

# Testing the creativity of Kevin Rudd's middle power diplomacy: EU–Australia partnership framework versus the Asia-Pacific community

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## Abstract

The 2007 Australian Parliamentary Elections brought a new dynamic to Australia's foreign policy: the Kevin Rudd factor. The Prime Minister sought to develop a more proactive and multi-faceted foreign policy around 'Creative Middle Power Diplomacy'. This study aims to cast light on the dynamism in Australia's Foreign Policy with Kevin Rudd within the framework of middle power activism. The research firstly focuses on the difficulties of defining and classifying middle powers through which it will put forward specific 'commonalities' for successful middle power foreign policy outcomes. The study of the EU–Australia Partnership Framework and the Asia-Pacific Community proposals – both of which

were priorities for Kevin Rudd – reveal the potential and limits of middle power activism. This study argues that in today's world, middle powers have growing potential to pursue specific foreign policy goals but their ability to achieve these goals is constrained by Great Powers' interests and consent, and also by the nature or 'commonalities' of middle power diplomatic practice.

## 1 Introduction

Middle powers have been a long-standing feature of the international system, albeit one that is difficult to define and classify neatly. They began to draw more attention with the *détente* period of 1960 and 1970s, as non-superpowers seeking a measure of flexibility in their interstate relations. Increasingly, middle powers took initiatives within their regional perimeters, even if they sometimes challenged hegemonic rudiments of the Cold War system.

This study analyzes the potential and limitations of middle power activism by comparing two case studies (one is successful and the other unsuccessful): the EU–Australia Partnership Framework 2008 (EAPF) and the Asia-Pacific Community 2008 (APC). It examines Kevin Rudd's 'new' foreign policy through the lenses of middle power activism. It does not argue that Kevin Rudd was a Prime Minister or Foreign Minister who oversaw the development of a substantially distinct foreign policy but rather that he brought a new dynamism to Australia's foreign policy both in a theoretical and practical sense.

Rudd wanted to redefine Australia's international outlook. As the policy-maker of a middle power, Rudd needed to utilize multilateral platforms for this aim. Yet, the platforms that existed before he became Prime Minister in 2007 did not correspond with this objective. Through prioritizing the completion of negotiations with the European Union (EU) on a partnership framework (EAPF) and the establishment of a new regional initiative, the APC, Rudd hoped to bolster Australia's image in both Europe and Asia. The EAPF focused on Europe where Rudd was successfully able to capitalize on common values, background, and global interests. The APC, on the other hand, was more of a challenge as Asian-Pacific countries were ultimately uninterested and/or unwilling to allow Australia to become an initiator of regional infrastructure, especially in the absence of prior consultation. The APC initiative gradually faded from view.

What made the EAPF successful and the APC unsuccessful gives important clues not only about Australia's success in cementing its status as a proactive middle power but also about the criteria to analyze middle powers' potential in general. These criteria have a particular theoretical significance for understanding how middle powers achieve new (and/or strengthening or recalibrating old) alliances.

In order to explore these criteria, the study focuses on definitions of middle powers in order to put forward 'commonalities' about how they act and how they can produce successful policy outcomes. It uses these commonalities to analyze Australia's middle power activism under Kevin Rudd. In particular, it examines the background, parallels, and contrasts of the EAPF and the APC to explain the reasons of their respective success and failure. This study argues that in today's world, middle powers have growing potential to pursue specific foreign policy goals but their ultimate ability to achieve these goals is constrained by Great Powers' interests and consent, and also by the nature or 'commonalities' of middle power diplomatic practice.

## 2 The 'commonalities' of middle powers' foreign policy conduct

The idea of middle powers has been in world politics for centuries (Ping, 2005), but the Canadian diplomat Hume Wrong and Lester Pearson first elucidated the concept in 1942, based on Canada's functional influence in the Second World War as distinguished from other minor powers (Hilliker, 1990, pp. 304–305). Herbert Vere Evatt, Australian Minister for External Affairs, made a similar definition by emphasizing the 'key importance' of middle powers 'for the maintenance of security in different parts of the world', 'by reason of their resources and geographic position' (Evatt, 1946, p. 10). Yet with the rising importance of middle powers, it became clear that functionality could not be the only criteria for defining them.

The literature on middle powers shows that no single criteria or model can provide a comprehensive definition. It is similarly difficult to classify middle powers. Nevertheless, some 'commonalities' can be inferred, which are important indicators of middle powers' success in their foreign policy endeavors.

One method for defining middle powers is to put forward a theoretical and tautological loom. Adam Chapnick (1999) made an amalgamation of

various approaches of defining middle powers (Mitrany, 1933; Gelber, 1945; Glazebrook, 1947; Pearson, 1966; Vital, 1967; Granatstein, 1970; Holbraad, 1971; Lyon and Tomlin, 1979; Dewitt and Kirton, 1983; Holbraad, 1984; Wood, 1988; Cox, 1989; Neack, 1992; Cooper *et al.*, 1993; Belanger and Mace, 1999), providing an overview of the literature since the 1930s. Challenging existing definitions of middle powers, Chapnick put forward three models – functional, behavioral, and hierarchical.

The functional model is based on Hume Wrong, Garantstein (1970), and Gelber's (1945) assumptions that middle powers are distinguished from great and small powers in terms of their involvement, interests, and ability to contribute to specific issues. An important commonality from this model is that *middle powers assume special responsibilities and influence in certain areas of strong interest, but not all the time and on every issue*. Their functionality or influence is conditional on the circumstances and can even seem disconnected from the middle powers' political and economic capabilities.

The behavioral model, as defined by Glazebrook (1947), Pearson (1966), Holbraad (1971), and Cooper *et al.* (1993), defines middle powers as 'good international citizens', which work as mediators to bring multilateral solutions to international disputes. Wood (1988) adds an extra role as regional leaders. In this definition, however, any state can be or act like a middle power (Chapnick, 1999, p. 76) – there is no robust causality between a state's size and its foreign policy behavior (Thakur, 1991; Ravenhill, 1998; Ungerer, 2007; Cooper, 2011, p. 321). A middle power may be better understood therefore as one that privileges the concept of interaction on the international stage, or 'middlepowermanship' as articulated by Cox (1989). In this interaction, middle powers 'direct their foreign policy efforts at the international level, for which multilateral arrangements are ideally suited' (Belanger and Mace, 1997, p. 166; Jordaan, 2003, p. 169). This model highlights another commonality that *middle powers are not/cannot be sole determinants of the international system*. They lack the ability to affect global structural change. They need to act in multilateral schemes where they can align with like-minded powers and increase their influence either as a mediator, conflict manager, or a regional leader.

