

# **CLIMATE CHANGE, GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE AND BARGAINING LEVERAGE: A CLASSICAL REALIST CRITIQUE OF WHY SOUTH KOREA ADOPTED A CARBON CAP AND TRADE SYSTEM**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*South Korean diplomatic bargaining leverage is enhanced through South Korea acquiring global leadership positions in promoting sustainable development. Global governance trends in addressing the greenhouse gas emission causes of climate change create opportunities for South Korea to benefit in terms of its power capabilities. They include diplomatic bargaining leverage deriving from South Korean representatives' high profile in supporting global multilateral treaty initiatives and their implementation organizations. South Korea benefits diplomatically from increasing global awareness of political economic interdependence for national sustainable development. Competition for influence by the United States and China in the post-Cold War international environment includes vying for leadership in global sustainable development initiatives. South Korea's geographic and institutional location at a nexus where US and Chinese focus their competition creates greater opportunities as well as dangers. South Korea aims to direct their competition into global sustainable development promotion with South Korea a leading proponent of these initiatives. As a lesser power, South Korea must accommodate this competition, while seeking to mitigate it to avoid regional and global interdependence from being undermined. This diplomatic bargaining leverage focus facilitates elaboration of the concepts of modernization, networking, hedging and soft-balancing in response to the rise of China.*

**JEL:** F1, F5, F6, Q5

**KEYWORDS:** Climate Change, China, Korea

## **INTRODUCTION**

South Korea adopted a carbon cap and trade system, entering into effect on January 12, 2015 (“South Korea Power Report” 2015). South Korea is an East Asian state leader, initiating a national emissions trading scheme (ETS) before many of its economic competitors (World Bank Group, 2015, 12). South Korea declared its intentions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2020 (“Country Report,” 2015, 34). South Korea launched its ETS 22 months before the 12 December 2015 Paris Agreement came to effect on November 4, 2016 (Bradsher, 2016).

The 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) adopted the Paris Agreement. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, the “Earth Summit,” adopted the UNFCC, which entered into force in 1994 (“Briefing: The Paris Agreement,” 2016). The Paris Agreement requires developed states to formulate and adopt policies to limit and reduce further their carbon emissions from 2020, earlier than for developing states. The Paris Agreement builds upon the 1997 Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCC, with the Kyoto Protocol terminating in 2020. Chinese officials have spoken of establishing a Chinese carbon market by 2017 (Wong

and Buckley, 2015). South Korea is significantly less wealthy per capita in comparison with Japan or other industrialized states adopting or considering greenhouse gas emission market-based restriction systems.

Answering the question as to why South Korea adopted a carbon cap-and-trade policy has different facets. At one level, the search for an answer may focus on official government policy accounts. I. Watson notes that Seoul after the institutionalization of the Korean War ceasefire adopted a national security strategy emphasizing national strength through economic development. President Lee Myong-bak (2008-13) of the conservative Grand National Party embraced a global environmental protection component modification to this policy thrust:

The official state-led view is that the long-term qualitative redefining of national security can be constructed through a new economic strategy known as ‘green development’ because business as usual (BAU) brown industrial development strategies of the past are counter-productive to establishing long-term national security. In this sense, environmentalism is no longer regarded as being a fetter on economic development, but rather an integral facet of development and thus of a new approach to national security (2012, 539).

South Korea’s global green component to its security policy attracted global attention, incorporating a commitment to serve as a link between the developing and the developed world (Ibid.).

This study explores how to conceptualize South Korea’s policy commitment in terms of generating bargaining leverage to pursue its polity motivations and policy aims. It highlights the role of South Korea’s soft power emphasis in its international grand strategy in its relations with China, the US and their allies and clients. China is a focus of South Korean strategy for its role as the main source of economic subsidy for North Korea. Chinese elite and public opinion places emphasis on studying South Korea as a laboratory for policies that China may adapt and adopt. Confucian South Korea’s economic success was important to the Chinese leadership in formulating their own economic reforms (Friedman, 2009, 5, 9, Wang, 1996). Escalating conflict between China and US allies in East Asia complicates South Korea’s strategy for reunification of the Korean peninsula under the Seoul regime. South Korea’s carbon cap-and-trade program is part of its post-Cold War strategy to exploit economically and politically critical global trends to enhance its diplomatic bargaining leverage.

The contribution of this paper to the international relations theoretical literature through the case study vehicle of South Korea’s climate change foreign policy includes multiple aspects. Firstly, it elaborates the notion of hedging and soft-balancing by lesser powers within the US-dominated regional and global framework with the rise of China (Pempel, 2010, Scott, 2010, 88). Its focus on the case of South Korean carbon cap-and-trade provides a useful elucidation of the concept of hedging behavior by a middle-ranking, globalized state. Secondly, it thereby develops the characterization of South Korea as developing and deploying ideational and positional power through its complex, networked foreign policy (Hayes, 2015, 97). It elaborates international networking by linking it to an explicit conceptualization of strategic enhancement of South Korea’s diplomatic bargaining leverage. Thirdly, it thereby demonstrates the importance of core concepts in Hans J. Morgenthau’s seminal exposition of classical realist theory for conceptualizing globalization. Classical realism’s theory of power and influence accommodates liberalist emphases on cooperation while supporting today’s constructivist foci on ideational power. Trends in contemporary international economic, developmental and environmental law illustrate this synergy. Shaping national interest as each state articulates it occurs through the application of competing great power hegemonic state influence capabilities. This point is foundational for addressing the global challenge of anthropogenic climate change.

The paper begins with a critical dialogue with selected theoretical literature conceptualizing state power, motivation, strategic behavior, hegemony and globalization to outline the theoretical framework. It then

applies the framework to the case of the rise of China in the context of established postwar US global hegemony. The following section highlights how these competing hegemonies interact insofar as national development requires integration in global trade and investment flows after the Cold War. South Korea has exploited the opportunities which these competing hegemonies provide. The reconciliation of these competitive cooperation imperatives manifests itself within the context of international economic, development and environmental law. These international hard and soft law trends constitute international regimes and their organizational manifestations, such as the World Bank. The rise of sovereignty-focused, nationalist populism within the US and elsewhere is a major challenge to these regimes. South Korea as a middle-ranking power plays an interlocutory, mediating role in the evolving international system as it pursues its own goals, including national reunification under the Seoul regime. China surpassed the US as South Korea's largest trading partner in 2004, and currently China imports more than twice as much South Korean exports as the US (Kim and Cha, 2016, 107).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A classical realist perspective is a useful theoretical framework for critical strategic analysis of international regime mechanisms for global environmental protection. Realism's relevance is also evident in the rise of sovereignty-focused, populist nationalism worldwide amidst globalization-driven state restructuring with the internationalization of capital (Oguz, 2015). In the European Union, the leader in global efforts to address global climate change, this rise of sovereignty-focused, populist nationalism takes the form of national Euro skepticism (Zeff and Piro, 2015, 2).

