). Currently, Seoul listed the 28th world most populous (World Population Review, 2020). Korea also improves the quality of living, education, and healthcare system for its population. It thus came in as 2nd in Human Capital Index (HCI), showcasing its competency and productivity for the next generation (World Bank, 2018, p. 32).

Korea holds some military capabilities. In 2010, Korea had the 12th largest military expenditures, ahead of other middle powers such as Australia and Canada. At present, Korea is among the top six world's most powerful military nations (Global Firepower, n.d.). Moreover, Korea continually sent military personnel to the UNPKO. Technological advancement is part of Korea's material capacity. It utilizes to support economic development and infrastructure improvement domestically. Moreover, Korea has applied its technological advancement to further several foreign policies and overseas projects.

5.2.1.2 Immaterial capability

Korea possesses some immaterial capacities, one of the most explicit examples is its soft power resources. These resources apply to support Korea's foreign policies as a middle power. Korea's soft power resources are quite notable and unique. It acquires powerful cultural resources, especially the Korean Wave or Hallyu. These cultural resources were applied, in the aims to recover Korea's national image, adjust the other perceptions toward the country, and at the same time, enhance its position and influence at the global level.

While its values, such as green growth and model for economic development, allow Korea to expand its foreign policies as a middle power and pursue some roles in several international problems, along with creating some opportunities for Korea to actively participate in international forums. Moreover, Korea applied foreign policy as a soft power by making several official visits to other countries. These soft powers resources assist Korea in strengthening its middle power position and effectively connecting with various countries.

5.2.2 Self-Conception

To identify one as a middle power, self-conception considers a necessary condition. Self-conception explains that middle power has to consider oneself as a middle power. This characteristic represents that the self-perceived role of each country would influence its position in the international community. Thus, it is significant to assess and consider self-conception as a middle power when studying middle power (Swielande et al., 2019, p. 20).

During the last three administrations, it can be argued that Korea has always had self-conception as a middle power. All of these could be explained as follows;

5.2.2.1 Self-Conception under Lee Myung-Bak

It was during Lee Myung-Bak that Korea's self-conception began to be more explicit. The initiation of Global Korea Strategy is one of the strong pieces of evidence supporting Korea's middle power identity, as Korean Vice-Foreign Minister in that period, Kim Sung-Han, stated that Korea demonstrated the influence that middle power may have on the global governance through this initiative (Jojin, 2014, p. 330).

This identity encouraged Korea to take a position in dealing with rising global problems and became more alert in international forums. Korea also actively pursued a role as a convener, conciliator, and proactive agenda-setter in the international forums, namely the G20 Summit, the Nuclear Security Summit, and Fourth High-Level Forum (HLF) on Aid Effectiveness. In addition, this middle power conceptualization has been endured to the following administrations.

5.2.2.2 Self-Conception under Park Geun-Hye

Park Geun-Hye also has a self-conception as a middle power. Being a responsible middle power was part of Korea's foreign policy objective, though it was not as strong as the previous administration. Under the philosophy of the trustpolitik, the middle power diplomacy was also launched in response to its aspiration. Nonetheless, this policy was not prioritized by the government, as a result of the fear to provoke any misunderstanding between China and the United States.

Importantly, Korea joined with other middle powers; Mexico, Indonesia, Turkey, and Australia, in MIKTA, in the aims to create a mutual

understanding, support the bilateral ties, find a common ground for cooperation, and carry out the initiative on international matters. In short, Korea expressed its middle power aspiration by cooperating with other middle powers through this platform.

5.2.2.3 Self-Conception under Moon Jae-In

Though Moon Jae-In does not officially claim itself as a middle power; nonetheless, in response to some of his speeches, President Moon Jae-In has mentioned middle power several times. This thus accentuates that this administration still concedes its position as a middle power.

Furthermore, the main themes of Korea's foreign policy include peace, prosperity, well-balanced development throughout the region, multilateralism, and values. In accordance with Howe and Park, this could be recognized as a characteristic of a middle power in the international community. Accordingly, Korea's foreign policy strategies largely are wedded to middle power diplomacy (Howe & Park, 2019, p. 125).