The hierarchical model is manifested by a three-tiered international community. David Mitrany (1933, p. 107) argues that middle powers are small powers but that they can become stronger and gain recognition of their status (between great and small powers) from the international

community via a 'scheme of gradation'. Such gradation stems from a middle power's objective capability, its self-proclaimed position, and recognized status, which creates a stratified international system with three classes of states according to Dewitt and Kirton (1983). But conceptualizing and measuring those capabilities can be problematic. Holbraad (1984) and Wood (1990) used GNP, and Neack (1992) used five national indicators to identify these capabilities, but none could propose an objective measurement. Without an objective measurement, any recognition could not be objective. In other words, being a middle power is a subjective label much more than an analytical and objective recognition. The commonality here is that *middle powers are middle powers as long as the international community accepts them as such; it is not easy to maintain this status at all times.*

John Ravenhill (1998) proposed another model for defining middle power status with five Cs: 'capacity', 'concentration', 'creativity', 'coalition building', and 'credibility'. These five Cs provide another valuable set of 'commonalities' for middle power behavior. For Ravenhill, 'capacity', particularly after the Cold War, was related to diplomatic rather than physical and military capability. 'Concentration' claims that middle powers are 'limited in the number of objectives' that they can 'pursue at any given time'. 'Creativity' refers to the leadership of middle powers, which is not forced by authority but 'by force of ideas' (Evans and Grant, 1991, p. 325). 'Coalition building' resembles the above-mentioned behavioral model in a way that middle powers cannot impose their will but they can persuade like-minded states to act together in multilateral schemes. 'Credibility' argues that because of middle powers' relative weakness, their international initiatives are 'regarded with less suspicion' since they are 'unlikely to be in a position to be the single largest beneficiary of a negotiated outcome'.

Another effort in the literature on defining middle powers, which has a particular significance for this study, relates to their activism, which became a focus in the late 1980s. Ravenhill (1998), with references to Cooper *et al.* (1993), and Evans and Grant (1991), argues that an additional three Cs determine middle powers' capacity for activist diplomacy: 'context', 'content', and 'choice'. 'Context' refers to the changes in the international agenda such as the easing of superpower tensions, declining US hegemony, and the increased domestic interest in new issues in foreign policy. These changes extend middle powers' maneuvering space in international politics and increase the chance of aligning with like-minded states to pursue 'new' and activist policies. 'Content' exemplifies quantitative changes in middle power

diplomacy. Such changes could be rapid proactive responses to the changing international environment (Cooper *et al.*, 1993, pp. 20–21) in a way to influence regional dynamics via new regional schemes. ‘Choice’, on the other hand, has three sub-elements: ‘partisanship’, ‘personal interest’, and ‘differentiation’. ‘Partisanship’ refers to the government’s decision to act as a middle power. ‘Personal interest’ is prime ministers’ and foreign ministers’ beliefs, personalities, ambitions, and energies. ‘Differentiation’ relates to governments’ efforts to separate themselves from the opposite side of politics in the eyes of their constituencies. This term originates from partisanship and strengthens with personal interest of the leader, who tries to emphasize his/her contribution to foreign policy.

Collectively these eight Cs (‘capacity’, ‘concentration’, ‘creativity’, ‘coalition building’, ‘credibility’ and ‘context’, ‘content’, and ‘choice’) complete the picture of middle power commonalities. However, none of the above-mentioned efforts bring a comprehensive and theoretically satisfying definition and classification to middle powers. As it was challenged by Chapnick, the current literature’s basic problem in defining middle powers was, as also partly expressed by Holbraad (1984), that middle powers ‘have no special standing in international law that could serve as a guide to their identity’ and ‘nobody has quite overcome the serious difficulties of providing an entirely satisfactory definition of the type of power that is neither great nor small’ and of their international codes of conduct. In addition to the lack of a definition of separate legal identity and the type of power, the lack of correlation between a country’s size or ranking in the international system and the conduct of its diplomacy causes another complication (Thakur, 1991; Ungerer, 2007, p. 539). Simply listing middle power countries is a complex exercise; such lists are never comprehensive and ‘highlight baffling omissions that defy any conceivable standard of consistency’ (Cooper, 2011, p. 320). In short, Cooper (2011, p. 323) rightly asserts that the theoretical definition of middle powers ‘is at impasse’.

Because of the lack of a universally agreed definition, classifying middle powers is also problematic. Eduard Jordaan (2003, p. 165) claimed that in terms of their mutually influencing constitutive and behavioral differences, there are two types of middle powers: traditional and emerging. The former ‘are wealthy, stable, egalitarian, social democratic and not regionally influential’. They do not seek strong and decisive regional orientation. The latter are ‘semi-peripheral, materially inegalitarian and recently democratised states that demonstrate much regional influence and self-association’. They

are 'reformist' and often initiate regional integration and cooperation. These two distinct sets of middle powers are not necessarily mutually exclusive, especially regarding their foreign policy behavior. In other words, a traditional middle power, such as Australia, might also act like an emerging middle power (as we will see later).

To overcome the difficulties of theoretical generalizations, the literature on middle powers has focused on single country studies to decipher middle power behavioral patterns in specific circumstances. Such studies continue to be important to build up secondary literature on the foreign policy 'reach' of middle powers. In this context, it is hoped that this study will assist with the growing understanding of middle power activism. This research will apply the idea of 'commonalities' as a framework of analysis and a new conceptualization for understanding middle powers.

### 3 Australia: a long history of middle power 'commonalities'

As [Ungerer \(2007\)](#) claims, middle power status has been a definite quality of Australian foreign policy. This is due to the set of constraints that Australia faces and its 'relatively small influence on global politics'. There are three major reasons for these constraints: public opinion that restricts some policy choices, the restrictions imposed by the US alliance on defense and foreign policies, and the restrictions created by the impact of relations with Asia on Australia's economic prosperity ([Cotton and Ravenhill, 2011](#), p. 1). These reasons maintain smooth middle power diplomacy practice but on the other hand can curb the outcome of Australia's activism and diplomatic outreach.

Since 1945, the 'commonalities' of middle power diplomacy can be observed in the Australian foreign policy with fluctuations in continuity. Even if such diplomatic practice is closely associated with the Australian Labor Party, particularly during Gareth Evans' term as foreign minister (1988–1996) ([Evans and Grant, 1991](#)), conservative administrations also followed most of these 'commonalities'. In short, Australia has self-identified as a middle power in a way that the concept 'has been one of the strongest influences on the form and conduct of Australian diplomatic practice' ([Ungerer, 2007](#), p. 540).