Alternative viewpoints include liberalist, global governance perspectives (e.g. Cho, 2013). As liberalist theorists point out, most of international interaction is business and trade related. It consists of cooperation for win-win outcomes (Schweller, 2011, 285). Critical constructivist critiques, which have been characterized more as an approach, have also been applied (Viola, Franchini and Ribeiro, 2013). These applications include a focus on narratives of national security and international environmental cooperation regarding South Korea (I. Watson, 2012). Conflating international economic cooperation and environmental protection regimes is appealing because they typically are congruent (e.g. Nathan and Scobell, 2013). Meanwhile, within established nation states, sovereignty-focused, populist nationalism rises, e.g. in the United Kingdom with the Brexit vote and Donald Trump's election as US president.

The classical realist focus on power motivation usefully addresses the question as to why South Korea as a middle-ranking power adopted a global leadership position on carbon cap-and-trade policy. It relies on theoretical assumptions of state power motivation for its premises. Hans J. Morgenthau's theoretical insights have been important in developing the most influential theory of international relations, the theory of "realism" in international relations (Morgenthau, 1993, Cottam, 1977, 14-17). Two vital concepts in Morgenthau's theory of realism in international relations are power and national interest. Power capabilities are evaluated relative to other states. Morgenthau's international relations theory of political realism is concerned ultimately about the optimization of power. Power is "the exercise of influence over the minds and actions of men" (Cottam and Gallucci, 1978, 4). It determines the range of policy options which a government has in its foreign policy. Realism assumes that an objective national interest exists in the form of the optimization of political influence of a country in the external international political environment. The national interest of a state is to expand to the objective limits of its geopolitical hegemonic sphere of influence. These limits derive from the relative power capability base which each state has. The relative power capability among states is changing, so the boundaries of a state's appropriate sphere of influence should change as well to avoid relative power-debilitating imperial overreach (Cesa, 2009, 178-80, 188-90, Chen, 2013, 44). With the rise of China, the question emerges as to whether the US risks being overextended in Korea and in east Asia generally. In the case of overextension, eventually, an international political systemic correction occurs as a result of inevitable foreign policy defeats. States, like people, rarely decline gracefully.

Morgenthau’s theory of realism assumes that states act as if optimizing their relative power capabilities and political influence in international relations is their primary motivation (Carroll, 1972). The -as if- argument is the cover for an incremental foreign policy making process within a state. Morgenthau knew what a state’s motivations in world politics were, or rather, what they were in effect going to be, i.e. power and influence (Behr and Heath, 2009). He did not need to ask, ‘why did they want power and influence?’ because, apparently, this question does not matter for understanding patterns of state international behavior. He knew that there was a political foreign policy making process inside a government, and that it was complex. He saw patterns and tendencies that push it in certain directions, which he saw as being overwhelming (Cottam, 1977, 15).

Morgenthau identifies 3 pattern types or categories of foreign policy strategic behavior (Behr and Heath, 2009, 337): 1) Status Quo -- a status quo policy aims to maintain the influence of an actor in international relations. 2) Imperialist -- an imperialist policy occurs when an actor recognizes that it has the ability to expand its influence and if it has the opportunity to expand its influence, it will. 3) Prestige -- a prestige policy occurs when an actor, which has been exercising great influence, begins to experience a decline in its relative power potential base. The implications are the following:

Table 1: General Foreign Policy Patterns

Country	Power Potential Base	Influence Exercised	Foreign Policy Will Be
A	1	2	Imperialist
B	1	1	Status Quo
C	2	1	Prestige

*Morgenthau identified three general foreign policy behavior patterns by states in international relations, focusing on Great Powers, i.e. the states with the top ranking relative power capabilities in the international political system. Morgenthau’s theory of political realism assumed that states act as if the optimization of their power and influence in the world is their primary foreign policy motivation. A rising Great Power such as China will therefore seek to expand its influence, defined as control over the thoughts and actions of men. The US, holding primacy in the postwar system, will seek to maintain its influence and resist China’s rise. A declining Great Power such as post-Cold War Russia will engage in ultimately futile demonstrations of capabilities. Awareness of interdependence can mitigate tendencies towards violent international competition.*

In terms of ethics and morality, Morgenthau emphasized the necessity of leadership decisions on the basis of an understanding of the consequences of one’s foreign policy decisions. In a world of states seeking influence despite resistance, a balance of power through creation of spheres of influence was therefore necessary. Maintenance would contain and prevent disastrous wars of global conquest, which would be the greatest ethical evil. The international political realist’s rules of diplomatic strategy require that Great Powers should keep a balance of power among spheres of influence (Chen, 2013, 44). A state therefore should not over extend, nor under extend, nor should it allow a lesser power ally to determine its foreign policy so as to maintain its adaptive flexibility.

Morgenthau observed that state leaders will cloak the output of their country’s foreign policy making process in broadly appealing ideological or religious symbols. This justification for their influence advancement he labelled, nationalistic universalism (Jütersonke, 2006, 203). Therefore, a state’s foreign policy motivations are rarely what a state leader claims they are. Realists therefore tend to be skeptics with regard to the importance of moral principles as guides to making foreign policy.

Nationalistic universalism is the belief that one state’s values and interests are superior, ideologically or religiously, to those of other states (Sullivan, 2010, 286). Intensely imperialist powers by definition are less constrained by the norm regimes embodied in international law. A recognized balance of power mandating cooperation is necessary for international law to develop. Therefore, the existence of an international political problem defined as global climate change is a global regime product of a balance of power system. It exists in relation both to great powers and lesser powers in peripheral regions (Little, 2007, 122, 125). It is a creation of globalization and great power competition within this context. Nationalistic universalism

includes the self-serving interpretation of the foreign policy aims of an aspiring superpower (James 2008, 422).

Shilliam offers insights into the role of nationalistic universalism in relation to global regime production and maintenance,

Morgenthau developed his ‘conservative liberalism’ by reference to what might be called the international dimension of knowledge production. Recognizing this dimension requires us to reimagine context as neither bounded to a particular society, nor universal in scope, but rather delineated in and through a specific society’s interaction with other, differentially developed societies (2007, 301).

Modernization is thus the dominant agenda characterizing the political economic foreign policy thrust of post-Soviet Russia as one of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa). The Russian authorities emphasize Chinese resources for modernization, dependent significantly upon the intensity of conflict between Moscow and the Euro-Atlantic community (Freire and Simão, 2015).

