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International Institutions: A Place for Middle Powers in the Global System

ABSTRACT

For more than half a century, political science scholars have studied whether international institutions promote peace and the extent to which they are responsible for the protection of global stability. This central question on international stability draws on hegemonic stability theory that argues that stability is a public good that can be produced only when a single dominant state is able and willing to provide it. Proponents of hegemonic stability theory - Charles P. Kindleberger, Robert Gilpin, Robert Keohane, and Stephen Krasner - argue the belief that stability of the international system requires a single hegemon to enforce the rules of interaction among the members. Yet, the literature on hegemonic stability theory and institutions neglects the role of middle powers, especially from the Pacific region, within the global system. Middle powers have become a part of the equation of stability through the proliferation of multilateral and interregional coalitions and convenings such as the Bandung Conference, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the Group of 20 (G20). This paper seeks to answer what role international institutions and middle powers possess in the overall stability of the world system a la hegemonic stability theory.

INTRODUCTION

For more than half a century, political science scholars have studied whether international institutions promote peace and the extent to which they are responsible for the protection of global stability. This central question on international stability draws on hegemonic stability theory that argues that stability is a public good that can be produced only when a single dominant state is able and willing to provide it. Proponents of hegemonic stability theory - Charles P. Kindleberger, Robert Gilpin, Robert Keohane, and Stephen Krasner - argue the belief that stability of the international system requires a single hegemon to enforce the rules of interaction among the members. Yet, the literature on hegemonic stability theory and institutions neglects the role of middle powers within the global system. This paper seeks to answer what role international institutions and middle powers possess in the overall stability of the world system a la hegemonic stability theory.

As early as the 15th century, middle powers were defined as states with sufficient strength and authority to stand on their own without the need of help from others (Wight 1978:298). Recently, there has been a shift in the literature on global stability. Scholars now identify middle powers as carving out a niche for themselves, pursuing a narrow range of foreign policy interest, and redistributing power in the international system. With stability not always guaranteed as a result of the constraints that restrain the leadership of the hegemon, the middle powers come forward and act together, particularly through international institutions. Political science scholars such as Daniel Flemes, Eduard Jordaan, Andrew Hurrell, and Detlef Nolte find that the

explanation of changing power relationships in the international arena provides a holistic understanding for stability. Middle powers display foreign policy behavior that not only stabilizes, but also legitimizes the global order particularly within and towards international institutions.

DEFINING MIDDLE POWERS & INSTITUTIONS

Although hegemonic stability theory does not take middle powers into full consideration of the global order, it is important to define the model of these types of states and institutions. Across the theoretical paradigms of realism, neoliberalism, and constructivism, academics agree that middle powers rank somewhat below the great powers in terms of their influence on world affairs. However, the concept and dynamic of middle powers' role in stability has changed as evidenced in the literature over time. In 1946, Martin Wight classifies middle powers in *Power Politics* on the basis of their power in comparison with dominant states, evidenced by military capabilities (65). Since then, other scholars have built upon this definition by including middle powers' population and economic power as preconditions for their status. In 1996, Robert Cox's *Middlepowermanship: Japan and the Future of the World Order* emphasized that the term, middle power, is not a fixed universal, but rather a set of practices that continually evolve in search of different forms of actorness (246). Now, in the 21st century, there have been further revisions in the literature that assert middle powers are credited with a special interest in international institutions or in forming coalitions in such institutions, both of which serve the objective of constraining the power of stronger states (Nolte 2010: 891). Middle powers best exemplify their means of influence through international institutions. In John Ikenberry's *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars*, he reasons that middle powers prefer that international stability is a result of a rule of law in

institutions that place strict limits on the returns to power (2001:6). Many of these political science scholars assert that great powers are not the sole factors in the equation of stability. Essentially, middle powers is not a static model – rather, middle powers take on an activist style in that they participate in global issues that are beyond their regional periphery to maintain global stability.

Middle powers, are first and foremost, identified by their role in international institutions whereas regional powers bear a special responsibility for regional security and for the maintenance of order in the region. It is important to note the differentiation between regional powers and middle powers in regards to the dynamics of stability. One way to suitably contrast middle powers and regional powers is through Detlef Nolte's *How to Compare Regional Powers: Analytical Concepts and Research Topics*; for middle powers, they seek to increase leadership through political influence in diplomatic forums whereas regional powers combine leadership and power over resources (2010:890). Therefore, middle powers are a key component of the global order because they seek to sustain stability as fortification of their posture in the international community. While middle powers lack the resources to partake in every area of international politics, they tend to opt for reformist change and attempt to construct identities that are distinct from those of weak states. For middle powers, multilateralism in international institutions consists of not being directly involved in conflicts, possessing a degree of autonomy in relation to the hegemon, facilitating progress in the global order, and an obligation to stability in interstate relations. Overall, middle powers are the catalysts for sustained stability because they take on the initiative to participate in conflicts that are beyond their immediate concern or self-interest.