One of the clearest and earliest examples of Australia's active middle power diplomacy was during the 1945 United Nations Conference on



International Organisation in San Francisco by Herbert Evatt, the Minister for External Affairs of John Curtin's Labor Government (1941–1949). During and after the conference, Evatt was not only interested in boosting Australia's image but also wanted to act as a regional leader of middle and small powers especially during the formation of regional institutions such as the South Pacific Commission in 1947 (Evatt, 1946; Hasluck, 1980; Hilderbrand, 1990; Cumpston, 1995). As one of the major 'commonalities' of middle powers, Evatt aimed to utilize multilateral schemes, aligning with like-minded powers to pursue his foreign policy aims of Australia as a mediator and/or regional leader. Evatt's diplomacy bears the 'creativity' element in a way that he forced his aim to be the leader of middle and small powers not via authority but via ideas. Evatt organized the 'content' of Australian foreign policy in a way to give proactive responses to the Great Power diplomacy of the early post-Second World War. His middle power activism was a successful outcome of his party's outlook, his personality, ambition, and energy.

During the Liberal-Country Party governments of Robert Menzies (1949–1966) with his Foreign Ministers Percy Spender, Richard Casey, Garfield Barwick, and Paul Hasluck, there were some fluctuations in the 'commonalities'. The Menzies administration rejected the concept of middle power activism and multilateralism, but the 'commonalities' could still be observed. Regarding 'functionality', Barwick stressed the influence of Australian foreign policy on specific issues such as its relations with Asia (CAPD, 1964, p. 486). During the formation of the Asian and Pacific Council in 1966, Australia acted in conformity with the 'behavioral' model and, as Hasluck assessed, acted as 'a bridge between the non-Asian and the Asian' (Goldsworthy, 2001, p. 281). The Asian and Pacific Council also fit into the 'behavioral' model that middle powers aim to align with like-minded powers to increase their influence.

With the Gough Whitlam (1972–1975) and Malcolm Fraser (1975–1983) administrations, the 'commonalities' became once again more exposed. Whitlam's term in particular was a good example of middle power activism. The 'context' of decolonization and détente gave a certain level of independence to Canberra. Whitlam changed the 'content' of previous administrations' diplomatic practice to adapt to the new and more flexible political debates of the early-1970s. Formal recognition of Communist China in 1973 and establishing relations with the Non-Aligned Movement in the United Nations (UN) are clear examples of Whitlam's quantitative changes in



diplomatic practice, as well as proactive responses to the changing international environment. His 'choice' of changing the outlook of Australia's foreign policy, as Ungerer (2007, p. 545) claims, was 'broadly accepted across the political divide' therefore Fraser 'did not seek to reverse' Whitlam's foreign policy outlook even though he was the leader of conservative Liberal-Country Party. Fraser acted in conformity with the functional model via his emphasis on developing relations with Asia and North-South debate (CAPD, 1981a, p. 1891; Ungerer, 2007, p. 546). Certain statements of the Fraser administration fit into the 'behavioral' model tenet that multilateralism is important for successful foreign policy with Foreign Minister Tony Street emphasizing the importance of multilateral diplomacy in addition to bilateral relations (CAPD, 1981b, pp. 829–830).

Middle power 'commonalities' were also the engine of Australian diplomacy during Bob Hawke and Paul Keating's Labor Party governments, between 1983 and 1996, with Bill Hayden and Gareth Evans as Ministers for Foreign Affairs. In this era, the end of Cold War 'context' made the international community more receptive to creative vehicles initiated by middle powers, which also made Australian middle power diplomacy more 'functional' and influential due to the end of Cold War's rigid bipolar dynamics. Evans' foreign policy outlook highlights some of the 'commonalities' clearly. In his own work, with Bruce Grant, entitled 'Australia's Foreign Relations', he emphasized the importance of multilateral coalition building with like-minded states. He also argued that middle powers should apply 'niche' diplomacy with which they can concentrate their resources on specific areas. Middle powers, according to Evans, 'are not powerful enough in most circumstances to impose their will, but they may be persuasive enough to have like-minded others see their point of view, and to act accordingly'<sup>1</sup> (Evans and Grant, 1991, p. 344). With his statement, Evans amalgamates 'behavioral', 'concentration', and 'coalition building' models and highlights some significant 'commonalities' of middle power foreign policy behavior, which accelerated Australia's middle power activism in the mid-1990s.

With the election of the Liberal National Coalition government of John Howard, most of the 'commonalities' were muted in Australian foreign policy between 1996 and 2007. The main reason for this is hidden in

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1 A striking example for middle power activism during this period is Bob Hawke's success in persuading other regional countries to establish APEC forum in 1989.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer's statements that Australia was no longer a middle power but 'a pivotal power' (Ungerer, 2007, p. 549). The Howard administration also shifted Australian foreign policy focus from multilateralism to bilateralism (DFAT, 1997). Howard's bilateralism aimed to strengthen bilateral relations with key allies, i.e. the United States, which almost perfectly fit the expectations of the international community in post-9/11. Howard's term was a significant break from the middle power diplomatic 'commonalities' but because of the above-mentioned constraints claimed by Cotton and Ravenhill (2011), it is a question mark that Downer's pivotal power argument ever came true for Australia.

With the November 2007 elections Kevin Rudd inherited, as Ungerer (2007, p. 550) states, 'a number of recurring patterns of foreign policy consistent with middle power behaviour'. These recurring patterns demonstrated that Australia was in the category of a traditional middle power. But Kevin Rudd aimed to add the activism and eagerness of emerging middle powers to this inheritance. That's why we can observe almost all of the 'commonalities' in Rudd's foreign policy from 2007. The question here is how well/smoothly/constructively these 'commonalities' interacted for his success.

Before he became the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd put forward the key constructs of his foreign policy in a detailed White Paper in 2004. The paper focused on the significance of the measures to deal with climate change, the importance of developing a more efficient engagement with the global governance structures, particularly via the UN, and the potential of deeper engagement with Asia (Rudd, 2004). In this paper, he advocated open activist diplomacy.

