

Explaining Foreign Policy Change on the Korean Peninsula



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Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise, the work presented is entirely my own.

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Summary

The diplomatic situation on the Korean Peninsula is characterised by both cooperation and conflict between various states. Two major issues affect these international relationships, (1) the North Korean nuclear crisis, (2) the power competition between the US and China. There are four major actors in these relations, South Korea, North Korea, the US and China. This study aims to analyse how changes in the relationship between two different actors around the Korean Peninsula impact another country's foreign policy. Specifically, this study focuses on three different relations, (1) the relationship between US–China relations and South Korean foreign policy change, (2) the relationship between US–South Korea relations and North Korean foreign policy change, and (3) the relationship between the US–China conflict and South Korean naval development. This work uses the Integrated Conflict Early Warning System (ICEWS) dataset and vector autoregressive (VAR) time series analysis to study changes in the relationships between countries and changes in a country's foreign policy over time. This study aims to present a new perspective on understanding international relations around the Korean Peninsula through a time series analysis of these three different relations. This thesis provides three academic and policy implications. First, to understand international relations around the Korean Peninsula, it is essential to understand the mechanism of foreign policy change in a specific country rather than analyse foreign policy at a certain point in time. Second, when analysing one country's foreign policy change, it is also necessary to consider the relationship between neighbouring countries as a significant variable. Finally, by focusing on the maritime conflict currently escalating in Northeast Asia, this study aims to emphasise the importance of naval power as an international factor of foreign policy change.

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1. Introduction

The diplomatic situation on the Korean Peninsula is characterised by both cooperation and conflict between various states. Two major issues affect these international relationships. First, there is the North Korean nuclear crisis. Both the US, which wants to prevent nuclear proliferation, and South Korea, which is in an armistice with North Korea, are highly related actors in this issue. The North Korean nuclear weapon possession is a potential threat to the US and an obstacle to the US Northeast Asia strategy (The US Department of Defense, 2019). North Korea's conventional military is also an imminent threat to South Korea. Even after the Korean War, North Korea continued to make military provocations against South Korea, and North Korea still openly poses a rhetorical threat to South Korea by developing various strategic weapons (Ministry of National Defense Republic of Korea, 2018).

A second issue affecting the Korean Peninsula is the power competition between the US and China. As China's economy and military power have grown, the US and China have faced conflicts in various fields. These confrontations have occurred on the Korean Peninsula and in the East Asian region. The US has military forces deployed in the region, namely the 8th Army in South Korea and the US 7th Fleet in Japan. The Korean Peninsula borders with China, and expanding the scope further, the US and China continue to have maritime conflicts in the South China Sea (Simon, 2012; Freund, 2017; Swaine, 2017). This relationship between the US, China, and North and South Korea can be described as a critical inertia of cooperation and conflict around the Korean Peninsula. In order to fully understand international relations around the Korean Peninsula, it is necessary to analyse how these interactions take place and how these interactions have affected individual countries' foreign policy decisions.

The relationship between the two countries on the Korean Peninsula has often

significantly impacted foreign policy in other countries. In the early days of the Trump administration, the US pushed for hard-liner measures; this included high officials mentioning military action against North Korea (AP, 2017). However, after the inauguration of the Moon Jae-in administration, the inter-Korean relationship was improved through the inter-Korean summit (Kim, Kim and Yang, 2018; Shin and Moon, 2019). Subsequently, North Korea began to raise the possibility of direct contact with the US. Since then, the US has shifted its hard-liner policy and achieved the first-ever US–North Korea summit in history (White House, 2018). The North Korea–US relationship deteriorated again after they failed to reach an agreement at the second US–North Korea summit in Hanoi; however, this example empirically confirmed that relationship between the two countries could affect foreign policy in another country (Liptak and Diamond, 2019).

Some scholars have tried to explain the relationship between the countries in Northeast Asia using grand theories. First, realism tried to explain it through the balance and transition of power between hegemonic states (Kim, 1991; Christensen, 1999; Christensen *et al.*, 2003; Ross, 2006; Kim and Gates, 2015). In particular, when the Soviet-led communist and US-led liberal groups competed in the region during the Cold War, the realist perspective became the most influential theory on the Korean peninsula. This trend seemed to decline briefly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but China has grown into a regional hegemony since the mid-2000s and theories based on realism have therefore again restored its policy influence (Ross, 2006; Beckley, 2017; Shiffrinson, 2020). South Korean hard-liners' foreign policy is based on this realism perspective. They argue that China's power expansion means the emergence of a revisionist hegemonic state in the region, which could create conflict in the region (Gow, Hiram and Chapman, 2003; Kim, 2015; Kim and Gates, 2015; Anderson and Cha, 2017). Moreover, to prevent this conflict, the US, South Korea, and Japan should

cooperate to maintain the balance of power in the region.

After the end of the Cold War, there were academic attempts to explain international relations in Northeast Asia through a liberalism paradigm. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, China's economic and social reforms were actively carried out and South Korea and Japan also increased their economic and cultural cooperation with China, a former communist country. As cooperation and exchanges increased between the three countries, the international situation in Northeast Asia temporarily stabilised, and thus liberalist analysis, which mainly focused on economic and cultural exchanges, started to emerge (Kim, 2002). This tendency was realised in foreign policy through Six-party talks when the North Korean nuclear crisis intensified in the early 2000s (Yu, 2006; Pacheco Pardo, 2012).

However, these traditional grand theoretic approaches tended to overlook the cultural and historical characteristics of Northeast Asia and constructivism, which complemented this limitation, was actively spread afterward. In particular, this constructivist approach has the advantage of explaining specific cases that would have been difficult to explain with a realism perspective. For example, realism has difficulty explaining the continuing diplomatic conflict between South Korea and Japan despite their bilateral strategic necessity (Cha, 2000). Constructivists argue that the same events could be accepted differently depending on individual countries' historical and cultural characteristics (Cho, 2010; Wendt, 2016). Therefore, Constructivists showed theoretical effectiveness at explaining the impact of cultural and historical characteristics of South Korea and Japan on their bilateral relations and the impact of collective identity between the two Koreas on inter-Korean relations (Rozman and Lee, 2006; Cho, 2010).

However, these grand theories have limitations in understanding relations between countries around the Korean Peninsula. The first limitation is that the application of the

argument becomes more difficult at state- or individual policy-level analysis. Grand theories have academic strength in understanding international relations around the Korean Peninsula at the system level; however, applying the grand theoretic approach is often challenging when analysing state levels or policy-specific cases. Taking South Korean foreign policy for example, conservative governments, which used the South Korea–US alliance as a critical strategy for their foreign policy, have frequently caused diplomatic conflicts with Japan. The Lee Myung-bak administration has pushed to strengthen its alliance as a critical foreign policy strategy. However, in 2012, Lee Myung-bak also faced severe conflict with Japan because he visited Dokdo, an island of disputed territory between South Korea and Japan, for the first time as South Korean president (Kagotani, Kimura and Weber, 2014). As such, the grand theory approach has limitations to explain the state-level and policy-specific cases.

The second limitation is the rigidity of research based on grand theory. Eriksson (2014, p. 102) argues in his article about the relevance between grand theories and policy that, “grand theory can be expected to have much stronger staying power once it has become the foundation of policy.” This rigidity is also evident in the different administrations’ foreign policies. Conservative governments and their think tanks, who support alliance-centred foreign policy based on realism, tend to underestimate or deliberately ignore the influence of collective identity in inter-Korean relations and China’s economic influence in the Korean economy, while progressive governments and their think tanks based on constructivism tend to overlook China and North Korea’s threats. As a result, different theories are neither supplemented nor advanced and the results of policies based on each theory are often ignored intentionally. This theoretical rigidity becomes an obstacle to understand and research the rapidly changing international relations situation in Northeast Asia.

This study utilised mid-range theory and quantitative methodology to overcome the

limitations of the grand theory approach. First, mid-range theory can compensate for the limitation that applying the grand theory becomes challenging in state-level and case-specific analysis. This thesis analysed three different cases with three different levels of analysis to verify the mid-range theory that the relationship between two different countries can affect another country's foreign policy. The first research is a system-level analysis that focuses on how South Korean foreign policy has changed in the hegemony competition between China and the US. The second study is state-level analysis, which analyses how South Korea-US cooperation has changed North Korea's attitude. Finally, to verify whether this theory can be applied at the case-specific level, the thesis analyses the relationship between US-South Korea cooperation and changes in naval power in South Korea and China. The thesis sought to overcome the limitations of grand theory-driven research by analysing cases with different levels of analysis.

Second, a quantitative methodology was used to overcome existing studies' theoretical and political rigidity centred on grand theory and qualitative methodology. Existing studies of Northeast Asian international relations have a grand theory as their foundation. Consequently, exchanges between different studies have been restricted and have tended to deliberately ignore the positive outcomes of related policies. For example, researchers who insist on pursuing hard-liner North Korea policies often underestimate the outcomes of inter-Korean summits and inter-Korean economic and cultural exchanges. In addition, they intentionally underestimate the empirical data that North Korean military provocations decrease when inter-Korean relations are cooperative (Ministry of National Defense, 2020). Therefore, this study tried to analyse policies and international relations with an emphasis on data-driven research. This thesis uses a quantitative methodology to focus on empirical and positivist perspectives to break down the barriers between theories created by

the grand theoretic foundation.

This study aims to analyse how changes in the relationship between two different actors around the Korean Peninsula impact another country's foreign policy. Specifically, this study focuses on three different relations. The first research subject is the relationship between US–China relations and South Korean foreign policy change. As mentioned earlier, as China has emerged as the world's second-largest power, competition between the US and China has been taking place in many different parts of the world (Ross, 2006; Ikenberry, 2008; Shiffrinson, 2020). In particular, in Northeast Asia, such confrontations have become visible through maritime disputes in the South China Sea and issues related to cross-strait relations, and these tensions have been worsening in recent years (Simon, 2012; Freund, 2017). International relations in Northeast Asia are also being reconstructed around this shifting power dynamic. The US is strengthening its relations with its allies in the region, focusing on Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) participants, namely Japan, India, and Australia, while China is challenging US hegemony through the Belt and Road Initiative (Yu, 2017; Du and Zhang, 2018; The US Department of Defense, 2019). However, South Korea is maintaining close relations with the US in relation to security and with China with regard to the economy. This study analysed how South Korea's security–economic dilemma has changed its foreign policy. Studies of this nature will improve our understanding of foreign policy changes in countries facing similar diplomatic dilemmas.

The second subject of this study is the relationship between US–South Korea relations and North Korean foreign policy change. There has been active research and discussion in South Korea on how to change North Korea's attitude toward South Korea. For example, Lee and Chun (2001) emphasises the importance of building trust between the two Koreas through the formation of collective identity, and based on this theory, the progressive

government of South Korea focused on restoring trust between the two countries through direct inter-Korean exchanges. Pacheco Pardo (2021) also points out that the strategic efficiency of isolating North Korea has reached its limit and argues that the most practical remaining option is to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis through engagement. On the contrary, Anderson and Cha (2017) emphasises cooperation between US allies in their policies toward North Korea. Recently, the ruling party in South Korea has discussed an independent engagement policy toward North Korea apart from the US's strategic patience, which has raised questions about how US–South Korea cooperation influences the North Korean attitude. Based on this discussion, this study analysed how North Korea has changed its attitude toward South Korea depending on how the US–South Korea relationship changed.

Finally, this study analysed the relationship between the US–China conflict and South Korean naval development. Recently, the US and China have deployed aircraft carriers to the South China Sea and confronted each other, raising tensions in the region (London, 2021). Given the physical distance between the US and China and the fact that both countries are nuclear powers, total war between the two countries is not realisable. Instead, it is expected that the two countries will use naval force to take regional sea control and exert diplomatic pressure on each other (Beckley, 2017; Caverley and Dombrowski, 2020). As China's naval power multiplies, the US is attempting to seize sea control through cooperation with its allies (The US Department of Defense, 2019). In line with this strategy, Japan has participated in Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPS) in the South China Sea, and recently a France and the UK decided to deploy their naval assets to the South China Sea (Panda, 2016; Reuter, 2021). Considering the current situation in East Asia, this study analysed the impact of Chinese and South Korean naval force development on US foreign policy change, especially as it relates to the cooperation between the US and its Northeast

Asian allies.

This work uses the Integrated Conflict Early Warning System (ICEWS) dataset and Vector autoregressive (VAR) time series analysis to study changes in the relationships between countries and changes in a country's foreign policy over time (Lautenschlager, Shellman and Ward, 2015). The ICEWS dataset uses automated algorithms to aggregate which countries take certain actions toward the specific country based on media reports and then categorises these actions into cooperative and conflictual events by assigning each data point a Goldstein value (Schrodt and Yilmaz, 2007). This work also analyses the relationship between the two countries using the concept of net cooperation, which measures whether the exchanges between two countries over a specific period were overall cooperative or conflictual (Schrodt and Yilmaz, 2007). Furthermore, as this research notes the impact of the relationship between the two countries on another country's foreign policy, this study utilises VAR, which efficiently analyses the impact between different time series data (Moon, 1997).

This study aims to present a new perspective on understanding international relations around the Korean Peninsula through a time series analysis of these three different subjects. First, to understand international relations around the Korean Peninsula, it is essential to understand the mechanism of foreign policy change in a specific country rather than analyse foreign policy at a certain point in time. In Northeast Asia, the orientation of a country's foreign policy often depends on domestic or international factors. The relationship between two other countries is the significant international factor affecting foreign policy change in Northeast Asia. South Korea continued an engagement approach in its relations with North Korea during the progressive government's term and reached the Six-Party Talk agreement on 3 October 2007, which guaranteed the denuclearisation of North Korea and the withdrawal of sanctions on North Korea (Yu, 2006; C. H. Lee, 2008; Pacheco Pardo, 2012). However, as

the conflict between the US and China has become intense and North Korea and the US have also clashed over the agreement's implementation, the South Korean engagement policy has drifted without results and was abandoned with the change in government (C. H. Lee, 2008; Choi, 2018).

Second, when analysing one country's foreign policy change, it is also necessary to consider the relationship between neighbouring countries as a significant variable. The countries located in Northeast Asia have complex political, economic, and cultural relations with each other. These relations are simultaneously both cooperative and conflictual in nature. South and North Korea were initially the same country, and, thus, they have a collective identity; however, at the same time, they are competitors that currently operate under very different regime types (Lee and Chun, 2001). South Korea and Japan share democratic values and capitalist economic systems; however, they have a complicated historical conflict (Schneider, 2008; Shin, 2009; Togashi, 2016). South Korea considers China as its most important economic partner; however, at the same time, South Korea worries about China's strong diplomatic support for North Korea (Yang and Ha, 2012; Frank, 2018). In Northeast Asia, because countries' relations have frequently changed depending on the time and situation, it is necessary to pay attention to foreign policy changes and analyse their influence.

Finally, by focusing on the maritime conflict currently escalating in Northeast Asia, this study aims to emphasise the importance of naval power as an international factor of foreign policy change. The nature of naval forces means they are easy to dispatch and can be used to put political pressure on the adversary; consequently, the power conflict in Northeast Asia is likely to proceed as a naval force competition (Cable, 1994, 1998; Caverley and Dombrowski, 2020). Under these circumstances, this study analysed the impact of Chinese and South Korean naval development on the cooperation of the US toward its allies and tried

to determine how naval force development influences international relations in East Asia.

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2. Effects of US–China Relations on South Korean Foreign Policy

Abstract

Researchers have mainly undertaken the analysis of the South Korean foreign policy orientation from a security perspective. This chapter claims that South Korean foreign policy priorities are divided into a security partnership (with the US) and an economic partnership (with China) and analyses how US-China relations affect the two partnerships through different mechanisms. The research coded event data from the Integrated Conflict Early Warning System (ICEWS) event data as a time series, using a Vector Autoregressive (VAR) model to analyse this causal mechanism. The model found that US-China relations have substantially affected South Korean foreign policy, specifically its economic partnership. If US-China relations improve, South Korea could have the diplomatic flexibility to expand cooperation with its economic partner (China) despite the sensitive rivalry between its two major partners. This analysis could constitute a guideline for South Korean foreign policy analysis, allowing an opportunity to resolve the limitations of existing security-oriented foreign policy change analysis.

Keywords: Foreign policy change, ICEWS event data, South Korea-China relations, South Korea-US relations

2.1. Introduction

As relations between countries have diversified since the end of the Cold War, and the importance of economic cooperation between them has grown, the manners of and degrees to which economic factors can impact foreign policy changes have increased. Accordingly, Gustavsson (1998) analysed the causal mechanisms behind foreign policy changes, distinguishing the international factors resulting in a foreign policy change into political and economic factors. International political and economic factors are sometimes synchronised and lead policy change in the same direction. At other times, they might conflict with each

other and entail different foreign policy directions.

Because the Korean peninsula is where the strategic interests of the US and China collide, South Korean foreign policy analysis has principally focused on security factors, such as the US Pacific strategy, China's military build-up, and the concept of power or alliance transitions (Castro, 1994; Kim, 2000; Christensen *et al.*, 2003; Cha, 2009; Kim, 2015, 2018). However, because South Korea maintains a security partnership with the US and an economic one with China, and the two countries repeatedly engage in conflict and cooperation, the effects of US-China relations on South Korean foreign policy require further study (Simon, 2012; The US Department of Defense, 2019; K-Stat, 2020).

Accordingly, this research claims that South Korean foreign policy priorities are divided into a security partnership with the US and an economic partnership with China, and analyses how US-China relations affect the two partnerships through different mechanisms. To investigate this causal mechanism, I coded event data on South Korea, the US, and China from Integrated Conflict Early Warning System (ICEWS) event data as a time series, employing a Vector autoregressive (VAR) model, which is useful in analysing how different variables correlate. This model was used to verify (1) how changes in US-China relations have influenced the diplomatic relationship between South Korea and China, and (2) how changes in US-China relations have affected the diplomatic relationship between South Korea and the US. The model test results outline a new perspective to understand foreign policy changes as conflicts between international security and economic factors within a country. The foreign policy priority division could also provide theoretical and empirical guidelines to explain the conflict between security and economic interests.

2.2. Literature Review

2.2.1. A Definition of Foreign Policy Change

Hill (2003, p. 3) claims that foreign policy's academic definition is "the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations." Hill's description (2003) includes various *actors* such as governments, coalitions, and organisations. He defines foreign policy as an integrated action that consists of both actors' reactions to single events and the integrated actions of actors in response to different events, using the expression "sum" in his definition. Thus, the critical elements of foreign policy are actors and their actions.

	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Effort</i>	<i>Policy Application</i>
<i>Adjustment Change</i>	X	X	○	One or some
<i>Program Change</i>	X	○	○	One or some
<i>Problem/Goal Change</i>	○	○	○	One or some
<i>International Orientation Change</i>	○	○	○	Many

Table 1 Type of Foreign Policy Change.

Made by author. Source: C.Hermann (1990) 'Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy'. *International Studies Quarterly*. P.5

Defining change in foreign policy is also essential. Hermann classifies foreign policy change types into four categories (Hermann, 1990, p. 5) (Table 1). Hermann analyses the type of foreign policy change based on what is changing and the number of policies affected. In South Korea's case, the Cold War world order served as the most influential international factor in foreign policy change, as South Korea was the front line of confrontation with the

Communist bloc in Northeast Asia from the US' post-Korean War strategic perspective (Hong, 2000). However, with the early 1990s decline of the Cold War order, South Korea also altered its foreign policy direction, diversifying diplomatic relations and establishing diplomatic ties with former Communist countries (Joo, 1993; Sanford, 1993). Since then, using its economic growth as a driving force, South Korea has consistently pursued foreign policy objectives to establish peace on the Korean Peninsula, strengthen networking with various countries, and enhance its role in the international community (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea, 2017, 2018).

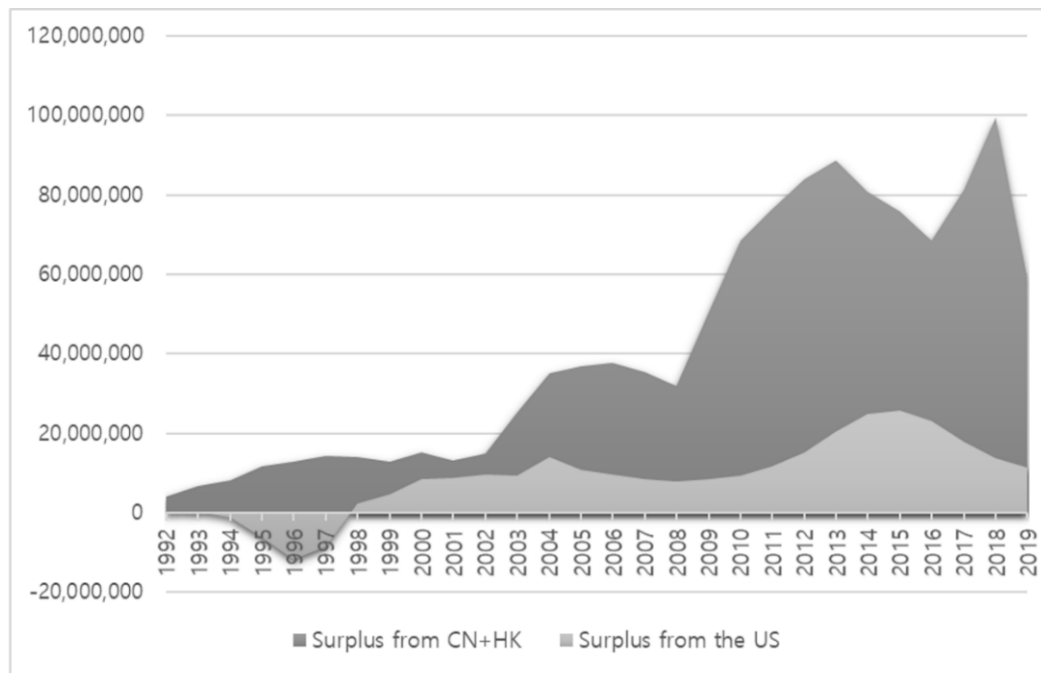
Therefore, South Korea's foreign policy objective has been stable since the end of the Cold War, without drastic changes, and foreign policy changes have been made mainly at the adjustment level. Thus, this study primarily focuses on foreign policy changes in level of effort. The US is South Korea's most critical security partner, and China is its most vital economic partner. Since 1954, South Korea and the US have maintained a cooperative defence system through the Mutual Defense Treaty (Hong, 2000, p. 40). South Korea has obtained the most considerable export benefit from China (168,116 million dollars, including Hong Kong) and recorded a 2019 trade surplus of 59,107 million dollars (K-Stat, 2020). Referring to Gustavsson's (1998) foreign policy change theory, political and economic factors are the major international drivers of foreign policy changes. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the prioritisation mechanism of South Korean foreign policy based on the change in the relations between the US and China.

2.2.2. International Factors Affecting Foreign Policy Change

Gustavsson (1999) argues that international political and economic factors around a particular country affect a foreign policy change. He classifies the influential factors of a foreign policy change into two categories (Gustavsson, 1999, p. 83). The first category is international

factors, including power relationships among countries, military strength, and national security perspectives (Gustavsson, 1999, p. 83). The second is domestic factors, referring to voter support, specific political parties, and individual social organisations that advocate for specific foreign policies (Gustavsson, 1999, pp. 83–84). When a decision-making coalition is affected by these factors, decision-makers set policy objectives and take strategic actions to realise them (Gustavsson, 1999, p. 86). Policies formed through this process then affect international and domestic factors, and changes in them lead to changes in policies (Gustavsson, 1999, p. 86). This research focuses on international factors that affect South Korean foreign policy change.

Gustavsson (1998) explains two international factors in his article by analysing the causal mechanism of Sweden's European Economic Community (EEC) participation. However, the Swedish case is different from that of South Korea, given that both international political and economic factors positively influenced Sweden's decision concerning EEC membership (Gustavsson, 1998). In the South Korean case, the two factors play a different role in its foreign policies, given that its security cooperation with the US for regional security interests is perceived as a threat to China, and that, from an economic perspective, South Korea cannot give up its trade interests with China (Ikenberry, 2008; Mearsheimer, 2010; Swaine, 2017).



Notes: CN=China, HK=Hong Kong, US=United States, Unit=1,000 dollars

Figure 1 South Korean Trade Surplus from Major Partners.

Made by author. Source: K-Stat. (2020). 한국의 10대 무역국 South Korea's Top 10 Trade Partners. <http://stat.kita.net/stat/world/major/KoreaStats06.screen>

In terms of the international factor, the existing literature on South Korean foreign policy change has the tendency to overemphasise security cooperation with the US and underestimate economic cooperation with China. As South Korea's military capabilities grow and China emerges as a challenger to the US, the importance of security cooperation between the US and South Korea is growing even more from the US' regional strategy perspective (The US Department of Defense, 2019). Taking this security tendency into consideration, Kim (2015) argues that pivotal middle-power states, such as South Korea, could take a mitigating role, managing the likelihood of future alliance-transitional conflict by supporting the dominant power's supremacy. However, despite the importance of regional conflict mitigation for South Korea, it is becoming more dependent on China in economic terms. Following the increase in the South Korean GDP, the country's economy

has become more and more trade-dependent, as evidenced in the ratio of imports and exports within it. This was 81.5 per cent in 2019, as opposed to 53 per cent in 1990 (Statistics KOREA, 2020). The US, the largest importer of South Korean products for decades, has yielded its position to China since 2003, with 25 per cent of South Korea's exports sent to China as of 2019 (K-Stat, 2020). In the same year, the trade surplus from China was five times larger than that from the US (Figure 1) (K-Stat, 2020). This economic dependence affects South Korean foreign policy as an international economic factor but has not been noticed as existing literature has mainly focused on political factors.

Furthermore, the complexity of relations between South Korea and neighbouring countries tends to be overlooked. From the US perspective, it is a strategic choice to prioritise relations with key allies in Northeast Asia to prepare for China's rising military capability (The US Department of Defense, 2019). However, relations between South Korea and its neighbours are more complicated. Both South Korea and Japan are individually allied with the US, but South Korea and Japan are not a military alliance. On the contrary, South Korea and Japan have a diplomatic conflict over the Dokdo/Takeshima island and a history revision issue (Rozman and Lee, 2006; Cha, 2009). On the other hand, as of 2019, South Korean export to China was double its exports to the US, which means China has become South Korea's most important economic partner (K-Stat, 2020). In other words, because of the complexity of South Korean security and its economic priorities, South Korean influence on the balance of power for regional stability has become less significant than in the Cold War era.

