

EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENTS' UNDERSTANDINGS ON NORTH KOREA: COMPARING OPERATIONAL CODE BELIEFS OF KIM, ROH, LEE AND PARK (1998-2016)

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ABSTRACT

The study is an attempt to provide an answer to the question of whether the South Korean political leaders have a significant influence on North Korea policy during a security challenge. Specifically, does South Korea with a more cooperative leader more likely to response to the security challenges by a more cooperative policy, or do structural and domestic political constraints limit their significance? To answer the question, this thesis examines the effect of South Korea's presidential operational code beliefs on North Korea policy in security challenges. The study assessed every president's operational code beliefs from Kim Dae-Jung to Park Geun-hye (from 1998 to 2016), mainly focusing on the "image of the political universe" (P-1) and "strategic preference" (I-1). Operational codes were derived from the content analysis of public speeches of presidents using the computer-based Verbs In Context System (VICS). Operational code analysis findings showed that all of the president's operational codes were significantly related to the foreign policy outcomes.

KEYWORDS

Political Leadership, Perception, Operational Code, Foreign Policy, Security Challenge,

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. THE NEGLECT OF LEADERSHIP IN FOREIGN POLICY

In the last few decades, individual level analysis rarely received enough attention from international relations theorists. Kenneth Waltz suggested three images of analysis in international relations: individual, nation (or state), and system. Even though each level of analysis offer unique explanation, he disregarded individual level approach for understanding international relations on his way to emphasizing the importance of the international system.¹ By man and Pollack also pointed out that many international relations theories do not expect leaders to play a major role in the domestic or international domain.² Moreover, the rapid growth of democratic governance system in every country during recent decades also impelled to neglect political leadership in foreign policy. The 'check and balance' principle, one of the main principles of democracy, also constrains the leader's influence in policy decision-making process.³ For example, domestic constraints by the congress, bureaucracy, media, civil society, and public opinionate considered to minimize the degree of each leader's autonomy on foreign policy decision-making process. In all,

¹ Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 33.

² Daniel By man and Kenneth Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," *International Security* 25, No. 4 (2001): 110-113.

³ Robison, Samuel Berwyn, "The Influence of Presidential Operational Code Beliefs on U.S. Foreign Policy Actions In The Middle East" (Master's Thesis, Louisiana State University, 2005): 1.

as Neustadt stated, the president is expected to be weak and is getting what he wants is becoming harder.⁴

1.2. BRINGING LEADERS BACK IN FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING

Notwithstanding, the role of leaders still remains as a crucial factor in understanding how states decide foreign policy in security challenge. First, the nature of the leader's understanding decide how the leader define the situation, so that influence his or her policy decisions. Richard Snyder was the most seminal scholar in exploring the power of decision-makers in foreign policy. Snyder and his colleagues emphasized that the analysis of international politics should be centered on the behavior of decision-makers. They asserted that no matter how much certain situational elements are stressed, the more important factor in foreign policy decision-making is how the leaders 'define the situation' according to his own preference.⁵ Presidents have their own beliefs, ideas, preperceptions, and motivations just like any other human beings do. This makes almost impossible for leaders to make objective decisions in every situation. Thus, different individuals are very likely to derive different meanings from the event occurring in the same environment, so that, behave differently.⁶Second, personal beliefs of a leader matters especially when perceiving their enemies and themselves. The leader's mindset defines what they want, who their enemies are, and how we should behave in order to achieve the goal. It is the psychological factor of leader's that reflects how the leader comprehend themselves as well as the outside world.⁷

Empirically speaking, we can discover many cases that successive leaders show inconsistency in their policy toward security threats. It is because of their variance in the assessment of the situations that resulted in a totally different approach to the same conflictive situation. For example, George H.W. Bush limited the intervention in Somalia to humanitarian aid, while Bill Clinton initially expanded the intervention in order to solve the underlying internal problems.⁸ In China, the new leadership of Xi Jinping carried out more assertive actions on maritime territorial disputes in the South China Sea compared to his immediate predecessor, Hu Jintao.⁹ When Lee Myung-bak Lee entered office as South Korean president, he made a major conversion in North Korea policy. He denied existing policy of unconditioned reconciliation with North Korea, which is often called as "sunshine policy."Even though the situation of North Korea's nuclear crisis wasn't different from that of the past president, he decided to employ more conditional and reciprocity policies toward North Korea instead of dialogue and engagement policy.¹⁰In sum, numerous empirical cases lead us to think that it is natural to expect different policy outcomes from different leaders.

Not only experimental cases, but also the common sense tells us that the history of what happened in international relations cannot be explained without mentioning the personal beliefs of individuals

⁴Neustadt, Ricahrd E.,*Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt and Reagan*. (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 17.