5.2.3 Status

By perceiving oneself as a middle power, it is not sufficient to identify a certain country as a middle power. Middle power must be accepted and acknowledged by other countries as well. The third characteristic of a middle power, "status", refers to the recognition and respect as a middle power in the international community (Swielande et al., 2019, p. 20).

Korea's status as a middle power is not that recognizable compared to established middle powers such as Australia and Canada. However, under the last three presidencies, there are various evidences supporting that Korea's status is respected by the international community.

After its middle power aspiration became explicit, Korea's middle power status was strengthened when it hosted and participated in various international negotiations and meetings, especially the G20 Summit. It was perceived by the United States as an ideal candidate to be the first non-G7 member and also the first Asian country to host this summit.

Korea also organized the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) in 2011, this summit provides an opportunity for Korea to share

the development experiences and potential for leadership, along with attempting to accomplish the aid effectiveness (Green, 2017, pp. 25-27). Accordingly, Korea's accession to the G20, joining the Development Assistance Cooperation (DAC), and participated in the various multilateral platforms were a confirmation of Korea's status as a middle power (Watson, 2016, p. 1).

The status was built up when the Global Green Growth Institute, a global environmental organization, established in Seoul in 2010. This is the first kind of UN-led international organization hosted by Korea. During the Park administration, Korea's middle power status was realized by its international community, as Korea engaged in MIKTA and coordinated with other middle powers to solve the rising international problems.

Under the current Moon administration, the status as a middle power is bolstered as Korea actively offers both financial and humanitarian assistance to the countries that suffered from the COVID-19. In addition, Seoul ranks 14th in the Global Soft Power Index, entailing that Korea's capability, position, and influence in the international community is apparent (Brand Finance, 2020, p. 4).

5.2.4 Systemic impact

Systemic impact defines as the ability to alter or affect specific elements of the international system. This concept emphasized that middle power would have better knowledge and expertise on specific issues especially the regional tension and reality. It is capable of detecting opportunities and developing approach more quickly than a great power. Apart from being a follower, middle power could take a role as a reformist, creating new innovation to change the international order. Accordingly, middle power would generate the systemic impact, along with influencing both great and small powers (Swielande et al., 2019, p. 20)

Korea is virtually not capable of generating a systemic impact by itself, being surrounded by various great powers. Thus, the great powers, particularly the United States, always influence Korea's foreign policy and decision-making. The installation of THADD is the case in point.

Importantly, Korea's foreign policies were designed to strengthen its position as a middle power by conforming to the existing international order rather than

making any adjustment. For example, Korea is among the front-runners to adopt the Green Growth Strategy, but such policy that focuses on climate change was not very new. This kind of policy was implemented before by other countries and international organizations. Korea only follows the existing global trend and came up with its own policies based on these issues, which does not lead to systemic impact.

Nonetheless, it can be said that Korea has some relevant systemic impact by allying with the United States, which pertains to security and prosperity, similar to Australia, but is a junior partner, not a leader or initiator.

5.2.5 Regional impact

Regional impact is the last characteristic of a middle power meaning that middle power should either be capable of performing the middlepowermanship in the region or in the worst-case scenario should at least successfully manage its relationships with the great power in the region (Swielande et al., 2019, p. 23).

5.2.5.1 Regional impact as ability to perform as middlepowermanship in the region

Whether or not Korea has a regional impact?’, considering its capability to act as a good international citizen in the region. The answer would probably be “no”. Though there is some aspiration to pursue some roles and act as a good international citizen in the region, Korea rarely creates any regional impact.

This is mainly due to its geopolitics; Northeast Asia is home to a country with strong economic and military capability such as China and Japan. If comparing to these countries, Korea’s capability is not as strong and its position, at both the global and regional levels, is more inferior (Lee, 2016, p. 6). Moreover, the relationship between Korea and the other Northeast Asia countries is not really in a good term, this resulted from historical context and territorial disputes. Any regionally oriented initiative or foreign policy that came up by Korea is not likely to receive an adequate attention from the other countries. Thus, this can be considered as a constraint for Korea to actively implement its foreign policies and generate regional impact.

Moreover, its preoccupation with North Korea is considered as one of the constraints for Korea to have a regional impact, as it takes away the essential

resources and attention that could be applied to support the foreign policy. Thus, when tension with the North arise, other policies are likely to slip to the lower priority and barely have any further progress.