**DISCUSSION**

State leaders in effect tend publicly to portray their respective polities’ foreign policy in self-serving terms, i.e. reflecting the challenges they face in a particular international political context. The selection of broadly appealing ideological symbols (in the contemporary era) will be made accordingly:

Table 2: Examples of Nationalistic Universalism

	Denmark (1940) [i.e. Germany Threat]	UK (1900) [i.e. Hegemonic Peak]	UK (1988) [i.e. USSR Threat]
Power Potential Base (scale of 1-5)	4	1	2 (and declining)
Geopolitical prevailing view	Threat	Opportunity	Threat
Nationalistic Universalism	national self-determination	civilizing mission	national self-determination

*According to Morgenthau, state polities will collectively tend to cloak the output of their respective, complex foreign policy making process in broadly appealing ideological or religious symbols. A state’s relative capabilities which shape consequent, perceived challenges, determine the content of a state’s nationalistic universalism. The prevailing worldviews at a particular point in world history will shape the content of the nationalistic universalism. For example, today, Western and East Asian state leaders tend to evoke different selective human rights themes to justify their respective foreign policies. By successfully persuading the global public that the particular interests of a state are in interests of target polities as well, then the initiator state can more readily achieve its foreign policy goals at lesser cost.*

Table 3: Morgenthau Might Portray the Cold War Accordingly

	USSR (1950) [Cold War Height]	USSR (1988) [Cold War End]	USA (1950)	USA (1988)
Power Potential Base	1	1 (declining)	1	1
Geopolitical prevailing view	Opportunity	Threat	Opportunity	Neither T Nor O
Nationalistic Universalism	advance the dialectic	each country determines its own pace	modernization (i.e. civilizing mission)	national self-determination/modernization

*The Cold War reflected the postwar inadmissibility of blatantly racist justifications for foreign policy such as “civilizing mission” and “white man’s burden.” Appropriate postwar terms include promoting modernization and development in the so-called “developing” world. In the post-Cold War international political system, global environmental concerns have modified the modernization paradigm to include sustainable development.*

Soft, or attractive, power is getting others to want what the initiator state wants. It can have its foundations in the ability to set the political agenda in its sphere of influence such that it shapes the preferences of others that the latter express. It can also rest on the appeal of one’s ideas. Smart power is the capacity to know when to apply hard power, when to apply soft power, and when and how to combine the two (Nye and Welch, 2017, 47-49). Capacity includes social science, i.e. inter-subjectively validated social science

knowledge, including knowledge/awareness of interdependence (see Table 5). As highlighted below, a source of diplomatic bargaining leverage includes the importance of knowing and realizing that state actors are interdependent. This interdependence has always been true. A task of social science is to remove obfuscation so that this understanding composes part of the diplomatic bargaining context. South Korea with its commitment to green politics in its foreign policy is attempting to boost its soft and hard power capabilities by shaping global interdependence awareness. Its international political strategy includes highlighting its technological prowess to meet these challenges, in particular in negotiating with the developing world. South Korea is a state that still is fighting to win the Korean War in the post-Cold War era by unifying Korea on Seoul’s terms. As rising China significantly adopts and adapts the South Korean model, it serves to undermine the leverage of North Korea. Smart power is power conversion (Nye and Welch, 2017, 46). It involves converting resources into effective influence over other countries’ behavior. It is the generation of bargaining leverage for subsequent application (see Table 5). The Seoul government recognizes the importance of climate change generates significant opportunities for enhancing particular forms of hard and soft power for subsequent smart power (“Park Calls for Efforts for Launch of New Deal on Climate Change,” 2015).

Table 4: Nationalistic Universalism in 2017

	N. Korea	S. Korea	Japan	USA	Russia	China
Ibid.	4	3	2	1	2	2
Ibid.	T	T	T	T/O	T/O	T/O
Ibid.	self-determination	modernization/civilizing mission/self-determination	modernization/self-determination	war on terror/civilizing mission/modernization	modernization/civilizing mission/self-determination	modernization/self-determination

*The collapse of the USSR accelerated US global influence expansion. Awareness of interdependency under the aegis of US-led globalization shaped prevailing global views of the necessities for national development with the failure of Soviet Communism. South Korea became an exemplar of economic development concomitantly with growing global governance efforts to address global climate change challenges via sustainable development policy. The post- September 11, 2001 international political environment added the “war on terror” to US universalistic global influence primacy justifications to remove the threats from rogue states to global civilizational progress. The rise of China within this dynamic international context generates threats and opportunities for South Korea to increase its influence to pursue its own foreign policy aims.*

Liberalists argue that international relations exist in a global society of states. Like any society, norms and rules do guide the behavior of its members, even though they may engage in violence against each other. Most of the time, most states obey most of their international legal obligations to each other: most of the time they cooperate to resolve their disputes peacefully (Henikin, n.d.). Liberalist principles stand in contrast to realist ones. Shilliam’s insight outlined above notes that liberalism can be a justification for national influence expansion in the international community. Whether this expansion by China, the US or any actor is seen as imperialistic threat to a state’s sovereignty is a subjective determination by each national community. Their respective perceived interests and challenges will shape their collective polity responses to this expansion. South Korea, for example, is comparatively open to US influence because its particular political and historical challenges are very different from the People’s Republic of China.

Liberalists tend to be state moralists: members of this global society of states do regulate their behavior according to common norms of cooperative behavior. They will form coalitions to punish militant law breakers. The proof is the importance of international institutions and norm regimes of behavior including the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and many others. Realists would respond that Great Powers cause these international organizations to function, if they function. The United Nations Security Council was largely immobilized by competing vetoes during most of the Cold War. It then became much authoritative in international relations with the end of the Cold War.

Constructivists argue that citizens exist in a global society of individuals, and sovereign states have emerged and are declining as a result of the changing values and capabilities of individuals. We live in a cosmopolitan global order. Human rights concerns are becoming more influential in global public opinion

to limit and constrain the behavior of governments. The world is not anarchic, but rather complex, and human rights aspirations can progressively expand. The national interest is simply whatever the output of the foreign policy making process, and not expanding to the objectively determinable boundaries of a state's sphere of influence.