⁵ Snyder, R. C., Brück, H. W., &Sapin, B., *The Decision-Making Approach to the Study of International Politics*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954): 141-145.

⁶ M. FatihTayfur, "Main Approaches to the Study Foreign Policy: A Review", *METU Studies in Development* 21, No. 1 (1994): 131.

⁷Renshon, J., "Stability and Change in Belief Systems: The Operational Code of George W. Hush", *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, No. 6 (2008): 820-849.

⁸ Saunders, Elizabeth. "Military Interventions as Wars of Choice", Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, (San Diego: Town & Country Resort and Convention Center, 2006): 1-2.

⁹ Irene Chan and Mingjiang Li, "New Chinese Leadership, New Policy in the South China Sea Dispute?" *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 20, No. 1 (2015): 40.

¹⁰Konishi, Weston S., Manyin, Mark E., *South Korea: Its Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Outlook*, Report of the Congressional Research Service to the Members and Committees of Congress, September 30 (Washington D.C.: The Library of Congress, 2009), 11.

like Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, or Mao Zedong.¹¹None of the recent scholars would try to explain the world today without reference to the personal characteristics of Donald Trump and Xi Jinping. Considering the high empirical and intuitive validity of the argument that leadership has a critical influence on state's behaviors in security challenges, it is somewhat ironic that analyzing leaders' belief system received relatively little attention in the discourse of conventional international relations theory.

One of the reason that stemmed scholars from exploring deeper in psychological analysis of leaders was that challenging process of scientific verification on the ideational beliefs. How to quantify the invisible personal beliefs as a variable brings exacting task to scholars. Also, the realistic problem also hinders researchers to focus on leaders as a crucial variable because it is impossible to directly study the supreme leader's mind set. These primary restrictions of researching personal beliefs of political leaders decreased scholars' interest in studying leaders.¹²In this paper, I tried to overcome these limitations by employing operational code analysis. First, operational code analysis allows us to get the tangible scores for the leader's philosophical and instrumental beliefs. Philosophical beliefs explain about the leader's understanding regarding the nature of the political universe—whether it is cooperative or conflictive, the intensity of political conflict and their perceived control within this universe—as well as their instrumental beliefs explains about the leader's understanding of the most efficient strategies for accomplishing their political goals.¹³Second, it allows us to access to leaders by analyzing their public speeches. Since it is impossible to bring political leaders to our laboratory, the best practical way to study leaders' thought is by looking at their public speeches. In summation, this research aims to quantify leaders' personal beliefs by using operational code analysis and then test the hypothesis that the operational codes of leaders – either conflictual or cooperative and either assertive or passive – have a significant impact on their state behavior in security challenges.

2. LEADERSHIP APPROACH TO FOREIGN POLICY DECISION-MAKING

According to Hermann, the actual foreign policy decisions are influenced by how each unit of actors works. He suggested that units in foreign policy decisions can be classified into three parts: predominant leader model, single group model, and multi-coalition model.¹⁴Among these three categories, the predominant leader model is different from the other two models. Since the single group model and multi-coalition model consists of a plurality of policy makers, it is important to understand the pattern of conflicts, cooperation, and interaction between foreign policy decision makers. However, the predominant leader model emphasizes only the top leader as the only meaningful actor in making foreign policies. Therefore in this case, it is significant to understand how the leader perceives the environment and themselves. Specifically, it is essential to examine how the leaders define the situation and what policy strategy the leader evaluates as the most effective one.

¹¹Malici, Akan, *When Leaders Learn and When They Don't: Mikhail Gorbachev and Kim Il Sung at the End of the Cold War* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008): 3.

¹²George, A., "The Operational Code: A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-Making", *International Studies Quarterly* 13, No. 1 (1969): 190-222.

¹³Akan Malici and Johnna Malici, "The Operational Codes of Fidel Castro and Kim Il Sung: The Last Cold Warriors?", *Political Psychology* 26, No. 3 (2005): 395.

¹⁴Hermann, "How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy," 52-53.