To present such activism, Rudd needed a 'new' foreign policy discourse. He conceptualized and presented his foreign policy paradigm as 'creative middle power diplomacy' (Rudd and Barroso, 2008). The creativity relied on the will to reenergize and redefine Australia's foreign policy into proactive global engagement, something that had been relatively subdued during the Howard administration. With such 'creativity', Rudd's desire was to create 'new global and regional institutions, the reinvigoration of nuclear disarmament and the successful negotiation of a new instrument to address climate change' (Gyngell, 2008, p. 1; Rudd, 2008a). In the six months following the 2007 elections, Rudd increased the tempo of ministerial visits, media releases, and interviews to establish the credentials of his foreign policy in Asia, Europe, and the rest of the globe.

During this flurry of domestic and overseas visits and interviews, Rudd kept emphasizing the potential of his foreign policy paradigm, as a means of boosting Australia's international image. For Rudd, this new and active foreign policy style was 'capable of identifying opportunities to promote' Australia's 'security and to otherwise prevent, reduce or delay the emergence of national security challenges' (CAPD, 2008, p. 12550). Such a style in foreign policy would enable Australia to be an active member of the international arena as a 'regional power prosecuting global interests' (CAPD, 2008, p. 12549). This approach was meant to underline Rudd's argument that Australia, as a 'part of a global order', 'must have its voice heard' (Rudd, 2008h). Rudd's foreign policy approach relied on Rudd's argument that 'acting nationally now requires acting internationally' and that 'in order to advance Australia's interests', Canberra 'must increasingly be engaged with other nations in responding to the challenges to those interests abroad' (Rudd, 2008a).

Theoretically, Rudd's creative middle power diplomacy and the reasons and means for strengthening Australia's international image correspond with successful middle power activism 'commonalities'. Firstly, Rudd wanted to utilize the new requirements of the international 'context'. The rising significance of global governance and global interdependence (for example via the G20) enlarged middle powers' maneuvering space (even though, unbeknownst to Rudd, the 'context' was not as suitable as in the Hawke and Keating era, particularly in Asia). Rudd was conceptually right about the requirements of the new 'context', but these requirements were not homogenous and consistent across every region. The 'content' was also theoretically sensible in Rudd's paradigm. From his statement mentioned earlier, Rudd was aware that Australia should give proactive responses to the changing international environment, even if he could not appreciate in advance how warmly his proposals would be received by regional partners. His foreign policy paradigm followed his party's outlook since 1945 (the concept of 'choice'), and Rudd aimed to separate himself and his government's efforts from the previous Howard administration (the concept of 'differentiation'). 'Creative middle power diplomacy' reflected Rudd's 'personal interest', personality, ambition, and energy. While the term was new, it did not bring a totally new paradigm to the Australian diplomatic practice. His foreign policy discourse reframed the debate but in practice left a lot of question marks.

## 4 Kevin Rudd: a 'creative' re-presenter of Australia's middle power diplomacy

Rudd (2008c) summarized the pillars of his foreign policy in Washington in March 2008 under three headings: the United States (US) alliance; the importance of United Nations (UN) membership; a redefined engagement with Asia. As Hawksley (2009, p. 122) argues, none of these pillars were 'substantially different from the priorities of the Howard government, so change' was 'a matter of degree'. Especially with the first two pillars, Rudd simply reformulated and re-presented long established priorities of Australian foreign policy.

Although Australia–US relations were well-trying and resilient, they were not free of tension. The major hitch in relations was Rudd's discontent with the Iraq War and his promise to withdraw Australian troops (Guardian, 2007). Moreover, Rudd did not have the same personal friendship with the American administration, as did his predecessor John Howard, at least at the beginning. In parliament, Rudd stated; '[t]he United States alliance remains fundamental to Australia's national security interests - both globally and in the Asia-Pacific region'. He also emphasized that the Labor 'government believes that the future strategic stability of the Asia-Pacific region will in large part rely on the continuing strong presence of Australia's closest ally, the US' (CAPD, 2008, pp. 12551–12552; Rudd, 2008j).

These positive messages and Australia's ongoing commitment to Afghanistan helped mitigate the tension following Rudd's decision to withdraw Australian troops from Iraq. With the Obama administration, Canberra and Washington's foreign policies seemed to converge further. Rudd eschewed following a more independent foreign policy if the result would impact on the old, reliable, and strategic bilateral partnerships. This attitude conforms to the 'functional' commonality that middle powers can only be influential within certain circumstances and in specific instances. In terms of a conflict of interest with Great Powers, middle powers choose to back off.

The second pillar about respecting the UN system falls into the 'behavioral' communality of multilateralism. To strengthen their international influence, middle powers utilize multilateral platforms to empower their status, acting as mediators, conflict managers, etc. For this pillar, the significance of the UN, both for international order and Australia's security and economy, was a focus for Rudd (CAPD, 2008, p. 12551). He highlighted his faith in

the UN at the General Assembly on 25 September 2008 (Rudd, 2008i), declaring Australia's strong support for the UN system and intention to carry out its foreign policy objectives in concert (Rudd, 2008b). In accordance with the 'behavioral' model, Rudd strove ambitiously, with his words, to 'run like a fury', to win a nonpermanent seat for Australia on the Security Council after an absence of >20 years (UNAA, n.d.).

The third pillar of Rudd's diplomacy was deeper engagement with Asia. The Labor Party's foreign policy ideology had always emphasized relations with Asia more than Liberal/National governments, yet Rudd pushed Australia's engagement with Asia to a new level. According to Rudd, the Asia-Pacific was experiencing the world's fastest changes in public sector policy formulation and regional and global institutional frameworks. Thus, Australia should not only utilize these changes and challenges (Rudd, 2008f) but should also 'maximise the opportunities' and 'minimise the threats and to make' its 'own active contribution' to the region (Rudd, 2008e, 2008g).

Rudd's foreign policy's creativity is hidden, firstly, in his assessment of Asia and his proposed plan of action to integrate into Asian dynamics. In Rudd's foreign policy paradigm, Japan, India, Indonesia and Korean Peninsula, and particularly China were mentioned as key partners. Previous governments had not overlooked Asia either. Hawke and Keating helped bring about the UN peace plan for Cambodia, the Chemical Weapons Convention, establishment of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, and the ASEAN Regional Forum. The Howard government had, for its part, concluded a Japan–Australia Declaration on Security (2007) and supported the autonomy and then independence of East Timor. A clear example of this attitude was Rudd's view of China. Labor and Coalition governments had not discarded China's importance as a core-trading partner, but they had a hidden suspicion about Beijing's potential to challenge the balance of power in Asia and particularly US hegemony. Rudd rejected the 'China threat' thesis and stated that China was interested in acting as a responsible global stakeholder (Rudd, 2008c; Sussex, 2011, p. 548). Rudd's attitude to the Asian Great Powers was an indication of his openness, even desire, to see the establishment of new Asian-only schemes, organizations, institutions, etc. This desire was the backbone of his creativity, and the APC proposal was the consequence of that.