Korea also confronts some international constraints. Firstly, as a result of the five-year term of the president without any other term being allowed. Korea's foreign policy lacks continuity. Seoul often comes up with many foreign policies and initiatives that would soon fade away. Furthermore, Korea's government sometimes did not implement its foreign policies seriously. Most policies were initiated, but rarely fully supported by the government. Some of them did not receive adequate financial support, while some faded away as a result of the political problem or lack of attention in the particular period. Accordingly, Korea is not capable of effectively implementing policies or carrying out activities. In other words, Korea could not perform as a middlepowermanship in the region, entailing that Korea rarely has a regional impact.

5.2.5.2 Regional impact as ability to manage relationship with the great powers in the region

Considering another aspect of the regional impact, whether or not Korea could manage its relationship with the great powers in the region. This concept might be problematic as there is rarely any case of middle power who can successfully manage the relationship with great powers. However, in respect to this element, as great powers rivalry always lays as a constrain for Korea's middle power policies. Thus, it could be argued that Korea hardly has ability to manage a relationship with the great powers in the region, though Korea sometimes uses the hedging strategy in response to great power rivalry.

For example, under the Park Geun-Hye administration, Korea maintained its relationship with the United States and simultaneously restored its tie with China. It expressed the willingness to join the Trans Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and at the same time, also decided to enter the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as a founding member (Park, 2015, 63). Thus, Korea pursued a hedging strategy in this kind of situation to maximize benefits and minimize risks that might occur. The other example is the United States military threatening against North Korea

and Japan moving toward remilitarization, Moon Jae-In government then pursues a hedging strategy toward China to create space from these problems (Fowdy, 2017).

It seems that the hedging strategy is the best Korea can do, to protect its national interest. However, Korea is incapable of managing the relationship with the great powers in the region. Korea has not effectively handled this relationship. Therefore, great powers rivalry remains one of the limitations of Korea's foreign policies until the present.

According to two aspects of regional impact, though there is always an attempt to deliver a foreign policy and encourage some cooperation at the regional level, Korea could not pursue a leadership or good international citizen role in the region. It could not manage a relationship with the great powers either. All of these mainly result from both internal and external limitations that Korea has encountered. Accordingly, it is quite clear that Korea's regional impact is somewhat lacked.

Overall, Korea is qualified as a middle power in three elements that is capability, self-conception, and status. Korea possesses both material and immaterial capacities, such as financial resources, technological advancement, and soft power resources, which are essential for Korea's foreign policies as a middle power. On self-conception, various foreign policy strategies show that it is aware that Korea is a middle power. Thus, it has continually behaved as a middle power; several foreign policies have been implemented. Korea also began to be more active in international forums and took some role at the regional level as well. Accordingly, Korea has been accepted by the international community as a middle power.

Korea still lacks some middle-power's qualifications namely systemic and regional impacts. Though Korea could hardly generate any systemic impact by itself and does not qualified for this qualification, but it could be relevant to the systemic impact through being the alliance with the United States.

In respect to regional impact. Though Korea sometimes adopts the hedging strategy in responding to the great power rivalry, aiming to protect its national interest, and maintain this relationship, but it could barely take lead in managing the great powers relationship. Korea always falls into great power domination and has to be dependent on the great powers. Moreover, the important factor indicated the regional impact is its role as a good international citizen in the region. However, due to both

internal and external limitations such as geopolitics, discontinuity, and a lower priority on its foreign policies, Korea is hardly capable of pursuing a leadership role or obtaining any influence on the region.

5.3 Conclusion

This study aims to explore Korea's foreign policies and analyze its middle power characters and qualifications, along with investigating resources, policy implementation, and limitations during Lee Myung-Bak, Park Geun-Hye, and Moon Jae-In.

The findings are in line with the hypothesis, "Given economic and cultural capability, Korea is trying to be middle power based on its international behavior" Economic and cultural capability along with technological advancement represent important assets for Korea's foreign policies as a middle power. During the last three presidencies, Korea has continually expressed itself and behaved as a middle power through launching and carrying out aspiring policies and activates.

During Lee Myung-Bak, which could be identified as a period of a rising middle power, the president officially identified Korea as a middle power and started to pursue middle power policies and activities at both regional and global levels namely hosting a high-profile summit like the G20 and Nuclear Summit, implementing the Green Growth and public diplomacy. It also carried out a niche diplomacy such as aid effectiveness.