Furthermore, hegemonic stability theorists assert that institutions were created to help states cooperate with each other in the achievement of mutual gains and maintain international financial stability. As defined by Karl W. Deutsch and J. David Singer in *Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability*, stability is the probability that most members of the system continue to survive, large scale war does not break out, and the continuance of political independence and territorial integrity (1964:390). On one hand, in the realist camp, John Mearsheimer's *False Promises of International Institutions* reasons institutions are just a reflection of the distribution of power in the world and that they hold little promise for promoting stability. They argue that institutions are based off self-interests of the dominant power and do not have an independent effect on state behavior (Mearsheimer 1995:7). On the other hand, for proponents of constructivism such as John Ruggie, argue against this claim by asserting that there remains a consensus that multilateral norms and institutions have stabilized global consequences among states. International regimes, coined by John Ruggie in *International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order*, is the "language of state action" and social institutions around which actor expectations converge in a given area of international relations (1982:380). Institutions are not just utilized for the leveraging of power by the hegemon. Stefan A. Schirm's *Leaders in Need of Followers: Emerging Powers in Global Governance* advocates middle powers' wish to assume leadership roles in international institutions and promote solidarity in the world system. As a force of stability, international institutions serve as a two-way street for the hegemon, middle powers, and smaller states to facilitate security. In its foundation, middle powers strive to carry out their interests through multilateral cooperatives in international institutions for the preservation of the mutual goal, stability, rather than counter-balance for relative power.

CONVERSATION WITH HEGEMONIC STABILITY THEORY

Hegemonic stability theory aptly supports that the maintenance of international institutions by the hegemon contributes to stable interstate relations when there are disproportionately powerful states among the potential co-operators. However, the theory misses a fundamental aspect that incorporates the collaboration of middle powers in maintaining these institutions. In Robert O. Keohane's *Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics*, a middle power is a state whose leaders consider that it cannot act alone effectively, but may be able to have a systemic impact in a small group or through an international institution (1969:269). Similar to Mearsheimer's claim, Andrew Hurrell argues that international institutions are also "sites of power and reflect and entrench power hierarchies and the interests of powerful states" (2000:4). Though the hegemon may have sufficient interest in supplying the public good of stability and bearing the full costs of provision, the presence of a stable international regime necessitates a persistent following from subordinate states. Middle powers attempt to wield means of influence through international institutions. These institutions are not just concerned with liberal purposes of alleviating common problems or promoting shared values. On this global stage, middle powers can promote attitudes favorable to their interests and influence rule making for the overall stability of international order. Hegemonic stability theory appropriately credits the hegemon for taking on the responsibility of restoring stability in the international system when there is a lack of leadership. However, while not every actor in international institutions plays an equal role, they all contribute to the overall stability of these bodies. Authors such as Daniel Flesmes, Detlef Nolte, and Randall Schweller challenge us to view middle powers as catalyzers or facilitators of stability in international institutions as they display a specific political approach of coalition building. Middle powers, just as the dominant

power, have the ability to participate effectively in international institutions and stabilize the world system.

The “free rider problem” is implicitly underscored in hegemonic stability theory in that the smaller states bear none of the costs of provision and share fully in the benefits. Yet, middle powers also bear costs for the price of maintaining stability. Middle powers constantly face costs when they take into consideration domestic groups from their countries that fear undesired great power influence in international institutions. In contrast to Charles Kindleberger’s work, Duncan Snidal’s *The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory* maintains that the collective action problem is impossible; it is in the best interests of states to reciprocate stability and cooperation, particularly under the conditions of growing interdependence after the postwar years (1985: 594). Middle powers attempt to strive in an environment where their fates are at the risk of being conditioned by the policies of the dominant power. Charles Kindleberger’s *The World in Great Depression, 1929-1939* and Mancur Olson’s *The Logic of Collective Action* declare that the most powerful state, the hegemon, is forced to supply essential public goods and has the tendency of being exploited by smaller states. Hegemonic stability theory emphasizes how the hegemon is the “author” in providing stability. However, proponents of the theory neglect the weight that middle powers carry in international institutions. Randall Schweller highlights a weakness of Kindleberger and Olson’s point by asserting in *The Concept of Middle Power*, “middle powers are neither mere pawns of great-power politics nor outright dependents of a great power” (2014: 2). They possess enough resources so that in a coalition with a number of other states, they can have an aggregated affect on the international system through international institutions. Although middle powers may lack overall leadership, they elicit stability in the global order by involving other like-minded states in an attempt to arrive at a workable compromise, usually through

institutions (Jordaan 2003:167). Therefore, taking into consideration of middle powers, the hegemon is not the only state that faces costs from the “free rider problem” as purported by hegemonic stability theory.