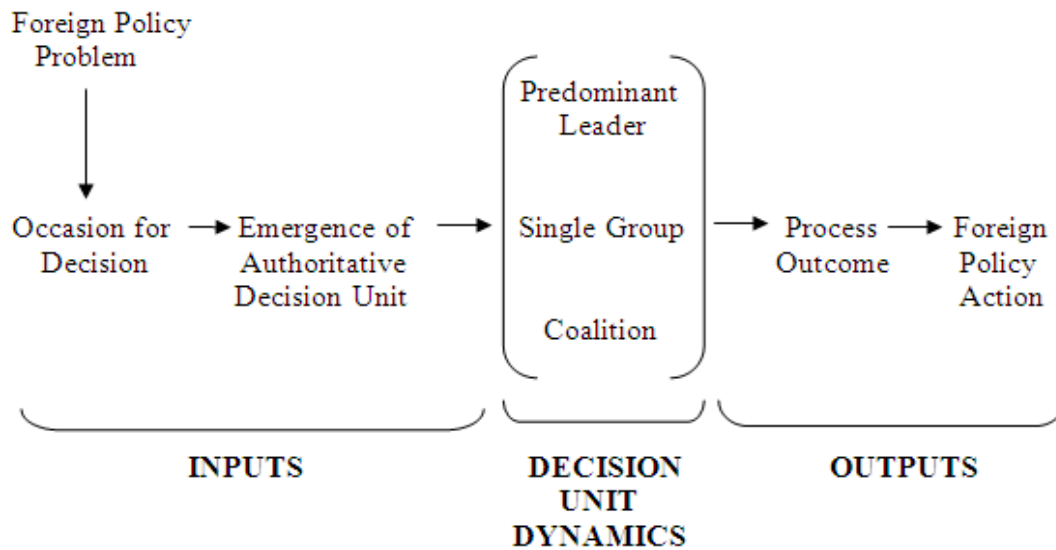


Figure 1. Hermann's Decision Units Framework¹⁵

The relationship diagram of the top ruler model in Figure 1 expresses that leadership has a significant impact on policy decisions and outcomes. There is a discrepancy between the structural conditions and the results of policy decisions by the operation of the causal mechanism of leadership that connects the two. In other words, leadership creates meaningful differences in policy decisions. On the other hand, both the context and the context in which this model can be applied should be considered at the same time. The conditions under which the leadership of the supreme ruler can be important are: (1) non-routine situations such as war and crisis; (2) decisions made at the top of the hierarchy of policy decisions that are free from other constraints.¹⁶ Looking at leadership as a definition of circumstances and an effective strategy choice is the actor-general perspective of the rational actor model.¹⁷ Actors can be seen as a kind of naive scientist. In other words, it is not merely a passive reaction to external stimuli but a presence that actively responds to the external environment and creates an environment. On the other hand, it is capable of numerous mistakes, biases, biases, and errors.¹⁸ Therefore, it can be understood that the choice and decision of the leader is based on bounded rationality. In policy decision making, the policy maker's attributes should be emphasized, not just the constraints imposed by the given situation. In this context, this paper focuses on the belief of the leader among the attributes of the leader, which is the policy maker and uses the operating code analysis method to analyze the belief of the leader.

2.1 VARIOUS INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL ANALYSES IN FOREIGN POLICY

Many pivotal works have been published which tried to apply an individual leadership framework to the study of foreign policy decision-making of international relations. Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin first provided the framework focusing on individuals in foreign policy decision-making. They called for bringing back leaders back in the explanations for state behavior and see what is inside

¹⁵Ibid., 58-59.

¹⁶Holsti, Ole, "Foreign Policy Formation Viewed Cognitively," in *The Structure of Decision: the Cognitive maps of Political Elites*, eds. Robert Axelrod (Princeton, NJ:Princeton University Press, 1976), 13-14.

¹⁷Hudson, Valerie M. "Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1, No.1 (2005): 5-7.

¹⁸George, Alexander L., "The Causal Nexus between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision-Making Behavior: The Operational Code" Belief System." in *Psychological Models in International Politics*, eds. Lawrence S. Falkowski (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979), 98-99.

the black box.¹⁹They argued that state's response in security challenge is a product of psychological and personality traits unique to each leader. Thus, different leaders are expected to have different decision-making processes based on their beliefs, particularly concerning whether leaders opt for a violent or non-violent course of action.²⁰Another milestone of psychological research on foreign policy decision-making is done by Hermann. He explained that each state's foreign policy strategy depends on the 'leadership style' of presidents. This leadership style includes factors such as the need for power, understanding of control over the environment, and level of distrust toward others.²¹James David Barber also provided a seminal work on individual-level analysis in foreign policy. In his study of the leadership style of the former presidents of the United States, Barber classified them into four types of presidential character: active-positive; active-negative; passive-positive; and passive-negative.²²He added that each leadership style has characteristics of adaptive, compulsive, compliant, and withdrawn, respectively. David Winter also has made a significant contribution to the individual-level study when we linked the state foreign policy behavior with leader's motivation. He asserted that president's decisions are closely related to the power and achievement motivation of himself.²³ Later, Brecher and his colleagues developed an in-and-out mechanism to explain a foreign policy behavior of states by the influence of individual leadership.²⁴ This in-and-out mechanism regarded state's foreign policy decision-making process as a function. The leader's understanding and beliefs connects the problematic situation (input) and the actual foreign policy (output). There is also individual-level analysis which tried to explain state behavior under the framework of the rational choice model. Jack Levy, for instance, used prospect theory in international relations suggesting that state behavior is the result of the rational selection of state leaders. The state's leaders were expected to analyze all incoming information and choose the course of action that can maximize gains while minimizing losses.²⁵ Nevertheless, this theory didn't put emphasis on how different personal beliefs can affect leader's calculation. As a result, the theory concludes that all leaders are expected to come to the same policy decision in an effort to maximize the utility, regardless of the different personal characteristics of the decision makers.