To address these limitations, this research analyses the relationship between South Korean foreign policy changes and US-China cooperation. As previously explained, the US and China are South Korea's most essential partners in security and economy (Hong, 2000;

K-Stat, 2020). While the tension between the two countries varies, the South Korean government has prioritised security in some cases and the economy in others. Therefore, to overview South Korean foreign policy change, it is necessary to understand the history of conflict between the US and China and their current situation.

2.2.3. The United States-China Conflict and South Korean Foreign Policy

Conflicts and cooperation between the US and China within East Asia have more than seventy years of history. The US and China engaged in military conflict during the Korean War, and both countries signed the Armistice (Hong, 2000). As soon as the conflict between China and the Soviet Union deepened, following their ideologic confrontation and territorial conflict, China started to cooperate with the US and officially signed diplomatic ties in 1979 to control the Soviet Union's influence in the region (Goldstein and Freeman, 1990). However, periodic tensions between China and the US also occurred due to US support for Taiwan, the US's major strategic and economic partner in the region (Kan and Morrison, 2014). The relationship between the US and China thus has a deep history of repeated conflict and cooperation; conflicts became more frequent in the mid-2000s as China grew into the world's second-largest economy and expanded its military capabilities (Ikenberry, 2008).

Since 2015, maritime disputes have erupted between the two countries in the South China Sea over freedom of navigation issue (Simon, 2012; Freund, 2017). China, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia surround the South China Sea; they have claimed varying degrees of sovereignty over it and engaged in a territorial dispute (Simon, 2012, pp. 996–997). China has begun to install artificial islands in the Spratly and Paracel Islands to assert its territorial water legitimacy (Simon, 2012, p. 996). Tensions began to rise as the US, which has a strategic interest in the area's Sea Lane of Communication (SLOC), navigated near the

artificial islands with naval vessels in the name of Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) (Freund, 2017). This conflict affected US allies' foreign policy in Asia because the US, directly and indirectly, demanded their participation in FONOPs. In response, Japan conducted a bilateral exercise with the US Navy in the South China Sea, which escalated tensions between Japan and China. South Korea has yet to participate in such operations, in consideration of its relations with China (Panda, 2016).

On the other hand, there are opposite cases in which South Korea has increased its cooperation with the US when the US-China relationship has deteriorated. After the fourth North Korean nuclear test, the US-China relationship rapidly worsened because they accused each other as responsible for the North Korean nuclear provocation (Korea Institute for National Unification, 2016). At that time, South Korea decided to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD) on the Korean Peninsula despite Chinese opposition and in consideration of North Korea's continued nuclear threat and ongoing, strained inter-Korean relations (Klingner, 2015). However, China has claimed that deploying THAAD in South Korea is a US strategy to weaken China's nuclear deterrent and neutralize its strategic weapons (Klingner, 2015; Swaine, 2017). Nevertheless, the South Korean government and security experts have argued that the THAAD deployment is an entirely defensive measure in response to the North Korean nuclear threat, and does not technically affect China's nuclear deterrence capability (Klingner, 2015; Easley, 2016).

Regardless of this claim, China's Foreign Ministry raised the concern that the THAAD deployment in South Korea could be used as part of a US-led Missile Defense (MD) system that would curb China's nuclear power and strategic interests (Ministry of Foreign Affairs the People's Republic of China, 2016; Swaine, 2017). Beijing imposed political and economic sanctions on South Korea, including the cancellation of a high-level official visit to

Seoul and restrictions on Chinese tourism to South Korea (Swaine, 2017). Despite these sanctions, South Korea retained its prioritisation of the security partnership and did not withdraw its decision on THAAD deployment (Kim, 2018).

As such, South Korea has pursued a foreign policy that sometimes considers its economic interest (with China) and sometimes emphasises security (with the US). Hix and Jun (2009) argue that the Hawk and Dove foreign policy division influences South Korean political parties' policy orientation. Analysing parliamentary voting tendencies, they claim that the South Korean National Assembly is divided by the Hawk, which insists on US-centred diplomacy, and the Dove, which values direct cooperation with North Korea (Hix and Jun, 2009, p. 689). While the ruling party's political tendency could affect foreign policy, some empirical cases are difficult to explain through this Hawk and Dove division theory. The hawkish Park Geun-hye administration decided to participate in the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) rather than the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP); the Obama administration had strongly recommended South Korean participation (Kim, 2018). As such, South Korea's foreign policy has sometimes been driven by security interests or economic interests. This chapter argues that the relationship between the US and China impacts these decisions.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

2.3.1. The South Korean Foreign Policy Dilemma

As the US and China's power game becomes increasingly visible, South Korea faces a foreign policy dilemma. During the Cold War, the international political circumstances made South Korea's pursuit of a one-sided foreign policy an obvious choice because its existence was threatened by a Communist neighbour (Castro, 1994; Hong, 2000; Song, 2019). However, as relations between the three countries have become more and more intertwined,

South Korea has found it challenging to conduct a similar one-sided foreign policy, this time between China and the US. The US cannot substitute for China in terms of the economy, and China cannot be a substitute for US security support. Besides, South Korea's growing economic and military influence has given both the US and China an essential strategic benefit, which means that the relation between South Korea and two major powers is not unilaterally beneficial (Kim, 2015; Mo, 2016). Therefore, South Korea can manoeuvre its foreign policy by changing its emphases between security and economic partnership.

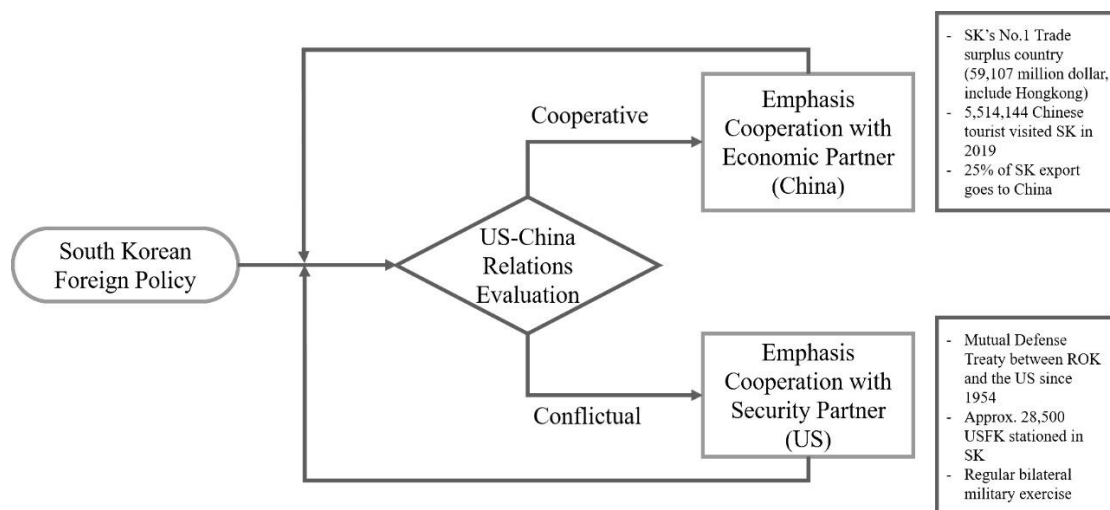


Figure 2 The Effect of US-China Relations on South Korean Foreign Policy Orientation.

Made by author.

This chapter employs two foreign policy notion priorities to analyse the causal mechanisms of South Korean foreign policy change (Figure 2). The first priority is the security partnership, which centres on relations with the US. Since 1954, South Korea and the US have maintained a cooperative defence system to respond to aggressions toward both countries through the Mutual Defense Treaty (Hong, 2000, p. 40). Moreover, there are about 28,500 US troops stationed in Korea (Koo, 2016). The second priority is its economic partnership. South Korea, which has a trade-oriented economic structure, has obtained the

largest surplus from China (including Hong Kong), recording a 2019 trade surplus of 59,107 million dollars (K-Stat, 2020).

Security and economic partnerships are international factors that affect South Korean foreign policy. South Korea cannot abandon either of the two associations. It needs to coordinate its foreign policy effort between the two priorities to manage its strategic position during a conflict between the US and China. Therefore, this chapter has noted how South Korea reacts to conflict and cooperation between the two major powers, which liaise with South Korea in different sectors. When relations between the US and China are cooperative, both sides are less likely to force South Korea to make a diplomatic choice. Under these circumstances, it is in South Korea's national interest to shift its foreign policy focus to pursue cooperation with an economic partner, realising an immediate benefit, rather than collaboration with a security partner, in which it is hard to obtain immediate compensation.

On the contrary, when relations between the US and China deteriorate, South Korea is forced to make diplomatic choices. In this case, South Korea could face intense diplomatic pressure from the US in the security sector, such as the adjustment of US troops in South Korea. South Korea's diplomatic options would be limited because if it lost US security support, it would be difficult to recover in a short time. Therefore, South Korea would shift its foreign policy emphasis to the security partnership, reduce (or show efforts to reduce) cooperation with its economic partners to meet US strategic needs. Focusing on the division of foreign policy priorities, this chapter analyses how each priority responds to South Korea's relationship with each of the two major powers. This examination will allow the identification of the causal mechanism of South Korean foreign policy change.

2.3.2. *Hypotheses*

At the beginning of the Obama administration, the US was carrying out a "pivot to Asia"

strategy to deal with China's growing influence in the region and strengthen ties with its Asian allies (Anderson and Cha, 2017). The US and China, which have had repeated episodes of fragile cooperation and conflict, suddenly implemented a December 2014 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit. This was held in China and later declared a blueprint for cooperation in environmental and related economic areas through its joint announcement on climate change (The White House, 2014). In 2014, a Chinese naval vessel—for the first time in history—took part in the world's most massive, US-led multinational Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC), which also became a symbol of changes in bilateral relations (Tiezzi, 2014).

Positive changes in US-China relations gave South Korea leeway to put diplomatic emphasis on the economic partnership. On March 26, 2015, South Korea joined the Chinese-organised AIIB, despite the American and Japanese refusals to participate. On September 3, Park Geun-hye took part in the China Victory Day Parade that some specialists thought could be the catalyst to expand cooperation between South Korea and China (Kim, 2018). When bilateral relations between the US and China became cooperative, South Korea expanded its diplomatic flexibility and pursued economic partnership-centred foreign policies over the security partnership.

However, relations between the US and China began to deteriorate due to differences in their positions on North Korea's fourth nuclear test on January 6, 2016, and the satellite (ballistic missile) launch test on February 7 of the same year. China expressed its displeasure with the US claim that China was responsible for the North Korean nuclear crisis through its foreign ministry spokesman. Furthermore, at a January 27 meeting between the US and Chinese foreign ministers, China expressed opposition to the US' proposal of stronger sanctions on North Korea (Korea Institute for National Unification, 2016).

Against this backdrop, the conservative Park Geun-hye government decided to deploy THAAD, which China opposed, while strengthening its security cooperation with the US and facing an economic crisis with China (Kim, 2018). Even considering that the security environment around the Korean Peninsula had deteriorated rapidly due to the North Korean nuclear crisis, it was a sudden change in South Korean foreign policy. Because since 2013, the South Korean and US governments had reviewed the THAAD deployment, and South Korea rejected it for several years due to Chinese opposition (Swaine, 2017; Kim, 2018).

Therefore, this chapter claims the following hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that if the relationship between the US and China is cooperative, South Korea will maintain a cooperative relationship with the economic partnership.

H1: As US-China relations become cooperative, South Korea's cooperation with China (economic partnership) increases.

The ICEWS dataset weighs event intensity by Goldstein value, which measures a cooperative event by a positive value (from 1 to 10) and a conflict-related event by a negative value (from -1 to -10) (Goldstein, 1992). This research subtracted the number of conflict-related events from cooperative events to weigh the net cooperation between the two countries. The hypothesis posits that South Korea will process an economy partnership-oriented foreign policy while the US and China have a cooperative relationship, which can be determined by an increase in the net number of South Korean cooperative events toward China.

H2: As the US-China relations become conflictual, South Korea's cooperation with the US (security partnership) increases.

If relations between the US and China deteriorate, the US could more actively

demand its allies' cooperation and ask them to clarify their attitude toward conflict between the two countries. Since the US plays a significant role in deterring North Korean military provocation and is also a major partner in denuclearisation negotiations with North Korea, South Korea will increase cooperation with the security partnership. This chapter analyses the effect of the change in relations between the US and China on South Korean foreign policy through testing these two hypotheses.

2.4. Research Design

2.4.1. The Integrated Conflict Early Warning System (ICEWS) Dataset

This study utilises the ICEWS dataset to measure the change in cooperation between South Korea, the US, and China. The US government initiated the development of the ICEWS dataset to create a comprehensive, integrated, automated, generalizable, and validated system to monitor, address, and forecast national, sub-national, and international crises in a manner that could support resource allocation decisions made to mitigate such crises (O'Brien, 2010, p. 89). The main components of the ICEWS dataset are: (1) Event, who did what to whom, when, and where. This information is automatically extracted from the text of various news stories, (2) Source Name/Sector/Country, this identifies the name/sector/country of the actor, (3) Event Type, it is an action that occurs between a source and a target, (4) Target Name/Sector/Country, this refers to the name/sector/country of the actor that is the event's target, (5) Event Intensity in Goldstein Value, A value ranging from -10 to +10 is used to express the level of cooperation or hostility exhibited in the event type (Lautenschlager, Shellman and Ward, 2015, pp. 36–41).

Take Hill's (2003, p. 3) definition of foreign policy into account: this research focuses on the government-related actors for the source sector: administration, national assembly, ministries, individual politicians, and governmental organizations, including the

military. The essential data to weigh the cooperation between the two countries are the event intensity (Goldstein value) and the number of events. This study uses event intensity as a criterion for distinguishing whether an individual event is a cooperation (from 1 to 10) or conflict (from -10 to -1) event (Goldstein, 1992).

To weigh net cooperation, the total number of cooperative events minus the total number of conflict events in a month is defined as net cooperation. Because event data are based on official exchanges and media reports, date characteristics such as weekends or holidays could affect the data analysis, resulting in frequent zero values. This could make the analysis challenging to measure the level of cooperation accurately (Lautenschlager, Shellman and Ward, 2015). Thus, the data are coded on a monthly time scale. Next, subtracting the number of conflict events from the total number of cooperative events prevents excessive interpretation of cooperation in times of frequent dyad exchanges. For example, in a specific period, the US and China actively exchange cooperation and conflict. However, if the data only consider the number of cooperative events at this period, it would appear that the US-China relationship is merely cooperative even though there are as many conflicts as cooperation. To prevent this error, this research uses the concept of net cooperation to analyse the relationship between the two countries.

This study analyses South Korean foreign policy direction data from 1995 to 2018. Considering that South Korea and China's official diplomatic ties have been established since 1992, it would be ideal if the data was coded from that year. However, the practical limitation that ICEWS data has been coded since 1995 was taken into account. Moreover, the dynamics of China-US relations in this period were also considered, including conflicts between China and the US due to cross-strait relations and the emergence of China threat theory due to China's rapid economic growth since the 2000s.

2.4.2. *Dependent Variable*

This study's dependent variable is the change in South Korean foreign policy. This research analyses the net cooperation from South Korea to China for the first hypothesis and the net cooperation from South Korea to the US for the second hypothesis. Thus, the event intensity and direction of the ICEWS dataset are used to code the net cooperation of South Korea towards the US and China. For dependent variables, the direction of the event is essential because the present research focused on South Korean foreign policy. Unlike the independent variable of interest, the dependent variable focuses on South Korea's attitude toward China and the US rather than on the relationship between dyad countries.

2.4.3. *Explanatory Variables*

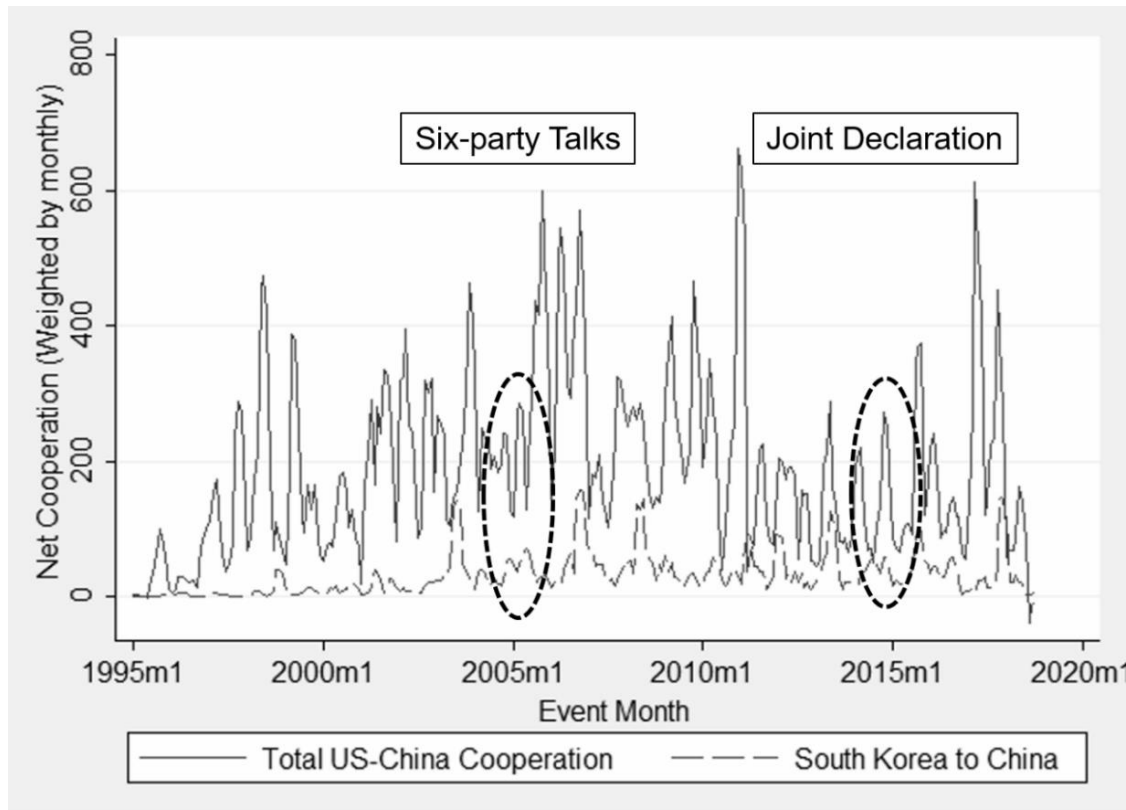
In this research, the independent variable of interest is the relationship between the US and China. Independent variables also used the concept of net cooperation to code the total monthly cooperation and conflict between the US and China. However, the relationship between the two countries does not consider the direction of cooperation or conflict. In other words, the relationship between the US and China is coded by the total net cooperation and conflict between the two countries. The descriptive statistics of these variables are presented in Table 2.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Obs.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>
<i>SK to CN</i>	286	31.67832	48.59877	-1	373
<i>US-CN Relationship</i>	286	191.1573	206.5892	-66	1524
<i>SK to US</i>	286	55.67133	60.60986	-2	445

Note: SK=South Korea, US=United States, CN=China

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Event Data.

Made by author. Source: Boschee, Elizabeth; Lautenschlager, Jennifer; O'Brien, Sean; Shellman, Steve; Starz, James; Ward, Michael (2015) 'ICEWS Coded Event Data', <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28075>, Harvard Dataverse, V29, UNF:6:NOSHB7wyt0SQ8sMg7+w38w== [fileUNF]

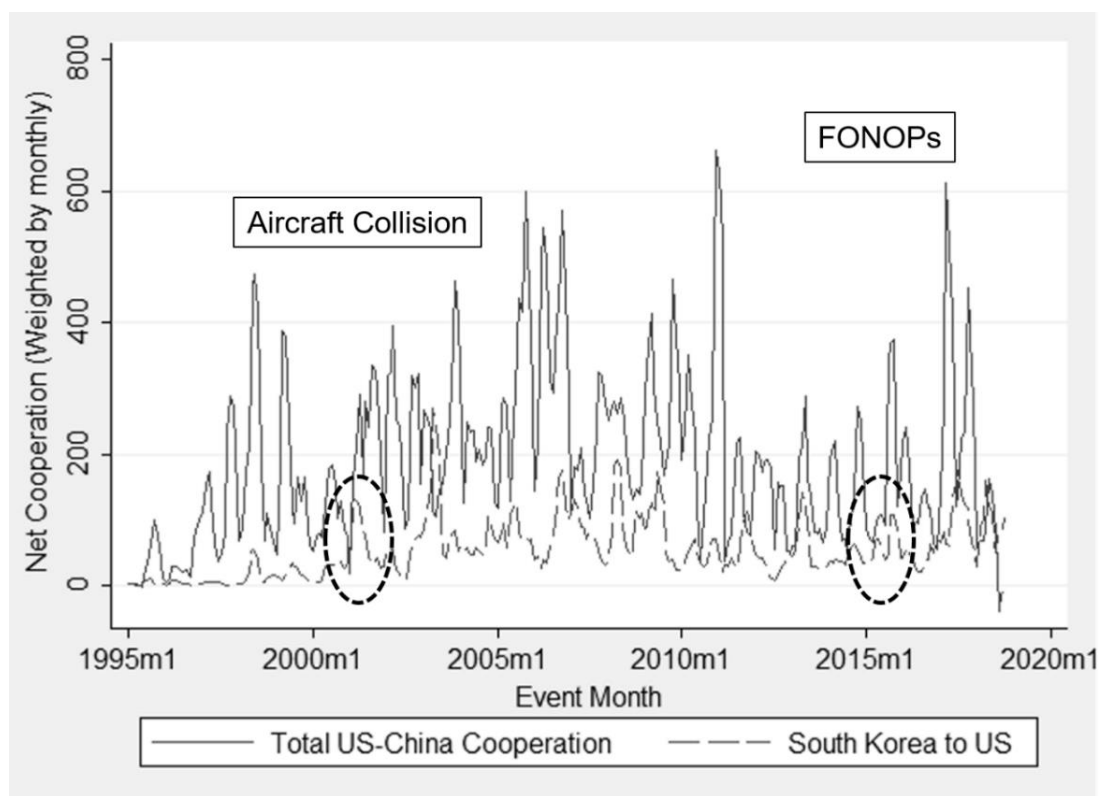


Note: This graph is smoothed using a three-month moving average

Figure 3 South Korean Net Cooperation to China and Net US–China Cooperation.

Made by author. Source: Boschee, Elizabeth; Lautenschlager, Jennifer; O'Brien, Sean; Shellman, Steve; Starz, James; Ward, Michael (2015) 'ICEWS Coded Event Data', <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28075>, Harvard Dataverse, V29, UNF:6:NOSHB7wyt0SQ8sMg7+w38w== [fileUNF]

The time-series graph of US-China relations and South Korean cooperation toward the US and China shows the characteristics of trilateral relations. First, as assumed in the first hypothesis, South Korean cooperation toward China has increased as US-China relations have improved (Figure 3). This tendency appeared in the Six-party Talks period, which produced its first tangible results when it issued a joint declaration on September 19, 2005 (Choi, 2018). Similarly, when the US and China reached an agreement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions at APEC in November 2014, US-China cooperation and South Korean cooperation with China increased (The White House, 2014).



Note: This graph is smoothed using a three-month moving average

Figure 4 South Korean Net Cooperation to the US and Net US–China Cooperation.

Made by author. Source: Boschee, Elizabeth; Lautenschlager, Jennifer; O'Brien, Sean; Shellman, Steve; Starz, James; Ward, Michael (2015) 'ICEWS Coded Event Data', <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28075>, Harvard Dataverse, V29, UNF:6:NOSHB7wyt0SQ8sMg7+w38w== [fileUNF]

Conversely, as explained in the second hypothesis, South Korean cooperation toward the US has shown a tendency to increase in the face of worsening US-China relations (see Figure 4). On April 1, 2001, the US Navy's EP-3C collided with a Chinese Air Force fighter, and emergency-landed on Hainan Island, China. The Chinese fighter pilot was killed, and the US and China were at odds over transferring the EP-3C's crew (BBC, 2001). The graph shows that US-China relations rapidly deteriorate during that time, and South Korean cooperation toward the US increases immediately after the incident, while South Korean cooperation toward China decreases. Similarly, the graph shows worsening US-China

relations and increased cooperation with the US since the US Navy's implementation of FONOPs in the South China Sea in October 2015 (Freund, 2017).

2.4.4. Control Variables

North Korean military provocation (NKMPV), the South Korean defence budget increase rate (SKDI), the South Korean ruling party's military positive notion (SKMP), and the South Korean ruling party's peace positive notion (SKPP) are exogenous variables. These variables do not significantly impact cooperation between the US and China; however, they can affect South Korean cooperation toward other countries. The NKMPV is a dummy variable, the value of which is 1 if a specific month experiences North Korean military provocation with military or civilian casualties or a nuclear or missile test, whereas the value is 0 for the months without these conditions. North Korean military provocations are an imminent threat to South Korea, which serves as a factor that makes Seoul focus on security-oriented diplomacy.

Since Hix and Jun (2009) have argued that the South Korean political party's political orientation toward North Korea and the US can serve as a criterion for classifying the foreign policy tendencies of its political coalition, the South Korean government's political orientation is taken into account as an exogenous variable. It is coded by the president's political party of origin's notion of the military positive (SKMP) and peace positive (SKPP) issue, referring to the Manifesto Corpus (Krause *et al.*, 2018). The same value is applied during a specific president's office term, but any change in value occurring after the general elections made in the middle of the term is reflected. The increase ratio in the defence budget is also used to indicate an administration's self-reliance tendency (Lee, 1993). The same value is applied for the year because the change is made annually in the defence budget and applies to the entire year.