Rudd's creativity is secondly hidden in the general framework of what he theoretically meant via combining these three pillars. With these three

pillars, Rudd amalgamated constitutive and behavioral features of *Jordaan's* (2003) classification of traditional and emerging middle powers. Traditional middle powers are usually followers of Great Power policies and enjoy the stability of the international balance of power, which they work to preserve. Emerging middle powers usually challenge this equilibrium and force the international/regional community to accept their policy initiatives. Australia's constitutive characteristics, as a wealthy, stable, egalitarian, and social democratic state, categorized it as a traditional middle power. But Rudd aimed to add an emerging middle power's reformist agenda, its initiative and eagerness to be a regional leader, into Australia's traditional middle power outlook. As *Santorio* (2008) argues, Rudd's creative middle power diplomacy in action was 'based on the idea that being a follower and acting as a leader are not mutually exclusive posture'. Middle powers are 'bound to follow greater powers' but 'they can – and must – actively share their views and participate with them in the construction of the future'. This was a theoretical creativity but did it really work in the diplomatic practice? We turn to the comparison of the EAPF and the APC to answer this question.

## 5 Creative middle power diplomacy in practice: the EAPF versus the APC

Rudd's foreign policy activism with the pillars explained earlier endeavored to upgrade Australia's international image. To carry out this objective, Rudd needed like-minded partners. Some partners would be traditional and reliable allies, but his approach was more ambitious: Rudd needed new partners and even new international platforms. The EAPF and the APC are the results of this outlook.

The comparison of these two regional schemes is important as a means of understanding the potentials and limits of middle power activism, particularly in terms of two major issues: multilateralism and coalition building. In this respect, smooth and efficient interaction of 'commonalities' becomes crucial for the success of middle power diplomacy.

The history of the EAPF began long before Kevin Rudd's term. It was Paul Keating who first actively pursued a comprehensive Framework Agreement with the EU in the 1990s to give a formal expression to the relationship (*Stats*, 2009). During Keating's era, bilateral Australia–EU engagements gained momentum – an EU–Australia High Level Group on Energy was established in 1991 (*Murray*, 2005, p. 23); the EU–Australia Wine

Agreement and the EU–Australia Science and Technology Agreement were signed after years of negotiations in 1994 (Murray, 2005, p. 24); and at the 12th European Commission (EC)/Australia Ministerial Consultations held on 15 May 1995, both parties decided to begin to work on shaping a new partnership. It was stated that the EU's reassessment of its Asia-Pacific strategy and Australia's growing European interests demonstrated the need for a more structured and modern relationship, oriented toward the challenges of the 21st century (JC, 1995). In November 1995, Keating government accepted a 'two-track' approach to the creation of a framework agreement between Australia and the EU. This 'two track model' envisaged the conclusion of both a treaty-level framework agreement focusing on the trade and economic competences of the European commission and a parallel (sub-treaty) political declaration with the EU presidency focusing on the foreign and security policy competences of the EU member states (Kenyon and Lee, 2011, p. 114).

The EU–Australia Framework Agreement negotiations initiated during the Keating era were put on the shelf when the new Prime Minister John Howard objected to the inclusion of a human rights clause supported by enforceable sanctions. The Howard government was against any linkage between trade and human rights, concerned that this would allow disaffected domestic groups such as the indigenous population and local trade unions to take their disputes to the EU (Stats, 2009). Instead of the Framework Agreement, Australia and the EU signed a Joint Declaration in Luxembourg on 26 June 1997, which formalized their commitment to a wide-ranging bilateral cooperation agenda (JDAE, 1997). It outlined mutual objectives for cooperation across a wide range of areas including science and technology, employment, mutual recognition of standards, competition and consumer policy, education, and the environment (JDAE, 1997). The Declaration (1997) emphasized both parties' commitment to enhanced cooperation in the international arena to pursue common goals such as further multilateral trade liberalization, the international promotion of democracy, the rule of law, etc. It also formalized arrangements for Ministerial and senior officials' dialog on key bilateral and international political, economic, and trade issues (JDAE, 1997). This declaration was essentially a non-binding consultative mechanism aimed at promoting cooperation over a range of commercial interests and shared foreign policy goals (Kenyon and Lee, 2011, p. 114).



At the 18th ministerial consultations held in Brussels in April 2002, Australian and EU representatives agreed to take stock of developments in their relationship since the signing of the Joint Declaration and to identify priorities for future cooperation (AEAC, 2003). In April 2003, the EU and Australia agreed on 'Australia and the European Union: An Agenda for Cooperation', which identified the high-priority areas on their cooperation agenda for the period between 2003 and 2008.

Growing interest in closer cooperation with the EU in relations with Pacific Island countries on aid and governance issues urged the Howard government to search for a more effective model for practical cooperation with the EU (Kenyon and Lee, 2011, p. 114). In 2007, at the Australia–EU ministerial consultation took place in Canberra, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, and the European Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero–Waldner, declared that both sides would seek agreement on a new 'partnership framework' with the aim of concluding negotiations by mid-2008 (Kenyon and Lee, 2011, 115). When Rudd came to power in December 2007, he gave priority to completing negotiations on the new partnership framework (Kenyon and Lee, 2011, 115).

The multilayered and long-standing bilateral relations between Australia and the EU (particularly in trade) facilitated Rudd's efforts. Bilateral trade relations had followed an upward sloping curve since the 1970s (Markovic, 2009). The EU was Australia's second largest two-way trading partner after China, with total bilateral trade in goods and services valued at over \$ 80 billion in 2011 (DFAT, 2012). Trade relations were supported by security cooperation, with the emergence of new threat perceptions on both sides. The security partnership traced back to the early post-ANZUS alliance era. The Australian Defence Force established relations with NATO in July 1952, with the Royal Australian Air Force taking part in NATO exercises (RAAF, n.d.). Security and defense cooperation increased since that time, especially after 11 September 2001 (Markovic, 2009).