2.2 OPERATIONAL CODE ANALYSIS

Historically, it was considered that the viable scientific research options to calculate the psychological beliefs systems of leaders are limited. The main reason for the restriction was the difficulty of studying political leader directly, unlike a conventional psychological analysis. Due to this problem, political science scholars have created a technique to analyze the psychological characteristics of leaders "at-a-distance," called operational code.²⁶ This research will employ the operational code analysis to assess the belief systems of the South Korean leadership. The operational code analysis is a system of personal beliefs which explains beliefs regarding political conflicts and instrumental strategy. It was initially defined by Nathan Leites, when he performed an innovative research on Bolshevism in

¹⁹ Snyder et al., *The Decision-Making Approach to the Study of International Politics*, 19.

²⁰ Hermann, M. G., and Kegley Jr, C. W., "Rethinking democracy and international peace: Perspectives from political psychology" *International Studies Quarterly* 39, No. 1 (1995): 511-533.

²¹ Hermann, "How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy," 81

²² James David Barber, "Presidential Character and How to Foresee It," in *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, eds. James David Barber (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Press: 1992).

²³ David G. Winter "Things I've learned About Personality From Studying Political Leaders at a Distance," *Journal of Personality* 73, No. 3 (2005): 561.

²⁴ Michael Brecher, Blema Steinberg and Janice Stein, "A Framework for Research on Foreign Policy Behavior," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 13, No. 1 (1969), 75-101.

²⁵ Levy, J. S., "Prospect theory, rational choice, and international relations", *International Studies Quarterly* 41, No. 1 (1997): 87-112.

²⁶ Walker, S. G., "The Evolution of Operational Code Analysis". *Political Psychology* 11, No. 1 (1990): 403-418.

1953. In this research, he analyzed the operational code of the Politburo of Soviet Union and how it was reflected in their political strategy.²⁷ It was the first work that used operational code analysis as a primary research method. From this period, leadership study in international relations has been activated by the research method of analyzing leader's public words such as speeches, writings, and interviews.

Fifteen years after the study of Leites, Alexander George further developed the operational code as scientific research method. He published a writing suggesting that a leader's operational code can be conceptualized as a political belief system. He divided this political belief system into two parts: philosophical beliefs and instrumental beliefs. The philosophical beliefs indicated leader understands on political universe while the instrumental beliefs displayed the most effective strategy for achieving political goals.²⁸ George developed ten questions based on an individual's philosophical and instrumental beliefs, which have since become the basis for all operational code analyses. By answering to each question, he was able to calculate leader's operational code and then he implemented it in his analysis of state's foreign policy decision-making process. He tried to explain how states behave in international relations by its supreme leader's operational code. His work successfully demonstrated that states with different operational code leaders showed different responses in similar situations and how leader's beliefs affected its state foreign policies.

In addition, Ole Holsti formulated six types of operational code system based on George's philosophical and instrumental questions. He believed that some of the operational codes showed similarities and they can be divided into certain categories. Thus, Holsti established the two main variables to distinguish leaders' political belief system: How leaders perceive about (1) what is the fundamental nature of the political universe (2) what are the fundamental sources of conflict. First questions with two possible answers: whether leaders perceive the conflicts of the political universe as permanent or temporary and the second question with three options: whether the leaders perceive the origin of the conflicts is the human nature, society, or international system. With the answers to these two questions, he developed six types of operational codes (A, B, C, D, E, F).²⁹ Stephen G. Walker further reanalyzed Holsti's six types of operational codes whether it betrays significant differences between each type. Walker discovered that Holsti's type D, E, F leadership didn't have enough difference among each other even though they all showed very different characteristics with A, B, and C types. Therefore, he reduced Holsti's typology of operational code leadership into four types of belief systems (A, B, C, and DEF). Walker's typology has also been applied by other scholars to explain the link between the beliefs and behavior in numerous foreign policy-makers studies including United States, Great Britain, China, Cuba, North Korea and Turkey.³⁰

When measuring leaders' different operational code types, he designated three key beliefs: nature of the political universe (P-1), strategic approach to goals (I-1), and ability to

²⁷Leites, N., *The Operational Code of the Politburo* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1951).