2.4.5. Vector Autoregressive Model

Figure 3 and 4 are a descriptive time series graph without statistical analysis. It portrays the general tendency of how South Korean cooperation changes concerning a specific diplomatic incident between the US and China. In this study, a Vector Autoregressive (VAR) model was used to test the hypotheses. A VAR model is a system with multiple equations in which each dependent variable is regressed to the previous value of the same variable and other dependent variables (Moon, 1997). This model uses three variables: (1) net US-China cooperation, (2) net South Korean cooperation toward China, and (3) net South Korean cooperation toward the US. These variables are highly likely to correlate with each other. Therefore, this research uses a VAR model capable of simultaneously analysing multiple time-series data.

All three variables are treated as endogenous because their behaviour toward one another is usually affected by others' behaviour. The Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) test, a Hannan-Quinn Information Criterion (HQIC) test, and the likelihood ratio (LR) test for lag length are used to find appropriate lag lengths. Two lags of variables, one and six, are included in the model, based on the diagnostic statistics results for the lag length specification. Therefore, it is assumed that states' behaviour over the previous one and six months affects each related country's reactions in the model.

For the estimation of the VAR model, this research uses Granger causality and impulse response analysis. First, the coefficients of the individual lagged variable are tested. Although the VAR analysis considers the significance of an individual lagged term less critical than the combined lagged coefficients' significance, analysing each lagged term's significance can be useful for finding which lagged terms of variables influence the dependent variables of each equation (Yoon, 2011). It is possible that one actor's behaviour

might affect that of another actor after a certain period has passed in interstate relations. Second, to examine the systemic behaviour and all the coefficients that describe the variables' dynamics, a Granger causality test is used. Using F-tests in the VAR model, the Granger causality test estimates whether lagged independent variables affect unlagged dependent variables. Each F-test result explains Granger causality's significance by analysing one explanatory variable's joint significance with all its lags on the dependent variable (Yoon, 2011).

Third, to assess the reciprocal characteristics of these relationships, impulse response analysis is used. By simulating shocks to each equation model, the specific characteristics of responses in the system can be analysed as to whether they are reciprocal, inverse, or ambiguous (Moon, 1997). Impulse response graphs are produced to see how the equations react to a positive, one standard deviation shock to an individual variable. The response direction is evaluated by the sum of the point estimates of responses to the simulated shock. A positive value indicates a reciprocal relationship. A negative value indicates an inverse relationship, which denotes a hostile response against the opponent's cooperation, and vice versa. A close to zero value and includes both positive and negative terms is considered an ambiguous relationship.

2.5. Findings

The time-series data of VAR models require stationary testing. This study's time-series data were verified as stationary through the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test (Appendix 1). Later, to determine the appropriate lag length, this research used AIC, HQIC, and LR tests (Appendix 2). Two lags of variables are included in the model, based on the diagnostic statistics results for the specification of the lag length. Because the AIC and HQIC analysed one and LR proposed six as the appropriate lag lengths for this model, the model utilises both one and six

as its lag lengths. Therefore, it is assumed that states' behaviour over the previous one and six months affects the reactions of each related state's behaviour in the model.

Equation	Interaction	Lag term	Coefficient	Equation	Interaction	Lag term	Coefficient
SK to CN	US-CN Cooperation	1	.0014701	SK to US	US-CN Cooperation	1	-.0200202
		6	.0434647***			6	.0056742
	SK to US	1	.2494725***		SK to CN	1	.0514046
		6	.0609525			6	.1205653*
	NK Provocation	-	24.0049**		NK Provocation	-	15.22619
	Peace Positive	-	-4.595209		Peace Positive	-	17.48777***
	Military Positive	-	1.841762		Military Positive	-	26.37892***
	Defense Budget Increase Rate	-	-1.307183		Defense Budget Increase Rate	-	-1.593664

Notes: SK=South Korea, US=United States, CN=China, *** p < .01, ** p < .05, * p < .1

Table 3 The Effect of Each Lagged Term of State Interaction in the VAR Analysis.

Made by author. Source: Boschee, Elizabeth; Lautenschlager, Jennifer; O'Brien, Sean; Shellman, Steve; Starz, James; Ward, Michael (2015) 'ICEWS Coded Event Data', <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28075>, Harvard Dataverse, V29, UNF:6:NOSHB7wyt0SQ8sMg7+w38w== [fileUNF]

An examination of the initial VAR model analysis results reveals a good overall fit of the model, with R-squared values that range from .23 to .10. Table 3 presents the results of the VAR analysis. It shows how each lagged term of the independent variables affects the dependent variable of each equation. For the equation of South Korean cooperation toward China, the VAR results show that South Korean cooperation toward China is most directly affected by US-China cooperation and South Korean behaviour toward the US. The sixth lagged term of US-China cooperation—the US-China relationship six months before the event on the dependent variable—is statistically significant at the 99 per cent level. The first lagged term of South Korean behaviour toward the US—South Korean behaviour toward the US one month before the event on the dependent variable—is also statistically significant at the 99 per cent level.

The result means that US-China cooperation has a significant impact on South Korean cooperation toward China, as claimed by the first hypothesis. Notably, the result that US-China cooperation has a positive coefficient on South Korean cooperation toward China could be statistical evidence to support the argument of foreign policy priority division. A positive change in US-China relations gives Seoul leeway to be diplomatically flexible and cooperate more actively with China, the principal economic partner.

On the other hand, the fact that South Korean cooperation toward the US has a positive coefficient on Korean cooperation toward China runs counter to the second hypothesis. This result suggests that South Korea's foreign policy may not be a matter of binary choice between security and economic priorities but of applying a distinctive strategic emphasis on two different partnerships. It is necessary to ascertain what variables affect South Korean cooperation toward the US to verify the causal mechanism. However, the VAR model's results provided the guidance for further research that the political orientation of

South Korean administration (peace positive and military positive) has a significant coefficient with South Korean cooperation toward the US, which coincides with Hix and Jun's (2009) finding.

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Chi²</i>	<i>P ></i>	<i>Direction</i>
<i>SK to CN</i>	US-CN Cooperation	10.731	0.005***	+
<i>SK to US</i>	US-CN Cooperation	1.6709	0.434	-

Note: SK=South Korea, US=United States, CN=China, *** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.1

Table 4 Granger Causality Test Result.

Made by author. Source: Boschee, Elizabeth; Lautenschlager, Jennifer; O'Brien, Sean; Shellman, Steve; Starz, James; Ward, Michael (2015) 'ICEWS Coded Event Data', <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28075>, Harvard Dataverse, V29, UNF:6:NOSHB7wyt0SQ8sMg7+w38w== [fileUNF]

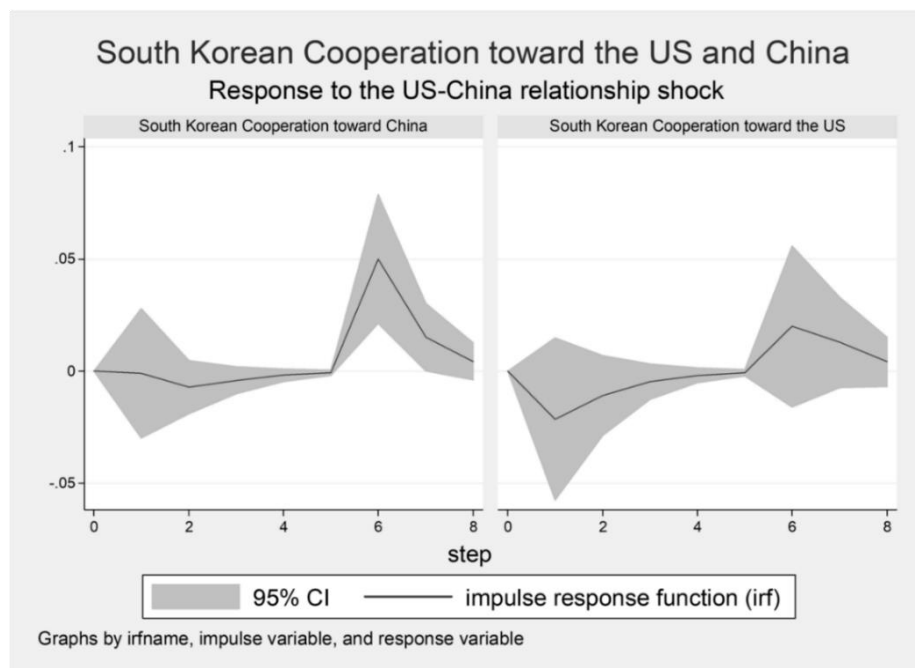


Figure 5 South Korean Cooperation Impulse Response Test Result.

Made by author. Source: Boschee, Elizabeth; Lautenschlager, Jennifer; O'Brien, Sean; Shellman, Steve; Starz, James; Ward, Michael (2015) 'ICEWS Coded Event Data', <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28075>, Harvard Dataverse, V29, UNF:6:NOSHB7wyt0SQ8sMg7+w38w== [fileUNF]

Table 4 presents the Granger causality test and impulse response analysis results for the VAR model. Like the VAR model result, the Granger causality test confirmed that South Korean cooperation toward China has a causal relation with US-China cooperation. The impulse response test found that if US-China cooperation impacts South Korean cooperation toward China, it is highly likely to change positively after six months (Figure 5). Like the VAR model and Granger causality test results, this result attests to the argument of the first hypothesis that positive changes in US-China relations allow South Korea to focus its diplomatic efforts on the economic partnership.

However, contrary to the second hypothesis, the Granger causality test and impulse response test results show that South Korean foreign policy does not necessarily shift between security and economic partnerships. The improvement in US-China relations facilitates South Korean cooperation toward China, but this does not necessarily mean South Korean cooperation toward the US is deteriorating. Instead, South Korean cooperation toward the US has a positive coefficient with South Korean cooperation toward China. However, the VAR model and the Granger causality test could not confirm the variable affecting South Korean cooperation toward the US. This means that while cooperation with the economic partnership is affected by US-China relations, another causal mechanism may affect the security partnership.

In summary, hypothesis 1 is confirmed by the VAR, Granger causality, and impulse response test. China is South Korea's most important economic partner, so the two regularly conduct close bilateral exchanges. However, it is often difficult to pursue non-economic cooperation with China due to conflicts of interest with the US, South Korea's closest military ally (The US Department of Defense, 2019). Therefore, for South Korea to expand cooperation toward China, US-China relations should be stabilised. As the US and China's

relationship changes frequently, Seoul should verify the long-term stabilisation of the US-China relationship, which usually takes more than six months. The bottom line is that Korea promotes cooperation toward China after stabilising of US-China relations is verified.

However, hypothesis 2—if the US and China’s net cooperation decreases, South Korean cooperation toward the US increases—is disconfirmed. The deterioration of US-China relations reduces the probability of South Korean cooperation toward China, but this does not necessarily mean strengthened cooperation with the security partnership. This result ultimately means that South Korean foreign policy is driven by diplomatic prioritisation between the security and economic partnerships, not by choosing between them. As the VAR and Granger causality test confirmed, the increase in cooperation with the security partnership has a significant positive effect on increasing cooperation with the economic partnership. This means that stabilisation of US-China relations should be seen as a primary condition for cooperation with the economic partnership and not a criterion for a choice between economy and security priorities.

In conclusion, the model used in this study could only confirm the causal mechanism related to the cooperation with the economic partnership. For South Korea, China is an indispensable economic partner, and maintaining close ties with the country is one of its major foreign policy priorities. However, as the US and China’s rivalry intensifies, situations where South Korean diplomatic choices are required frequently occur. Seoul appears to use a strategy of responding to these demands while reducing cooperation with Beijing. This demonstrates its diplomatic efforts to its security partner while maintaining essential ties with Beijing behind the scenes. In other words, the relationship between the US and China is a significant causal mechanism for South Korean cooperation toward the economic partnership; however, this does not necessarily mean that South Korea should choose its strategic position

between two different foreign policy priorities; instead, it should manage its foreign policy emphasis between them. It is necessary to conduct further research to identify the causal mechanism behind the diplomacy between South Korea and its security partnership.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter provided a comprehensive theory to facilitate understanding of how the relationship between the US and China influences South Korean foreign policy. As regional tensions between the US and China increase, South Korea has experienced a foreign policy dilemma arising from the conflict between its security and economic interests. Priority divisions of foreign policy direction are useful to explain South Korean foreign policy orientations, which are characterised by keen shifts in diplomatic emphasis to match changes in US-China relations. If the latter were to improve, South Korea could have greater diplomatic flexibility and expanded cooperation with China.

During the Cold War, and up until the early 1990s, South Korea did not have a strategic choice dilemma. The US has been the best partner in both security and economy for South Korea, and the Cold War international order has given Seoul this clear diplomatic option (Hong, 2000). However, the change in South Korea's international status and China's rise as an economic partner has made it difficult for South Korea to make the same binary choice as in the past. The finding that cooperation with its economic partner (China) is related to the US-China relationship provides a basis for explaining South Korean foreign policy's untraditional changes, such as active cooperation with China by the pro-US conservative government and active cooperation with the US by the self-reliant, progressive government, which has been difficult to explain through previous literature.

The manifestation of a cooperation prioritisation strategy is not purely a South Korean phenomenon. The special relationship between Taiwan and China has led Taiwan to

face the diplomatic dilemma of cooperation with both the US and China: the US, as a guardian against the Chinese threat to its state existence versus China, its most influential economic partner (Lin, 2016). When faced with a similar foreign policy dilemma, Italy also joined the China-led Belt and Road Initiative despite the EU and NATO's security concerns (*Italy joins China's New Silk Road project*, 2019). This foreign policy tendency differs from existing international relations theory centred on a security perspective and hard power transitions. As economic cooperation between countries becomes increasingly frequent and political tensions between the US and China become visible worldwide, foreign policy strategy changes following the differentiation between these economy and security partnerships could become a universal phenomenon.

This chapter highlights the importance of the foreign policy priority division by analysing the causal mechanisms behind foreign policy changes, examining cooperation with an economic partner separately from cooperation with a security partner. Moreover, this chapter has highlighted the limitations of existing South Korean foreign policy change theories, namely, their focus on hard power and security. However, further discussions are necessary because, although this research sheds light on the division of foreign policy priority and the causal mechanism of cooperation with an economic partner, it could not identify the causal mechanisms behind the cooperation with a security partner. The result only provided a guideline for further research targeting the idea that South Korean cooperation toward the US might be influenced by the administration's political orientation, which is distinct from the economic partnership's cooperative mechanism. Future research on applying this circumstance of a major power rivalry and cooperation with an economic partner to empirical cases apart from South Korea is also required.

The new perspectives incorporated in foreign policy priority division could

contribute to practical South Korean policy analysis. The VAR and the Granger causality test found that US-China relations substantially affected South Korean foreign policy, particularly its cooperation with an economic partner (China). If US-China relations improve, South Korea could have the diplomatic flexibility to expand cooperation outside the economic sector with that partner. This analysis could constitute a guideline for more accurate South Korean foreign policy analysis in the future, allowing the opportunity to resolve the limitations of existing South Korean foreign policy change analysis.

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2.8. Appendices

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Test Result</i>
<i>SK to CN</i>	-7.415***
<i>US-CN Cooperation</i>	-6.482***
<i>SK to US</i>	-5.615***

Note: *** denotes significance at the 1% level

Appendix 1 Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Result.

Made by author. Source: Boschee, Elizabeth; Lautenschlager, Jennifer; O'Brien, Sean; Shellman, Steve; Starz, James; Ward, Michael (2015) 'ICEWS Coded Event Data', <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28075>, Harvard Dataverse, V29, UNF:6:NOSHB7wyt0SQ8sMg7+w38w== [fileUNF]

<i>Lag</i>	<i>LR</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>AIC</i>	<i>HQIC</i>
0			34.9242	35.0023
1	56.516	0.000	34.7867	34.9116*
2	11.663	0.233	34.8093	34.9811
3	19.706	0.020	34.8032	35.0219
4	4.3404	0.888	34.852	35.1175
5	6.6695	0.671	34.8924	35.2049
6	22.51**	0.007	34.8763	35.2356

Appendix 2 Selection-Order Criteria Result.

Made by author. Source: Boschee, Elizabeth; Lautenschlager, Jennifer; O'Brien, Sean; Shellman, Steve; Starz, James; Ward, Michael (2015) 'ICEWS Coded Event Data', <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28075>, Harvard Dataverse, V29, UNF:6:NOSHB7wyt0SQ8sMg7+w38w== [fileUNF]

3. An Analysis of the Influence of the South Korea-United States Cooperation on North Korean Foreign Policy Change

Abstract

This chapter claims that South Korea-US cooperation is one of the most significant variables for North Korean foreign policy change and analyses the effectiveness of South Korea-US cooperation based on its influence on North Korean cooperation toward South Korea. To analyse this causal relation, I coded event data from the Integrated Conflict Early Warning System (ICEWS) as a time series and used a Vector autoregressive (VAR) model. The model found that the South Korea-US cooperation substantially affected North Korean foreign policy, specifically its cooperation toward South Korea. If the frequency of cooperative events between South Korea and the US increases, North Korea could realise it cannot achieve its political objective by using coercive attitude and instead expand cooperation toward South Korea because of its loss-averse foreign policy change characteristics.

Keywords: North Korea; US-South Korea Cooperation; Foreign Policy Change; Korean Peninsula Security

3.1. Introduction

The role of the US in inter-Korean cooperation has always been controversial. In Korean politics, the relations with the US is an important criterion for distinguishing political tendencies and an important consideration for establishing foreign policy (Hix and Jun, 2009). Progressive politicians and experts have argued that excessive US influence on the Korean Peninsula is a factor that limits inter-Korean exchanges (Song and Kim, 2020). On the contrary, conservative politicians and scholars argue that North Korea recognises the US Forces Korea (USFK) and the South Korea-US alliance as their most significant threat, and thus a deterioration in South Korea's relations with the US would result in the loss of their most effective leverage in negotiations with the North, which is virtually a nuclear power (Cha, 2002).

In a more academic assessment, Yoon Jong-han (2011) argues that the US conciliatory attitude toward North Korea is likely to lead to cooperation from the North, and that if the US and South Korea maintain policy consistency (i.e., both countries pursuing appeasement policies toward the North), it is more likely to draw cooperation from the North. In a similar context, Moon and Bae (2003) analysed the President Bush's hard-line North Korea policy, arguing that the Bush administration's hard-line North Korea policy had actually made the North aggressive and caused the US-North Korea relationship to reach a stalemate. On the contrary, Victor Cha (2002) argues that the key strategy for successful negotiations with North Korea is to ensure that it does not feel reasonable to use a coercive negotiation strategy under any circumstances through solid cooperation between South Korea, the US, and Japan.

The core issue of the controversy is whether cooperation between the US and South Korea will lead to a change in North Korea's foreign policy in a conciliatory or a coercive direction. Scholars who argue that cooperation between South Korea and the US leads to North Korea's cooperation toward South Korea as being motivated by a loss-averse characteristic of foreign policy change. In other words, if South Korea and the US are expected to take a coercive stance against North Korea's provocations or aggressive negotiating attitudes, Pyongyang may give up its hard-line policy and shift its policy in a conciliatory manner (Cha, 2002; Song and Ryu, 2018). On the contrary, scholars who argue that cooperation between South Korea and the US makes North Korea more aggressive emphasise the collective identity formation aspect of the foreign policy change. In other words, through active exchanges, South Korea can implicate their collective identity with North Korean leaders, and, based on this perception, North Korean leadership could promote cooperation toward the South (Moon, 2001; Cho, 2010; Wendt, 2016). Therefore, they argue

that if South Korea excessively focuses on cooperation with the US, which North Korea perceives as a threat to their regime, or neglects inter-Korean exchanges while following Washington's coercive North Korea policy, it could eventually make North Korea more aggressive.

This study focuses on the South Korea-US cooperation and North Korea's foreign policy change, using event data and the vector autoregressive model (VAR) to analyse how strengthening cooperation between South Korea and the US affects North Korea's foreign policy changes. The Integrated Conflict Early Warning System (ICEWS) dataset is utilised as event data. The ICEWS dataset is a dataset that aggregates individual interactions, or events, between one country and another based on media coverage and evaluates each event intensity according to the Goldstein value (Lautenschlager, Shellman and Ward, 2015). By analysing this dataset through the VAR model, this research analyses how North Korea's cooperation with the South has changed as the cooperation between South Korea and the US changes.

Considering that many existing studies were influenced by international relations paradigm, this study conducted a data-driven analysis as much as possible to break away from these biases. This is different from previous studies that adopted an international relations paradigm because instead of claiming the legitimacy of policy through a political paradigm, it focuses on the policy performance of South Korea-US cooperation to change North Korea's foreign policy. On the policy aspect, this study is useful in that it provides policy-makers with a more data-centred analysis of the outcome of South Korea-US cooperation.

3.2. Literature Review

3.2.1. *Change of Political Approach toward North Korea*

North Korean foreign policy change is always considered to be an essential factor in the Korean Peninsula's security because among the critical conditions for the peaceful coexistence between North Korea and its neighbours is North Korean denuclearisation, which requires change in its foreign policy. During the Cold War period after the Korean War, the South Korean government tried to induce North Korean foreign policy change through regime competition (Han, 2012, p. 38). The Rhee Syngman administration insisted on unification using military power, and the Park Chung-hee administration tried to induce North Korean regime change or collapse through economic development competition (Hong, 1999; Han, 2012). These policies were based on the theory that turnover in the leadership influences a change in its foreign policy, and they sought to change North Korean foreign policy through the collapse of its regime (Stanley, 2009; Mattes, Leeds and Carroll, 2015; Pilster, Böhmelt and Tago, 2015).

However, new perceptions of North Korean policy changes began to emerge as the Cold War ended. Lee and Chun (2001, p. 190) argue that inter-Korean relations have both the identity of individual sovereign states and the divided countries' identities that want to reunite. They also argue that both Koreas need to establish a common understanding of new inter-Korean relations to overcome the gap between these two different identities (Lee and Chun, 2001). Following these arguments, the importance of collective identity began to be emphasised in inter-Korean relations, and new North Korean policies aimed to achieve a peaceful coexistence rather than sticking to the unification (Choi, 2010; S. R. Cho, 2017). This tendency was implemented for the first time in the Kim Dae-jung administration's Sunshine Policy.

The Sunshine Policy was promoted to induce a collective identity between two leaderships and the Korean peninsula's population rather than the leadership turnover of North Korea. Thus, peaceful exchanges between the two Koreas increased. As a conciliatory policy continued to be pursued during the progressive administration's tenure, the first inter-Korean summit since the Korean War was held, and private sector exchanges such as the Kaesong Industrial Complex and Mountain Kumgang tours were also organised (Ministry of Unification Republic of Korea, 2003). Despite this conciliatory atmosphere, South Korean understanding of North Korean foreign policy changed once again as North Korea developed nuclear weapons. At first, the situation seemed to stabilise as a tentative agreement was reached through the Six-party talks, but as the relations between the North and the US deteriorated and they later failed to implement the agreement, the North Korean foreign policy change mechanism also began to be re-studied in a new direction (C. H. Lee, 2008; Lee, 2016).

Since then, the Obama administration's strategic patience has been promoted in the US, and consecutive conservative governments in South Korea have taken power; South Korea induced North Korean foreign policy change through cooperation with the US by supporting their economic sanctions toward North Korea (Park, 2008; Snyder, 2009; Cha and Katz, 2011; Kim, 2016). This policy takes into account the loss-averse nature of the foreign policy change, and the critical mechanism is to induce North Korea to pursue conciliatory policies to avoid damage caused by sanctions (Lim, 2016, p. 78). However, despite tightened sanctions, North Korea continued to develop nuclear weapons and continued its aggressive policy toward the South with its military provocations, including the sinking of the ROKS Cheonan and the Yeonpyeong Island bombardment (Beck, 2011; Frank, 2018).

Amid the controversy over the achievements of different North Korea policies, the

US continues to impose sanctions on the North regardless of changes in the administration, causing controversy in South Korea over US-lead North Korea policy (Yang and Ha, 2012; Frank, 2018). Since the Moon Jae-in administration took power in 2017, some politicians have begun to argue that there should be an exchange with North Korea independent of US sanctions, which has also caused subtle conflicts between South Korea and the US (Kang, 2020). Some politicians even consider the US, which controls South Korean independent inter-Korean policy promotion, to be hindering South Korea's independent unification policy (Kang, 2020). On the contrary, some politicians and scholars argue that cooperation with the US is essential no matter the policy's direction, mainly because promoting synchronised North Korea policies with the US has more significant policy outcomes (Yoon, 2011, p. 282).

3.2.2. Different Attitudes toward US-South Korea Cooperation

Scholars who analyse the tendency of South Korean political coalition with a focus on foreign policy notion divide South Korean administration into hawks, being those who emphasise cooperation with allies and pressure on the North, and doves, meaning those who emphasise collective identity with the North and direct cooperation with them (Hix and Jun, 2009; S. R. Cho, 2017). However, this study analysed North Korea's attitude toward South Korea, focusing on the South Korean attitude toward its cooperation with the US, not on the traditional hawkish versus dovish political orientation classification. South Korea's North Korean policy can be divided into two notions based on its attitude toward cooperation with the US. The first notion is the alliance-centred notion, which emphasises the importance of the South Korea-US alliance giving a consistent signal to North Korea through policy cooperation (Cha, 2002; Cha and Katz, 2011; Kim, 2015; Kim and Gates, 2015). Secondly, the self-reliant notion emphasises promoting an independent North Korea policy that is not tied to the US's North Korea policy (Moon, 2001; Cho, 2010; Choi, 2010).

The alliance-centred notion calls for delivering a unified message to North Korea through South Korea–US cooperation based on the South Korea–US alliance. Given that South Korea’s policy objectives are peace and denuclearisation on the Korean Peninsula and North Korea’s objective is the regime’s stability, the US could play a critical role in achieving these objectives. Yoon Jong-han (2011) argues that the appeasement policy toward North Korea is more effective when there is an accord of the political notion between South Korea and the US. Victor Cha (2002) insists that it is vital to make it unsustainable for North Korea to maintain its status quo through cooperation between South Korea, the US, and Japan, and the alliance should be prepared to impose punishment even if an appeasement policy is pursued. These arguments value the impact of the US in negotiations with North Korea and serve as the basis for the argument that the South Korea–US alliance needs to engage in negotiations with North Korea in the same voice to impose North Korean cooperation.