In sum, global value change is more likely to occur if the respective nationalistic universalism of Great Powers is more or less accepted as best practice prescriptions for national power capability. One US foreign policy college textbook claims that soft power is far more important than military power for US influence in international affairs (Hook, 2017, 246). It is embodied in the US itself as a model of modernization (Ibid., 10). J. K. Watson argues that Japanese imperial expansion beginning in the late nineteenth century adopted British imperial models to the point of mimicry. South Korea inherited core concepts of self and other from being subject to the Japanese imperial modernization project drawing heavily from the West. The "modernization" project thus has a long pedigree for use to justify, to self and other, policies of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism to the present (2007, 174, 177, 182-4, 186).

China is a rising power, and how it will address the issue of global climate change may increase its power and influence in the world relative to the United States. It will be a test of many factors that constitute bargaining leverage. These factors include internal adjustment of the national regime to shifting from fossil fuels towards renewables, and pulling the peoples within its sphere of influence along with it. Success in leadership in global transformation of the economy provides extensive opportunities for state leaders in this endeavor to acquire soft and hard power as models for this endeavor. Transforming the global economy to counter the global climate change threat to humanity requires direction of trillions of dollars in expenditures (Bradsher, 2016).

Inferring from realism, a state leader or analyst, in trying to determine how the international political system constrains or directs South Korean foreign policy, should determine 1) the conflicts between the Great Powers, i.e. do their respective polities collectively see a challenge, in the form of threat or opportunity towards one or other great powers; 2) the degree of intensity of perceived challenge, i.e. the intensity of perception of threat or opportunity. If the conflicts are intense, then they will shape the behavior of everyone else in international relations. So, 'what does Washington want?' and 'what does Beijing want?' will be important questions for government decision making in Seoul. The challenge of global leadership to address climate change creates new arenas for national competition, including soft power as well as economic hard power bargaining leverage. Already economically vulnerable developing countries will more urgently seek economic aid and investment and markets to meet the increasing costs of global climate change.

Today, the "war on terror" may be understood as a new form of the "civilizing mission"/ modernization post-Cold War American nationalistic universalism (see Table 4). During the Cold War underdeveloped, technologically backward societies were derivatively perceived as sources of opportunity for US influence expansion to implement global containment against the USSR (see Table 3). Today's challenge from weaker actors to the US is in the form of threat from international criminality in the face of rogue states including North Korea (e.g. Ali, 2011, Kang, 2014, Acharya, 2013, Wagner and Onderco, 2014, Jumbert 2014) (see Table 4). This criminality is in the form of rogue, mafia-type regimes using their resources to threaten the international community led by the preeminent United States. The US' institutionalized global preeminence is validated by its supposed victory in the Cold War over the expansionist, totalitarian Soviet regime in Moscow (see Table 3). Responsible leadership in an era of interdependence is an essential framework for formulating the universal ideological justification for the national foreign policy. Responsible lesser powers such as South Korea should participate in partnering with the international community to address this looming global crisis within postwar US hegemonic frameworks. The postwar US-led regional international regimes have globalized since the end of the Cold War. After the collapse of the USSR, participation in US-led globalization is perceived as the only route towards national development. The perceived appeal of the ideology of globalization as a component of US nationalistic

universalism increased its bargaining leverage magnitude as well. Former World Bank President and deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz portrayed South Korea as a model of national development success within the US hegemonic environment (Wolfowitz, 2010). South Korea and the East Asian “miracle” economies gain soft power bargaining leverage at mastering the national development challenge as reputed experts within, for example, Latin America (Leiteritz, 2012, 67).

For Korea, being a divided nation is a source of national humiliation (Jager, 1996). South Korean nationalistic universalism is an elite-led liberalism in the context of the failure to unify the nation due to the threatening authoritarian North. Liberalism is, in other words, part of a foreign policy strategy. South Korea may participate in cooperatively leading with global actors like the United Nations. It is also useful insofar as it appeals to China as an actor that will significantly determine whether or not the Korean nation will reunify.

South Korea’s commitment to global leadership in addressing global climate change is evident through it being chosen as the host nation headquarters for the Green Climate Fund. As its web portal states,

The Fund is a unique global initiative to respond to climate change by investing into low-emission and climate-resilient development. GCF was established by 194 governments to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries, and to help adapt vulnerable societies to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Given the urgency and seriousness of the challenge, the Fund is mandated to make an ambitious contribution to the united global response to climate change (“Green Climate Fund”).

Songdo, South Korea, is the host city for the GCF. The GCF is a UN “financial body ... attached to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change” as a channel for directing \$100 billion annually to assist developing countries (“The first eight projects financed by the Green Climate Fund,” 2015).

Table 5: Effect on Diplomatic Bargaining Leverage of the December 2015 Paris Agreement in Terms of Relative Increase or Decrease in Efficacy in the South Korea-China Dyadic Relationship (Cottam and Gallucci, 1978)

Diplomatic Bargaining Lever	South Korea	China
<i>Passive</i>		
1. Perceived Public Attitudes	+	
2. Perceived possible great power involvement	+	
3. <i>Awareness of interdependence</i>	+	
4. Perceived long term power alterations	+	
5. Perceived economic/and/or political stability	+	
6. Perceived irrationality of leaders		
7. Perceived adverse effect on friendship		
8. Perceived likelihood of accidental war		
<i>Active</i>		
1. Perceived ability to give or withhold aid	+	
2. Perceived ability to influence 3rd countries	+	
3. Perceived ability to use force		
4. Perceived trade opportunities	+	
5. Perceived ability to deal with domestic political dissatisfaction		
6. Perceived transnational appeal of ideology [ <i>Nationalistic universalism relevant here (BD)</i> ]	+	
7. Perceived willingness to alter relationship type		

*Bargaining leverage involves perceived capabilities that are assumed to be stable for purposes of dyadic diplomatic case analysis. International political strategy includes policies that shape critical trends in a target polity that determine the comparative magnitude of passive leverage. The target polity(ies) can include one’s own polity, as well as an external target polity(ies). Bargaining leverage that is active is so-called because its magnitude can be manipulated in the specific dyadic diplomatic case. South Korean strategy promotes global awareness of interdependence while also providing aid and target polity guidance as a leader mastering globalization’s challenges for national development.*

Effective political strategy adopts foreign and domestic policies that develop bargaining leverage capabilities so that they are available to be used. In the case of passive levers, they are assumed to be passive only insofar as the dyadic case of diplomatic bargaining occurs in a relatively constricted time frame. Hence, they are considered unalterable, although they may be quite substantive and effective through skillful diplomatic application. For example, perceived possible great power involvement depends upon the intensity of conflict among the Great Powers in a particular point in time. The more intense competitive inter-Great Power conflict, the more interested the Great Powers will be in conflicts among third actors. These third actor conflicts impact on their respective perceived influence in the international political environment through soliciting outside, Great Power aid. Great Powers are more likely to be concerned about these solicitations and their respective influence if locked in intense conflict with each other. Of course, the intensity of Great Power conflict changes over years and generations. For analysis of a diplomatic case, such as persuading North Korea to cancel a pending ballistic missile test, the intensity of conflict between the US, Russia, Japan and China is taken as given. An effective long term North Korean international political strategy would aim, however, to increase the intensity of conflict between the US and China. Thereby, the survival of the North Korea regime and state likely becomes more important to Beijing, which Pyongyang can use as diplomatic bargaining leverage towards Beijing.