The hegemonic stability theory lacks a holistic view of states within the global order by placing them in binary encampments. It asserts that that nations tend to align on the basis of interests, – those that are satisfied, known as status quo states as opposed to those that are dissatisfied, revisionist states. Yet, middle powers are neither status quo states nor revisionist states. Middle powers differ from revisionist states in that they understand the constraints enforced by the hegemon and carefully negotiate their own positions and behaviors within the tolerable range. Additionally, revisionist states are likely to be more aggressive as they seek to change the global order in terms of power. They also tend to be primarily concerned with their own status and prestige above all other considerations, hoping to remodel the global order. As a result, revisionist states are faced with their own survival, power, and security, which can often lead to competition and conflict. Middle powers are fundamentally cautious agents, protecting their domestic growth and sovereignty and displaying foreign policy measures that secure their objectives. In this manner, middle powers frequently manage risk and uncertainty within international institutions to secure the stability of global governance and maintain sufficient bases of followership. Therefore, as the dynamic between states changes, so do the possible roles and behaviors of middle powers (Krasner 1976: 318). Middle powers are not seeking to enhance their relative power in the international system, but rather enforcing an atmosphere of security for states in international institutions. More importantly, middle powers demonstrate a propensity to promote stability in the world system in a way that does not challenge or threaten the global status quo or seek to be the hegemon.

By placing states in either camp, as hegemonic stability theory reasons, political scientists are overlooking what middle powers can offer to the global order. The assumption that underlies the theory is that a hegemon can enforce rules and norms unilaterally, avoiding the collective goods problem. In *The World in Depression, 1929-1939*, Charles Kindleberger argues a hegemonic power is not only needed to keep stability in the global system, but it also forms global norms. In fact, he argues that there is no universally accepted standard of behavior for small countries and that they lack power to affect the outcome of great events. Essentially, Kindleberger asserts that the role of states, with the exception of the hegemon, are privileged to look after their own private national interest rather than concern themselves with the public good of stability in the world economy as a whole (1973: 300). Robert Gilpin's *War and Change in World Politics* reasons that subordinate states will accept their exploitation from the hegemon as long as the costs of being exploited are less than the costs of overthrowing the hegemonic power (1981:11). Gilpin also points out that all hegemons will decline in power because it is arduous to maintain power. He further writes of how lesser states obey the commands of the dominant state or states' as a result of power and prestige. This may hold true for weak states, but middle powers are not passive followers of the hegemon. Middle powers assert their own interests through international institutions, thus resisting a passive nature in the world system. It is through these bodies that middle powers institutionalize their preferred norms of global governance, as they cannot maximize their bargaining power unilaterally. By taking on this central form of international diplomacy, middle powers influence negotiations, advertise their commitment to stability, and strengthen their image of global citizenship.

Many political science scholars have focused on the role of great powers in the international institutions, but middle powers are playing a more prominent role in the global

arena. Stephen Krasner's *State Power and the Structure of International Trade* emphasizes the dominant power and its tendency to use its superior status to structure the trading system to its own advantage. Krasner also states that institutions alone cannot define stability of the global order, through the hegemon, because "institutions created during periods of rising ascendancy remained in operation when they were no longer appropriate" (1976:342-343). However, Eduard Jordaan's *The Concept of a Middle Power in International Relations: Distinguishing Between Emerging and Traditional Middle Powers* retorts this claim by emphasizing that middle powers are stabilisers and legitimisers of the world order, whether in times of hegemony or not. Middle powers are assuming greater responsibility in the international system due to their ability to bring about deep global change; they tend to mitigate endemic instability of military-political conflict with stronger economic origins in international institutions (Jordaan 2003:169). James Scott, Matthias vom Hau, and David Hulme build on this claim by stating that middle powers have the ability to consolidate their economic position and assert their influence in the international system through a regionally focused geo-economic and geopolitical strategy (2012:8). The inclusion of middle powers in the understanding of global stability and international institutions does not mean that the hegemon becomes irrelevant. Instead, recognizing the changing nature of power among states points to the rising importance of how stability incorporates all "players of the game".