On the contrary, the self-reliant notion is wary of overestimating the role of the US and argues that South Korea, the major actor in the inter-Korean issue, should play a leading role in the Korean Peninsula issue (Mo, 2016; Song, 2019). The self-reliant notion argues that trust between the two Koreas must be established to ensure peace on the Korean Peninsula, and South Korea should promote exchanges with North Korea in various fields (Moon, 2001). Cho Young-chul (2010) argues that the Kim Dae-jung administration’s Sunshine Policy positively impacted the formation of collective identity between the two Koreas, which helped shift the Clinton administration’s North Korea policy toward appeasement and, consequently, built trust between the two Koreas. Moon Chung-in (2011) also criticised the Lee Myung-bak administration’s hard-line, alliance-centred policy toward North Korea for being tied to rigid principles and partisan ideology and praised the Kim Dae-jung administration’s Sunshine Policy that helped build trust between the two Koreas by

separating economic and cultural exchanges from security issues. The self-reliant notion does not deny the effectiveness of policy cooperation with the US; however, it emphasises that South Korea needs to be the main actor on the Korean Peninsula issue rather than unilaterally following the US's policy notion.

This research focuses on the impact of South Korean-US cooperation because, despite the importance of this variable, the impact of Seoul-Washington relations on North Korea policy has not been studied much in previous research. Therefore, rather than examining the unity of individual administrations' foreign policy tendencies, this study seeks to analyse the impact of direct cooperation between the two countries on relations with North Korea's cooperation toward South Korea.

3.3. Theoretical Framework

3.3.1. South Korean Perception toward South Korea-US Cooperation

	<i>Self-Reliant Notion</i>	<i>Alliance-Centred Notion</i>
<i>Cooperation Focus</i>	Inter-Korean	International
<i>US Cooperation</i>	Possible Threat to North Korea	Necessary Pressure on North Korea
<i>NK Foreign Policy Change Mechanism</i>	Trust between countries (Collective Identity)	Necessity to avoid collapse of regime (loss-aversion)

Table 5 South Korean Notions on South Korea-US Cooperation.

Made by author.

The self-reliant notion claims that direct cooperation with North and collective identity formation are critical mechanisms that elicit North Korea's cooperation (G. Lee, 2008; Lee,

2009; Moon and Lee, 2009; Choi, 2010). Due to the isolative nature of the North Korean regime and the complexity of maintaining it, it is not easy for the North Korean regime to pursue its reforms or to take the initiative in cooperation with the South (Cho, 2014). Therefore, when the South takes the initiative in pursuing appeasement strategies that emphasise their collective identity and heritage, the North has tended to be less resistant and more open to cooperation (Cho, 2010). The self-reliant notion also claims that it is essential to reduce reliance on the US for the implementation of independent North Korea policy and expand the country's own security capabilities so that it can reduce US influence on the Korean Peninsula. This tendency is more likely to be at odds with the US on sanction issues (Kim, 2003; Nam, 2006). Those who support this notion basically argue that excessive security cooperation with the US could pose an existential threat to North Korea, which could ultimately serve as an excuse for Pyongyang to engage in hostile actions against Seoul (Moon and Lee, 2009; Cho, 2014).

On the other hand, when the leadership coalition values alliances, it will make efforts for alliance cooperation (Cha, 2002; Song, 2019). As such government tends to value cooperating with the US, it is possible to observe an increase in cooperation with the US within the event data. Alliance-centred notion argues that South Korea-US security cooperation is the most effective diplomatic measure to pressure North Korea and that strict responses to the North and pressure through security cooperation with the US will force the North to come to the negotiating table in the long run (Cha, 2002).

As mentioned earlier, these two tendencies are not mutually exclusive within the same leadership coalition. One of these notions may be more pronounced within a single administration, depending on the timing, and, in some cases, the tendency may change within the same administration. This study considers these changes and analyses how they

influenced North Korean cooperation to South Korea, rather than analysing the propensity of a particular administration. Table 5 summarises the characteristics of the two different notions. This study focused on the cooperation between South Korea and the US as a significant variable to divide political propensity.

3.3.2. Influence of South Korea-US Cooperation on North Korean Foreign Policy Change

North Korea claims the presence of US troops in South Korea and the implementation of the South Korea-US bilateral exercise as an existential threat to the North Korean regime (Snyder, 2000; Cho, 2014). That is the reason why Kim Jong-un demanded the cancellation of the South Korea-US bilateral exercise, and Trump accepted the demand on June 12, 2018, during the US-North Korea summit in Singapore (Shugerman, 2018). From a self-reliant notion's point of view, US-North Korea relations are less important than inter-Korean relations. While acknowledging the effect of the USFK's deterrence, they also believe that the presence of US troops in South Korea and the South Korea-US bilateral exercise will stimulate an arms race between the two Koreas, and thus the relationship with the US can be adjusted depending on the process of denuclearisation (Moon and Lee, 2009).

In other words, they believe that if excessive cooperation with the US stimulates North Korea's isolationism, it consequently causes military tension on the Korean Peninsula and provokes North Korea to pursue a nuclear program (Moon, 2001; Lee, 2009). That is why the self-reliant notion argues that asymmetry needs to be adjusted to a balanced relationship with the US (Song, 2019, p. 144). Also, they consider reducing South Korean dependence on US security support and securing the capacity to carry out their own North Korea policy to be essential factors in policy implementation. Through this process, they

argue that South Korea can install trust in the North Korean leadership and change the North's foreign policy through a mutual understanding.

Behind the self-reliant North Korea policy argument, there is controversy about the effectiveness of South Korea's policy of pressuring North Korea. Many experts have mentioned the possibility of a collapse of the North Korean regime, but no one knows yet whether the regime has faced the threat of collapse (Bennett and Lind, 2011). The administrations of Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye applied independent economic sanctions against North Korea in line with the Obama administration's "strategic patience" policy (Cha and Katz, 2011; Christensen, 2015; Kim, 2016). However, the North Korean regime did not collapse, and North Korea even completed its nuclear weapons program (Ross, 2012). Thus, the self-reliant notion argues that excessive security reliance on the US and high-intensity pressure on North Korea could provoke military action and trigger an arms race on the Korean Peninsula (Cho, 2014).

On the other hand, the alliance-centred notion recognises that strengthening cooperation between South Korea and the US is a critical element of its North Korea policy. They argue that for South Korea, the conflict deterrence function of the USFK is essential, and achieving the complete denuclearisation of North Korea through cooperation with the US is an important factor in peace on the Korean Peninsula (Song and Ryu, 2018). Alliance-centred notion also believes that the most effective strategy in negotiating with North Korea is to pressure the North by strengthening cooperation with the US in order to bring it to the negotiating table (Cha, 2002; Choi, 2018). They consider North Korea to be a rational actor and note the loss-averse aspect of North Korea's diplomacy. In other words, the change in North Korea's diplomacy happens by making them realise that they suffer a great political and economic loss when they maintain a coercive attitude toward South Korea and the US.

Competition between the two North Korea policy notions persists. The controversy over the South Korea-US cooperation has grown further as the North destroyed the Kaesong Inter-Korean Liaison Office in the North on June 16, 2020, and shifted to a hostile notion against South Korea (Bicker, 2020). Alliance-centred specialists are calling for the resumption of the suspended South Korea-US bilateral exercise to put pressure on North Korea. Meanwhile, the self-reliant notion politicians sharply criticise North Korea's actions but argues that it is impossible to undo what has been done to create a peaceful atmosphere of cooperation. They also insist that it is vital to bring the North back to the negotiating table rather than further stimulate hostile activities. After all, the main point of argument in this debate is the two sides' different assessments of cooperation with the US.

3.3.3. *Hypotheses*

As mentioned earlier, the self-reliant notion and the alliance-centred notion have different perceptions of the South Korea-US relationship. From the perspective of the self-reliant notion, inter-Korean relations are fundamentally a problem between South and North Korea, and the essential goal is to implement the capability to conduct self-reliant inter-Korean cooperation. This tendency yields a self-reliant defence policy that can reduce security dependence on the US (Ministry of National Defense Republic of Korea, 2003). The fact that one of the core objectives of the self-reliant defence policy is the transfer of wartime operational control is additional evidence for this argument (Lee, 2009; S. R. Cho, 2017). Therefore, politicians that favour self-reliant North Korea policy acknowledge the importance of cooperation with the US but do not dwell on aligning their policy with the US (S. R. Cho, 2017).

On the other hand, the alliance-centred notion makes a different argument for cooperation with the US. North Korea has not always responded favourably to Seoul's

appeasement policies. Direct cooperation with North Korea, which is claimed by self-reliant experts, calls for comprehensive reciprocity and collective identity in policy implementation. However, the question of whether reciprocity is always valid with North Korea remains controversial because, for North Korea, South Korea is not the only negotiation option. North Korea indeed has a traditional ally, China, and the North has been making more efforts to negotiate directly with the US since Pyongyang officially declared it possesses nuclear capabilities (Ji, 2001; Wu, 2005; Ha and Chun, 2010; Han, 2012). For North Korea, South Korea's proposal may be attractive, however, ultimately, lifting sanctions through negotiations with the US is more important (Snyder, 2000).

Therefore, the alliance-centred notion argues that in order for inter-Korean cooperation to appear attractive to North Korea, it is necessary to eventually strengthen the solid South Korea-US alliance, which Pyongyang fears most, and reinforce combined security cooperation with the US allies near the Korean Peninsula so that Pyongyang can approach Seoul first (Shin, 2018).

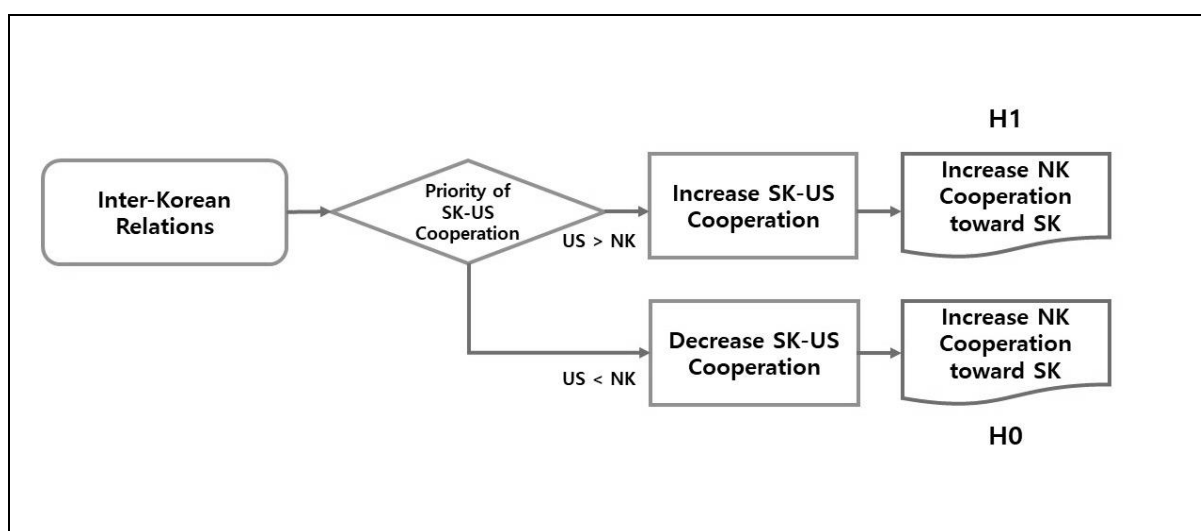


Figure 6 Effect of South Korea-US Cooperation on North Korean Foreign Policy Change.

Made by Author

H0: Increased frequency of cooperation between South Korea and the US decreases the likelihood of North Korea's cooperation toward South Korea.

H1: Increased frequency of cooperation between South Korea and the US increases the likelihood of North Korea's cooperation toward South Korea.

This study analyses whether cooperation between South Korea and the US has a negative impact on North Korea's attitude or, rather, whether it is a strategic choice to draw cooperation from the North through the VAR model. Therefore, H0 is related to the self-reliant notion's argument, and H1 supports the alliance-centred notion's argument. The self-reliant notion, which argues that the relationship between the two Koreas is meaningful in inter-Korean relations, also claims that South Korea should risk confrontation with the US if the US continues to control South Korea's independent unification policy to improve inter-Korean relations; thus, this approach would yield a tendency of relative decline in cooperation with the US. On the contrary, the alliance-centred notion tends to increase cooperation with the US because it argues that building a strong cooperative relationship with the US is crucial in improving inter-Korean relations. This chapter has analysed a North Korean foreign policy change mechanism through the VAR model based on these hypotheses.

This study is not intended to evaluate a particular administration's North Korea policy. Instead, this chapter was written to compensate for the shortcomings of existing North Korea policy research practices, which have analysed inter-Korean policies using the administration's political orientation division. The self-reliant and alliance-centred notions are not exclusive concepts that can be applied to specific political coalitions. What is clear is that North Korea policies have long-term outlooks, and the policy can be changed within a single administration depending on the domestic and international political situation.

Therefore, it is necessary to analyse the changes in North Korea policy both between and within administrations using the notion classification presented in this study and also evaluate the effectiveness of these policies from a different perspective.

3.4. Research Design

3.4.1. *Dependent Variable*

The dependent variable for this study is the change in North Korea's net cooperation toward South Korea, which was coded using the event intensity and direction of the ICEWS dataset. The direction of the event was essential for the dependent variables. Because the present research pertains to the impact of South Korea's foreign policy notion on the North Korean cooperation toward South, the dependent variable focused on North Korea's attitude toward South Korea rather than focusing on the relationship between dyad countries. In particular, because appeasement attitude is a core strategy of the self-reliant notion and an administration with a self-reliant strategy naturally has a more cooperative attitude toward North Korea, if the model had considered South Korea's cooperation toward North Korea, there is a possibility that the analysis result could have been distorted.

3.4.2. *Control Variables*

The research used the inter-Korean summit and North Korea's military provocations as a control variable. An inter-Korean summit is considered to have the effect of drawing cooperation from North Korea, at least in the short term. Based on this assessment, the study analysed whether inter-Korean summits have had a positive effect on North Korea's cooperation with the South. On the other hand, North Korea's military provocations damage South Korea politically and economically, and Pyongyang is strategically using military provocations as a card to pressure Seoul (Beck, 2011; Han, 2012; Shin, 2012). Because of the

military provocation's destructive nature, North Korea's cooperation with the South will naturally decrease if the North conducts military provocation. From a long-term perspective, however, North Korea's military provocations could be a factor in strengthening cooperation between South Korea and the US, which would pressure the North diplomatically and ultimately impose on Pyongyang's cooperation with the South.

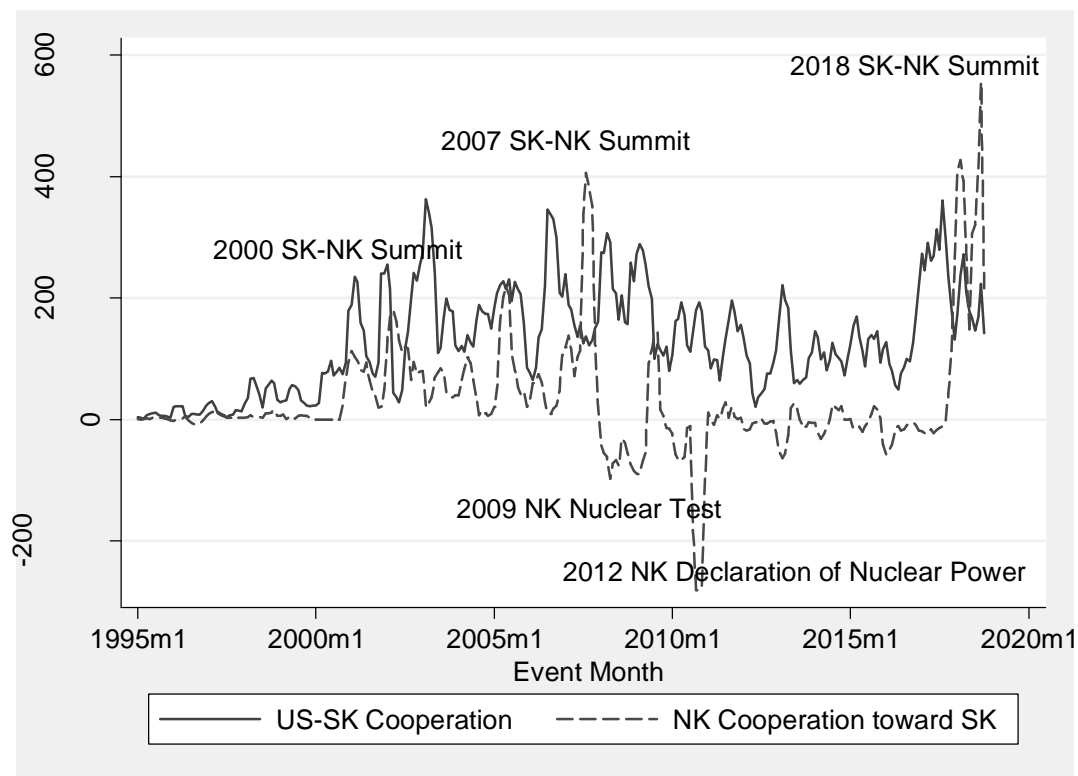
3.4.3. *Explanatory Variables*

The independent variable of interest in this research was the cooperation between the US and South Korea. The direction of the event was not taken into account when considering this variable because this study aimed to analyse the cooperation between the dyad countries within the US-South Korea relationship. The concept of net cooperation was also applied to code the independent variables: the total monthly conflict between the US and South Korea was subtracted from the total monthly cooperation between the two nations to determine the net cooperation. Table 6 presents descriptive statistics of the dependent and independent variables.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Observation</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
<i>US-SK Cooperation</i>	304	130.2796	121.8037	-1	697
<i>NK Cooperation toward SK</i>	304	29.42763	125.5356	-715	932

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics.

Made by author. Source: Boschee, Elizabeth; Lautenschlager, Jennifer; O'Brien, Sean; Shellman, Steve; Starz, James; Ward, Michael (2015) 'ICEWS Coded Event Data', <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28075>, Harvard Dataverse, V29, UNF:6:NOSHB7wyt0SQ8sMg7+w38w== [fileUNF]



Note: This graph is smoothed using a three-month moving average to make it easy to read.

Figure 7 Relations between US-SK Cooperation and NK Cooperation toward SK.

Made by author. Source: Boschee, Elizabeth; Lautenschlager, Jennifer; O'Brien, Sean; Shellman, Steve; Starz, James; Ward, Michael (2015) 'ICEWS Coded Event Data', <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28075>, Harvard Dataverse, V29, UNF:6:NOSHB7wyt0SQ8sMg7+w38w== [fileUNF]

A time series graph of US-South Korea cooperation and North Korean cooperation toward South Korea reveals the characteristics of self-reliant argument. As assumed in the hypothesis zero, North Korean cooperation toward South Korea has decreased as US-South Korea cooperation has improved (Figure 7). These tendencies begin to be visible after 2002 when the Agreed Framework was practically nullified. However, it is necessary to analyse the data using statistical models. Because, assuming that there is a causal relationship between

the two events and that there is a specific lagged term, it can be seen that relations between South Korea and the US have a positive coefficient with North Korean cooperation toward South Korea.

3.4.4. *Vector Autoregressive Model*

Although Figure 7 is a descriptive time series graph without statistical analysis, this graph illustrates the general tendency of how North Korean cooperation changes in relation to specific diplomatic incidents between the US and South Korea. To further analyse the data statistically, a Vector Autoregressive (VAR) model was used to test the hypotheses. A VAR model is a system with multiple equations in which each dependent variable is regressed to the previous value of the same variable and other dependent variables (Moon, 1997). The model employed for this study used two variables: (1) net US-South Korea cooperation, and (2) net North Korean cooperation toward South Korea.

Because the behaviour of the two variables toward one another is usually affected by the others' behaviour, both variables are treated as endogenous. An Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) test, a Hannan-Quinn Information Criterion (HQIC) test, and the likelihood ratio (LR) test for lag length were used to find appropriate lag lengths. One lag variable, four, is included in the model based on the results of diagnostic statistics for the specification of the lag length (Appendix 3). Accordingly, in the model, the behaviour of the US and South Korea over the previous four months is assumed to affect the reactions of North Korea.

Two control variables were identified, namely North Korean military provocation (NKMPV) and inter-Korean summit (SKNKS). The NKMPV is a dummy variable: in a given month, if North Korean military provocation with military or civilian casualties occurs or if there is a nuclear or missile test, a value of 1 is assigned; months without these conditions are assigned the value is 0. SKNKS is also a dummy variable, the value of which is 1 if a specific

month has an inter-Korean summit, whereas the value is 0 for months without. NKMPV is a negative factor for North Korean cooperation toward South Korea while SKNKS is a positive factor.

This research used Granger causality and impulse response analysis for the estimation of the VAR model. Specifically, the coefficient of the lagged variable was tested first. Although the significance of an individual lagged term is considered to be less critical than the combined lagged coefficients' significance in the VAR analysis, it can be useful to analyse the significance of each lagged term in order to determine which lagged terms of variables have influences on each equation's dependent variables (Yoon, 2011). It is plausible that, even after a certain period of time has passed, the behaviour of one actor might still affect that of another actor. Second, so as to examine the systemic behaviour and all the coefficients that describe the variables' dynamics, the study used a Granger causality test. The Granger causality test uses F-tests in the VAR model to estimate whether lagged independent variables affect unlagged dependent variables. The result of each F-test explains the significance of Granger causality by analysing the joint significance of one explanatory variable with all its lags on the dependent variable (Yoon, 2011).

Third, to verify the impact of Seoul-Washington relations on North Korea's cooperation with the South, impulse response analysis was used. Simulating shocks to each equation model enabled the analysis of the specific characteristics of responses in the system (Moon, 1997). Impulse response graphs were produced to assess how the system of equations would react to a positive, one standard deviation shock to an individual variable. Through the impulse response test, this study verified which changes in South Korea-US relations would result in changes in North Korea's cooperation with the South. Through these three statistical analyses, this research comprehensively examines how changes in cooperation between

South Korea and the US affect North Korea's cooperation with the South.

3.5. Findings

<i>Equation</i>	<i>Interaction</i>	<i>Lag term</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>
<i>NK to SK</i>	US-SK	4	.1473492***
	Cooperation		
	Inter-Korean	-	427.0124***
	Summit		
<i>US-SK</i>	NK Provocation	-	-70.92886***
	NK Provocation	-	50.99915**
<i>Cooperation</i>			

Note: SK=South Korea, US=United States, NK=North Korea, *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Table 7 VAR Result.

Made by author. Source: Boschee, Elizabeth; Lautenschlager, Jennifer; O'Brien, Sean; Shellman, Steve; Starz, James; Ward, Michael (2015) 'ICEWS Coded Event Data', <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28075>, Harvard Dataverse, V29, UNF:6:NOSHB7wyt0SQ8sMg7+w38w== [fileUNF]

Time series data used in VAR models need to be stationary tested. All time-series data in this study have been verified as stationary through the Augmented Dickey-Fuller test (Appendix 4). Later, to determine the appropriate lag length, this research used the AIC, HQIC, and LR test (Appendix 3). One lag of the variable was included in the model, based on the results of diagnostic statistics for the specification of the lag length. Because the LR, AIC, and HQIC analysed four as the appropriate lag lengths for this model, the model utilised four for its lag lengths. Therefore, it was assumed that the behaviour of states over the previous four months affected the reactions of each related state's behaviour in the model.

An examination of the results of the initial VAR model analysis reveals a good overall fit of the model, with R-squared values that range from .36 to .16. Table 7 presents the results of the VAR analysis. For the equation of North Korean cooperation toward South

Korea, the VAR results show that North Korean cooperation toward the South is affected by US-South Korea cooperation. The four lagged terms of the US-South Korea cooperation—that is, the US-South Korea relationship four months before the event on the dependent variable—is statistically significant at the 99 per cent level.

The result means that US-South Korea cooperation has a significant impact on North Korean cooperation toward the South, as claimed by the hypothesis one. Notably, the result shows that South Korea-US cooperation is likely to induce North Korea's cooperation with the South; ultimately, South Korea-US cooperation is more likely to work positively to draw cooperation with the North and function as an effective means of pressuring the North, whereas similarly positive outcomes are less likely to result as an effect of undermining the trust between the two Koreas by threatening the survival of the North Korean regime. As a result, North Korea policy are likely to be effective when they are supported by cooperation between Seoul and Washington.

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Chi²</i>	<i>p ></i>
<i>NK to SK</i>	US-SK Cooperation	17.479	0.002***

Note: SK=South Korea, US=United States, NK=North Korea, *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Table 8 Granger Causality Test Result.

Made by author. Source: Boschee, Elizabeth; Lautenschlager, Jennifer; O'Brien, Sean; Shellman, Steve; Starz, James; Ward, Michael (2015) 'ICEWS Coded Event Data', <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28075>, Harvard Dataverse, V29, UNF:6:NOSHB7wyt0SQ8sMg7+w38w== [fileUNF]

Table 8 presents the Granger causality test result for the VAR model. Like the VAR model result, the Granger causality test also confirmed that North Korean cooperation toward

South Korea has a causal relation with US-South Korea cooperation. This result, like the results of the VAR model and the Granger causality test, attests to the argument of the hypothesis one that positive changes in US-South Korea relations could positively influence North Korean cooperation toward South Korea. This result could be evidence to support the positive effect of cooperation between South Korea and the US in North-South relations.