The component policies of an effective political strategy that focus on increasing the magnitude of passive bargaining leverages orient towards influencing the polity in the target state. The target state can be one's own polity. Strengthening domestic regime public support may be a focus, besides trends in constituency political perceptions, behavioral attitudes and motivational values in relevant foreign polities. As implied above, effective political strategies that cultivate passive bargaining leverage tend to have a longer time frame. Democratization of South Korea in 1987 arguable serves this aim, among others. Global environmental protection and trade agreements promote awareness of interdependence across polities in terms of trends in constituencies, as well as across governments. Indeed, strengthening passive bargaining capabilities can be understood as the broader context that creates greater magnitudes available for manipulation in active bargaining leverage. For example, polities that are perceived as having strong public regime support generally would be predisposed to have a higher degree of military morale and effectiveness.

Awareness of interdependence is a bargaining lever that increases in intensity for all states that may attempt to use it insofar as the international community recognizes it. The increasing salience and intensity of concern regarding greenhouse gas emissions threatening catastrophic global climate change for the entire planet is reflected in trends in international law. The development of global environmental law has accelerated rapidly since the end of the Cold War. The most notable development was the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro. Subsequent global climate change mitigation milestones include the 1997 Kyoto Protocol (to the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Climate Change Convention) on Climate Change, and most recently, the 2015 Paris Agreement. The latter formally superseded the Kyoto Protocol (Clark, 2015). South Korea has attempted as a lesser power to play a high profile, leadership role in the most recent developments in global climate governance. Thereby, South Korea seeks to harness this rising level of global awareness of interdependence for its own, national security objectives in the Northeast Asian security context. Development and usage of these levers may likely impact the magnitude of others. Rising awareness of global interdependence has hard and soft power implications for economic development aspirations and even for national public sympathies and ideological attitudes. Global climate change mitigation conferences are significant in that they start from the assumption of global interdependency. Consequently, awareness of global interdependency also becomes a foundation framework for progressively developing hard and soft power bargaining leverage in other categories. To rephrase, it creates opportunities for smaller states like South Korea to demonstrate high profile transformational leadership globally (Northouse, 2012).

## A PATH FORWARD

The rise of sovereignty-focused, populist nationalism in great power nation states implies understanding global environmental cooperation by approaching it within a realist framework. International environmental law combines national law applied to domestic environmental problems with international law that deals with international development issues. It consists of international agreements, rules of customary international law, general principles of law and non-binding legal instruments. In the decentralized international system of sovereign states, no single global sovereign authority exists to pronounce imperatively on the requirements and obligations of international law. The international legal system is a powerful but still comparatively primitive one (Morgenthau, 1993, 255-56). Citizens are subject to the laws of a sovereign national state which is legislated, executed, and adjudicated by specialized state organs. In contrast, sovereign governments themselves are simultaneously the subjects, legislators, adjudicators, and implementers/enforcers of international law (Crawford, 2012, 20-21). The content of international law is inferred from prevailing trends in sovereign state practice and their pronouncements of recognition of their legal obligations (Shaw, 2014, 50-90). A widely-admired international jurist, the late Antonio Cassese was the first president of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (“AntonioCassese”; Chandler, 2006, 484). He was also the author of a widely used introductory textbook on international law. Cassese’s observations regarding the content of international environmental law are referenced here. These global environmental treaties create opportunities to enhance South Korean bargaining leverage and leadership amidst Great Power political economic collaboration to address global climate change.

According to Cassese, the need to protect the environment erupted as an issue in the late 1960s, and since then it has become of crucial importance. Technological change and development together with other, traditional issues in the nature of international law, make the imposition of strict obligations on States or corporations difficult. The result is the unique features of the international regulation of the global environment: 1) “only a few general legal principles have evolved;” 2) “Possibly, one or two *customary rules* have crystallized on matters relating to the law of the sea;” 3) Non-binding resolutions and declarations constitute so-called “*soft law*” in order to regulate general problems 4) The conclusion of “very numerous treaties” on “specific matters.” But “many of these treaties are, however, *framework agreements*;” 5) Reliance on “*supervisory and preventative mechanisms*” rather than judicial procedures; 6) Establishment of a number of “*institutional institutions*,” with “the task of endeavoring to stave off further degradation of the environment.” States have aimed to balance forestalling further deterioration of the environment with accommodating the very large potential costs of remedies, especially for the developing world (2005, 487).

As inferred by Cassese, the environment is now indeed a common amenity as the international community sees it, in which everyone has an interest in protecting. Various treaties and conventions have established numerous international bodies. They have adopted the role of calling upon or requesting individual States to protect the environment on behalf of the international community. These international institutions act to protect “*community values and concerns*” (2005, 487). This function substitutes for the lack of specific, readily enforceable bilateral obligations on States as part of these global environmental treaty obligations. Any State has the right to demand any other State comply with general international legal standards on the environment. The lack of specificity is due to State resistance, together with the need to entrust international bodies with the task of promoting compliance with these standards. Economic interests behind the international regulation of the environment ultimately motivate compliance. Therefore, international bodies can better act than individual States on behalf of groups or on behalf of the entire international community (Ibid., 487-88).

Cassese notes that the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro ushered in a new phase of international environmental law. It linked environmental and economic issues to sustainable development and human rights concerns. Sustainable development requires the use of

the world's finite resources in ways which ensure that the needs of future generations are also met. The 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change reiterated the principle of sustainable development as the justification for this multi-lateral treaty:

The ultimate objective of this Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time-frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner (“United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change”).

The concluding document of the Rio Conference emphasized that states have “common but differentiated responsibilities” in view of their different “contributions” to environmental degradation (2001).