Rudd's pillars highlighted and deepened those common interests. And this was bolstered up by a vital 'commonality': like-mindedness of the 'behavioral' and 'coalition building'. The first like-mindedness was on Rudd's second pillar emphasizing the importance of the UN. Both Rudd and the EU believed that the UN should be at the center of a robust rule-based international order. The effectiveness of the UN should therefore be increased. For this, Australia needed to engage comprehensively with key multilateral partners around the globe that shared Australian goals,

particularly Australia's partner in Europe, the EU (Rudd, 2008a). According to the European Security Strategy, the EU too is strongly committed to the establishment of an effective multilateral system in which a stronger international society, well-functioning international institutions, and a rule-based international order played a central role (ESS, 2003).

The second like-mindedness was on multilateralism. Rudd and the EU believed in the necessity of multilateral cooperation in dealing with global challenges. European leaders believed that contemporary global and regional problems and threats were common issues shared by humanity and could not be dealt with through unilateral initiatives. The EU's belief in multilateral cooperation and building partnerships coincided with Rudd's belief in Australia's need to act in global and regional partnership (Rudd, 2008a).

The third like-mindedness was on trade. The creation of a rule-based multilateral trading system based on global trade liberalization was said to be in the trading interests of both the EU and Australia. They saw rule-based multilateral trading system as the best mean to guarantee their long-term economic interests; thus, they were committed to effective functioning of multilateral trading institutions particularly the World Trade Organization (WTO). Although they have conflicting interests in liberalization of trade in agricultural products, they have a common interest in the liberalization of trade in industrial products and services, the strengthening of WTO rule-making, and rule-enforcement mechanisms (Kenyon and Kunkel, 2005).

The multilateral trade component was particularly important since the EAPF heavily addressed this dimension. In the Chapeau of EAPF (2008), the EU and Australia reaffirmed their commitment to the development of a healthy and prosperous world economy, open-market principles, the improvement of market access in accordance with the aims and principles of the WTO, and the strengthening of the multilateral trading system. One of the objectives of EAPF (2008) was to promote and support the multilateral rule-based trading system and consolidate and expand the bilateral trade and investment relationship.

The like-mindedness on multilateral trade is also theoretically important since it fits into 'behavioral' commonality of middle power diplomatic practice where middle powers act in multilateral schemes with 'like-minded' powers to increase their influence. Kenyon and Kunkel (2005) argue that Australia needed to build a closer partnership with the EU in the

multilateral trading system. In the WTO, the EU was the rule-maker in shaping the global trading system owing to its status as the world's largest trading bloc. This status gave the EU a strong negotiating leverage in shaping the WTO negotiations (Kenyon Kunkel, 2005, p. 57). On the other hand, Australia was a middle ranking trade power with more tightly circumscribed negotiating leverage when compared to the EU, and this made it a rule-taker in WTO negotiations (Kenyon Kunkel, 2005, p. 57). Thus, in order to increase negotiating leverage in WTO negotiations, Canberra needed to foster a close partnership with the EU in the WTO. Realizing this, Kevin Rudd focused on the shared trade interests of Brussels and Canberra without emphasizing differences (Rudd and Ashton, 2011).

The fourth like-mindedness coalesced around Rudd's third pillar about a deeper commitment to Asia. One of those components was about development challenges in the Pacific Islands. Rudd (2008a) argued that overcoming these challenges was critical for Australia's security interests and 'a failure to act on the development challenges of the South Pacific Island states [would] result long term in rolling Australian military interventions, together with the risk of a large-scale influx of refugees from the region'. Rudd identified the EU<sup>2</sup> as a prominent partner in his government's efforts to overcome development challenges facing Pacific Islands. The EU also identified the development of the Pacific Islands as a security and stability challenge (CEC, 2006). It identified Australia as a key Pacific player and relations with Australia as solid and broad based, including cooperation on foreign policy issues, trade, security, environment, and education. It was also emphasized that development cooperation was increasingly becoming a more valuable part of relations with Australia (CEC, 2006).

Last but not least Australia and the EU agreed on the need for climate change action. For Rudd (2008d), concerted global action was crucial to overcome contemporary global challenges, notably climate change and development, and he identified the EU as Australia's chief partner to this end (Rudd, 2008d). Hussey and Lightfoot (2010) argue that the signing and ratification of the Kyoto protocol by the Rudd government constituted the first sign of a definite shift from divergence to unity, from conflict to cooperation

2 The overall EU development aid available for the Pacific region during the period 2008–2013 is €750 million; of this €677 million is earmarked for Pacific-Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific countries and €73 million for Pacific Overseas Countries and Territories (European Commission, 2012).

in the EU–Australia relationship compared to John Howard's era. They put forward that the field of climate change clearly demonstrated the shift in the Australian foreign policy rhetoric from hostility to multilateralism, partnership, and common strategic objectives (Hussey and Lightfoot, 2010, p. 510).

The above-explained 'like-mindedness' on many dimensions was strengthened by a deep and strong understanding of the common norms and values, and the shared history between the EU and Australia.<sup>3</sup> The promotion of these values and norms, particularly democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, made the EU and Australia natural partners. Such values and norms facilitated the formation of the EAPF. The importance of these common norms and values was shown in Rudd's words at Brussels on 2 April 2008. Rudd talked about the 'profound' historical connections between the EU and Australia, including the system of government, 'political philosophy and institutional pedigree'. This could build up a base 'as the world changes, and as Australia and Europe change with the world, our two peoples will share ever more convergent interests in an ever more shrinking world' (Rudd, 2008d).

The EU was receptive to Rudd's proactive outlook. Rudd's personal relations with EU officials and European prime ministers and foreign ministers further facilitated this reception. The EU had nothing to lose in terms of concluding a new scheme with Australia: the latter's support in the Pacific and on climate change initiatives would complement the EU's foreign policy objectives. Australia was the principle *demandeur* but both parties stood to gain from the agreement.

The common norms, historical bonds of the Cold War, and the post-Cold War interactions were determining catalysts of the EAPF process. The EAPF was a successful diplomatic move of a middle power looking to consolidate its interaction with a great power bloc. The ease and success of the framework agreement can be attributed to the amalgamation of 'functional' and 'behavioral' commonalities. This functionality was bolstered by the EU and Rudd's emphasis on multilateralism. 'Capacity', 'creativity',

3 According to the 2006 census, ~9.3% of the Australian population in 2006 was born in an EU country and ~70% of Australians claimed European ancestry. According to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship community profiles, in 2006 there were 1,855,220 EU-born people in Australia. This figure excluded people born in Romania and Bulgaria, as these countries were not EU members at the time of the census. The total Australian population according to the Australia 2006 census was 19,855,288 people (Markovic, 2009, p. 4; see also Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (2008)).