²⁸George, Alexander, "The Operational Code," 199-216.

²⁹Holsti, Ole, *The 'Operational Code' as an Approach to the Analysis of Belief Systems* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 1977).

³⁰ Walker, S. G., "The Interface Between Beliefs and Behavior: Henry Kissinger's Operational Code and the Vietnam War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 21, No. 1 (1977): 129-168.

controllhistorical development (P-4).³¹ Walker regarded these three values as master beliefs among ten questions because they are fundamental in verifying the answers for the rest. Then he later reconceptualized only P-1 and I-1 beliefs as the key operational beliefs, removing P-4. He explained that other four answers besides the key beliefs within each category must be closely connected and included in P-1 and I-1 values.³² The P-1 belief indicates a leader's general worldview on the political universe so that it explains about the fundamental beliefs which best describes the leader. The I-1 belief reflects how the leader believes about the best approach to achieve his political goal. It shows the leader's preference on what kind of strategic policy best serves to accomplish the objective. Since the P-1 and I-1 scores are representative for philosophical and instrumental belief, they act as guides for defining operational codes of leaders.

In He Kai and Feng Huiyun's research on operational code of Xi Jinping and Hu Jintao, they also emphasized these two master beliefs. The P-1 and I-1 values were used as a methodological tool to assess the nature and the policy behavior of Chinese top leaders. With these two variables, they constructed 2 x 2 typology of leadership style. According to their research, the P-1 value decides the state would be either revisionist power or status quo power. Leader's I-1 value determines the state would implement either assertive policies or moderate policies. Through incorporating the two key operational code beliefs, they identified four types of leadership or states in the international system: assertive-revisionist; assertive-status-quo; moderate-revisionist; and moderate-status quo.³³

Since this study will apply these three operational codes to South Korea's North Korea policy, the typology of operational code beliefs will be specified by focusing on South Korean leaders in their understanding about the nature of the political universe with North Korea (P-1), the degree which the leader perceives of controlling the development of the history (P-4), and what kind of policy strategy the leader believes as the most effective one (I-1). Particularly, if a leader's perception regarding the nature of the political relationship with North Korea is conflictual in orientation (if the P-1 value is low), it may suggest that the leader is more likely to respond to the security challenge with conflictual policies such as military pressure and sanction. On the other hand, if a leader views its relationship with North Korea as cooperative in orientation (if the P-1 value is high), the leader is more likely to respond to the security challenge with more peaceful means such as dialogue and negotiation. Similarly, if the leader perceives himself as having high control over historical development (high P-4 score), it may imply that the leader is more likely to implement an assertive approach to the North Korea policy while the leader with low P-4 score will prefer passive policy. Lastly, if the leader has preference in a more cooperative policy to achieve political goal (high I-1 score), it indicates that the leader favors moderate policy in nature. In other words, the leader is more likely to use cooperative policy in order to achieve what the leader desires. As the I-1 belief shows the leader believes in the effectiveness of conflictual policy to achieve goals (low I-1 score), the leader is likely to depend on military strategy in their relationship with North Korea.

2.3. CRITICISMS AND SOLUTIONS

³¹ Walker, S. G., "The Motivational Foundations of Political Belief Systems", *International Studies Quarterly* 27, No. 1 (1983): 179-202.

³² Mark Shafer and Stephen Walker, "Operational Code Analysis at a Distance," 33.

³³ He and Feng, "Xi Jinping's Operational Code Beliefs and China's Foreign Policy," 220.

Two major criticisms need to be carefully considered when using operational code analysis in foreign policy decision-making. The main shortcoming of operational code analysis on foreign policy comes from the nature of the contents which are examined. Operational code analysis highlights on public speeches and interviews that are officially stated as the political leader of the certain country. The contents should contain diplomatic and rhetorical words that do not align with the actual policy of the leader. In order to overcome this criticism, researchers need to be very cautious in choosing what speeches to choose for representativeness. Also, as I mentioned earlier, there are numerous of speeches addressed by the president, so it is required to pick typical examples that can best represent the leader's real mindset on the certain subject of foreign policy.