Cassese summarizes that a host of legally non-binding international instruments which UN Conferences or bodies have adopted serve as international guidelines for protecting the global environment. They all belong to the category of “soft law,” along with other non-binding instruments such as codes of conduct. The principal, foundational ones: 1) The 1972 Stockholm Declaration, which the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment passed; 2) The 1982 World Charter for Nature, which the UN General Assembly proclaimed by consensus; 3) The UN Conference producing the 1992 Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development adopted the 1982 World Charter. Soft law lays down the standards of action which States, international organizations, corporations, and individuals should pursue. They are not legally binding, except insofar as they codify or crystallize general principals or rules, e.g. the polluter pays. But they do evince the consensus of the international community on the path which it is to take to tackle global environmental issues. They are much less binding than legal rules but they are much more than simple desiderata of individual States or organizations. They point to the “*general approach to the environment*” which States, intergovernmental organizations, national or multinational corporations, and individuals should adopt, albeit each at its own level (2005, 491).

Cassese sums up the guidelines of this general approach: 1) The international community has the obligation to safeguard the global environment for the benefit of everybody, including future generations. It is proclaimed in Principle 2 of the 1972 Stockholm Declaration. So also does the 1982 World Charter for Nature proclaim it. The 1992 Rio Declaration reiterates it; 2) Nature is an asset which the international community must protect, which the international community must do so along the lines which the various provisions of the 1982 World Charter for Nature. The 1992 Rio Declaration further developed it, in some respects. International organizations and individuals share responsibility for the protection of the environment, and therefore they should cooperate (Principles 4, 24, and 25 of the Stockholm Declaration); 3) States have common responsibilities but which the international community differentiates. The determining factor is whether or not they are industrialized or developing countries (Principle 7 of the 1992 Rio Declaration). Developing countries need financial and technological assistance, stability of prices, adequate earnings for primary commodities and raw materials as well as free flow of up-to-date scientific information and transfer of experience in environmental technologies. Standards and criteria which may be valid for the countries with a higher level of economic development may prove inappropriate, or generate an excessive cost, for developing countries (Principles 9, 10, 20 and 23 of the Stockholm Declaration, upon which the 1992 Rio Declaration further elaborated); 4) Many treaties and declarations propound the notion of ‘sustainable development,’ which should guide States in promoting development. Sustainable development aims to refer to ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’ This definition is from the Report which the UN General Assembly adopted in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), (which the Norwegian Prime Minister, G.H. Brundland, chaired); 5) States should seek to avoid damage to

the environment by taking precautionary measures (Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration); 6) “In principle,” the polluter should bear the cost of pollution, “with due regard to the public interests and without distorting international trade and investment” (Principle 16 of the Rio Declaration) (2005, 491-92).

Cassese notes that the choice of this particular law-making process is only natural. It occurs in an area in which enormous economic interests are at stake. States, therefore, prefer to proceed with utmost prudence and they have prepared themselves to accept legal restrictions only by rules which they themselves have contributed to creating and which they then have duly accepted (*Ibid.*). Developed parties to the UN Climate Change Convention committed to transferring \$100 billion annually by 2020 to the developing world to assist their transition to cleaner energy (Davenport, 2016a).

The focus on law for shaping the international bargaining context as a locus of international strategy exists here because international environmental protection overlaps with trade law. This overlap is articulated in the phrase, sustainable development. Consequently, formal and informal rules and regulations constitute its substance. These rules and regulations must have deep domestic support from their respective constituencies in order to support this focus on international law.

Cassese infers that generally, in this area, the correct consideration is that prevention of environmental damage is necessary. Collective bodies carry out this prevention on the behalf of the international community. The primary task of these bodies is to monitor the behavior of States. In the case of non-compliance, the task then should be to assist the delinquent State in remedying the damage. This point is true for large developing countries such as India, who are also rapidly expanding polluters. This body of law sees sanctions, then, as only a last resort, and being necessary in the case of repetition of non-compliance (2005, 493-94).

Cassese explains why the international community decided that little point exists in relying upon traditional judicial mechanisms in cases of persistent non-compliance. Recourse to traditional bilateral rules on State responsibility for retaliation, redress and compensation are also ineffective because: 1) The rules governing the matter are not so clear-cut and specific to determine whether or not a State has abided by an international rule or has violated it; 2) Once the breach of the rule has occurred, intervention by judicial or quasi-judicial bodies may be too late to permit remedying the problem through reparations and compensation because of the magnitude of the damage; 3) The delinquent State may be unable to pay compensation due to relative economic underdevelopment; 4) Private persons may have caused the damage without any State responsibility, for example, on account of lack of due diligence; 5) The damage may be to the entire international community rather than to one or more particular States. Due to the desire to protect policy aims of States in other areas, none of them are willing to institute judicial or other proceedings against the law-breaking State (2005, 493). The implication is hegemonic leadership of integration as the context by which to bring to bear the full range of state diplomatic bargaining leverage to bring about political economic enforcement (see Table 5). It further implies Great Powers with the requisite power capabilities to assume leadership responsibility to implement climate change obligations.

According to Cassese, the purpose of monitoring mechanisms is to verify whether States are complying with international standards as well as promoting respect for such standards. As such, it is well-attuned to the realities of the present international community. The most widespread supervisory systems have groupings into four different categories: 1) “States’ self-reporting procedures;” 2) “Inspection;” 3) “So-called non-compliance procedures.” States parties first adopted non-compliance procedures in 1990 with regard to the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Other treaties subsequently took it up, notably the 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change; 4) “preventive global monitoring” (2005, 494).

Options which are capable of enhancing the safeguarding of the global environment as a crucial constituent part of the common heritage of mankind are the starting point of negotiations. A focus on fault or negligence is not essential for State responsibility to arise, requiring payment of compensation, even if the State acted with due diligence. Similarly, the State is responsible even for lawful actions by State agents or private agents, whenever they result in serious harm to the environment (Cassese, 2001). Again, the commitment of the capabilities of Great Power states is necessary for enforcement.

### Reconciling Trade Liberalization with Environmental Protection

Cassese notes that as a means for ensuring protection of the environment, the international community has agreed to create instruments concerning trade. The 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer envisages the taking of trade sanctions against those States which do not comply with the agreed minimum standards (2001). Liberalization of trade focuses on abolishing State protectionism in order to promote the free flow of international trade. The need to protect natural resources and the environmental ecosystem may require strong State intervention into trade flows and production processes. Cassese notes that capital exporting countries are more likely to invest in areas of the world which already have substantial industrialization. These areas are more attractive to investment than in areas with scant, or absent industrialization and ancillary facilities in developing countries (2001, 395-96).