Following the Lee presidency, Korea has still continued its middle power policies. The two administrations; Park Geun-Hye and Moon Jae-In, could be classified as a continuity of Korea's middle power diplomacy. For the Park administration, Korea was trying to be a responsible middle power by responding to international problems and contributing to world peace and progress. Seoul also joined MIKTA and coordinated with other middle powers to create mutual understanding, to find common ground for cooperation, and to launch an initiative for global governance reform.

Under Moon Jae-In government, who also emphasizes middle power status, Korea is implementing three policies under the Northeast Asia Plus Community of Responsibility including Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Platform, New

Northern, and New Southern Policy, along with carrying out public diplomacy. Recently, Korea also provides some contribution in responding to COVID-19, namely the financial support, diagnostic kits, and facial masks, to a number of developing countries in Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, the America, and the European Union (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020)

In brief, Korea behaviour and foreign policies related to middle power are quite explicit. Throughout the three administrations, Korea has always pursued foreign policies as a middle power at both regional and global arenas. Seoul has actively participated in some international events and solved global problems, along with playing some roles in various international forums.

To answer the main research question, “What kind of middle power is Korea?” In accordance with the concept that distinguishes traditional and emerging middle powers by Jordaan, Korea can be classified as a hybrid middle power. It obtains the attributes of both kinds of a middle power.

On one hand, Korea emerged as a middle power after the cold war from the semi-periphery. Thus, it renders some characters as an emerging middle power. On the other hand, Korea corresponds to the traditional middle power. Seoul is a stable democratic state who has quite limited regional influence. Its behavior is also in-line with the traditional middle power as Korea actively pursues some role at the global level through various high-profile summit, positions as a good international citizen and pays attention to various rising international problems.

For the five characteristics of a middle power, Korea could be regarded as a limited middle power. It qualifies as a middle power for three elements, namely capability, self-conception, and status.

Being a country that is full of both material and immaterial capacities, along with having a self-conception as a middle power. According to the Korea’s constitution and political structure, Korea’s president would be in position for five years without more terms being allowed. Once there is a power transition, it is natural for any president to come up with the new edition of foreign policy or at least renew the name of the existing policies. Accordingly, though the scope of foreign policies is changed according to each president, Korea has always enthusiastically behaved as a middle power from Lee Myung-Bak until present. Several foreign policies and oversea

activities related to middle power thus have been carried out at both regional and international levels through various policy implementation structures. Korea is also respected by the international community as a middle power.

For the last two qualifications; systemic and regional impact, Korea is not qualified for these criteria. Though pursuing foreign policies as middle power at the global level, Korea could barely generate any systemic impact by itself. This can be attributed to great power domination and the nature of Korea's foreign policies, which is likely to conform rather than adjusting on the existing international order. However, Korea is relevant to some systemic impact by allying with the United States.

In terms of regional impact, Korea is not qualified either, due to its internal and external constraints, such as geopolitics, preoccupation with North Korea, lack of the continuity, and lower priority on regional policies.

Overall, combining the two middle power concepts, it reveals that Korea is a hybrid and also a limited middle power. On the one hand, Korea can be categorized in-between the traditional and emerging middle powers. On the other hand, Korea is qualified for three out of five characteristics. This highlights Korea as a different case of a middle power. Accordingly, it implies that the existing concepts on middle power are not yet comprehensively capture the characters of middle power.

Given a hybrid and limited characters of middle power, not much can be expected from Korea. Though Korea's capability has increased with the continual efforts to behave as a middle power, there are certain limitations, namely geopolitics, the preoccupation with North Korea, internal political constraints, and a lower priority on foreign policy. Even the current New Southern Policy, not much progress has been made to date. It would be quite difficult for Korea to take a more significant role as a middle power.

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BIOGRAPHY

Name	MISS NATCHAYA CHAWALITCHAIKUN
Date of Birth	March 13, 1997
Educational Attainment	2015 - 2018: Bachelor of Political Science Major: Politics and International relations (English Program) Minor: Governance and Transnational Studies Thammasat University
Work Experiences	Intern, Thai Trade Center in Vancouver, Department of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce of Thailand