GLOBAL ORDER & INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Hegemonic stability theory is limited to conditions that favor the position of the hegemon in relation to the subordinate states. The theory is widely useful when two distinctive propositions are simultaneously supported: the presence of a dominant state leads to greater stability in the international system and this greater stability benefits all states in the system.

However, the hegemon may show more than one perception that reveals their motives for increased power, which drastically affects the stability of the global order. At times, a hegemon can showcase coercive leadership or benevolent leadership (Snidal 1985: 588). In this manner, hegemonies have two different conceptions of how they are perceived in the world system. Therefore, scholars such as Duncan Snidal challenge political observers to think of the shortcomings of hegemonic stability theory, as it might be of use to analyze the posture of middle powers in the world system with a hegemon. In Snidal's *The Limits of Hegemonic Stability*, he raises the possibility that the hegemonic actor has the ability to distribute costs among states, which can alter the distribution of benefits to favor itself (1985:588). The hegemon also needs institutions to legitimate their power over the hierarchical structure. Middle powers help ensure system stability through the persistence of rules that characterize international institutions, so that the hegemon can be observed in its distribution of power and capability over the relevant issues.

Institutions are complemented by the explanatory variable of followership, which is needed by both the hegemon and middle powers for the outcome of stability. For the stability and effectiveness of international institutions, hegemonic states need institutions to sustain their position in the global order, as well as distribute the responsibilities of leadership. Likewise, middle powers define themselves staunchly by their participation in international institutions, their capacity to mediate, and dissemination of interests. In Robert Keohane's *International Institutions: Two Approaches*, he asserts that at any point in time, transaction costs within the global order are to a substantial degree the result of the institutional context (1988:386). In this context, international stability is driven by communication, economic and political interaction, and diplomacy among states within international institutions. Hegemonic stability theorist,

Charles Kindleberger reasons, “an essential ingredient of followership is to convince the leader that he is the author of the ideas that require the use of his resources” (1973:301). Therefore, the hegemon, middle powers, and weak states need to work together to maintain global stability.

The diplomacy that middle powers utilize in international institutions propels stability is drastically different from hegemonic diplomacy. As supported by hegemonic stability theory, the hegemon will take the lead and overpower other states in the international system to enforce international order. However, middle powers rely on each other for multilateral action to promote their interests and security of the global order. Middle powers take responsibility of stabilizing global consequences, despite their inferior status to the hegemon, by determining strategies for consensus building. Robert Cox substantiates this claim by writing that middle powers could be influential because they are “not suspected of harboring intentions of domination and...have resources sufficient to enable them to be functionally effective” (1989:10). Middle powers need adequate networks with other states to can help foster stability through international institutions. These networks will assist them to mediate, broker, and bridge roles, and consequently, enhance their diplomatic influence in bringing stability to the international system.

EXPECTATIONS OF MIDDLE POWERS

Hegemonic stability theory holds that a hegemon can help resolve or at least keep in check conflicts among middle powers or small states. As previously mentioned, the theory misses a fundamental aspect – the significant role that middle powers can play in preserving stability in the world system. Middle powers help stabilize and legitimize the global order because they serve as mediators among states in conflict. They do not serve as a grouping of idiosyncratic actors within international institutions. Middle powers are dedicated to “orderliness

and security...as they often attempt to pre-empt, contain and resolve conflict between warring parties” (Jordaan 2003: 169). Additionally, Randall Schweller’s *The Concept of Middle Power* claims that middle powers have a unique place within international institutions where they can be expected to display a specific pattern of statecraft that promotes international stability by serving as bridge builders, international conflict managers, and facilitators of resolution activities (2014:6). It is not just the hegemon that serves as the gatekeeper of stability. Schweller goes on to say that middle powers have a moral responsibility and collective ability to sustain global order from those who could possibly threaten it, such as the hegemon or small powers. Because middle powers are between the dominant power and subjected weak states in terms of influence, they have the ability to serve as the diplomatic mediators of international institutions.