'coalition building', and 'credibility' commonalities also worked together effectively to materialize the EAPF. Regarding 'capacity', the EAPF was a diplomatic move; no physical or military capability played a role in its formation. It embodied 'creativity' in the way it was brought to the EU as an 'idea' (increasing Australia's relevance to the EU and serving the interests of both). These were strengthened by the motto of middle power 'coalition building' like-mindedness. The EAPF also fit into the 'credibility' commonality since Australia was not in a position to be the single largest beneficiary of the new scheme.

Because of the positive circumstances, the EAPF could be concluded quickly. Australia and the EU signed the EAPF in Paris on 29 October 2008 (the agreement replaced the 1997 Joint Declaration and the 2003–2008 Agenda for Cooperation.) Under this framework (2008), Australia and the EU pledged to expand and deepen their cooperation on security matters, multilateralism, climate change, democracy promotion, human rights, and cooperation on overseas development assistance in the South Pacific. Signed almost one year after Rudd came to power, it was a strong political statement. With the EAPF, Rudd wanted to give an open signal to the international community, particularly in the Asia-Pacific, about his proactive foreign policy.

Yet, Rudd did not find such a receptive audience in other parts of the world. The most telling example is in Asia where he put forward his proposal on an Asia-Pacific community (APC/c)<sup>4</sup> in a speech addressed to the Asia Society Australasia in Sydney on 4 June 2008. His proposal was a response to recent changes that had taken place in the global economic and strategic environment, and the shift of global economic and strategic weight to Asia (Rudd, 2008k). Rudd (2008k) emphasized that for the first time, the Asia-Pacific region would be at the center of global affairs and that an Asia-Pacific Century was on the way. An Asia-Pacific Century, in his view, necessitated a reconfiguration of Asia's regional institutional architecture. Rudd claimed that there was a need for strong and effective institutions, which would strengthen an open, peaceful, stable, prosperous,

4 The Asia-Pacific community proposal started out with a capital 'C', but at Rudd's address to the Shangri-La Dialogue, at the eighth summit of Asia-Pacific security and military leaders held in Singapore in late May 2009, was altered to a small 'c'. Thus, APC was used in short hand as APC/c. The change came after objections the Community sounded to much like the European Community. This study abbreviated the Asia-Pacific Council as APC/c. For details see Dobell (2009a, b, 2010).

and sustainable region because regional institutions were important in addressing collective challenges that no one country could address alone – they also helped develop a common idea of what those challenges were (Rudd, 2008k). Rudd (2008k) also emphasized that although the APC/c would not take the European integration as an identikit model, it was necessary to emulate the European spirit, which had enabled them to be successful in building a common sense of community.

Rudd's Sydney statement sketched out the APC/c. Regarding the 'commonalities', his proposal embodied the three Cs of middle power activism. The proposal was a product of his personal ambition and his 'differentiation' effort from the previous Howard government. It also addressed the 'contextual' changes and challenges in Asia; Australia, he thought, could utilize it as an opportunity to initiate something new. Regarding these changes and challenges, the 'content' of Australian foreign policy should be flexible and give rapid proactive responses, one of which could be a new multilateral scheme. Theoretically speaking, the APC could be considered an acceptable example of middle power activism.

The APC/c proposal was too ambitious on the 'behavioral' side – lifting Australia's role from a middle power mediator to an initiator. Rudd's proposal did not fit into the 'concentration' commonality either. He did not limit the number of objectives for the APC, which led to claims that the proposal was out of Australia's diplomatic, economic, and political reach. The APC/c proposal envisaged the establishment of a regional institution which spanned the whole Asia-Pacific region – including the United States, Japan, China, India, Indonesia, and the other states of the region – and which would be able to engage in the full spectrum of dialog, cooperation and action on economic and political matters, and future challenges related to security (Rudd, 2008k). It would be a new regional institutional structure, all-inclusive in terms of both membership and regional issues addressed (Rudd, 2008k). Rudd stated that existing regional institutions were not capable of achieving these purposes in their current form. He invited all regional countries to discuss what regional institutional architecture would be by 2020. He underlined that this debate did not of itself mean the diminution of any of the existing regional bodies. APEC, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the East Asia Summit, ASEAN Plus Three, and ASEAN itself could continue to play important roles, and longer-term might continue in their own right or embody the building blocks of an APC/c (Rudd, 2008k).

The most important deficiency of the APC/c proposal was in terms of the ‘coalition building’. The APC/c almost discarded the fact that for any middle power-oriented coalition, the linchpin is always the like-mindedness of prospective members. Although the proposal came at a time when there was a region-wide quest for a new regional institutional architecture,<sup>5</sup> it did not create much enthusiasm in the region. Some ambiguous points of the proposal resulted in doubts among regional countries. Singapore was among the first countries that criticized Rudd’s lack of prior consultation and approached the proposal with suspicion as Barry Desker, head of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, identified: the APC/c proposal was ‘dead in the water right from the very beginning’ (Frost, 2009, p. 12). Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that that ‘Singapore, like all ASEAN countries, is committed to the principle that ASEAN should be at the centre of any regional architecture’ (MySin Chew, 2008). Indonesia and Malaysia were among the countries supporting the view that additional institutions were unnecessary and that existing organizations should be reconfigured and redeveloped. (Frost, 2009, pp. 11–12). Japan was also doubtful whether it would be right time to have a new regional mechanism (Frost, 2009, p. 11). The United States, which Rudd saw as a prospective member of the APC/c, did not welcome the proposal either due to Rudd’s lack of prior consultation before launching the initiative. WikiLeaks documents revealed Washington’s frustration regarding the way Rudd’s proposal had been developed. On 5 June 2008, the US embassy in Canberra cabled Washington that it was ‘hastily rolled out, with minimal consultations’ (Symonds, 2010).

These discussions and statements show that the APC/c proposal was theoretically sensible and even desirable, but ultimately impractical. Richard Wolcott in his ‘concept paper’ titled as ‘Towards an Asia-Pacific Community’ came to the conclusion that on the one hand there was a region-wide recognition that existing regional institutions in their current form do not provide a forum for all relevant leaders to discuss the full range of economic, security, environmental, and political challenges the region needs to address and there is a need to discuss how regional architecture can be developed to best suit

5 The need to reassess Asia-Pacific’s regional institutional architecture has been under discussion at the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council since 2006 (Soesastro, 2008). Rudd’s proposal was an attempt to give further momentum to the growing demand for a new regional architecture in the Asia-Pacific, suited to the region’s changing geo-political reality in the 21st century (Shekhar, 2008).



the region's purposes (Woolcott, 2009). Moreover, there was a keen interest in further discussion on the APC/c proposal, including on the geo-strategic and economic challenges the region would face in the 21st century and how the regional institutions might be developed to meet these (Woolcott, 2009). On the other hand, there was little enthusiasm for creating new institutions in addition to existing forums, given the heavy travel schedule and meeting demands that regional leaders faced (Woolcott, 2009). Similarly Peter Drysdale argued that 'while no one thought that the region needed a new Asia-Pacific institution there was overwhelming consensus of the need for institutional renovation or reconfiguration to achieve roughly what Rudd has in mind' (Drysdale, 2009).