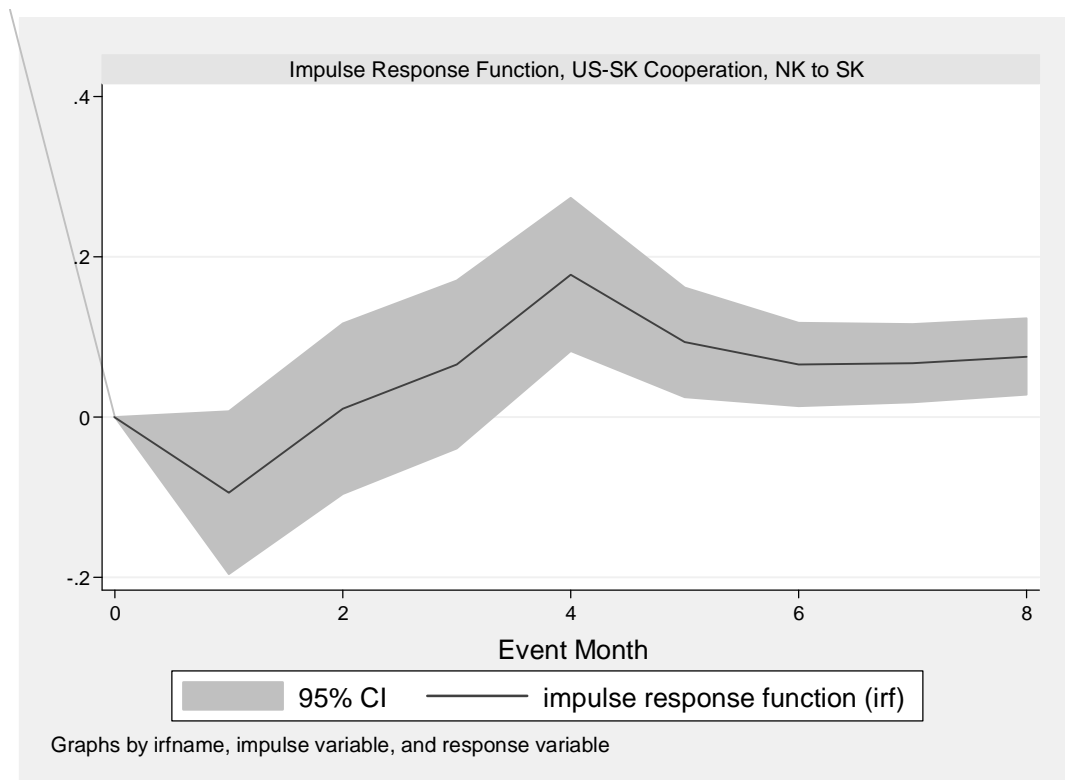


Figure 8 Impulse-Response Test Result.

Made by author. Source: Boschee, Elizabeth; Lautenschlager, Jennifer; O'Brien, Sean; Shellman, Steve; Starz, James; Ward, Michael (2015) 'ICEWS Coded Event Data', <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28075>, Harvard Dataverse, V29, UNF:6:NOSHB7wyt0SQ8sMg7+w38w== [fileUNF]

This argument is also confirmed through the impulse response test. North Korea's cooperation toward South Korea declined in the short term when simulating changes in South Korea-US relations, but, after about four months, the North's cooperation appears to increase. In other words, South Korea-US cooperation is positively significant in the long term, even

though it decreases North Korea's cooperation toward South Korea in the short term. This is a meaningful test result that can resolve, to some extent, the ongoing debate on the effectiveness of South Korea-US cooperation on inter-Korean relations.

In conclusion, South Korea-US cooperation is likely to have a positive impact on inducing North Korea's cooperation. From the perspective of immediate changes, as observed in the descriptive statistics, cooperation between South Korea and the US may appear to have a negative impact on North Korea's cooperation with the South. The descriptive figure (Figure 2) seems to show an increase in cooperation between South Korea and the US, while North Korea's cooperation with the South decreases. This tendency has been the primary evidence in creating scepticism about South Korea-US cooperation. However, after analysing data with the VAR model, South Korea-US cooperation actually has a positive influence on North Korean cooperation toward the South. Specifically, North Korea's cooperation tends to increase four months after the increase in South Korea-US cooperation.

3.6. Conclusion

Referring to the findings of this study, it can be concluded that North Korea has a strong tendency to respond to South Korea-US cooperation with a loss-averse characteristic. Shortly after the two allies showed signs of strengthening their cooperation, North Korea showed a tendency to take a hard-line stance on the South Korea-US cooperation, making it seem like there is a negative effect on North Korean cooperation toward the South. Ultimately, however, the North has shifted to a conciliatory attitude to resume negotiations if it is convinced that Seoul and Washington will not give in to the North's tough negotiation policy and that if Seoul and Washington stop responding to the negotiations, the opportunity to lift the UN sanctions will be eliminated.

While the major finding of this study is that South Korea-US cooperation positively

affects North Korean cooperation toward South Korea, it is necessary to note that this cooperation has usually been enacted with a time difference. The process of foreign policy change takes a considerable amount of time as it is necessary to analyse changes in the international and domestic political environments and establish strategies to react to these changes. This principle is also valid for North Korea, which, in particular, tends to disrupt South Korea–US cooperation through military provocations and, in the short term, rhetorical threats. The VAR analysis also showed that North Korea tends to respond negatively to US–South Korea cooperation in the short term; however, North Korea changed its attitude after a specific time. This finding suggests that South Korea needs to simultaneously establish domestic and foreign strategies to cope with this cooling-off period in the process of pursuing its policy toward North Korea.

For example, the political situation was not favourable just before the Moon Jae-in administration's first inter-Korean summit in 2018. North Korea conducted a nuclear test on September 3, 2017, and US President Donald Trump also publicly mentioned the possibility of military action against the North (YTN, 2017; Ministry of National Defense Republic of Korea, 2018). The Moon Jae-in administration emphasised the restoration of inter-Korean relations before taking power (dongA.com, 2017). However, it pushed for a hard-line policy toward North Korea, opting to strengthen cooperation with the US rather than use an appeasement approach to the North due to the worsening situation caused by the North's nuclear test (Jung and Kim, 2017). On September 8, South Korea and US deployed additional Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) systems in South Korea to strengthen missile deterrence against the North.(Jung and Kim, 2017) Inter-Korean relations were expected to continue to deteriorate as North Korea responded with a ballistic missile test (Ministry of National Defense Republic of Korea, 2018, p. 263). On the contrary, the North

has changed its attitude since 2018: the inter-Korean summit was held on April 27, 2018, and the first US-North Korea summit in history occurred on June 12. As is shown in the finding of this research, the response based on concrete South Korea-US cooperation showed a positive influence on the North Korean attitude toward the South a few months later.

This study has an academic contribution in that it analysed the impact of cooperation between two countries on another country's policy change. It also has policy implications, especially for South Korean security policy-makers, that it sheds light on evaluating the controversial impact of South Korea-US cooperation toward North Korean foreign policy change. North Korea policy can sometimes be conciliatory, sometimes hard-line. However, it is important for policy-makers to note that such South Korea-US cooperation is likely to have a positive impact on the North's cooperation, no matter whether the policy has a conciliatory or hard-liner direction.

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3.8. Appendices

<i>Lag</i>	<i>LR</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>AIC</i>	<i>HQIC</i>
0			24.6319	24.6631
1	106.79	0.000	24.2804	24.3323
2	12.615	0.013	24.2639	24.3366
3	12.817	0.012	24.2468	24.3403
4	18.553*	0.001	24.2093*	24.3235*

Appendix 3 Lag Length Test Result

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Test Result</i>
<i>US-SK Cooperation</i>	-11.004***
<i>NK to SK</i>	-9.643***

Note: *** denotes significance at the 1% level

Appendix 4 Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Result

4. Naval Force Transition: Effects of Naval Force Enhancement on Interstate Cooperation

Abstract

East Asia is geographically far from the US, so the power competition between the US and China focuses on naval power competition, especially between China and the US' traditional East Asian allies, South Korea and Japan. This chapter argues the naval force transition theory that complemented the power transition theory, focusing the growth of the South Korean Navy and the cooperation of the US toward South Korea, and analyses the correlation between naval force enhancement and interstate cooperation. This study used the naval tonnage and proportion dataset and analysed the naval forces of South Korea, China, the US 7th Fleet, and Japan from 1999 to 2019. The US cooperation toward South Korea is aggregated with the concept of net cooperation by the Integrated Confidential Early Warning System (ICEWS) dataset. According to the Vector Autoregressive (VAR) model, the US strengthened cooperation with its ally, South Korea, to prevent naval force transition when the proportion of the Chinese navy in the region increased. On the other hand, when the proportion of the South Korean Navy increased, the US managed its cooperation effort and decreased cooperative events with South Korea. The finding noted the importance of naval force as an essential variable in analysing international relations in Northeast Asia.

Keywords: Naval Force, Power Transition, Offshore balancing, US-South Korea relations, US-China Relations

4.1. Introduction

As naval strategist James Cable (1994) argues, naval forces can achieve political objectives through limited physical exertion, and naval deployment alone can expand a country's influence within the region (Cable, 1994). The naval force build-up and sea control, which utilises these strategic characteristics, is one of the most frequently used regional conflict strategies. This chapter focuses on the relations between the naval force build-up and

cooperation. The interaction between naval force and interstate cooperation is not a new phenomenon. Britain supported Japan's naval build-up, signed the Anglo-Japanese alliance, and ultimately thwarted Russia's intervention in East Asia in the early 1900s (Gow, Hiram and Chapman, 2003). Now, the US is trying to secure naval supremacy over China in East Asia through cooperation with regional allies (Till, 2015).

This chapter analyses the relationship between the naval force build-up and cooperation and theorises the relation between the two. In particular, this chapter focuses on the Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN), which has achieved rapid growth in the last 20 years. The development of the ROKN began in 1974 when the Park Chung-hee administration carried out a massive modernisation of its defence under the *Yulgok* program as a policy countermeasure to the Nixon Doctrine, emphasising the reorganisation of the US foreign deployment (Bowers, 2013). The *Yulgok* project was carried out until 1992 through different administrations, and during this period, the ROKN, which relied heavily on US military supplies after the Korean War, built a significant naval force, armed with self-developed destroyers, frigates, and submarines (Bowers, 2013).

At that time, the main focus of the South Korean naval force modernisation was on North Korean military provocation (Bowers, 2013). In 1992, the South Korean Ministry of National Defense assessed that the North Korean Navy had 445 combat ships, including 25 submarines, which overwhelmed the ROKN by the number of assets (Ministry of National Defense Republic of Korea, 1992). At the same time, however, experts said that the North Korean military's strength could not be the same as the same-sized South Korean or US forces because of its lack of readiness due to aging equipment or limited training caused by economic reasons (O'Hanlon, 1998). Furthermore, since the end of the *Yulgok* program in 1992, the justification for the ROKN's build-up has been weakening due to the economic

crisis in North Korea, which presumably damaged North Korean military readiness.

What changed this situation was Admiral Ahn Byung-tae's declaration of blue-water navy construction when he took office as the Chief of Naval Operations in 1995 (Kim and Kim, 2012). He declared in his inauguration speech, "With the construction of the blue-water navy, our navy will be equipped with three-dimensional mission capability that harmonises surface, underwater, air, and amphibious force." (Kim and Kim, 2012, p. 106) Since then, various arguments have been raised to support the blue-water navy construction, including South Korea's high dependence on trade, trade dependence on sea transport, and neighbouring countries' naval build-up (Lee, 2013; Song, 2019). South Korea has built three 3,000-ton destroyers between 1998 and 2000, six 4,500-ton destroyers between 2003 and 2008, and three AEGIS destroyers from 2008 to 2012 (Bowers, 2013). ROKN has also built ten self-developed submarines since 1998 and built a 15,000-ton helicopter carrier in 2007, which has resulted in their acquiring blue-water operation capabilities (Bowers, 2013).

International politics has also undergone significant changes since 2000. The Cold War world order has long since collapsed, and China has emerged as a new economic and military power. In particular, China's naval build-up has taken place at a rapid pace. China's economy has continued to grow, and as of 2010, it has emerged as the world's second-largest economy by GDP (World Bank, 2020). Since the early 2000s, its growth has made it the most potent naval force in the region, and the gap with neighbouring countries has widened since 2005 (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2010). From this time on, the maritime conflict between the US and China began to become more visible. If cross-strait relations triggered a significant dispute between the US and China until the late 1990s, the maritime dispute over the South China Sea emerged as a major political conflict between the US and China after the late 2000s.

To react to China's military growth, the US has made efforts to manage China's rise in various ways. The Obama administration promoted Asia-centred policies under the motto of Pivot to Asia as its primary strategy (Ross, 2012; Christensen, 2015; Anderson and Cha, 2017). In addition to its efforts to integrate China into the international community, it also increased cooperation with its regional allies to manage China risk in the future (Cha and Katz, 2011). The US has augmented cooperation with its East Asian regional allies, South Korea and Japan, as a policy priority in establishing the Indo-Pacific strategy (The US Department of Defense, 2019).

In line with this regional situation change, the US attitude toward South Korean naval build-up has gradually changed. Until the *Yulgok* program, South Korea also tended to become independent of the US influence, and the cooperation between the two navies was insufficient because the US had the character of a blue-water navy while the ROKN was mainly composed of coastal operations assets against North Korea (Bowers, 2013; Lee, 2013). However, in the 2000s, ROKN became capable of blue-water operation, and the US re-evaluated the strategic advantages of cooperation with South Korea. Bilateral exercises between ROKN and US Navy (USN) were held regularly, and the Commander, US Naval Forces Korea (CNFK) stationed in South Korea, which was located inside the US Forces Korea base in Seoul, was entirely moved to the ROK Fleet command's compound in Busan in 2016 (Commander US Naval Forces Korea Public Affairs, 2015; Ministry of National Defense Republic of Korea, 2018).

The current international political situation in East Asia resembles that of East Asia just before the Russo-Japanese War. Britain's strategic decision to form the Anglo-Japanese alliance with Japan, which had been increasing its naval influence, is similar to the way the US has strengthened its cooperation with South Korea to control China's growing influence.

The following sections will explain the detailed mechanism, but it is not a coincidence that naval forces emerge as a major factor in these two historical events. The political characteristics of naval forces described earlier explain why naval forces appear to be an important factor in similar historical events.

4.2. Literature Review

4.2.1. Political Influence of Naval Force

Previous research has studied the political influence of naval force in various directions. Naval force is sometimes used as a policy instrument to achieve specific political objectives or unintentionally influence domestic politics (Mahan, 1918; Cable, 1994, 1998). After analysing the use of naval force in Britain, France, and other European countries from 1660 to 1783, Alfred Mahan, a naval strategist, argues that the projection of naval force through naval strategies, unlike traditional military strategies, could achieve decisive victories in peacetime or wartime that would be difficult to achieve by traditional armed force projection (Mahan, 1918, p. 23). Mahan also emphasises that a country's naval force capacities are directly related to its national power as most of the country's commerce takes place through the sea and the naval force's unique mobility can be a powerful means of pressuring the adversary (Mahan, 1918, p. 90). As Mahan argues, the importance of maritime transportation remains valid in modern times. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) remarks "around 80 per cent of global trade by volume and over 70 per cent of global trade by value are carried by sea" (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2018).

James Cable, a British naval strategist, establishes the concept of gunboat diplomacy, noting the political use of limited naval force (Cable, 1994). He categorises the characteristics of naval force as (1) Definitive Force, (2) Purposeful Force, (3) Catalytic Force, and (4)

Expressive Force (Cable, 1994). The definitive force characteristics refer to the use of limited naval power (primarily through physical measures) to produce a political outcome (Cable, 1994, p. 33). On the other hand, the characteristics of purposeful, catalytic, and expressive force are unique characteristics of naval forces that are distinguished from those of other military forces, such as the projection of naval force for indirect political influence (catalytic force) or specific political purposes (purposeful force) or the creation of political influence only through the possession of certain naval assets such as aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines (expressive force) (Cable, 1994, 1998). Unlike Mahan, Cable did not focus on the naval force entity itself but its characteristics and limited use.

While scholars such as Mahan and Cable mainly focused on the political use of the naval force in the past, Gartzke and Lindsay (2020) study the strategic aspect of naval force's political use and presented a new perspective. In their analysis, they emphasise two characteristics of naval forces. First, a naval force's projection capability allows them to intervene in more disputes with less risk (Gartzke and Lindsay, 2020, p. 603). Second, building and maintaining a naval force requires significant time and expense, while such forces are more vulnerable to coastal defence than expected (Gartzke and Lindsay, 2020, p. 610). They argue that the superior mobility of the naval force increases the conflict initiators' belligerence, while its vulnerability makes it easier for target countries to provoke them, which, contrary to navalists' beliefs, destabilises international affairs (Gartzke and Lindsay, 2020).

Although not covered in detail in this chapter, the political impact of naval force also affects domestic politics. Böhmelt et al.(2017) argue that the larger the navy is in comparison to the army, the more likely a coup will occur. They noted that, due to naval officers' recruitment characteristics, naval leaderships often belong to the middle class more often

compared to similar leadership in the army, and naval bases are relatively closer to cities, allowing the navy to better understand the middle class's grievances (Böhmelt, Pilster and Tago, 2017). This argument again shows that the organisational characteristics of the naval force have specific characteristics suitable for exerting political influence.

Thus, as previous literature has established, the naval force has various significant political influences internationally and domestically. However, there has been minimal research regarding the relationships between the naval force build-up and interstate cooperation. There are various reasons why countries may increase their cooperation with other nations. Two states can cooperate for security purposes or may increase exchanges for economic benefits (Robst, Polachek and Chang, 2007; Smith, 2009). Countries that need cooperation will expand their cooperation through cooperative events such as official visit exchanges, agreements, and economic support (Berger, 2000; Weeks, 2003; Robst, Polachek and Chang, 2007; Chanlett-Avery, Kronstadt and Vaughn, 2020). With 80 percent of world trade taking place via maritime transport, the revisionist states' naval build-up and the risk of damaging the freedom of navigation is making the naval force a more critical variable for cooperation (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2018).

Although this phenomenon has not been noted academically, the naval force's influence on interstate cooperation is not a new phenomenon. In the early 19th century, Britain sought various strategies to check Russia's growing influence in East Asia and to protect its interests in China (Kim, 2005, 2008). At that time, the British tried to suppress Russian progression by utilising their naval force considering the political characteristics of the navy. However, managing the expansion of Russian influence through naval reinforcement at the Singapore naval base was thwarted due to limitations in naval assets and budget (Gow, Hiram and Chapman, 2003). At that time, Britain's interest in Japan, which

had emerged as an emerging naval power in the region, was heightened. Although the Russian navy outnumbered the Japanese naval force at that time, Britain believed that it would be able to check Russia, Germany, and France in Asia if it supported Japanese naval enhancement while promoting cooperation with Japan (Gow, 2003).

Later, Britain indirectly supported Japan's naval build-up, increasing their official exchange with Japan (Gow, Hiram and Chapman, 2003). As a consequence of this enhancement, the Japanese navy had greater power than the Russian 1st Pacific Squadron deployed in East Asia (Kim, 2005, p. 351), and the naval cooperation led to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance signed on January 30, 1902 (Gow, 2003; Kim, 2005, 2008). Britain's naval force-based cooperation strategy achieved strategic success because Japan vanquished Russia in the Russo-Japanese war and protected the Anglo-Japanese naval hegemony in East Asia (Gow, 2003). The development of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in the early 19th century is an empirical example that demonstrates how relations between a naval force enhancement and interstate cooperation operate, in which Britain strengthened cooperation with Japan to support the Japanese naval force enhancement in order to maintain sea control of the East Asia.

This type of strategic cooperation continued to occur in East Asia. Based on its supreme naval power, the US dominated East Asian sea control for a considerable time after World War II. At that time, China, which had an inferior naval force, resisted US sea control through its anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) strategy based on the concept of sea denial. However, the escalation of China's rapid naval power enhancement made it difficult for the US 7th Fleet to maintain sea control in East Asia. Freedom of navigation conflict between the US and China in the South China Sea has revealed this situation change. Previously, overwhelming US naval power had dominated the maritime order in East Asia; however,

following the growth of the Chinese navy, China began to actively challenge this hegemonic sea control. As such, competition between the US and China in East Asia was centred on the political influence of naval forces.

4.2.2. *Naval Force Transition*

Various theories have been developed to explain the conflict between the hegemon and the challenger. Organski (1980) argues that there is a high probability of conflict when power transition occurs between a rapidly growing challenger and a slow-growing hegemonic power. The perception of China's rise as a future threat has been studied mainly using power transition theory. The Chinese threat perception is based on China's rapid economic and military growth and the US's slow growth with the assumption that China will quickly surpass US national power (Lemke and Tammen, 2003; Ikenberry, 2008; Mearsheimer, 2010; Kim and Gates, 2015).

Of course, there are counter-arguments against China's threat perception. In the 2000s, as China was becoming a part of the liberal world order, many scholars expected that the US and China's power transition would be a peaceful shift, just as Britain's power shift to the US had been peaceful. Ikenberry (2008) argues that in the future, China could have peaceful power shifts with the US and become an important actor within the international system built by the US, considering China's accession to various international organisations that began with China's entry into the UN. Jeffery (2009) also argues that the historical analogy negatively influenced China's image on the Chinese threat perception.

However, unlike the prospects of these studies in the 2000s, relations between the US and China have deteriorated since mid-2010. During Trump's presidency, the US and China continued trade war, a US-China maritime dispute has been taking place in the South China Sea, and China has imposed sanctions on US companies as the US continues to sell weapons

to Taiwan (Freund, 2017; Liu and Woo, 2018; Davidson, 2020). China implemented the Belt and Road initiative and began to create its own international financial organisations, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) (Yu, 2017; Kim, 2018). In response, the US has pressured its allies to impose sanctions on Chinese companies, such as Huawei, and is preparing for military pressure by building a Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) (Chanlett-Avery, Kronstadt and Vaughn, 2020; Stacey, 2020). Unfortunately, in 2020, the US–China relationship is closer to the alliance transition situation than a peaceful power shift.

The power competition between the US and China could emerge as a naval competition in the East Asian region. There are three reasons why naval force should be considered as a vital element of this power transition in the region. The first reason is that the US and China are geographically far from each other. Neither powerful ground troops nor air forces in the US or mainland China pose a significant threat to either country as the Pacific Ocean lies between China and the US, and the strait distance between Washington and Beijing is 11,139 kilometres far. The second reason is that both the US and China are nuclear powers. A war between the two nuclear weapons states, which would result in mutually assured destruction, is not a realistic assumption. Finally, the economies of the two countries are extremely intertwined. China is the US's third-largest trading partner and the best supplier of manufactured goods in the US, and as of 2019, China recorded a surplus of \$345.2 billion in trade with the US (US Department of Commerce, 2020).

According to the power transition theory, the rapid growth of challenger states and the power transition between a hegemonic power and a challenger increase the probability of conflict (Organski and Kugler, 1980). The hegemonic power needs to maintain its supremacy over the challengers to prevent a power transition (Organski and Kugler, 1980). However, East Asia's problem is that, since this power competition appears as competition in the naval

build-up, it is difficult for the hegemonic power to control power transition, particularly if the challenger rapidly builds its naval force in a short period. It is difficult for the US to overcome this disadvantage due to the budget and time-consuming nature of naval forces and the fact that China has geographical advantages.

The increase in the Chinese tonnage proportion of naval forces in the region and the decrease in allied naval forces mean increased naval force transition probability in East Asia. The US needs to increase its cooperation with allies to avoid the naval force transition in this circumstance while strengthening its naval force in material or operational means. Considering this circumstance, the tonnage proportion of allied naval forces, especially those in East Asia, is a significant variable for the US' cooperation prioritisation in East Asia.

4.2.3. Offshore Balancing: Relations between Naval Force Transition and Cooperation

For quite a long time, the US maintained its supremacy on sea power in East Asia through the US 7th Fleet in Japan. The US 7th Fleet, based in Yokosuka, Japan, is the most powerful US fleet, with one aircraft carrier, ten surface vessels, and four large amphibious ships capable of carrying out large-scale amphibious operations (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2020a). Although the US has taken the sea control in East Asia based on this naval force superiority, the recent rapid growth of People's Liberation Army Navy (Chinese Navy, PLAN) has led to the US's need to establish a new strategy. Recently, the US showed its vigilance against China's naval build-up on its military and security development report on China, using the phrase "world's largest navy" based on the number of assets in the PLAN (Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2020, p. 44). Considering China's growing military strength and geographic proximity, it is now practically impossible to overwhelm China's military power with the US 7th Fleet alone.

In terms of the international political situation, Britain in the early 20th century and the US in the 2000s have three common characteristics. The first characteristic is the possession of regional interests. Currently, the US also has vital interests in East Asia. In 2019, China (3rd), Japan (4th), South Korea (6th), and Taiwan (10th) were all at the top of the trade rankings with the US (US Department of Commerce, 2020). If one includes India and Vietnam, which have to use East Asia's Sea Lane of Communication (SLOC) for their trade with the US, the trade volume between the US and major Asian partners comprised 25 percent of its total trade (US Department of Commerce, 2020). The second common characteristic is that there is a rival state in the region. The US recognised China's rapid growth, territorial claims in the South China Sea, and attempts to form a Chinese-centred economic community through the Belt and Road initiative as a challenge to the US-centred liberal order (Ross, 2006; Kim and Gates, 2015; Yu, 2017; Du and Zhang, 2018). Finally, in both circumstances, a total war with a rival state is either impractical or unlikely. Although the US is currently the world's most powerful military power, a total war with nuclear power China is a costly option (Rubel, 2012, p. 28).

The problem is that despite the US military supremacy, it is difficult for the US to focus its power on a specific region in a short time as the US Navy has a wide area of operations. As a way to overcome these limitations, Mearsheimer and Walt (2016) proposed an offshore balancing strategy. They believe the idea that the US should be the guardian of the liberal world or that the US should deploy a significant level of its troops in major conflict areas to maintain peace is an overestimation of US military capability (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2016). Therefore, they argue that the US needs to adopt an offshore balancing strategy to manage the emerging China risk by avoiding the additional deployment of US troops in East Asia but working closely with East Asian allies to maintain a balance of power

(Mearsheimer and Walt, 2016, p. 73). The offshore balancing strategy suggests power balancing by strengthening relations with regional allies through continuous official contacts, agreements, and government-level exchanges.

With China's rapid naval build-up, the Chinese tonnage proportion of naval force in the region is rising. Although neighbouring countries are also increasing their naval forces, China's rapid growth has led to a continued decline in the tonnage proportion held by US allies' naval forces. In line with this strategic circumstance, the US, in its current India-Pacific strategy, emphasised cooperation with its allies in the East Asian region.