International institutions, through the efforts of middle powers, help constrain the autonomy of the hegemon. Moreover, it is a result of institutions that there is a check and balance of power and stability among all states, including the hegemon. Andrew Hurrell’s *Paths to Power: Foreign Policy Strategies of Intermediate States* supports this claim with “institutional means, built on a global basis, remain the chosen route for engendering stability within the international economic system” (2000:4). Institutions empower middle powers as well as provide them the political space to create new coalitions that counter-balance contrasting preferences of the dominant state. Additionally, middle powers take an initiative in international institutions because it protects them with a predictable rules-based environment, where they have sufficient capacity and credibility to partake in those tasks. As argued by Andrew Cooper and Daniel Flemer in *Foreign Policy Strategies of Emerging Powers in a Multipolar World: An Introductory Review*, middle powers share similar characteristics on the need for rules and order in multilateral institutions (2013:957). Middle powers have become a part of the equation of

stability through the proliferation of multilateral and interregional coalitions such as BRICS, IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa), and the G20. Gary Goertz's *International Norms and Decision Making: A Punctuated Equilibrium Model* claims that middle powers that engage in coalitions are often successful in accomplishing their goals even when faced with great power opposition (2003:185). This is due to a major initiative that comes from the middle powers to assert their posture in international institutions, which gains backing from smaller states. Moreover, when middle powers take a greater stance in international institutions, they hope to gain international recognition and traction with other states.

The hegemon, United States, took leadership of sustaining global financial stability, particularly after World War II. However, between World War I and World War II, there was an absence of a world leader, resulting in economic chaos and the Great Depression. Hegemonic stability theory, as supported by Charles Kindleberger, convincingly shows how the hegemon develops and enforces the rules of the system. While the lack of a hegemon may have led to the breakdown of global order in the 20th century, there is a newfound collaboration of states, led by middle powers that attempt to prevent economic disorder in the 21st century. Empirically, political science scholars observe the strength of middle powers in international institutions such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization, and International Monetary Fund. It is also predicted among economists that middle powers in the G-20 will be able to stabilize the international system due to their purchasing power and modernization. There is, evidently, a more pluralistic nature of international order that includes the increasing economic and demographic potential of the middle powers.

Middle powers have the ability to command the hegemon or dominant states to follow institutional rules and provide them with the opportunities that prevent the overpowering of

smaller states. Jeanne A.K. Hey raises the point in *Small States in World Politics* that “states are deemed small not by an objective definition, but by their perceived role in the international hierarchy” (2003:3). This enforces the stability of international institutions because middle powers look out for smaller powers as to preserve their security according to the decision-making procedures of the bodies. Middle powers such as Brazil, Turkey, and Canada have understood that to project themselves as relevant actors to international institutions and stability, they must build coalitions with one another. As a result, middle powers have greater bargaining capacity and help to prevent unilateralism of major powers. Hegemonic stability theory falls short in that it significantly focuses on the hegemon of the leader-follower relationship among states. In engaging a wider theoretical debate over the nature of the hegemony, middle powers challenge the notion of the theory to demonstrate the inadequacy of a leader-centered approach to contemporary international politics.

INDIA AND THE BANDUNG CONFERENCE - 1955

Many of the international institutions established at the end of World War II have sought to alleviate issues such as colonization, the end of the Cold War, environmental threats and global poverty. However, very little has been altered in the basic structure of these global institutions. The Bandung Conference, held from April 18–24, 1955, was important to India's mentality on its position in the international arena, and subsequently, its United Nations policy and aspirations. This was the first large scale conference organized by newly independent Asian and African countries such as India, Indonesia, Ceylon, Pakistan, and Burma to advocate cultural cooperation, international peace, and opposition to colonialism. The fight against colonialism that India had to endure to gain independence pushed forth the Non-Alignment Movement. India desired to be the master of its fate. Many of the non-aligned countries promoted the principles of

self-determination, national independence, sovereignty, and the territorial integrity of States. In Nehru's speech to the Bandung Conference Political Committee on the status of global politics, he boldly stated to the delegations, "So far as I am concerned, it does not matter what takes place; we will not take part in it [blocs] unless we have to defend ourselves. If I join any of these big groups I lose my identity."¹ Moreover, Pakistan, Philippines, Iraq, and especially India, struggled against imperialism, and opposed multilateral military alliances, apartheid, and the use of force to solve international issues.



The Bandung Conference was pioneering in the fact that these smaller, although population dense, countries advocated peaceful coexistence among all nations and democratization of international relations. In his speech to the Bandung Conference participants, Nehru urged countries to be aware of the unaligned area and how joining different camps or alliances could lead to war. Unlike many Western countries, the countries that attended the Bandung Conference pushed for international cooperation on an equal footingⁱⁱⁱ. The Bandung Conference was monumental in international politics because it was a milestone for Third World countries to collaborate, discuss their political views, and insist that their recommendations play a role in the world order.