Cassese notes that the liberal, free-market approach which primarily the USA advocates is clearly inappropriate to the development needs of developing nations. It is incongruous due to the latter's economic structure and conditions. This liberalization principle grounds itself on the liberal theory of free trade and free competition. In particular, the abolition of trade tariffs and other devices that distort the world market is its core. Yet in fact, the developing world requires "discriminatory treatment," i.e. treatment which takes account of their specific conditions. Therefore, this trade must be different and more advantageous than the trade occurring between industrialized States, to permit 1) "stabilization of the price of their commodities, so as to avoid price fluctuations and declines which occur at the detriment of the producers;" 2) "trade preferences and concessions," particularly, "trade barriers on their imports and preferential treatment for their exports." The form would be "most-favoured-nation treatment," but, "without any concession to developed countries in return;" 3) "foreign investment", particularly with the aim of promoting "economic activities in areas other than production and export of local raw materials;" 4) "economic assistance," particularly "the rescheduling or even cancellation of foreign debt;" 5) "transfer of modern technology;" 6) "training of skilled workers" (2005, 506).

These six points correspond with the requirements for green, sustainable development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century developing world which the Global Climate Fund supports. Yet, they may require state intervention that conflicts with the neoliberal, "Washington consensus." The latter is arguably a manifestation of American nationalistic universalism proclaiming modernization (Chandler, 2006, 475, Mitchell, 2007, 715-16). It is part of a long Anglo-Saxon tendency spawned in the British Empire (Vucetic, 2011, 260-61). In terms of understanding Chinese behavior regarding climate change, realism would point towards China's efforts to change the international political economy away from the US-unicentric model. It is inseparable from an analysis of the development imperatives confronting the developing world. From China's perspective, it has been successful because of its aspiring great power capabilities while still a developing country (Brasher and Davenport, 2015). Hence, China is demanding changes in the Bretton Woods and other Cold War-era world development institutions. When its concerns as an emerging superpower are not met, then it moves to create its own institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) (Wildau, 2015).

Cassese notes that developing countries have entreated the financial and economic institutions which the US and its allies established after the Second World War to adjust their policies. The 1944 creation of the World Bank at the Bretton Woods Conference as an intergovernmental organization established it as corporate in form, with the member states owning all of its capital stock. On the basis of the quotas which

the Bretton Woods conference established for participating in the IMF, they established the same quotas for participating in the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank). Later, it became a UN Specialized Agency. The Board of Governors of the World Bank is the central organ of the IBRD. It consists of a Governor and an alternate whom each member State appoints. It takes decisions according to a “weighted voting” system (and it is the same procedure for the decision-making in the IMF’s Board of Governors as well). Each member receives a vote weight in proportion to a country’s quota (i.e. allocation of resources to the World Bank’s funds) (2005, 511). The voices of the wealthiest members is stronger than the voices of the other members, with the US weighted vote basically giving it veto power (“America’s Flawed Strategy” 2015).

The Board of Governors can and has vested many of its powers to the Executive Board. It at present consists of 22 Directors. The Directors elect the Bank’s president, which is, according to convention, a US national. “The encouragement of the development of productive facilities and resources in less developed countries” describes the statutory goals of the Bank. Since its earliest days, the bank has pursued this goal. The US, through programs such as the Marshall Plan, in effect overtook the World Bank in the pursuit of the Bank’s other statutory goals. The US aimed to recover and refit European economies after the Second World War (Cassese, 2001, 403). The World Bank then came to focus on the development needs of the developing world.

China attempts to utilize intergovernmental organizations to address international development issues regarding the developing world. South Korea seeks to build its association with China as an international hub mediating between the developing world and China (Mundy, 2015). Cooperation is close between the South Korean Ministry of Finance and the World Bank. This cooperation is illustrated by the World Bank’s “Online Learning Campus” webportal, offering online courses and webinar content on a wide range of topics relevant to development. The running head of the webportal reads “In partnership with Republic of Korea Ministry of Strategy and Finance.” This header’s appearance is recent, emerging since the current World Bank president, Dr. Jim Yong Kim, was appointed in 2012. Dr. Kim, a Korean-American born in South Korea and raised in the US, has been reappointed in his position while undertaking far-reaching change at the World Bank. China supported the reappointment of Dr. Jim Yong Kim to a second, five-year term (Picker, 2016). Dr. Kim has received support from the main donors to the World Bank for restructuring the World Bank to focus on functional development sectors. It represents a shift away from the previous focus on geographic program orientations (“A Non-Contest at the World Bank,” 2016). The shift to global public policy issues like public health and governance and climate change is partly a response to the abundance of global investment capital already available.

Dr. Kim has urged the world to adopt a carbon pricing system. He restated the World Bank’s support for it at the December 2015 signing of the in Paris of the agreement to reduce carbon emissions to slow global climate change (Davenport, 2016b). The World Bank established a Carbon Finance Unit to assist developing countries in establishing emissions trading schemes (Davenport, 2016b). North Korea signed the Paris Agreement on April 22, 2016 (Ri, 2016). South Korean energy economist Dr. Hoesung, Lee won the competitive election to become chairperson of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The election occurred at an intergovernmental representative meeting in Dubrovnik, Croatia in October 2015 (Darby, 2015). The position is portrayed as the most senior UN climate science position (“Hoesung Lee,” 2015).

China has amassed sufficient investment capital that it founded another, regionally-focused institution, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, despite US resistance. The UK, Australia, Germany and South Korea are among its founding members, but the US and Japan remain outside (Perlez, 2015). The AIIB, as well as other specifically Chinese banks, have demonstrated a willingness to invest in coal-fired (i.e. exceptionally polluting) power generation plants in poor, developing countries (Forsythe, 2015). Yet, the first president of the AIIB, Chinese official Jin Liqun, has stated that the AIIB would be committed to

environmental concerns in supporting projects (Anderlini, 2016). Dr. Jim Yong Kim stated that the AIIB will be an “important new partner” for the World Bank, while China will have veto power in the AIIB (Clover and Wildau, 2015).

### The Election of US President Donald J. Trump

Seoul aimed to join the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), with its environmental protection obligations, and applauds the Chinese proposal for a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) (Bland et al., 2013, “Neighboring Countries Gain from China’s FDI,” 2014, “Trans-Pacific Partnership: Labour and Environment,” n.d.). The prospective RCEP is foreseen comparatively to deemphasize human rights and environmental obligations due to the greater diversity in levels of development among likely signatories (Chen, 2016). Having a bilateral US free trade agreement (FTA) in force since March 2012, South Korea appeared to hedge by delaying to join as a founding member of the now defunct TPP (King & Spalding LLP, 2015, “S. Korea Undecided on Joining TPP,” 2013). Japan, which does not have a FTA with the US, joined the TPP negotiations as the last founding member participant in 2013 (Hancock, 2013). In response to Japan’s move, Seoul applied but agreed to wait until after the TPP treaty was ratified by its 12 founding members (Palmer, 2013, Hess, 2013). The TPP became subject to ratification after signing on February 4, 2016 (“Trans-Pacific Partnership,” n.d.). This ratification is now unlikely; US President Donald J. Trump withdrew his predecessor’s signature by executive order on January 23, 2017, fulfilling his presidential campaign pledge (Baker, 2017). The December 2015 China-South Korea FTA has faced new informal barriers to Korean exports to China (“Eyes on Korea-China FTA Meeting Amid THAAD Tension,” 2017). Seoul agreed in July 2016 to host deployment of the advanced Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) US anti-ballistic missile system (“With THAAD Conflict Brewing,” 2017). Officially it is a response Pyongyang’s weapons of mass destruction programs, but Beijing declared it as a threat to its own military security (“South Korea: No Delay for THAAD missile Deployment, Despite Beijing’s Objections,” 2017).