4.3. Theoretical Framework

4.3.1. *Naval Force Transition in East Asia*

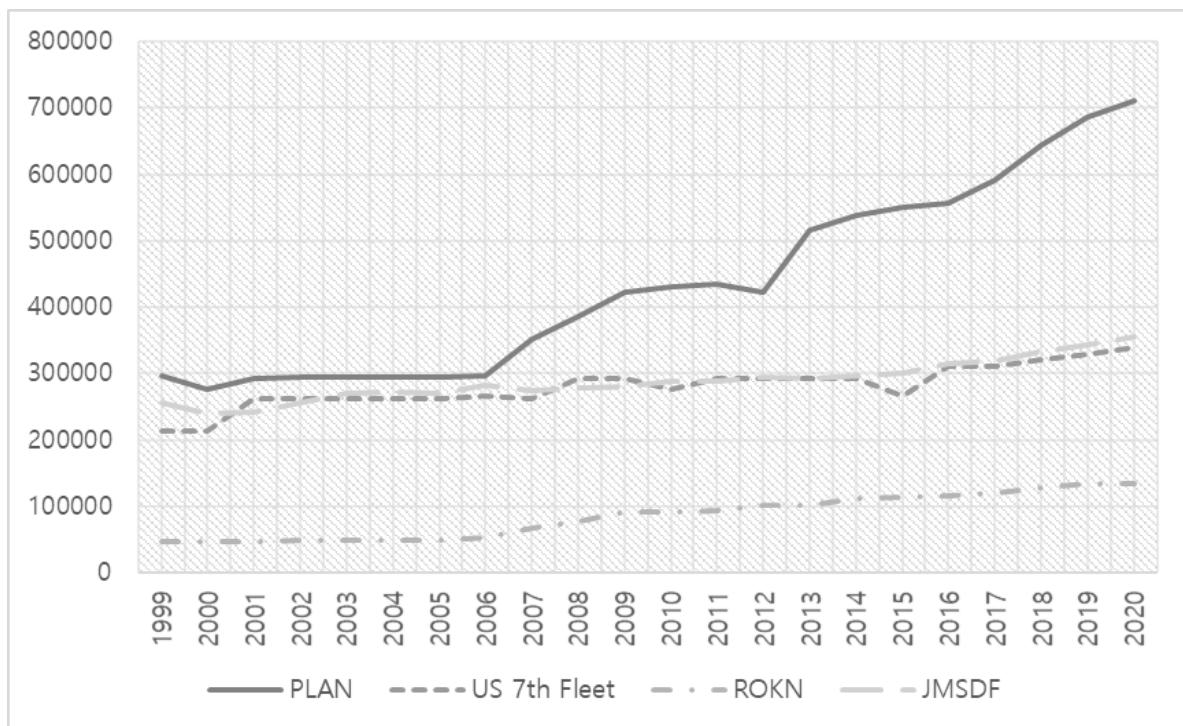


Figure 9 Naval Force Presence in East Asia (Tonnage).

Data collected from Military Balance 1999-2020 and aggregated by author. Aggregation detail is explained in the research design section of this chapter.

Although the US 7th Fleet is only a dispatched force, it is the largest dispatched fleet of the USN, and the 7th Fleet is more potent than the navies of most countries around the world. PLAN, which is at odds with the US 7th Fleet, is also the largest naval force in the region, as shown in Figure 9. Nevertheless, the US has maintained naval supremacy in the East Asian region because of its cooperation with its allies. The US 7th Fleet maintains close cooperation with Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) because its forces are deployed in Yokosuka, Japan, and its commander and staff are also stationed in Japan.

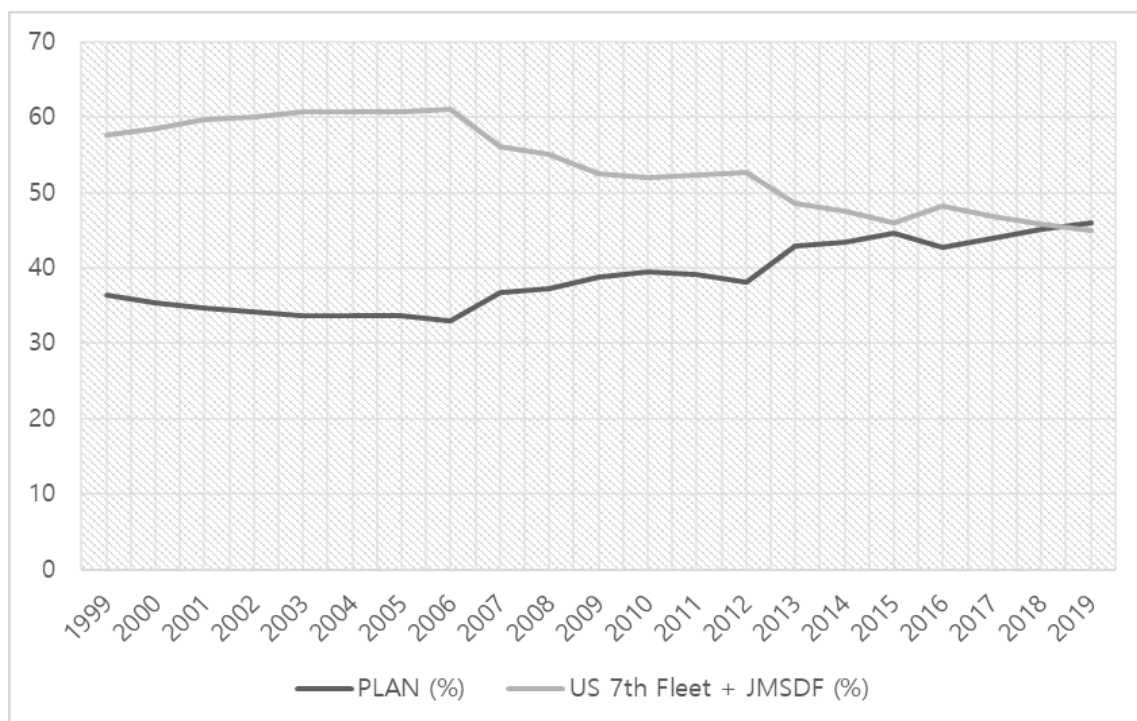


Figure 10 Naval Force Regional Proportion Comparison.

Data collected from Military Balance 1999-2020 and aggregated by author. Aggregation detail is explained in the research design section of this chapter.

However, China's rapid naval force expansion has made it difficult to maintain this naval supremacy. Despite the sustained growth of JMSDF, China's naval force build-up has overwhelmed its pace. The regional proportion gap between PLAN and US 7th Fleet plus

JMSDF has narrowed since 2006, and in 2019, the PLAN's naval force took the lead against its competitors (Figure 10). For the US, this is a significant strategic burden. The USN is continuously expanding its deployment of the 7th Fleet, but it cannot increase the number of assets as dramatically as the PLAN's growth. The JMSDF is also limited as it does not have access to an enormous budget like China does to increase its assets in the short term (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2020b).

Against this backdrop, the US needs to increase its cooperation with South Korea, another ally in the region and a growing naval power, to gain an upper hand as an allied naval force and prevent a naval force transition in East Asia. Supporting allies' naval build-up by various means, such as by increasing bilateral military interoperability or the authorisation of a US-developed high-tech weapon system to those countries, will increase the proportion of allied naval forces in the region. Consequently, as an increase in the Chinese naval force's tonnage proportion in the region will heighten the probability of the naval force transition, Chinese naval build-up will positively influence US cooperation with allies in the region. Second, a decrease in the ROKN's tonnage proportion in the region, regardless of the ROKN's overall tonnage change, can also be a factor in influencing cooperation between the US and South Korea.

4.3.2. Hypotheses

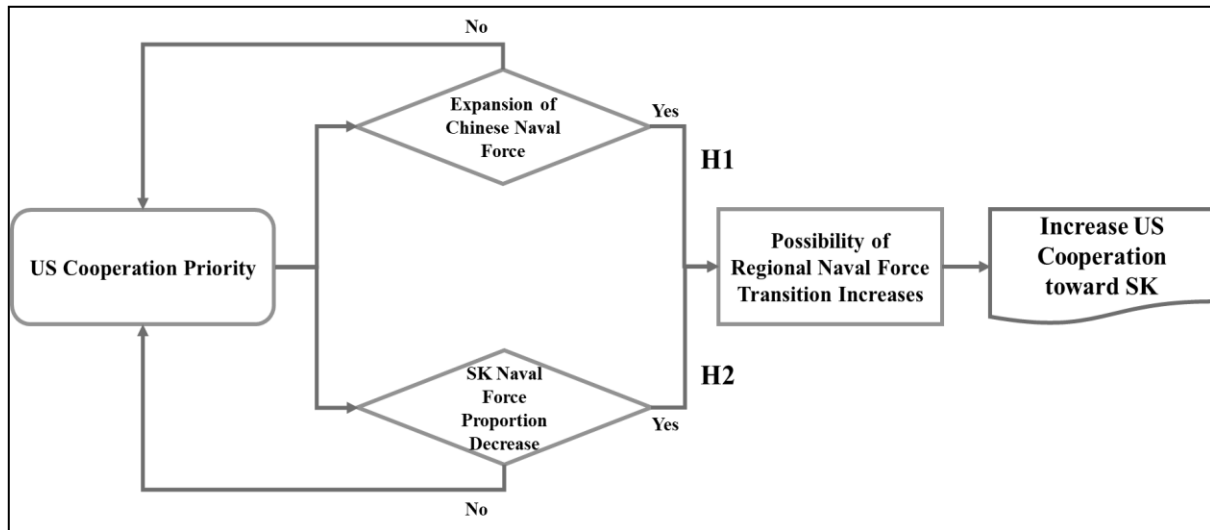


Figure 11 Naval Force Transition and Cooperation.

Made by Author

The US and its ally's cooperation in East Asia could become active in two cases. The first condition is the expansion of the challenger's naval force. Due to the budget and time-consuming characteristics of the naval force, the US cannot rapidly increase its naval assets in response to the rapid growth of PLAN. To overcome these restrictions, the US should increase its cooperation with regional allies through its Offshore Balancing strategy.

H1: The growth of the challenger country's (China) regional naval force strength increases the probability of cooperation between the hegemonic state (US) and its ally (South Korea).

The second condition that may activate their cooperation is a reduction in the allied naval forces' naval tonnage proportion in the region. Contrary to mathematical expectations that the proportion of the ROKN would naturally decrease as that of PLAN increases, the ratio held by the South Korean naval force in the region has gradually increased. This means that the total tonnage of PLAN and ROKN are increased simultaneously. However, if the gap between PLAN's and ROKN's speed of enhancement widens, the tonnage proportion of the

ROKN could decrease. Thus, the reduction in the tonnage proportion of ROKN due to the difference in the pace of naval build-up between China and South Korea can motivate the US to cooperate with South Korea. The ultimate offshore balancing can be achieved by the overwhelming naval force of the US' forward-deployed naval force and the allied naval force against the Chinese naval force. Thus, the reduction in the allied naval force's tonnage proportion in the region due to the difference in naval build-up speed could also motivate the US to cooperate.

H2: The decrease of the regional ally's (South Korea) naval force strength increases the probability of cooperation between the hegemonic state (US) and the allied state (South Korea).

Through this evaluation process, the existing hegemonic power decides to conduct an offshore balancing strategy by improving cooperation with its allies instead of increasing deployed naval forces. Considering that the US' efforts to cooperate are limited and have priority, the tonnage proportion of naval forces affects this priority; significantly, the increase in the challenger state's naval force's proportion and the decrease in that of the allied state has a positive impact on the increase in US cooperation. The study used naval force data and event data to analyse whether the challenger's naval force growth increased the hegemon's necessity for cooperation with its allies and evaluate how the difference of naval build-up speed between the challenger and the US' allies affected cooperation with the US.

4.4. Research Design

4.4.1. Independent Variables: Naval Force Evaluation

It is difficult to evaluate a naval force solely by utilising the naval vessel's armaments or specifications considering that each naval asset's purpose varies and a naval force usually

generates tactical synergies while operating with different types of vessels (Crisher and Souva, 2014). For example, it is difficult to say that a heavily armed destroyer always has a tactical advantage against a high-speed missile corvette. Given these limitations, the most politically utilised means of evaluating a naval force is by calculating the sum of the individual assets' tonnage (Crisher and Souva, 2014). Historically, there have been cases of controlling a nation's naval force by limiting the total tonnage of the individual nation's naval assets, which occurred during the Washington Conference in 1921, and academically, Crisher and Souva used this criterion to create a Naval dataset that covers the years 1865-2011 (Gow, Hiram and Chapman, 2003; Crisher and Souva, 2014).

Crisher and Souva (2014, p. 11) considered the total tonnage of assets "that can operate outside of their littoral waters" in their dataset, but there is an issue in that the criteria may vary depending on the navy's size and the country's operational circumstance. Therefore, this research aggregated a new dataset with more specific criteria and analysed only the tonnage of naval vessels classified as Frigate (FF) or higher by NATO classification. This criterion is generally consistent with the existing classification criteria used by Crisher and Souva and, at the same time, reduces their ambiguity. The data collection period is from 1999 to 2020, and the scale is a year. The descriptive statistics of the naval power data are shown in table 9.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Obs.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
ROKN	21	82742.86	31531.85	47000	133750
PLAN	21	422666.2	131287	275500	686540

Table 9 Descriptive Statistics of East Asian Naval Force Dataset.

Data collected from Military Balance 1999-2020 and aggregated by author. Aggregation detail is explained in the research design section of this chapter.

Based on the measured tonnage of the naval forces, the concept of tonnage proportion, which is included in the Crisher and Souva dataset, is utilised as an independent variable in this study (Crisher and Souva, 2014, p. 18). Based on the research's original naval tonnage data, the East Asian navy tonnage proportion is calculated by determining the ROKN and PLAN ratio among the total naval forces in Northeast Asia (i.e., US 7th Fleet, ROKN, PLAN, and JMSDF). The calculated values are shown in figure 12 below.

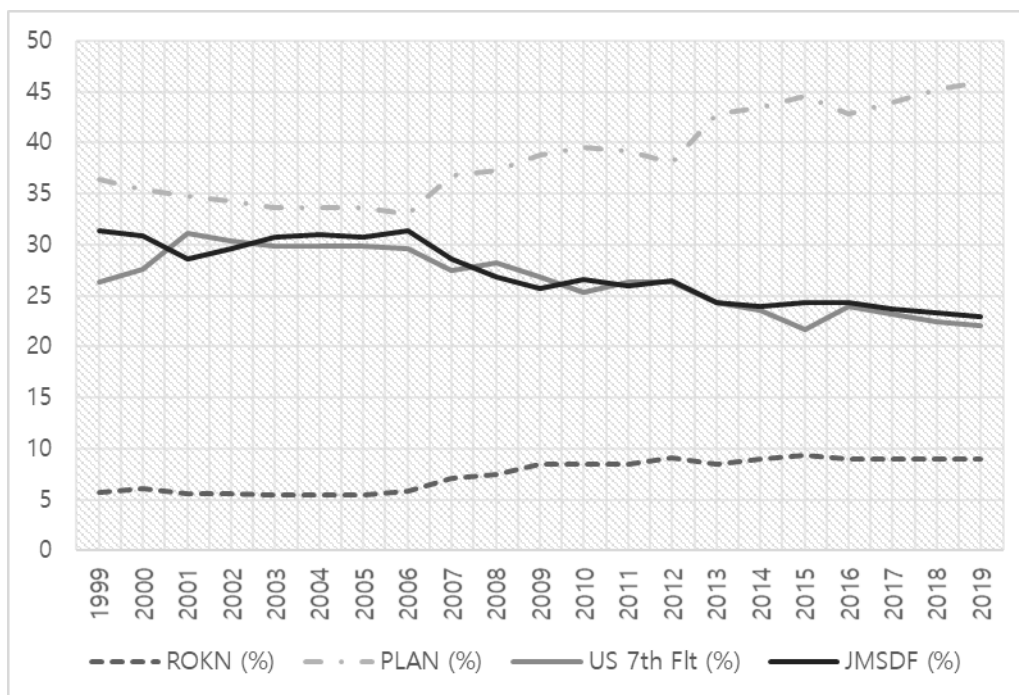


Figure 12 Naval Force Tonnage Proportion in East Asia.

Data collected from Military Balance 1999-2020 and aggregated by author. Aggregation detail is explained in the research design section of this chapter.

4.4.2. Dependent Variable: Cooperative Events

The research utilises the Integrated Conflict Early Warning (ICEWS) dataset to measure changes in South Korea and the US' cooperation. ICEWS is a dataset based on an automatic collection of media reports on what actions have been made from one country to another. In ICEWS, the degree of cooperation or conflict of the event is measured using the Goldstein

value. A positive value event is classified as cooperation and a negative value as a conflict. Specifically, cooperative events include “Consult,” “Diplomatic Cooperation,” and “Material Cooperation,” whereas conflictual events include “Disapprove” and “Threaten.” In this study, net cooperation was used to measure the cooperation between the US and South Korea. Yearly net cooperation is an annual calculation of the number of cooperative events conducted from the US to South Korea minus the number of conflictual events from the US to South Korea.

If the US prioritises cooperation with South Korea, the number of cooperative events will increase, and the number of conflictual events will decrease. Therefore, if the US prioritises cooperation with South Korea, the net cooperation from the US to South Korea will increase. The descriptive statistics of net cooperation from the US to South Korea are shown in table 10.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Obs</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
US-SK Cooperation	21	1037.857	438.1283	248	2093

Table 10 Descriptive Statistics of the US to SK Net Cooperation.

Data collected from Military Balance 1999-2020 and aggregated by author. Aggregation detail is explained in the research design section of this chapter.

4.4.3. Vector Autoregressive Model

This work analyses the correlation of three variables: the US net cooperation to South Korea, the tonnage proportion of ROKN, and the tonnage proportion of PLAN. These three variables have three characteristics. The first characteristic is that they are focused on change over time. Since all three variables reflect time-related changes in values, time series analysis is required. The second characteristic is that the variables have endogeneity. South Korea and China have

complex maritime borders and face maritime and air conflict over the West Sea border and Socotra Rock area. In other words, China's naval force build-up is a variable that could affect South Korea's naval build-up. The growing cooperation between South Korea and the US is also considered a threat to China and ultimately affects China's military expansion.

The final characteristic is that the effects between the variables are based on a specific lagged term. The process from naval build-up planning to operationalisation is a long-term project that takes between 3–10 years. Even if South Korea's naval build-up follows China's naval build-up, this could not yield an immediate effect, and the actual build-up outcome can only be assessed after a considerable time. It is also challenging for the US to rapidly re-organise its naval force deployment to cope with China's naval force.

While considering these characteristics of the dataset, this research utilises a Vector Autoregressive (VAR) model to analyse the three variables' correlation. Since this research focuses on changes in data, all data have been logged (Table 11). As the data is used for time series analysis, the stationary test was conducted, and the test confirmed that log ROKN and log PLAN data were non-stationary, so the first differentiation was conducted. After differentiating, it was confirmed that all data were stationary (Appendix 5). The research also utilised the Granger causality test to analyse the endogeneity relationship between variables.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Obs</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Log US-SK Cooperation	21	6.844701	.4900199	5.513429	7.646354
Log ROKN (%)	21	1.989659	.2160905	1.703545	2.232002
Log PLAN (%)	21	3.650641	.1118122	3.497339	3.82698

Table 11 Descriptive Statistics of Logged Variables.

Data collected from Military Balance 1999-2020 and aggregated by author. Aggregation detail is explained in the research design section of this chapter.

The Akaike's Information Criterion (AIC) test, the Final Prediction Error (FPE) test, and the likelihood ratio (LR) test for lag length were used to find appropriate lag lengths. Two lags of variables, namely four and five, are included in the model based on the diagnostic statistics results for the lag length specification (Appendix 6). Therefore, it is assumed that states' behaviour over the previous four and five months affects each related country's reactions in the model. As part of the Robustness check, the impulse response test was also utilised. This test analyses how each variable influences different variables by testing the variations in the affected variables when there is an instant impulse on other variables.

4.5. Findings

4.5.1. VAR

<i>Equation</i>	<i>Interaction</i>	<i>Lag term</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>
Log US to SK Cooperation	Log ROKN Proportion	4	-3.290549***
		5	-2.28903***
	Log PLAN Proportion	4	4.369427***
		5	-1.518101
Log ROKN Proportion	Log US to SK Cooperation	4	.0991151***
		5	.0498926

Note: SK = South Korea, US = United States, ROKN = Republic of Korea Navy, PLAN = People's Liberation Army Navy, *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Table 12 VAR Results

Made by author

VAR analysis of the relationship between naval force build-up and interstate cooperation shows significant R-square values between .71 and .30 (Table 12). According to the equation for South Korea–US cooperation and the proportion of Chinese navy in the region, US cooperation toward South Korea demonstrates a significant positive coefficient at the 99 per cent level for the 4 lagged term. This means that as the proportion of China's naval force increases in the region, US cooperation toward South Korea is likely to increase after

approximately four years, as claimed in hypothesis 1.

The equation for US cooperation toward South Korea demonstrates a negative correlation with a 99 per cent level for both 4 and 5 lagged terms. This result means that if the proportion of the Korean navy in the region decreases, the probability of US cooperation toward South Korea increases after 4–5 years, as claimed by hypothesis 2. As argued by the hypotheses in this chapter, the US tends to increase cooperation toward South Korea when the proportion of Chinese navy in the region increases and that of South Korea decreases.

4.5.2. *Granger Causality and Impulse Response Test*

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Chi²</i>	<i>p ></i>	<i>Direction</i>
Log US to SK Cooperation	Log ROKN Proportion	13.636	0.001***	-
	Log PLAN Proportion	13.305	0.001***	+
Log ROKN Proportion	Log US to SK Cooperation	11.526	0.003***	+
Log PLAN Proportion	Log US to SK Cooperation	6.0515	0.049**	+

Note: SK = South Korea, US = United States, ROKN = Republic of Korea Navy, PLAN = People's Liberation Army Navy, *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Table 13 Granger Causality and Impulse Response Test Result

Made by author

A Granger causality test was conducted to determine the causal relationship between variables (Table 13). The equation for US cooperation toward South Korea demonstrates that the proportions of both the Chinese and South Korean naval forces in the region have a 99 per cent probability of affecting US cooperation toward South Korea. In other words, as verified by VAR tests, the Granger causality test results confirm that changes in the proportion of the Chinese and South Korean navies in the region affect the US cooperation toward South Korea.

The Granger causality test also confirms that the proportion of the South Korean navy in the region is affected by US cooperation toward South Korea. As mentioned earlier in

this chapter, this seems to originate from the offshore balancing strategy that both directly and indirectly supports the military capabilities of allies in the region to prevent power transitions in the region. This cooperation is made through allowing the sale of the US cutting-edge technology weapon systems to South Korea or operational synergy through increased military exchange between the two countries. It can also be confirmed that China's naval enhancement is affected by US cooperation toward South Korea. South Korea-US cooperation is perceived as a potential threat to China, just as China strongly imposed economic sanctions on South Korea after South Korea and the US deployed the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD).

4.5.3. Diagnostics and Robustness Check

Additional diagnostics for models were conducted, considering the limited number of observations. Three tests were conducted, as follows: the Lagrange multiplier test for autocorrelation, the Jarque-Bera test for normality, and the eigenvalue stability condition test for stability. First, the Lagrange multiplier test determined that the model's p-value is 0.33 in lag 4 and 0.11 in lag 5, confirming no autocorrelation in this model (Appendix 7). Second, the Jarque-Bera test demonstrated that the variables' p-value was between 0.40 and 0.79, indicating their normality (Appendix 8). Lastly, the eigenvalue stability condition test showed modulus values between .29 to .95, which confirmed the model satisfied stability condition (Appendix 9). Overall, the model was found to be suitable for analysing the correlation between naval enhancement and cooperation.

<i>Equation: Log US to SK Cooperation</i>				
<i>Interaction</i>	<i>Model 1 (Only ROKN)</i>	<i>Model 2 (Add JMSDF)</i>	<i>Model 3 (Add 7th Fleet)</i>	<i>Model 4 (All)</i>
Log ROKN	-2.677594 ** (4)	3.714876 ** (2)	1.937336 *** (2)	2.410001 *** (1)
(%)		3.127212 ** (3)	-5.695928 *** (4)	-5.713794 *** (4)
Log PLAN		-3.419572 (2)	4.5211 *** (2)	7.045283 (1)
(%)		-1.984729 (3)	4.55087 *** (4)	-4.84025 (4)

Note: JMSDF = Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force, () = lagged term, *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Table 14 Coefficient of Dependent Variable in Different Models

Made by author

Next, four different models for robustness checking were designed (Table 14). Model 1 excluded PLAN export from the existing model, Model 2 added the JMSDF proportion to the existing model, Model 3 added the US 7th Fleet proportion to the existing model, and Model 4 included all additional variables to the existing model. From the analysis, it was

shown that US cooperation toward South Korea decreased consistently when the proportion of South Korean naval forces increased. However, for the Chinese navy proportion, similar results were only obtained when the US 7th Fleet proportion was included.

Consequently, test results confirmed hypotheses 1 and 2. Both Chinese and South Korean naval proportions correlate with the frequency of US' cooperative events to South Korea. First, the US emphasises cooperation with South Korea by increasing the frequency of cooperative events as the proportion of Chinese naval forces increases in the region. This finding provides the empirical basis for supporting the theory that power transition in East Asia tends to appear as competition between naval forces and that the US adjusts its priority for cooperation according to China's developing hegemonic naval power in the region.

The decreased proportion of South Korean naval forces in the region has also led to an increase in the frequency of cooperative events from the US to South Korea. This finding may offer empirical evidence of the transition of naval forces and the US offshore balancing strategy strengthening its naval influence in the region through cooperation with allies rather than direct military reinforcement. A series of statistical tests proved the naval force transition theory in East Asia and the US offshore balancing strategy.

4.6. Conclusion and Policy Implications

While previous literature has addressed the conflict between the US and China, few studies have linked changes in US cooperation toward its allies with regional naval forces. Since the conflict between the US and China became active in various fields, East Asia has emerged as a region where US and Chinese strategic interests collide. Since China became the world's second-largest economy, its military power has grown at the same time. Notably, rapid naval enhancement increases the possibility of power transition in East Asia. When considering China's geographical advantage of using land-based anti-surface weapons in East Asian seas,

it is possible to consider that the naval force transition between China and the US in East Asia has already occurred. The escalation of bilateral conflict in the South China Sea may well offer proof of such a transition of naval forces.