The failure of the APC/c resembles another unsuccessful proposal, the East Asian Community, put forward by the former Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama.<sup>6</sup> Hatoyama's proposal was ill-articulated particularly because of his 'lack of understanding of the US perceptions of his actions and his *naivete* that *yu-ai* (friendship and love) would bind the transpacific region'. There was also the lack of coordination in Hatoyama's Democratic Party of Japan that the Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada contradicted with Hatoyama's emphasis on 'the primacy of the US-Japan relations' and stated that the 'US needed not be member of the EAC'. Okada's statement also contradicted Rudd's APC/c proposal, which stressed the explicit inclusion of the United States. Such contradiction between Japan and Australia 'on the matter of engaging the US in the region' contrasted the previous successful Australia-Japan cooperation in the launching of the APEC and the ASEAN Regional Forum (Sato, 2013).

In short, the APC/c faltered because of the lack of constructive interactions of 'commonalities'; its ambitious outlook regarding membership and decision-making; and the lack of enthusiasm in the prospective members in Asia to establish a brand-new institution from the scratch. Rudd read the new 'context' in Asia well, the 'content' of proactive response was also theoretically promising which was strengthened with his 'personal interest'. However, from his statements, it seems that he disregarded the required constructive interactions of the other 'commonalities', which at the end outweighed his activist proposal. The most significant of these was the combination of 'behavioral' and 'concentration' 'commonalities', which are

6 The East Asian Community proposal was first made by the former Japanese Prime Minister Junichirō Koizumi in 2002. For details see Cook (2009).

the linchpins for ‘coalition-making’. Rudd did not particularly search for like-minded powers before he launched the APC/c proposal, with which he might have persuaded the other non-like-minded powers to support his proposal. He did not concentrate his diplomatic efforts on only limited number of objectives for his proposal. He, rather, made an ambitious claim, which is also against the ‘credibility’ commonality, which might have raised some suspicion that Australia could be single largest beneficiary of a negotiated outcome.

The APC/c and the EAPF had structural differences. The EAPF, despite the EU’s multilateral architecture, was more of a bilateral structure since the EU acted as a single supranational unit during the formation process of the framework. Therefore, Rudd did not need to explain the details of his EAPF proposal to each single member of the EU, as he needed to for the APC/c to each prospective member in Asia. The APC/c, particularly because of its all-inclusive membership prospects, was a solid multilateral proposal. Therefore, it faced one of the basic problems of multilateral coalition building. For *Sussex* (2011, p. 551), this was because ‘multilateral approaches rely heavily upon norms and rules’ and ‘if these are inconsistent with the dominant conditions setting a regional agenda then multilateral preferences can undermine the authority of governments that sponsor them, particularly if they lack the capacity to see them to fruition’. The APC/c proposal emphasized normative rationales, as the APC/c multilateralism could be a cure for all regional problems, but the Asian states were more interested in the instrumental ends of it. The members were also different in these two schemes. The EAPF relied on traditional partners with similar outlook as Australia, which almost automatically facilitated the process. The APC/c, on the other hand, aimed to develop a brand-new scheme with nontraditional partners with limited like-mindedness.

## 6 Conclusion

Although defining and classifying middle powers with a single paradigm is complicated (middle powers have varying capabilities and interests), it is relatively easy to determine common foreign policy behavioral patterns, named in this study as ‘commonalities’. In terms of their political conduct, these may be ‘functional’, ‘behavioral’, and ‘hierarchical’ commonalities. With regard to their diplomatic practices, ‘capacity’, ‘concentration’, ‘creativity’, and ‘coalition building’ are important. And in terms of their

capacity of activist diplomacy, 'context', 'content', and 'choice' are the major 'commonalities'. For the success of their policy initiatives, middle power policy-makers should ensure that these elements interact constructively. If they are disassociating or conflicting, they have a potential to impede policy achievements. Middle powers could achieve a sustainable success as long as they are aware of their 'commonalities' with the other middle powers, strategic partnerships with Great Powers, have flexible foreign policy paradigms with a piecemeal approach for different circumstances and instances.

Kevin Rudd's creative middle power diplomacy gives us a picture of how important these three issues are for middle power activism. In theory, Kevin Rudd's diplomacy discourse had an interesting amalgamation of traditional and emerging middle powers' foreign policy attitudes. It was both reformist and appeasing. It was reformist in its desire to lead processes of regional integration and to smooth over destabilizing effects against it. It was also appeasing if not to fundamentally challenging the global economic structures and Canberra's traditional military, political, and economic alliances. Rudd managed to build his own interpretation of middle power activism at least in an ideological sense.

In practice, Rudd was not an exception to other Australian policy-makers in terms of his desire to 'punch above his weight', but because of the restrictions mentioned earlier, only on few occasions were they successful. The comparison of the EAPF and the APC/c illustrates the reasons why some occasions are successful and some are not. The EAPF was more of a traditional middle power policy scheme. It relied on traditional alliances, did not harm Great Power interests, and did not seek strong and decisive regional orientation. The APC/c on the other hand was more of an emerging and reformist middle power initiative. These two are not mutually exclusive by all means. What Kevin Rudd tried to do with the EAPF was to increase Australia's strength as a middle power so it could 'punch above its weight' and achieve a much more comprehensive and ambitious multilateral scheme: the APC/c. Yet again he was constrained by systemic elements beyond his control and the 'commonalities' that he overlooked.

With his middle power policy, especially as seen in the EAPF, Rudd was able to show that a proactive and creative diplomacy makes Australia a more attractive partner internationally. The Kevin Rudd factor successfully raised Australia's voice and presence in the region and on the global stage. His creative middle power diplomacy's energy and ideas, to engender new

partnerships and synergies, facilitated engagement with important partners not only on issues in Australia's immediate region but also more widely. This is also the ultimate goal of an upwardly mobile middle power – to be consulted and listened to on all issues of international concern.

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