Peter Navarro, a senior trade official in the Trump administration, condemned the US-South Korea FTA during the campaign (“Trump’s TPP Abandonment Fans Trade Fears in Korea,” 2017). Immediately after Trump’s inauguration, a White House website post declared, “We will also develop a state-of-the-art missile defense system to protect against missile-based attacks from states like Iran and North Korea” (“Making Our Military Strong Again,” 2017). If US-China conflict intensifies, then pressures for US ratification of a resurrected version of the TPP may increase. Yet, Trump simultaneously announced that with the end of new US multilateral trade agreements, the US would consider only bilateral trade agreements only “with individual allies” (Baker, 2017). If so, then it would appear to correspond with the traditional US “hub and spokes” approach to US security strategy in East Asia since the end of the Second World War (Cha, 2009).

This study’s implications reinforce the desirability of South Korea joining both the RCEP and a resurrected TPP, should the latter emerge. Thereby, Seoul would reinforce its position as a global institutional sustainable development network nexus point between these competing superpower-hegemonies. It would also be a conceivable goal that South Korea as a middle-ranking power might pursue as part of a higher-level aim of alleviating intensification of conflict between Beijing and Washington. Long term intensification of conflict between Beijing and Washington will likely benefit Pyongyang.

### **CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

This paper aimed to outline a political strategic approach to growing South Korea’s diplomatic bargaining leverage in international relations. It critically elaborated on hard, soft and smart power, hedging, as well as global legal regime networks, hegemony and strategic behavior to comprehend global climate change alleviation policy. The South Korean authorities adopted a global green commitment within their national

security through economic development strategy. This policy commitment increased South Korea's hard and soft power capability in diplomatic negotiations, particularly with regard to rising China. China's rise in the heretofore US-dominated global regime system exploited political economic opportunities for integration in the global production chain. Anti-pollution imperatives have expanded to include global trends towards commitments to confront a menacing universal challenge: human-induced climate change. South Korea's policies have exploited global formal and informal institutional leadership opportunities that have consequently emerged. Navigating the rise of China to address this global challenge requires an essential focus on nation state capabilities and the national interest as articulated by the nation state. As such, foundational realist concepts continue to provide critical perspectives to understand these past, present and future trends. These concepts point to the importance of focusing on nation state Great Power economic modernization interests and their incentives to cooperate in trade and environmental regulation. It motivates cooperation in a world that will continue to be dominated by their respective spheres of influence.

The study's limitations lie in the challenge to accommodate state-level sovereignty-focused populist nationalist reactions to globalization. The successful Donald J. Trump campaign for US president spotlights the fragility of international cooperative political economic and environmental protection regimes. Should the United States withdraw from the 2015 Paris Agreement, hard power's salience in international relations will likely increase, and South Korea's global leadership potential will decline. This study's framework will have difficulty maintaining its relevance in an international community of state actors with international strategies more reminiscent of the pre-1945 era. In response, the Chinese leadership has rhetorically defended vigorously economic globalization including its willingness to provide global leadership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Tabuchi, 2017).

Currently, China is engaged in an expansionary foreign policy strategy. Despite its current behavior in the South China Sea, it is not yet aiming to imperialistically revolutionize the status quo; however, it seeks recognition of equality with the US. Western foreign policy strategy should not assume that expansion is necessarily aggressive since global competition has been increasingly soft power based. A containment strategy may not be most appropriate for China. At worst, it risks creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Beijing may view itself as conforming to international norms in demanding rectification of the Pacific regional territorial sovereignty legacies of Japanese imperial aggression. Containment actions against China may be perceived as efforts at continuing subjugation. China's response would be more belligerent, thereby risking confirmation of the misperception of Chinese foreign policy motivation as imperialist. Certain constituencies within Beijing may indeed see opportunity to expand influence over perceived lesser, post-European imperial-legacy Asian states. International law and legal mechanisms are useful because they make identification of the value motivations for a state's foreign policy behavior more readily discernible. A state that intentionally disregards international conventions is more likely led and primarily motivated by constituencies promoting militant, expansionary, imperialist intent. Emerging states that work within existing conventions are motivated by status quo-oriented needs/motivations.

South Korea's political strategic approach as a lesser power is to participate as a neutral political economic actor in creating and institutionalizing mechanisms for global public policy governance. By satisfying the US and China, it acquires bargaining leverage over them and other relevant actors through promotion of awareness of interdependence through global governance. International environmental protection within the context of sustainable development is a critical global governance issue. South Korea has utilized its recognized phenomenal success in development with a public commitment to provide subaltern leadership. South Korea has exploited these opportunities as a relatively small state to gain greater global diplomatic bargaining leverage. Its interests focus on protecting its achievements ultimately by neutralizing the North Korean national security challenge. The rise of sovereignty-focused, populist nationalism in the US, China and elsewhere is a potential destabilization of the global regime system. It threatens South Korea's international political strategy. It illustrates again that South Korea responds to and exploits international regimes that are created by the Great Powers.

The shock of the Brexit vote and the Trump US presidential election victory continue to reverberate in the academy as well as in the media. Further research should focus on the unique internal, nationalist factors that drive each state's respective foreign policy strategic behavior. These differentiating internal factors as independent variables are a focus of neoclassical realist approaches to critiquing international strategy to contribute to conflict resolution. National political institutional particularities mediate nationalist populism's impact on American and Chinese strategic behavior. Morgenthau's –as if- assumption of power optimization state motivation is problematic for research on globalization's impact on national regime legitimacy and policy behavior. Great power imperialist behavior under regime authorities that act as if the external political environment requires strong, decisive leadership that only they can provide has led to global hegemonic war. The world arguably has not witnessed a intensively imperialist great power since the early 1940s. How such an actor would behave in the nuclear era amidst twenty-first century globalization, both towards its lesser allies as well as towards more equal powers, requires elucidation.

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