This chapter presents two new perspectives for interpreting East Asian international relations. First, a new perspective on how power transition is conducted in East Asia was presented. Thus far, it is the case that the US overwhelms China in many different areas statistically. However, as the US and China's economies have intertwined due to globalisation and the rise of free trade, the significance of directly comparing China and US economic power to determine power superiority has weakened. Moreover, a direct comparison of US military forces, which operate worldwide, with those of China, operating mainly within the East Asian region, is problematic from a military perspective. Naval force transition is a theory that can overcome the complexity of economic relations and geographical limitations of classical military force comparison.

The US seemed to strengthen cooperation with South Korea as China's naval force proportion increased in East Asia. Kim (1991) complements Organski's power transition theory by arguing alliance transition theory that power consists of the combined power of allies rather than the power of individual states. In addition to this argument, this chapter's statistical tests confirmed that alliance transition is carried out by naval forces in East Asia. China's naval force build-up may trigger US cooperation with allies to decrease the possibility of naval force transition and prevent its outbreak.

The second academic finding in this chapter highlights the understanding of the US offshore balancing strategy mechanism. Resources for cooperation are limited, and the US should prioritise cooperation. Under these circumstances, it is evident that changes in the naval forces of allies serve as important variables that evaluate naval force transition. The

reduction in the proportion of allies' naval forces in the region should be prevented to halt naval force transition. At the same time, unnecessary diplomatic efforts would not be required among allies when a sufficient proportion of naval forces is maintained to prevent naval force transition.

Results demonstrate that changes in naval power in the region are not related to the absolute size of the navy but to the pace of naval enhancement. Thus, when the pace of allied naval force build-up matches that of China and the proportion of allied naval forces in the region begins to rise, the US will naturally orient its diplomatic efforts to other countries or regions. The increasing proportion of South Korean naval forces in the region has led to a decrease in cooperative gesture by the US toward South Korea. Conversely, if the proportion of South Korean naval forces in the region decreased, the US seemed to increase cooperation toward South Korea. This tendency is consistent with stance of the offshore balancing strategy in that it tries to maintain naval force supremacy in the region whilst avoiding excessive waste of diplomatic effort.

The correlation between Chinese and South Korean naval forces and US cooperation toward South Korea could help understand the correlation between naval forces and cooperation in other regions, because naval force transition does not only occur in East Asia. Given China's growing global influence and Russia's growing military influence in Europe, it is likely that the hegemonic state needs to manage its cooperation priorities with allies to prevent naval force transition by challenger states. Dominant states may also increase their naval forces in the region through naval deployment; however, cooperation with their allies may allow them to dominate the region together with friendly partners. Considering this trend, it is worth noting the increase in military cooperation between China and Russia and China's expansion of influence within Africa and Europe through the Belt and Road Initiative. Such

cooperation will allow the US to increase efforts with its allies, just as it did in East Asia, to expand its naval influence in the region.

The conclusions of this study also have implications for South Korean foreign policy and naval enhancement. The first policy implication is that it is necessary to focus on naval forces as a significant indicator of cooperation between countries. As noted in the first part of this chapter, naval power has so far been recognised mainly as a means of protecting a country's territorial waters or as a political tool of a country's political action outside of its territory. The conclusion of this chapter suggests that, in addition to the use of naval power as a means of political action, cooperation between countries within the region can also be affected. Therefore, when establishing foreign policy, the competition of naval build-up in East Asia can be seen from the perspective of naval force transition, which could help to predict cooperation between countries.

The second implication is that naval enhancement can also affect South Korea's independent regional influence. South Korean progressive administrations, including the Moon Jae-in administration, have emphasised the importance of a self-reliant defence policy. With regard to the US offshore balancing strategy, having a regional ally with sufficient naval capacity means that much of the US regional strategy can be delegated to its regional ally. In other words, South Korea's sufficient proportion of naval force in the region could serve as a steppingstone for controlling US influence in the region and for South Korea to pursue its self-reliant security strategy.

Thus far, China's naval power has been unlikely to compete with the US and cause naval force transition outside East Asia. However, as mentioned earlier, in addition to China's independent naval build-up, China may seek to expand its naval influence through cooperation and allies, which may lead to naval force transition in other regions. For this

reason, naval forces should continue to be concerned with international relations research, and in relation to the foreign policy of countries, naval forces should be treated as significant variables.

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4.8. Appendices

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Test Result</i>
<i>Log US Cooperation to SK</i>	-3.493*
<i>Log PLAN Proportion</i>	-4.908***
<i>Log ROKN Proportion</i>	-3.852**

Note: *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Appendix 5 Augmented Dickey-Fuller Test Result

<i>Lag</i>	<i>LR</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>AIC</i>	<i>FPE</i>
1	7.2824	0.608	-4.17257	3.2e-06
2	4.2322	0.895	-3.25472	9.8e-06
3	36.201	0.000	-4.46813	5.3e-06
4	573.06	0.000	-41.4719	3.0e-21*
5	2355.2*	0.000	-197.686*	-

Appendix 6 Lag Length Test

<i>Lag</i>	<i>Chi²</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Prob > Chi²</i>
4	10.2309	9	0.33212
5	14.1038	9	0.11868

Appendix 7 Lagrange-multiplier Test Result

<i>Equation</i>	<i>Chi²</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Prob > Chi²</i>
<i>Log US Cooperation to SK</i>	1.831	2	0.40031
<i>Log ROKN Proportion</i>	0.503	2	0.77771
<i>Log PLAN Proportion</i>	0.738	2	0.69130
<i>All</i>	3.072	6	0.79973

Appendix 8 Jarque-Bera Test Result

<i>Eigenvalue</i>	<i>Modulus</i>
$.5530624 + .7805947i$	.956664
$.5530624 - .7805947i$	.956664
$.8355912 + .3891045i$	.921746
$.8355912 - .3891045i$	.921746
$-.02404176 + .9046433i$	.904963
$-.02404176 - .9046433i$	.904963
$-.6223339 + .6170121i$	.876358
$-.6223339 - .6170121i$	.876358
$-.8469098 + .1459469i$	.859393
$-.8469098 - .1459469i$	.859393
$-.280521 + .7584637i$	.808677
$-.280521 - .7584637i$	.808677
$.7296636$	.729664
$.3394567$	.339457
$-.2988147$	.298815

Appendix 9 Eigenvalue Stability Condition Test Result

5. Conclusion

This thesis analyses the effect of relations between two countries on another country's foreign policy in Northeast Asia. For its analysis, this thesis analysed event data using a vector autoregressive model while narrowing the level of analysis from system level to individual policy level. This thesis has three theoretical contributions. First, this research found the theory that could apply to various levels of analysis simultaneously. Existing grand theory-oriented analysis is extensively applied when describing the international relations of Northeast Asia at the system level. However, there is a disadvantage that the more complex cases to analyse increase as the level of analysis varies. This thesis quantifies the changes in the relationship between the two countries in the region through event data and confirms that this relationship can affect the foreign policy of another neighbouring country. This research also confirms that the theory could continue to be applied in the different levels of analysis, as proved by different case studies such as the US–China regional hegemony competition, inter-Korean relations, and the strengthening of South Korea–China naval forces.

The second theoretical distribution is that the research found a relatively flexible theory compared to traditional grand theory-oriented theories. For example, in South Korean foreign policy research, realists consistently deny the effectiveness of appeasement policy while constructivists overlook China's threat and the importance of South Korea–US cooperation. However, this thesis' argument that increased cooperation between South Korea and the US having a positive impact on changes in North Korea's attitude is an applicable theory regardless of the tendency of North Korea policies, whether appeasement or hard-liner tendencies. In other words, the finding of this thesis is meaningful in that it demonstrates that persuading the US to pursue conciliatory policies toward North Korea tends to be more effective and cooperation with the US does not necessarily mean conflict with North Korea.

The third theoretical contribution is that the arguments in the thesis are immediately applicable to policy; applying theory to policy is a challenge for all academic research. The event data used in this study are actively used in the diplomatic and military sectors to analyse the environment of international relations (Schrodt, 2012). This characteristic shows that the findings of this study can be actively utilised and applied in policy-making. In addition, because South Korea's existing foreign policy has a grand theoretic foundation and the tendency for dichotomous policy rigidity such as the choice between the US or North Korea, the findings of this thesis can offer clues to overcoming the limitations of existing research.

The findings of this study have policy implications for analysing international relations around the Korean Peninsula. The first implication is related to an analysis of South Korean foreign policy toward China, which is currently influenced by the relation between the US and China. Currently, the US has not issued any official proposals to South Korea to participate in the Quad; however, South Korea has indirectly felt the US' pressure for its participation (Park, 2021). Nevertheless, through the THAAD conflict, South Korea learned that it is a costly option to choose one side in the conflict between the US and China seeing as, after the deployment of THAAD, South Korea experienced massive economic sanctions following intense opposition from China (Easley, 2016; Swaine, 2017).

Considering the Biden administration's stance toward China and China's response, tensions between China and the US are expected to continue for some time. On 16 April 2021, the US and Japan announced in a joint statement that they would respond together to threats from China, referring to the cross-strait issue and human rights issues in Hong Kong and Uighur (The White House, 2021). As China opposes such cooperation between the US and Japan, conflicts between the US and China are expected to intensify in Northeast Asia. Under

these circumstances, South Korea will be pressured to make diplomatic choices between the US and China. Thus far, the South Korean Moon Jae-in government has officially maintained a neutral stance between the two countries rather than choose between them (Park, 2021).

However, based on the findings of this study, if relations between the US and China continue to deteriorate, South Korea is expected to reduce or limit cooperation with China. There are two main reasons for this expected policy change. Firstly, as the study concluded, South Korea tends to reduce its economic cooperation with China when security and economic interests are conflicted. South Korea could suffer a temporary economic crisis if China imposes an economic sanction (Kim, 2018). However, the fact that China cannot be an alternative to the historical US–South Korea security cooperation would make it difficult for South Korea to increase cooperation with China at the risk of worsening relations with the US.

While trade with China (including Hong Kong) makes the most significant trade surplus for South Korea, the US is also a trade partner and has the third-largest trade surplus for South Korea (K-Stat, 2020). However, security cooperation with the US cannot be replaced by security cooperation with China. The bilateral operation capability between South Korea and the US is based on 70 years of military cooperation, and the ROK-US Combined Forces Command, a permanent bilateral command, cannot be replaced by military cooperation with other countries nor rebuilt in a short time. Although South Korea declared that it would maintain a neutral position when the US indirectly asked South Korea to choose, cooperation between South Korea and China entered a stalemate as the recent meeting between South Korea's and China's foreign ministers concluded without a joint statement on 3 April 2021 (S. Kim, 2021). Specialists say that the outcome of these talks may have originated from the combination of Chinese interests, which wanted South Korea to maintain

at least a neutral stance, and South Korean interests, which wanted to maintain cooperative relationships with both the US and China; consequently, both sides may have refused to discuss sensitive topics (Y. Kim, 2021). Considering that China and the US will strongly pressure South Korea's choice in the future, the expansion of cooperation with China is likely to be limited or decrease as the US–China conflict intensifies.

The second implication is the reconsideration of the correlation between South Korea–US cooperation and North Korean foreign policy change. When the inter-Korean summit in 2018 led to the North Korea–US summit in the same year, South Korea was able to gain confidence in the outcome of its independent North Korea policy (Kim, Kim and Yang, 2018; Lee, 2018). However, when the North Korea–US summit in Hanoi, Vietnam, broke down without any agreement in February 2019, the relationship between the US and North Korea began to deteriorate (Nishino, 2019). After the failure of the Hanoi Summit, South Korea began to feel pressure on the outcome of its appeasement policy toward North Korea. Under such pressures, Unification Minister Lee In-young mentioned the possibility of pursuing an independent North Korea policy, which would not be bound by the South Korea–US working group, to achieve immediate results from the appeasement policy (Lee, 2020). However, inter-Korean relations continued to deteriorate, and on 16 June 2020, North Korea unilaterally destroyed the inter-Korean liaison office in Kaesong and rejected all subsequent conciliatory offers from South Korea (Bicker, 2020). This study confirmed that policies based on cooperation with the US rather than these types of independent policies toward North Korea could affect North Korea to change its policy cooperatively, regardless of whether the South Korean North Korea policy notion is an appeasement or hard-liner policy.

In considering the findings of the analysis of the ICEWS event dataset in this study, North Korea's cooperation toward South Korea also increased as South Korea and the US

increased cooperation. Considering that conflict and peace on the Korean Peninsula are greatly affected by inter-Korean relations, the increase in cooperation between South Korea and the US ultimately positively impacts the situation on the Korean Peninsula. The 1994 Agreed Framework and the Six-Party Talks, which lasted from 2003 to 2009 and officially made progress in denuclearising North Korea, are based on South Korea–US policy coordination. Therefore, to resolve the deadlock of the current inter-Korean relations, it is more important to sympathise with the US on the North Korea policy direction rather than obsessing over unilateral contact with North Korea.

The final policy implication is that naval power should be considered a critical variable when analysing international relations in Northeast Asia and establishing future foreign policies. Considering that the US and China are nuclear powers and there is considerable physical distance between the two countries, it is hard for them to engage in total war. Thus, the transition of power between them is highly likely to emerge as a naval force competition in the region. The US is strengthening cooperation with its Asian allies through the Quad, which can be interpreted to suggest that the US is ultimately trying to manage the growth of China's naval force through its own naval operations and cooperation with its allies' navies in Northeast Asia.

The US will distribute cooperation efforts as effectively as possible in the face of the growing need for cooperation with its allies in the region. The findings of this research confirm that naval forces also act as a significant variable when considering the distribution of these efforts. The study's findings show two estimations, the first of which is that cooperation between the US and its regional allies will increase as China's naval force is reinforced. Currently, it is difficult to maintain the balance of naval force with the Chinese Navy utilizing only the US's deployed naval force. However, if the naval forces of US

alliances overwhelm the Chinese naval forces, the US could prevent a naval force transition.

The US also has no choice but to efficiently distribute diplomatic efforts, which will eventually lead to a decrease in cooperation efforts with countries with sufficient naval force or countries with an expanding naval force proportion within the region. This is because the US's diplomatic efforts and resources are limited and it is more efficient for them to focus on countries that urgently require security support from the US. According to a study on South Korea's naval force development, the US has continued to reduce the frequency of cooperation as the country's naval capabilities increase.

Overall, this thesis analysed the relationship between the US, China, and North and South Korea, which are the most important actors in Northeast Asian international relations, and examined how the relationship between those countries affected one country's foreign policy. Because existing research has been primarily concerned with cooperation and conflict between the two specific states, the findings of this research are expected to provide a different perspective when analysing the international relations of the Korean Peninsula. While the confrontation between the US and China is particularly prominent in Northeast Asia, their confrontation is expanding to other regions. For example, the conflict between the US and Russia in Europe shares some tendencies with the conflict between the US and China in East Asia. Considering these phenomena, the findings and methodology in this study could be used to study cooperation and conflict in other regions and implicate policymaking in other countries with similar international relations circumstances.

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6. Appendix Historical Overview of International Relations on the Korean Peninsula

6.1. Introduction

This appendix is designed to introduce a historical overview of international relations on the Korean Peninsula, which is unfamiliar to Western academia. Before describing the foreign policy change in Korean Peninsula, it is necessary to understand the complicated security situation of South Korea. Because of this reason, this research will describe the South Korean foreign policy toward the US, North Korea and China in three stages, (1) The Cold War period (1948-1989), (2) the Post-Cold War period (1990-1992), and (3) North Korean Nuclear Crisis period (1993-present).

6.2. Cold War Period (1948–1990)

6.2.1. War Aftermath

In this period, the situation around the Korean Peninsula was rapidly changing. On 15 August, 1945, Japan's surrender brought Korea independence, and the division of South and North Korea began with the Soviet Union and US troops stationed in the North and South. The Korean War broke out in 1950 with North Korea's invasion, and the war ended in 1953 by signing the Armistice Agreement. During this period, the administration consistently implemented anti-communist policies because of the Korean War aftermath, and North Korea continued to stage military provocations (Hong, 2000; Kim, 2014). Also, in the early 1970s, economic development was a priority rather than improving inter-Korean relations because North Korea's military and economic power dominated the South before the rapid economic growth of South Korea from the middle of the 1970s (Yang, 2015). However, after the economic growth and the Cold War atmosphere easing, South Korea attempted to improve

inter-Korean relations (Kim, 2014).

After the Korean War, North Korea started creating a peace initiative to improve its relationship with South Korea. North Korea made a series of proposals, such as a joint conference of representatives of North and South Korea to negotiate national unification (30 October, 1954), a non-aggression pact between the two Koreas with simultaneous disarmament (7 March, 1955), and an international conference for the solution of the Korean issue (28 April, 1956) (Hong, 2000, p. 89). In support of North Korea, China also proposed to hold a conference for the nations concerned to discuss the withdrawal of foreign troops from the Korean peninsula and the unification of Korea in 1954 and 1956 (ibid p.89). These proposals were a deceptive tactic of communist countries seeking to remove the United States Force Korea (USFK) from the Korean peninsula and attempting to reunify the peninsula based on North Korea's economic superiority.

President Rhee Syngman rejected these proposals and criticised them a 'peace camouflage' (ibid p.89). Because, since the Korean War, Rhee Syngman's administration was continuously wary of North Korea's invasion, and therefore, he pushed ahead with a foreign policy based on strong anti-communist ideologies (ibid, pp. 38–39). In response to North Korea's threat, the Rhee Syngman administration signed a Mutual Defense Treaty with the US and negotiated continuously for US military and economic aid in 1953 (ibid p.42, 68). Furthermore, President Rhee Syngman actively called for additional US military and economic aid to South Korea (ibid p.73).

6.2.2. Cold War, Regime Competition, and Détente

In 1961, general Park Chung-hee took the power through 16 May Coup d'état. In the early period of the Park Chung-hee administration, the relationship with the US was stable. The USFK's deterrent power and US's military aid was essential during the continued threat from

North Korea. By the time the Vietnam War was about to erupt, the Park Chung-hee administration had decided to dispatch troops to Vietnam to strengthen the relationship with the US and asked the US government to accept South Korean support (*Vietnam war and Korean military*, 2005). At the beginning, The US initially refused to accept South Korean troops for fear of provoking communist countries in the region (Ma, 2013). However, the US eventually requested South Korea to send its first overseas dispatched troops (*Vietnam war and Korean military*, 2005, p. 44). At this time, Korea strengthened its security cooperation with the US by sending the largest-scale troops (37,438 in total) to Vietnam to support the US (*Vietnam war and Korean military*, 2005, p. 64).

Changes in South Korea-US relations emerged after US President Richard Nixon announced the Nixon doctrine in 1969. After the US announced the Nixon doctrine, the US began to reduce USFK earnestly, and around 20,000 troops from the US Army 7th Division left Korea in March 1971 (Kim, 2014). During this time, North Korea's military provocations were getting bolder and Moon Se-kwang, a Korean-Japanese resident who was ordered by the North, failed to assassinate President Park Chung-hee, but the first lady, Yuk Young-soo at the National Liberation Day ceremony in 1974 (Holloran, 1974). Internationally, Vietnam was reunified by communist Vietnam two years after the armistice in 1975. In the meantime, the Park Chung-hee administration, which decided that it could not rely solely on the US, expressed its will to strengthen its self-defence in the 1970s and began to foster its defence industry and strengthen its military force's capabilities (Lee, 2007).

On 15 August, 1970, the Park Chung-hee administration declared the Peace Unification Initiative to suppress North Korea's growing military provocations because it had confidence that South Korea's economic power overwhelmed North Korea from 1970 (*1995 Unification White Paper*, 1995, p. 55). In 1972, North and South Korea announced the 4 July

North-South Joint Statement, ran a North-South Joint Committee, and began implementing a unification policy centred on inter-Korean dialogue (*1995 Unification White Paper*, 1995). In 1979, after president Park Chung-hee's assassination on 26 October, Chun Doo-hwan took government control through 12 December Coup d'état (Lee, 2016). Relations with the US, which were strained by the self-defence policy of the late Park Chung-hee administration, began to return to their original condition. When anti-communist Ronald Reagan was elected as the US president, the Chun Doo-hwan administration took advantage of this opportunity. The USFK was reinforced in this period, and South Korea and the US expanded its combined ROK-US exercise (*60 Years of Korean diplomacy*, 2009).

Chun Doo-hwan administration presented the unification policy of building a unified and independent nation and showed North Korea its specific commitment to the unification of the two Koreas by proposing inter-Korean summits, inter-Korean high official exchange visit, and the Harmonious Democratic Unification Plan (*1990 Unification White Paper*, 1990, p. 36). It is meaningful that the South Korean government first proposed a summit between the two Koreas, but the North rejected the proposal from the Chun Doo-hwan administration (*1992 Unification White Paper*, 1992, p. 44). However, in 1984, North Korea demonstrated positive deference toward the inter-Korean relationship when North Korean Red Cross cooperated with the South Korean counterpart by providing aid for flood victims after heavy rain fell on South Korea (*1992 Unification White Paper*, 1992; Ministry of Unification Republic of Korea, 2003).

Afterwards, aid supplies from North Korea were provided to South Korea from 24 September to 4 October of the same year (Ministry of Unification Republic of Korea, 2003). Then, the most significant achievement of the exchanges between North Korea and the Chun Doo-hwan administration happened—the reunion of separated families and exchange of art

performances in 1985 (1990 *Unification White Paper*, 1990, p. 110). This event was significant because it was the first public level exchange since the Korean War. Although the Chun Doo-hwan administration made some illustrative examples and working-level contacts, there was no fundamental improvement in inter-Korean relations.

6.3. Post-Cold War Period (1990–1992)

6.3.1. *Nordpolitik*

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought about a drastic change in foreign and security policy in the Korean peninsula. The isolation of the North Korean economy, which began after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and natural disasters (floods in 1995 and 1996) in North Korea, caused the Arduous March in the mid-1990s, leading to numerous deaths from starvation and the economy and social collapse (Goodkind and West, 2001).¹ North Korea began developing nuclear weapons due to the growing economic gap with the South, caused by the ongoing economic recession, difficulty maintaining the balance of power against the U.S. on the Korean peninsula because of the collapse of the Soviet Union and difficulty securing resources for its conventional military forces (Cho, 2014).

In South Korea, President Roh Tae-woo is elected through a direct election in 1988. The Roh Tae-woo administration implemented progressive unification policies, based on the post-Cold War atmosphere and confidence in economic growth, and conducted extensive diplomatic relations with communist countries called the *Nordpolitik* (60 *Years of Korean diplomacy*, 2009). The Roh administration took the initiative in proposing a dialogue with the North from the beginning of the administration, and, with the North's agreement, the inter-

¹ According to estimates by the Statistics Korea (KOSTAT), the number of people who died due to starvation was estimated at 336,000 and 94,000 who lost their birth because of it. (1993~2055 북한 인구추계/ 1993-2055 North Korea Demographic Estimation, 2010)

Korean contacts began in the 1990s in various levels (*1990 Unification White Paper*, 1990). The countries reached various agreements through eight inter-Korean, high-level talks, and inter-Korean politics, military, exchanges, and cooperation sub-committees were organised and operated to implement individual agreements during the high-level inter-Korean talks (*1992 Unification White Paper*, 1992).

South and North Korea also initiated discussions on denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. The Roh Tae-woo administration adopted and initiated the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula through a representative meeting to discuss the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula (*1992 Unification White Paper*, 1992). Then, the administration formed a joint inter-Korean nuclear control committee to discuss the issue in detail, but denuclearisation talks were regularly halted without narrowing differences in the rules of inspection (*1992 Unification White Paper*, 1992, p. 215). Other than this, the Roh administration conducted a total of nine inter-Korean sports talks and eight inter-Korean Red Cross talks (*ibid* p. 230). In 1991, the two Koreas joined the United Nations simultaneously (*ibid* p. 95). Although there was no fundamental improvement in inter-Korean relations, Roh's unification policy was different from the previous administration's because it provided a venue for dialogue in various areas.

6.3.2. *Rebuilding Cooperations*

In the late 1980s, the US also began to rebuild security cooperation with South Korea in line with the post-cold war atmosphere. First, the US Department of Defense officially reported to the Congress its plan to reduce USFK and change its role through the East Asia Strategy Initiative (EASI) in 1989 (Ministry of National Defense Republic of Korea, 1992; Castro, 1994). Accordingly, in March 1991, the chief of the Military Armistice Commission was replaced by a South Korean general from US general, and in November of the same year, at

the 23rd Security Consultative Meeting (SCM), South Korea and the US agreed to transfer armistice operational control to the Korean military between 1993 and 1995 (Ministry of National Defense Republic of Korea, 1992). Under the agreement, the Korean military's armistice operational control, which had been held by the United Nations Command since the Korean War and by the Combined Force Command (ROK-US) after 1978, was transferred entirely to the Korean military in 1994(*2014 Defense White Paper*, 2014).

Diplomatic relations between South Korea and People's Republic of China (PRC) were officially established in 1992; however, signs of strengthening cooperation between South Korea and the PRC have already begun to appear in the early 80s. The first official contact between PRC and South Korea came during the process of handling the issue after the Chinese domestic jetliner landed at a USFK air base near Seoul after being hijacked by Chinese criminals (Kim, 2002). At that time, a Chinese government delegation visited Seoul, and South Korea also took steps to release and return 102 passengers and aeroplane to China, which embarrassed Republic of China (Taiwan) and North Korea. Later in 1986, China sent a large team of 350 people to the Asian Games in South Korea despite North Korea's opposition (Lee, 2007).

In 1992, South Korea officially established diplomatic ties with China and decided to recognise that the PRC is the only legitimate government in China (Sanford, 1993; Kim, 2002). Since then, the two countries have been strengthening their cooperation based on economic and trade aspects. Meanwhile, the PRC has pushed for strengthening cooperation with the ROK in order to put diplomatic pressure on the Republic of China (Taiwan) (Kim, 2002).