Second, there is a doubt about who is the real writer of the public speeches. Since most of the political leaders have their own team who are in full charge of writing public statements, some criticize that public speeches cannot be used to evaluate the president's personal mindset. Especially in the case of the South Korean president Park Geun-hye, who was impeached during her term of presidency, one of the key criticisms raised on her was that her private friend who did not have official title wrote and revised the president's public speeches. In this case, people can cast doubt on the contents of the public speeches whether it really represents the leader's ideas and beliefs. Even though this criticism is correct in some aspect, however, it does not mean that these speeches cannot be used as the materials for analyzing the leader's personal beliefs and thoughts. This is because all of the presidents make their own speechwriting team to write the first draft of the statement, but it is only delivered as public when the leader finally recognized the contents of the statement. Thus, we can be confident on the public speeches reflect the leader's ideas.³⁴

As limitations mentioned above tell, contents analysis research method is not a perfect method. However, the content analysis and operational code analysis in foreign policy still show a significant contribution. Moreover, when considering practical and realistic issue that it is almost impossible to research political leader's psychological characteristic in a person, the only option available to study the leaders' own thoughts is to look inside their mind 'at-a-distance.' By deliberately sampling the speeches and interpreting the result, operational code analysis can be a meaningful method in international relations studies.

3. EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SOUTH KOREA'S NORTH KOREA POLICY

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The main explanatory variable for this study are drawn from the operational code. This research examines and compares operational codes of the former South Korean presidents Kim Dae-jung, Roh Moo-hyun, Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye, consecutive South Korean presidents from 1998 to 2016. Then, it will explore the relationship between the presidential operational code and the state behavior in security challenge. In this research, I will take P-1 and I-1 operational code beliefs as possible variable. This study will apply these three operational codes to more specific context, South Korea's North Korea policy. Therefore, the typology of operational code beliefs focuses on South Korean leaders in their understanding about the nature of the political universe with North Korea (P-1) and what kind of policy strategy the leader believes as the most effective one (I-1). Particularly, if a leader's perception regarding the nature of the political relationship with North Korea

³⁴Malici, *When Leaders Learn and When They Don't*, 21-22.

is conflictual in orientation (if the P-1 value is low), it may suggest that the leader is more likely to respond to the security challenge with conflictual policies such as military pressure and sanction. On the other hand, if a leader views its relationship with North Korea as cooperative in orientation (if the P-1 value is high), the leader is more likely to respond to the security challenge with more peaceful means such as dialogue and negotiation. Similarly, if the leader has preference in a more cooperative policy to achieve political goal (high I-1 score), it indicates that the leader favors moderate policy in nature. In other words, the leader is more likely to use cooperative policy in order to achieve what the leader desires. As the I-1 belief shows the leader believes in the effectiveness of conflictual policy to achieve goals (low I-1 score), the leader is likely to depend on military strategy in their relationship with North Korea.

3.2 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the results of the operational code analysis of the former South Korean presidents Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun (from 1998 to 2007) and Table 2 shows the results of the operational code analysis of the former South Korean presidents Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye (from 2008-2016)

	President Kim Dae-jung (N = 220)	President Roh Moo-hyun (N = 69)
<i>Philosophical Beliefs</i>		
P-1 Nature of Political Universe (Conflict/Cooperation)	0.66	0.48
P-2 Realization of Political Values (Optimism/Pessimism)	0.39	0.16
P-3 Political Development (Unpredictable/Predictable)	0.15	0.27
P-4 Historical Development (Low Control/High Control)	0.28	0.33
P-5 Role of Chance (Small Role/Large Role)	0.96	0.91
<i>Instrumental Beliefs</i>		
I-1 Strategic Approach to Goals (Conflict/Cooperation)	0.64	0.83
I-2 Intensity of Tactics (Conflict/Cooperation)	0.32	0.49
I-3 Risk Orientation (Averse/Acceptant)	0.15	0.16
I-4 Timing of Action		
Conflict/Cooperation	0.36	0.17
Words/Deeds	0.49	0.52
I-5 Utility of Means		
Reward	0.16	0.22
Promise	0.2	0.3
Appeal	0.46	0.39
Oppose	0.05	0.04
Threaten	0.05	0
Punish	0.08	0.04

Table 1. Comparison of the Operational Code of Kim Dae-jung(1998-2003) and Roh Moo-hyun (2003-2008)