By working alongside African countries, India emphasized the need for a positive approach to all issues, particularly because the Afro-Asian group assumed new character and power in the international system. Ms. Pandit attended the 18th Session of the General Assembly, where she ascertained that there were opportunities available in which India could take a prominent role in African and UN affairs with a clearly defined policy. India desired to be of assistance to African countries because many nations were divided among themselves and without common policies. Ms. Pandit writes, “We had abandoned no principles. We continued pledged to the things we believe in. We wanted the closest co-operation with the African nations but statesmanship demanded different methods of approach to world issues at different times”^{iv}. She also convinced African leaders at this session that India did not have an ulterior motive of leadership, but rather had the desire to collaborate in the United Nations and outside with African and Asian countries in establishing a new world order that valued freedom and equality of opportunity for all without discrimination. However, Ms. Pandit not only calls for cooperation between Asian and African countries, but also the initiative to voice their opinions. She writes, “I

stressed the point that, we, the new nations, now had the responsibility of living up to the statements we had made in the past. Soon our group would have the majority voice in the United Nations and we must use our power to good purpose”^v. Through Ms. Pandit’s words and encouragement for African and Asian countries, many leaders began to look to India for leadership in international cooperation at the United Nations.

The principles and spirit of the Non-Alignment Movement continued after the Bandung Conference. The major leaders of the Non-Alignment Movement were Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Ahmed Sukarno of Indonesia and Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia; they later became the founding fathers of the movement.^{vi} Similar to the core of the Bandung Conference, the Non-Alignment Movement insisted that countries should not be passive in the world system. Rather, the movement urged Third World countries to have a voice in international politics and take concerted action. Based on India's Ministry of External Affairs, "In 1960, in the light of the results achieved in Bandung, the creation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries was given a decisive boost during the Fifteenth Ordinary Session of the United Nations General Assembly, during which 17 new African and Asian countries were admitted."^{vii} As the Non-Alignment Movement began to grow, so did the number of Member States in the United Nations. These non-aligned countries began to take more of a firm stance in international politics, specifically India. Similarly, these countries made efforts to raise their voices so that the Great Powers’ voices were not the only ones being listened to in the United Nations.

However, in 1971, India signed the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation with the Soviet Union, which shocked various countries and bruised India’s reputation. It seemed to other countries that India was taking a stance of alignment in international affairs, especially

when it interfered in the affairs of neighboring countries from the 1970s to 1980s. A great amount of debate that followed the Bandung Conference was categorizing Soviet policies in Central Asia and Eastern Europe as the same as Western imperialism. Although there was criticism of the signing of this treaty, Indo-Soviet relations began to gain momentum after Soviet leaders visited India in 1955. In his speech to the Bandung Conference participants on major blocs, Nehru asserted that he “belong[s] to neither and [I] propose to belong to neither whatever happens in the world. If we have to stand alone, we will stand by ourselves, whatever happens (and India has stood alone without any aid against a mighty Empire, the British Empire) and we propose to face all consequences...”^{viii}. Additionally, he argued that a relationship between countries can survive without any trace of bloc politics or alliances. In fact, Nehru stated that India does not agree with communist teaching or with anti-communist teachings. However, he stated, “We have had their (Soviet leadership) goodwill and their good wishes all along...and this is the consolation to use and we certainly hope to have that in the future”^{ix}. At the core of the Non-Alignment Movement, countries like India were not passive or neutral to global issues, but rather took a stance for their values of cooperation and stability, and were willing to cooperate with countries in good faith.

ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), a relatively new multilateral financial institution, was established to assist countries with their infrastructure challenges and needs across Asia. The AIIB aims to stimulate growth and improve access to basic services by emphasizing interconnectivity and economic development. Created in January 2016, the Beijing-based bank provides infrastructural financing in the Asia-Pacific region, but is also seen as a competitor to the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, which are heavily Western

dominated. With a total approved membership of 77 members, the president of AIIB, Jin Liqun, has stated that he expects 85 members to be associated with the bank by the end of 2017 (Yao). Some of the AIIB founding members to be highlighted are China, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Brunei, Myanmar, the Philippines, Pakistan, Britain, Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, and Spain (Huang).

High stakes					
	<i>GDP (\$ trillion)</i>	<i>Estimated stake* (%)</i>		<i>GDP (\$ trillion)</i>	<i>Estimated stake* (%)</i>
China	10.35	39.16	Britain	2.85	5.22
India	2.05	7.74	Korea	1.30	4.93
Germany	3.82	7.00	Italy	2.12	3.90
Australia**	1.51	5.69	Indonesia	0.87	3.29
France	2.90	5.32	Singapore	0.29	1.13

*If stake is based on size of GDP. Weighting is done differently for Asian and European countries
 **If it participates

AIIB members		
	<i>Countries</i>	<i>Joined in</i>
First members	China, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam	October 2014
Obtained membership	Indonesia	November
	New Zealand, Maldives, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan	January 2015
	Jordan	February
Applied for membership	United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Luxemburg	Application submitted in March
Applied for membership	Korea	Expressed intention to join on March 27