6.4. North Korean Nuclear Crisis Period (1993-Present)

6.4.1. *Beginning of the Crisis*

From this time forward, the Cold War international relations were dissolved. Related changes are beginning to occur in the relationship between South Korea, the US and China. In the past, all South Korean administrations actively cooperated with the US to fight against the hostile communist countries (Hong, 2000; Lee, 2007; Kim, 2014). However, the relationship between the two countries has continuously changed since then, depending on the administration, in diplomatic and security aspects—North Korea's nuclear issue, relations with China, sharing defence expenses for USFK, and the transition of wartime operational control of the South Korean military.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought about a drastic change in foreign policy in the Korean peninsula. The isolation of the North Korean economy, which began after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and natural disasters (floods in 1995 and 1996) in North Korea, caused the severe famine, so called the *Arduous March*, in the mid-1990s, leading to numerous deaths from starvation and the economy and social collapse (Goodkind and West, 2001). According to estimates by the Statistics Korea (KOSTAT), the number of people who died due to starvation was estimated at 336,000 and 94,000 who lost their birth because of it (1993~2055 북한 인구추계/ 1993-2055 North Korea Demographic Estimation, 2010). North Korea began developing nuclear weapons due to the growing economic gap with the South, caused by the ongoing economic recession, difficulty maintaining the balance of power against the US on the Korean peninsula because of the collapse of the Soviet Union and difficulty securing resources for its conventional military forces (Romberg and Swaine, 2003; Hughes, 2007; Cho, 2014).

The Kim Young-sam administration sought to actively pursue progressive unification policies with North Korea consistent with the mood of global cold war appeasement and creating a dialogue with the North. However, the situation quickly reversed when North Korea left the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 12 March, 1993 (*1992 Unification White Paper*, 1992, p. 118). North Korea held talks with the US in New York and Geneva and discussed International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections and waived off the NPT withdrawal (*1998-2002 Defense Policy*, 2002, p. 267). When North Korea officially withdrew from the IAEA in 1994, and the US announced a draft resolution on sanctions against North Korea, the conflict reached an apex (ibid p.267). Despite the unfavourable situation, the two Koreas continued their discussions. Then, the situation stabilised when former US President Carter met North Korean leader Kim Il-sung on a surprise visit to Pyongyang, declaring that North Korea was willing to freeze its nuclear activities and guarantee full nuclear transparency (*1998-2002 Defense Policy*, 2002, p. 267).

Despite the lack of inter-Korean high official exchanges, the Kim Young-sam administration provided food aid to the North, which was suffering from severe food shortages (Lee and Kim, 1999, p. 40). In resolving the first nuclear crisis, the US and North Korea agreed in the Geneva Agreed Framework that North Korea fulfilled its obligations to denuclearise and provided North Korea with two 1,000MW light water reactors (*1998-2002 Defense Policy*, 2002, p. 267). Conflicts between the two Koreas began to deepen again after the North's submarine infiltration in September 1996 (Kristof, 1996; *1998-2002 Defense Policy*, 2002). As such, the Kim Young-sam administration failed to push for a consistent policy with regards to North Korea, and, as a result, it only repeated conflicts and reconciliation without any visible achievements.

The Kim Young-sam administration has actively pursued the cooperation with the US

in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. However, some issues have been drawn to a solution by the US without leading the way by the South Korean government (Lee and Kim, 1999, p. 38). For example, there was a diplomatic discord between Korea and the US in deciding the condition and time to provide a light-water reactor which is decided by Geneva Agreement Framework (Niksch, 2002). In addition, the use of North Korea issue with domestic politics caused a rift between the US and South Korea relations, which in turn helped North Korea to successfully implement a strategy to alienate South Korea and pursue direct negotiations with the US (Snyder, 2000; Yang, 2017).

The Kim Young-sam administration pursued pragmatic diplomacy with China. First, export from Korea to China continued to increase from 5 millions dollars in 1993 to 13 millions dollars in 1997 (Yang, 2017; K-Stat, 2020). The Kim Young-sam administration, which began power just six months after it established diplomatic relations with China, continued high-level exchanges to strengthen cooperation in diplomatic relations as well (Yang, 2017). In the first North Korean nuclear crisis in 1993, China did not engage in active diplomatic intervention on the Korean Peninsula (Chung, 2012; Easley and Park, 2016). However, since President Kim Young-sam visited China in 1994 and demanded China's support for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue, China indirectly contributed to the Geneva Agreement between North Korea and the US by notifying North Korea that it cannot veto the U.N. sanctions unless the US and North Korea reach an agreement (Yang, 2017).

6.4.2. *Sunshine Policy*

After Kim Young-sam administration, Kim Dae-jung, a South Korean progressive politician, became South Korea's president. Kim Dae-jung administration approached the North Korea issue in an entirely new direction with the previous administrations. Unlike the previous administration's unification policy, the 'Sunshine Policy' aimed at establishing a stable peace

status while recognising the current North Korean regime instead of following one-sided unification notion (Choi, 2010). Kim administration tried to bypass the military, security issues, a sensitive subject between North and South, and increased economic and cultural exchanges first which Kim administration believed that it causes the spill-over effect to other inter-Korean issues (Kim, 2000; Lee and Chun, 2001; Cho, 2010; Choi, 2010; Lee, 2016). Since then, there have been achievements such as the development of the Kaesong Industrial Region and the start of the Mountain Kumgang tour as part of inter-Korean economic cooperation (Ministry of Unification Republic of Korea, 2003).

Despite these achievements, relations with North Korea were once in crisis, with the North Korean Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) test in 1998 and the first naval battle of Yeonpyeong near the NLL in 1999 (*1998-2002 Defense Policy*, 2002). While overcoming these security crises, Kim administration continued its engagement policy, and in 2000, as an outcome, the first South and North Korea Summit since the division of Korea could happen (Ministry of Unification Republic of Korea, 2003). However, suspicions over North Korea's nuclear development at the end of the administration have undermined the outcome of the Sunshine Policy.

The Clinton administration responded positive to Kim Dae-jung administration's engagement policy (Perry, 1999). Perry, who was the president's special advisor, emphasised in his report that cooperation from neighbouring countries, including South Korea, is essential and the Agreed Framework is better to be respected in pursuing negotiations with the North Korea (Perry, 1999). However, the political situation has changed since George W. Bush was elected president of the US and 9/11 occurred in 2001.

During the Clinton administration, the US Asia-Pacific strategy was carried out through multinational cooperation, but with the Bush administration, it changed to hard-line

intervention based on the superior military power (Harnisch, 2002; Heisbourg, 2003; Moon and Bae, 2003). This strategy requested for strict reciprocity and thorough verification of North Korea's diplomatic action in the implementation of engagement policy, resulting in discord between South Korea and the US on the North Korea issue (Moon and Bae, 2003). Later in the six-party talks, North Korea insisted the US to guarantee the security of regime as condition of progressive denuclearisation (Moon and Bae, 2003). South Korea also persuaded the US that the US should continue its engagement policy with North Korea if North shows its sincerity on the Agreed Framework (Harnisch, 2002; Moon and Bae, 2003). However, the US maintained its stance that without 'Complete, Verifiable, Irreversible, Dismantlement (CVID)', there would be no regime security guarantee. Thus the policy disparity between South Korea and the US started to become the political issue (Moon and Bae, 2003).

After president Kim Dae-jung's visit to China in 1998, the diplomatic relation between South Korea and China upgraded to 'Cooperative Partnership' (*60 Years of Korean diplomacy*, 2009). The cooperation of China, one of the parties to the Armistice, was essential when it came to an end to the Armistice and to establish a peace regime in the Korean peninsula, one of the major tasks pursued by the Kim's administration's Sunshine Policy (Moon, 2001). Therefore, President Kim suggested the transformation of the inter-Korean peace treaty in multinational cooperation to China's President Jiang Zemin at the UN in September 2000 (ibid, p. 182). South Korea and China tried to resolve the issue of establishing a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula within the framework of the four-party talks (South and North Korea, the US and China), but the plan failed because the Bush administration had negative views on the establishment of a peace regime before denuclearisation. Moreover, North Korea also preferred to sign a bilateral peace treaty with

the US to dismantle the Armistice (ibid, pp. 182, 187).

6.4.3. Continued Engagement Policy and Six-party Talks

Roh Moo-hyun administration took office with the second North Korean nuclear crisis that occurred in October 2002. Despite this crisis, Roh Moo-hyun government continued exchanges and cooperation projects under the principle of separation between politics and economy (G. Lee, 2008, p. 276). During this time, the Kaesong Industrial Complex project initiated and began to take private companies' participation, and the tour to Mountain Kumgang in North Korea exceeded one million South Korean visitors as of June 2005. Besides, tours to Pyongyang, Mountain Baekdu and Kaesong have been conducted for civilians since 2005 (Lee, 2014, p. 80). It was the most progressive development in private-sector exchanges between the two Koreas after the Korean War.

However, Roh Moo-hyun administration's 'diffuse reciprocity' North Korean policy caused issue sometimes. In general, the principle of inter-Korean relations was 'always exchanged something simultaneously', and 'the value of the exchanged actions was normally equal' and 'the obligation of each country was added on that action' by the principle of 'specific reciprocity' (G. Lee, 2008, p. 277). Roh administration's diffuse reciprocity was not sensitively reacted in these aspects. In other words, not like the 'Tit for tat' strategy, Roh Moo-hyun government was constantly conducting its friendly behaviour to North Korea, even if there is no way of receiving the favour from them simultaneously. As a result, Roh Moo-hyun administration were helpless on the North Korea's 'politics and economy relating' strategy and watched Pyongyang's declaration of a nuclear power in 2005, missile launch test in July 2006, a nuclear test in October without decisive reaction (G. Lee, 2008, p. 277; Lee, 2014, p. 56).

Roh Moo-hyun government is looking for a new paradigm in foreign policy for

conforming to a middle-power country. Accordingly, he stressed equalisation of the alliance relationship with the US, and balanced diplomacy (Lee, 2009, p. 4). Also, the anti-American sentiment was strongly formed in South Korea after the death of two middle school girls by US armoured vehicles in June 2002 and the acquittal of the US soldiers involved (Kim, 2003). At the same time, the US was also pushing for a plan to change the strategy of US forces outside the mainland from a 'strongpoint defence force' to a 'rapid and flexible operational force' after 9/11 (Lee, 2009, p. 17). Accordingly, the two countries agreed to reduce the number of USFK (C. H. Lee, 2008). Moreover, the 38th Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) between South Korea and the US also confirmed the deadline for transferring wartime operational control of South Korean military to 17 April, 2012 (Lee, 2009, p. 19).

Nevertheless, regard to the relocation of USFK, Roh administration and the US agreed to manage the time of the relocation considering the security and economic condition of Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia in the first ROK-US summit in May 2003 (Lee, 2009, p. 18). This agreement allowed the Roh Moo-hyun government to have the tripwire role of USFK on the peninsula, and show the effort to maintain a balanced relationship with the US in the future. Through this 'Cooperative Self-reliant Defence' Policy, the Roh Moo-hyun government conducted policies of the combination of balance of the alliance and self-reliant defence (C. H. Lee, 2008).

While South Korea and the US were in fragile cooperation, China has started to play a crucial role in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue based on its strong influence on the North, then China has begun to emerge as an essential partner for South Korea (Ji, 2001; Wu, 2005; Easley and Park, 2016; Mastro, 2018). China hosted three rounds of the six-party talk from 2003 to 2005 (Wu, 2005; C. H. Lee, 2008; Yang, 2017). After North Korea's nuclear test on 9 October, 2006, China joined the U.N. Security Council's resolution to impose sanctions

on North Korea, putting pressure on the North (Christensen, 2009). Since then, China has shown off its possible role in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue, especially in South Korea and the US perspective, by pressing North Korea to return whenever the six-party talks are in trouble.

Taking this influence into consideration, in July 2003, Roh administration established ‘complete cooperative partnership’ with China, which enables cooperation in all areas, including the political and security sectors, during the presidential visit to China (Yang, 2017). The Roh Moo-hyun administration understood the meaning of the rise of China in East Asia, and enhanced economic cooperation in the private sector and security cooperation in official level to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis (Lee, 2014, p. 58). Regardless of the intention of the Korean government at that time, the situation was seen as being relatively negligent in strengthening the ROK-US alliance by the Bush administration (ibid, p. 58).

6.4.4. Strategic Patience

As soon as President Lee took the government of South Korea, the alliance between ROK and US started strengthening again (Lee, 2014, p. 87). Lee Myung-bak administration believed that previous progressive government’s ‘Cooperative Self-reliant Defence’ policy was weakening the relations with the US then since his inauguration, he stressed the intensification of the alliance with the US (Snyder, 2009, p. 88). The Obama administration was also in a circumstance where the diplomatic situation was not favourable. The alliance with Japan, the traditionally closest ally in Northeast Asia, was weakened by the Japanese Prime minister Hatoyama’s attempt to relocate the US bases in Japan, moreover, the US’ intention to make China become a ‘responsible stakeholder’ was also not adequately progressed by China’s uncooperative attitude (Cha and Katz, 2011, p. 57).

In this circumstance, South Korea has begun to become one of the most cooperative

allies of Northeast Asia (ibid, p. 54). Based on the strengthened alliance between two countries, the US actively supported the investigation results of the Civil-Military Joint Investigation Group (JIG) and Multinational Combined Intelligence Task Force (MCITF)² in the event of the sinking of the ROKS *Cheonan*, and actively supported the show of force against North Korea by the bilateral naval exercise in the West Sea (ibid, p. 59). After the naval exercise, they showed off high-level cooperation by holding 2 plus 2 (Defence and Foreign Affairs) talks, and delayed the due date of the transfer of wartime operational control of ROK military from 2012 to 2015, guaranteeing stable joint operational capabilities between South Korea and the USFK (ibid, p. 59). In return, South Korea also sent 350 engineering unit troops to Afghanistan to support the US middle-east strategy in response to the US request. ROK's support has helped the US further since NATO countries are not fully cooperating with the US' Afghanistan engagement at that time (ibid, p. 60). In conclusion, the cooperation between South Korea and the US was generally positive.

Lee Myung-bak administration's North Korea policy was planned based on the criticism of previous progressive administrations' engagement policy. President Lee and his staff evaluated the Sunshine Policy as a failure because, despite ten years of engagement policy, North Korea continued hostile attitude toward South Korea, military provocation and its nuclear development programs (Moon, 2011, p. 2; Lee, 2014, p. 105). Thus, President Lee implemented the 'formation of new inter-Korean relations with the combination of principle and pragmatism' and 'approaching the North Korean nuclear issue with the cooperation with

² To identify the main culprit behind the sinking of the ROKS *Cheonan*, South Korean government operated a MCITF consisting of intelligence analysts and naval specialists from South Korea, the US, the UK, Australia, Canada (*ROKS Cheonan sinking White Paper*, 2011, p. 142). The JIG and MCITF concluded: "ROKS *Cheonan* was split and sunk due to shockwave and bubble effect generated by the underwater explosion of a torpedo. The detonation location was 3m to port from the center of the gas turbine room and at a depth of 6-9m. The weapon system used was a CHT-02D torpedo with approximately 250kg of explosives manufactured and used by North Korea." (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea, 2011, p. 333)

neighbouring countries.’ (Moon, 2011, pp. 2, 3) To meet these policy objectives, President Lee has announced the Grand bargain initiative, which promises to help North Korea achieve \$3,000 per capita income within ten years in return for denuclearisation (Moon, 2011, p. 3). Also, President Lee persuaded members of the Six-Party talks the importance of the Grand bargain (Lee, 2014, p. 106). Due to Lee administration’s active diplomatic activity, Grand bargain strategy drew understanding from participants of the six-party talks, and while denuclearisation inter-Korean talks, South Korea explained the concept of Grand bargain to Northern counterpart (ibid, p. 106).

However, North Korea did not convince with Lee Myung-bak administration’s North Korea policy and launched satellite rocket (which suspected as the ICBM test) in April 2009, then conducted its second nuclear test in May (Beck, 2011; Han, 2012; *2016 Defense White Paper*, 2016). North Korea sunk the South Korean naval corvette *Cheonan* on 26 March, 2010, and launched artillery firing at Yeonpyeong Island on 23 November (*ROKS Cheonan sinking White Paper*, 2011; *2016 Defense White Paper*, 2016). After the sinking of ROK corvette *Cheonan*, President Lee oriented his North Korean policy to hard-liner way with ‘24 May Measure’ (Moon, 2011, p. 5). Major points of 24 May Measure are; (1) ‘Proactive deterrence’ which allows a pre-emptive attack of South Korean military as a self-defence measure if there is any intention or indication of a North Korean military provocation. (2) Suspension of all economic exchanges and cooperative projects, except the Kaesung Industrial Complex. (3) Blockade of any cash flow into North Korea, including humanitarian assistance (ibid, p. 6). It is clear that North Korea provided the cause of tension, Lee Myung-bak government also stuck to principle and could not perform their flexibility (Lee, 2014, p. 110). Therefore, the inter-Korean relations and exchanges between the two Koreas became worse.

The exchange between South Korea and China was rapidly developed during the Lee Myung-bak administration, especially in the economic sector (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea, 2012, p. 60). As of 2012, Korea-China trade volume stood at \$2151 billion, China maintained Korea's position number one trade partner, while Korea maintained its status as China's number three trading partner (K-Stat, 2020). However, in the field of security cooperation, China's security concern to the strengthening of the South Korea-US alliance and the gap in the strategy against the North Korean nuclear issue between South Korea and China have made the estranged relationship between them (Cha and Katz, 2011). Lee Myung-bak government aimed to offer a diverse range of international cooperation as a middle-power country ostensibly but in fact making much effort in a restoration of the ROK-US alliance (Yang, 2017, p. 236). At that time, China was in tension with the US due to the US strategy of 'Pivot to Asia', arms sales to Taiwan (Yang, 2017, p. 230). Thus, the ROK's cooperative action to strengthen the ROK-US alliance was a policy that made China uncomfortable from a security perspective (Lee, 2014, p. 88). China's discontent turned out by China's uncooperative attitude to South Korean reaction with the sinking of the ROKS *Cheonan* and sharp criticism on the ROK-US joint exercises (Moon, 2011, p. 11; Lee, 2014, p. 233).

Differences in South Korea and China's perception of North Korea policy have also had a negative impact on their relations. At that time, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's health was deteriorating, and China had a sense of uneasiness about the regime's chaos after his death (Yang, 2017, p. 230). Against this backdrop, China has judged that the South's pressure on the North is adding to the instability in the regime in North and that the more it tries to pressure the North, the more North Korea seeks direct negotiations with the US, which in turn undermines China's influence on the Korean Peninsula (Yang, 2017, p. 230).

In response, China promised to provide 20 million dollars in food and oil to North Korea when Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visits North Korea, even though sanctions against the North are being imposed under the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1874 after the North's second nuclear test in 2009 (Yang, 2017, p. 227). Chinese support to North was in direct opposition to the ROK-US led pressure strategy on North. In conclusion, while Lee Myung-bak administration period, ROK's economic, cultural ties with China had become much stronger, however, regarding diplomatic and security perspective, somewhat regressed with the difference in strategic interest and mistrust between the two countries.

6.4.5. Diplomatic Dilemma

The conservative Park Geun-hye administration succeeded the Lee Myung-bak administration. Park Geun-hye government's foreign policy must be taken into account the relationship between the US and China at the time. At that time, South Korea was using a hedging strategy between China, rising power and the US, the historical and essential security partner (Kim, 2018, p. 621). The Obama administration maintained its 'strategic patience' not to talk to North Korea until the North shows its sincere willingness to denuclearise, and South Korea was in a situation where direct dialogue with the North was not working correctly due to North Korea's provocations and South Korea's strict reaction (Song, 2017, p. 119). In other words, the two pillars of resolving the North Korean nuclear issue - the inter-Korean relationship and the North-US negotiation - were not working correctly (ibid, p. 119).

In this situation, China's cooperation was crucial to put the pressure on North Korea in order to make it change its attitude (Easley and Park, 2016; Choi, 2018). Park Geun-hye government tried actively to elicit cooperation from China than any government before. She sent a special envoy to China before the US when she was president-elect, and she visited China before Japan after taking office (Song, 2017, p. 119). Despite the US' opposition,

South Korea joined the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and instead suspended TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership), which was actively promoted by the Obama administration at the time (Kim, 2018, pp. 618, 619). It also revealed differences in opinion with the US by attending China Victory Day Parade, an unusual move for the leader of so-called the 'Free World Country' (Song, 2017, p. 116). In this way, Park administration made much effort to improve relations with China.

However, in response to North Korea's fourth nuclear test, South Korea has pushed for tougher sanctions, such as banning coal and oil imports, but China opposed it (Song, 2017, pp. 129, 130). Since the South Korea- China diplomatic discord, South Korea has begun to give up its hopes for China's policy changes through friendly gesture (Song, 2017, p. 131; Kim, 2018, pp. 620, 621). Since then, South Korea has pressured China as it began discussing with the US the deployment of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) in the Korean Peninsula, which has been on hold because of the strategic sensitivity (Song, 2017, pp. 126, 131, 132; Swaine, 2017; Kim, 2018, pp. 620, 621).

China has actively opposed the deployment of THAAD on the Korean Peninsula, claiming that THAAD X-band radar's coverage is beyond the Korean Peninsula and infringing on China's strategic interests (Swaine, 2017; Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea, 2018, p. 48). The Chinese leadership was thinking that the deployment of THAAD would weaken their nuclear deterrence (Kim, 2018, p. 620). In the end, after the South Korean government finally decided to deploy the THAAD, China's massive retaliation against the South Korea by reducing official and private exchanges and conducting various government-led investigations on Korean companies in China has worsened the Korea-China relations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea, 2018, pp. 48, 49). Park Geun-hye government used hedging tactics between two countries, in balanced diplomacy between

China and the United States, to get cooperation on its North Korea policy from both sides. In conclusion, however, it failed to persuade China and later resulted in a strategically bold decision (deployment of THAAD) to restore relations with the United States.

6.4.6. Present Situation

The Moon Jae-in administration has prioritised the restoration of relations with the North Korea in its policy and has actively engaged in exchanges with Pyongyang since its inauguration. Holding the first inter-Korean summit on April 27, 2018, the leaders of the two Koreas met for the first time and confirmed their shared engagement in improving inter-Korean relations through the Panmunjom Declaration (Kim, Kim and Yang, 2018). Following the Panmunjom Declaration, the two Koreas set up a joint liaison office in Kaesong and held seven rounds of inter-Korean talks, including talks at a high level (*통일백서 2019 Unification White Paper 2019*, 2019). The third inter-Korean summit has been held in Pyongyang between 18 to 20 September 2020, producing tangible results in inter-Korean exchanges as the two defence ministers signed an agreement to implement the Panmunjom Declaration in the military sector (*통일백서 2019 Unification White Paper 2019*, 2019). After the North Korea-US summit on June 12, 2018, the inter-Korean cooperation was expected to produce substantial results in the denuclearisation sector (White House, 2018). However, it became entrenched as the agreement broke down at the second North Korea-US summit on February 28, 2019 (*BBC*, 2019).

No further cooperation has been made between the two Koreas as denuclearisation negotiations between the US and North Korea have now become entrenched. Recently, the government announced that it is willing to pursue independent North Korea cooperation to improve relations with the state as the US-North Korea negotiation is in a stalemate (Do,

2020). However, North Korea appears to be attempting the negotiation with the US without making any official contact with South Korea, after the failure of the US-North Korea negotiations (Nishino, 2019). In the future, inter-Korean relations are expected to be an important turning point in how the North responds to the government's friendly gestures.

In the early stages of the Moon Jae-in government, Trump had sought to arrange a meeting with Kim Jong-un, and accordingly, the Moon administration's role as a negotiator was highlighted, promoting cooperation between the US and South Korea (Campbell, 2017). However, South Korea's role as a mediator has been met with questions of effectiveness since the agreement between the US and North Korea broke down at the 2019 Hanoi summit (Nishino, 2019). Currently, both North Korea and the US are demonstrating minimal engagement in the negotiation, and North Korea's refusal to make direct contact with South Korea could render the Moon administration's role as mediator particularly difficult in the future.

The Moon administration has pushed for exchanges with China, focusing on restoring soured Seoul-Beijing ties as it decided to deploy the THAAD system under previous administrations. During a parliamentary audit of the Foreign Ministry on October 30, 2017, South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha ended the controversy over the THAAD deployment by declaring that the South Korean government is of the same opinion regarding the Chinese three-no principle: no additional THAAD deployment, no US-led Missile Defence programme participation, and no trilateral military alliance with the US and Japan (S. Cho, 2017). Since then, some extreme economic retaliation measures have been relaxed, although China has not entirely concluded its economic retaliation on South Korea as of yet.

South Korea is unable to respond aggressively to China's retaliative measures since South Korea, which has a trade-oriented economic structure, benefits significantly from

China; China was South Korea's largest trade surplus as of 2019, although China's economic retaliation damaged many companies and private sector cooperation following the THAAD deployment (K-Stat, 2020). The Moon administration opposed the framing of the Korean Peninsula as the front line of the US-China power conflict, and is also moving forward with policies aimed at restoring the previous level of economic cooperation whilst avoiding conflicts with China as it expects Beijing to play a significant role in the denuclearisation of North Korea (Park, 2017; S. R. Cho, 2017).

Factors affecting international relations in Korean Peninsula have differed over time; immediately after the Korean War, the Cold War world order held the greatest influence, thereby placing importance on cooperation with countries with the same political notion and implementing strong anti-communist policies (Hong, 2000). During the post-Cold War period, South Korea also increased direct contact with North Korea whilst promoting cooperation with ex-communist countries in line with the global atmosphere of international cooperation (Joo, 1993; Sanford, 1993; Kim, 2002; *60 Years of Korean diplomacy*, 2009). However, after the North Korean nuclear crisis, complex and diverse variables began to affect relations between countries.

One of the significant factor is the rise of China: China has grown into the world's second-largest economy after the US in nominal GDP after 2009 while maintaining a 7 to 10 percent economic growth rate since 2000 (World Bank, 2020). The US was the largest export partner of South Korea until 2002; however, China has maintained this position since 2003 (K-Stat, 2020). In terms of security, China has become North Korea's most influential supporter since the collapse of the Soviet Union and begins to exert influence around the six-party talks in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue (Ji, 2001; Easley and Park, 2016; Wang, 2018). Additionally, China's growth has prompted Washington to further engage with its Asia-Pacific strategy, placing Seoul in a situation where it must decide its foreign policies

within the context of a US-centred security cooperation (South Korea, US, and Japan) and its role as a balancer for Northeast Asia (Ikenberry, 2008; Christensen, 2015; The US Department of Defense, 2019).

6.5. References

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