	President Lee Myung-bak (N = 104)	President Park Geun-hye (N = 147)	
<i>Philosophical Beliefs</i>			
P-1	Nature of Political Universe (Conflict/Cooperation)	0.27	0.23
P-2	Realization of Political Values (Optimism/Pessimism)	0.15	0.09
P-3	Political Development (Unpredictable/Predictable)	0.07	0.23
P-4	Historical Development (Low Control/High Control)	0.21	0.19
P-5	Role of Chance (Small Role/Large Role)	0.98	0.98
<i>Instrumental Beliefs</i>			
I-1	Strategic Approach to Goals (Conflict/Cooperation)	0.55	0.64
I-2	Intensity of Tactics (Conflict/Cooperation)	0.24	0.38
I-3	Risk Orientation (Averse/Acceptant)	0.14	0.22
I-4	Timing of Action		
	Conflict/Cooperation	0.45	0.36
	Words/Deeds	0.64	0.64
I-5	Utility of Means		
	Reward	0.18	0.29
	Promise	0.14	0.04
	Appeal	0.45	0.5
	Oppose	0.05	0.11
	Threaten	0.05	0.04
	Punish	0.14	0.04

Table 2. Comparison of the Operational Code of Lee Myung-bak (2008-2013) and Park Geun-hye (2013-2016)

3.3 RESULTS EXPLANATION

According to the operational code analysis, President Kim Dae-jung had the most benign view on the nature of the political relationship with North Korea among four presidents. (P-1: 0.66) President Roh Moo-hyun's score suggests the most cooperative strategic orientation among the four leaders (I-1: 0.83) with second highest cooperative understanding on the nature of the political universe with North Korea. (P-1: 0.48) President Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye both shared comparatively conflictual view on the nature of political universe with North Korea (P-1: 0.27, P-1: 0.23) while Park showed relatively higher degree of preference in cooperative strategic approach (I-1: 0.64) than Lee. (I-1: 0.55).

Before proceeding to discuss each decision-makers' operational code in more detail, first I will discuss their differences and similarities in general. First, all of the four presidents seem to have a positive understanding. One of the special features of this result of operational code analysis is that the scores are all positive even though the P-1, P-2, I-1, I-2 scores range from -1.0 to +1.0. While there is still a significant difference between their scores, this result can be understood in two ways. One explanation might suggest that it is the result of rhetoric words that they used for public speeches. Considering positive words the leaders use in the foreign policy domain, the operational

code scores might be higher than the real personal belief. It is also possible that they really have cooperative beliefs toward North Korea in orientation when calculated in absolute scale. Regardless of any interpretations, it is still worthwhile to see the differences between the presidents by comparing each other. Second, while there is a huge variance in presidents' P-1 scores, the gap of the I-1 scores among four presidents is minute. (Range of P-1: 0.43, Range of I-1: 0.28) It implies that South Korean political elites share a relatively common strategic orientation despite their different beliefs about the nature of the political relationship with North Korea. Lastly, in terms of the P-1 and P-4 scores, we can say there is a shared understanding on the nature of North Korea by party identification. Presidents from the Conservative party (Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye) shared an almost same level of the P-1 and P-4 scores and showed substantial difference compared to that of presidents from the Democratic party. (Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun) While presidents in the same party shared the similar philosophical beliefs (understanding nature of the political universe and sense of control over historical developments), the gap between each party group was significant. Therefore, it can be implied that philosophical beliefs of operational codes have some relationship with its party identification, too. A brief review on the history of South Korea's Northern policy also supports this tendency of party identification. Presidents from the Democratic Party (historically the liberal camp and left wing) tended to engage peacefully in North Korea affairs and prefer negotiations and dialogue, while presidents from the Conservative Party (historically the conservative camp and right wing) tended to prefer more military and hawkish policies toward security challenges raised by North Korea.

3.4 COMPARISON BETWEEN THE LEADERS' OPERATIONAL CODES

Deeper examination of the operational code analysis results suggest some meaningful observations. The operational codes of the South Korea presidents can be explored in three dimensions: (1) perception of nature of political relationship with North Korea (P-1: cooperative or conflictual) (2) preferred strategic approach to North Korea. (I-1: cooperative or conflictual)

First, for the degree of understanding whether the nature of the political relationship with North Korea is cooperative or conflictual, Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun shows the P-1 value of 0.64 and 0.48, respectively. These high scores of P-1 operational code demonstrate their beliefs on cooperative perception toward the nature of inter-Korean relations. On the other hand, Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye both present a relatively low level of P-1 score compared to the first two, with the value of 0.24 and 0.27, respectively. It can be interpreted as they have a greater tendency of conflictual understanding on the nature of relation with North Korea. This intense image of the opponent's hostility implies that any act of the other side is likely to be interpreted as posing a threat to them.