*Australia is reviewing whether to join or not, and Japan has postponed the decision.
 Source: International Monetary Fund, Ministry of Strategy and Finance and data compiled by JoongAng Ilbo

Independent of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, the China-led AIIB and its founding members have the opportunity to set the rules for the bank. Of significant importance, the United States has not decided to apply to be a member of AIIB, and instead, continues its leadership with the IMF and World Bank. David Dollar asserts, “China’s initiatives in Asia are seen in many quarters as a setback for the United States. The U.S. government contributed to this narrative through its efforts to discourage allies from joining the new AIIB. In the end, major American allies, such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and South Korea, did join the Chinese initiative, and Japan is seriously considering becoming a member. However, this is likely to be a temporary diplomatic setback for the United States” (“The AIIB and the ‘One Belt, One Road’”).

Though Christine Lagarde, chief of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), stated that the IMF would be happy to cooperate with the AIIB, there has been much frustration from the United States over the creation of the bank. The Obama administration has raised potential issues of the bank’s transparency, governance, and clashes with existing institutions such as the Asian Development Bank. In *Transforming Global Governance with Middle Power Diplomacy: South Korea*, it is argued that the Obama administration actively “dissuaded others from joining the AIIB because it represents a direct challenge to existing norms of international governance on the one hand, while Asian neighbors see a clear need for enhance infrastructure investment in the region and a potentially useful niche role and justification for the establishment of the AIIB” (Snyder 56). In response to the alternative narratives of AIIB, its key founder has emphasized that AIIB would complement existing international institutions.

Founding Members of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

Australia	Finland	Jordan	Myanmar	Qatar	Tajikistan
Austria	France	Kazakhstan	Nepal	Republic of Korea	Thailand
Azerbaijan	Georgia	Kuwait	Netherlands	Russia	Turkey
Bangladesh	Germany	Kyrgyzstan	New Zealand	Saudi Arabia	United Arab Emirates
Brazil	Iceland	Lao	Norway	Singapore	United Kingdom
Brunei	India	Luxembourg	Oman	South Africa	Uzbekistan
Cambodia	Indonesia	Malaysia	Pakistan	Spain	Vietnam
China	Iran	Maldives	Philippines	Sri Lanka	
Denmark	Israel	Malta	Poland	Sweden	
Egypt	Italy	Mongolia	Portugal	Switzerland	

Middle powers, particularly in Asia, are emerging as vital fulcrums of stability. While there are several middle powers that have benefited from the US-led international order, the AIIB project has given them an opportunity to help “change the rules of the game” while simultaneously supporting good governance. The AIIB project invites countries, particularly the founding members, many of which are middle powers, to collaborate in writing the rules of the bank and discuss new financial resources for development infrastructure projects.

GROUP OF TWENTY

Founded in 1999, the Group of Twenty or otherwise known as G-20 is comprised of twenty members who seek to review and promote high-level talks of policy issues regarding international financial stability. These countries include: Australia, Canada, Saudi Arabia, United States, India, Russia, South Africa, Turkey, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, France, Germany, Italy,

United Kingdom, China, Indonesia, Japan, and South Korea. The G-20 has worked to enforce financial regulations to prevent financial crises, promote cooperation on tax issues and financial transparency, and collaborate on vital challenges such as climate change and global health security.

There has been a growing consensus that middle powers have been excluded from global gatherings for an extended period until the elevation of the G20 in 2008. Though the G20 is large in terms of size, middle powers have the opportunity to become significant beneficiaries to the group. In “The G20 and Contested Global Governance: BRICS, Middle Powers, and Small States,” it is argued that “middle powers and smaller states, with a greater sense of the stakes involved concerning ‘hub institutionalization, have a much greater incentive to actively engage with the G20” (Cooper 1). Cooper goes on to assert that middle powers in the group utilize and leverage their agency through efforts such as coalitions, ad hoc groupings, and expert/working group tracks. With a group as large as twenty, deadlocks and contested global governance are often visible. However, the dynamics of middle powers in the G20 allows for them to have a “political opportunity structure...to gain traction in terms of setting strategic priorities within the G20 on niche issues as well as to provide a mediatory role in diffusing conflict arising from geopolitical system structural shifts” (Cooper 11). Through diplomacy, middle powers can take on an increasing role by taking initiative with other like-minded countries to yield and recommend new issues for the G20 agenda as well as raise solutions. The current international landscape necessitates the role of middle powers to take a bigger role in this interconnected world.

Key Data for the G20 Countries

Country	CCPI Rank		Share of Global GDP	Share of World Population	Share of Global CO ₂ Emissions*	Share of Global Primary Energy Supply
	2017	2016				
France	4	8	2.37%	0.91%	0.88%	1.77%
United Kingdom	6	5	2.41%	0.89%	1.26%	1.31%
Italy	16	20	1.94%	0.84%	0.99%	1.07%
India	20	23	6.81%	17.87%	6.24%	6.02%
Indonesia	22	19	2.47%	3.51%	1.35%	1.65%
Mexico	28	26	1.91%	1.65%	1.33%	1.37%
Germany	29	27	3.39%	1.12%	2.23%	2.23%
South Africa	32	43	0.65%	0.74%	1.35%	1.07%
Argentina	36	49	0.80%	0.59%	0.59%	0.63%
Brazil	40	42	3.02%	2.84%	1.47%	2.21%
United States	43	35	15.94%	4.40%	15.99%	16.18%
China	48	48	16.98%	18.92%	28.21%	22.38%
Turkey	51	51	1.37%	1.06%	0.95%	0.89%
Russian Federation	53	53	3.18%	1.98%	4.53%	5.19%
Canada	55	56	1.48%	0.49%	1.71%	2.04%
Australia	57	57	1.03%	0.33%	1.15%	0.91%
Korea	58	59	1.67%	0.70%	1.75%	1.96%
Japan	60	58	4.38%	1.75%	3.67%	3.22%
Saudi Arabia	61	61	1.48%	0.43%	1.56%	1.56%

*energy-related emissions

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One of the main issues that the G-20 takes up is tackling the effects of climate change. Aside from working together to help bring the Paris Agreement into action in 2016, G-20 members have sustained momentum on climate action by promoting energy efficiency and working with the private sector to address climate change. A leader in tackling the climate change issue under the Obama administration, the United States' efforts in this arena are now in jeopardy as evidenced by the Trump administration's decision to withdraw from the Paris climate accord. This major break from international partners from the landmark agreement will isolate the United States in the collaborative effort to curb global warming. In fact, the United States' reversal from the Paris climate accord puts itself at odds with the other 194 member states

that signed onto the agreement. Despite the United States' pledge to remove itself from the accord, other countries, particularly middle powers, have stepped up to prove their commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Many leaders, such as Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, have spoken out to assert and reaffirm the highest level of commitment to the accord, as well as to pledge that they would go above and beyond to combat climate change. Middle powers have the opportunity to exercise cooperative leadership while constructively addressing the new political, financial paths posed by the Trump administration and creating a more inclusive and progressive international system.

CONCLUSION

One of the great debates in the field of international relations centers on the purpose of international institutions and its role in global stability. Middle powers do not have the military power or economic might to assume a hegemon position in the world system. Yet, as argued by Eduard Jordaan, middle powers self-interests derive from a deeper level, one that emphasizes stability, controllability, and progress in their economic status. Essentially, middle powers legitimize the global order by utilizing and asserting themselves through international organizations, relying on the authority afforded by these institutions in order to manage and maintain the prevailing world order (Jordaan 2003:169). Suspended between the hegemon and small states in the global order, middle powers encourage stability by facilitating conversations of collaboration in international institutions.

To an extent, hegemonic stability theory does accurately describe the hegemon's behavior in the international system as evidenced in Charles Kindleberger and Stephen Krasner's works. Yet, some scholars such as Eduard Jordaan, Randall Schweller, and Detlef Nolte argue that the validity of hegemonic stability theory has diminished due to the rise of multiple actors in

international institutions. At the same time, middle powers is an ever-changing concept and it is difficult to extrapolate how they will interact with the hegemon and in international institutions. Nonetheless, with a rise of middle powers taking initiative in international institutions, the hegemon must account for other states in sharing the costs of leadership.

Hegemonic stability theorists neglect the consideration the role of middle powers within the global order as an agent for stability. In the context of current political events, middle powers are gaining more ground within international institutions as they emphasize coalition building and multilateral frameworks. Randall Schweller highlights that at the international systemic level, middle power have made significant strides in their pursuit of promoting global stability by putting “themselves forward as champion of anti-colonial, racial, and economic justice” (2014:3). Political observers now notice the rise of middle powers as evidenced by the emphasis of cooperation through the efforts of the Bandung Conference, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and G20. Now more than ever before, middle powers should neither be underestimated when it comes to the value of reinforcing stability in the international system or a force for good in leading collaborative efforts. Essentially, middle powers possess a unique vantage point in the international system and international relations today as proactive multilateralists for stability.

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