The second dimension is about what kind of strategy the leader prefers to achieve his goal: cooperative or conflictual. This part is expressed by the I-1 value. The higher I-1 score means the leader believes a more cooperative and flexible strategy better serves achieving his goal, while lower I-1 score implies the leader's preference in conflictual and military measures. In the case of the former South Korea presidents, I-1 scores are 0.64, 0.83, 0.55, and 0.64 for Kim Dae-jung, Roh Moo-hyun, Lee Myung-bak, and Park Geun-hye, respectively. Roh Moo-hyun showed the preference in the most collaborative strategic approach among the four presidents. President Lee Myung-bak showed low I-1 score compared to other three presidents. The degree of cooperative strategy preferred by Kim Dae-jung and Park Geun-hye was same.

4. CONCLUSION

In summary of the analysis, the result of operational code analysis shows that the operational code beliefs of South Korean presidents are highly related to the North Korea policy in security challenges. Based on this conceptual framework, I develop a typology of political leaders of South Korea in terms of North Korea policy based on two factors: how they believe about the nature of the North Korea (P-1) and what method they believe is the most effective strategy to respond to the North Korea security challenges (I-1). First, it is crucial to see whether the president believes the nature of political relationship with North Korea as conflictive or cooperative. Leaders who diagnose the origin of the political universe in relationship with North Korea are more likely to undertake “hardliner” and conflictive behaviors. In contrast, leaders who see the nature as relatively cooperative and harmonious relationship will try to employ the policy of negotiation and dialogue. Second, it is about leaders’ beliefs on the most effective instrument to solve the crisis. There is one type of leaders who have an preference in conflictual direction in achieving their strategic goals. Another type of leaders has beliefs in cooperative approach when fulfilling their strategic goals. Presidents who prefers conflictual strategy does not have enough viable options and try to enhance military power to secure themselves. In the case of South Korea, this is achieved by consolidating the military alliance with the United States. In contrast, presidents who prefer peaceful strategy are with more options to employ, leaving them more room to pursue harmonious strategies, which aim to resolve a given conflict through bilateral or multilateral negotiations with minimal military reactions. Thus, these different evaluations on the nature of the political universe in a relationship with North Korea and the preference in a strategy to achieve political goals, have profound consequences for how states behave differently in security challenges.

4.1 LOCATING THE ‘NORTH KOREA POLICY’ DISCOURSE IN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Debates on the South Korea’s North Korea policy have evolved around two axes.³⁵ The first axis revolves around a debate over how to perceive North Korean government. Some South Korean leaders consider the nature of two Koreas relationship as conflictive since North Korean regime is troublesome and failed state. They believe the current North Korean authoritarian regime is unstable and will collapse soon. They also believe North Korean regime do not prioritize its citizens, but just tries to be more aggressive in the international system. In short, they find the origin of the security challenge from North Korea’s incapability of governance. However, some other politicians believe South Korea’s relationship with the North can be and must be harmonious. They believe North Korean regime’s behavior can be understood because it is rational choices in terms of their state survival and bounded rationality. They also think that current North Korean regime is stable and smart enough to survive in the international system. They believe that we can change the calculation of North Korean leaders’ thinking mechanism through dialogue and engagement policy because their actions are also controllable and predictable. This first axis matches with the P-1 value which is about understanding the nature of political universe of North Korea.

The second axis is related to the degree of the dependence on the role of the United States in solving North Korea security threat. Some political leaders and strategists of South Korea have argued that South Korea must put emphasis on the consolidation of the military alliance with the United States in order to deal with North Korean government. This implies that only assertive and military actions are effective in solving the security challenges particularly in light of the South Korea-United States military alliance. They emphasize close cooperation with United States especially because South Korea is depending on United States’ military capability in defending North Korea’s nuclear weapons and provocations. Others, by contrast, contend that South Korea should become more

³⁵Park CheolHee, “Conservative Conceptions of Japan as a “Normal Country””: Comparing Ozawa, Nakasone, and Ishihara” in *Japan as a 'Normal Country'?: A Nation in Search of its Place in the World*, ed. David A. Welch, Yoshihide Soeya, and Masayuki Tadokoro (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011): 110-116.

independent from the alliance with the United States. They prefer to take more consideration in cooperative policies toward North Korea in order to solve the security challenges of North Korea. This line of thoughts is closely linked to the idea that South Korea should expand its voice and power in order to implement more independent and consistent North Korea policy. The second axis matches with the I-1 value, which is about the preference of the conflictual or cooperative policy in achieving strategic goals.

4.2 FOUR SCHOOLS OF THOUGHTS

From the two axes outlined above, four different conceptions of the South Korea's North Korea policy strategy can be identified. The first school, referred to as 'cooperative-independent' school, begins from the premise that the nature of the inter-Korean relation is cooperative. They have a fundamental confidence in the cooperative nature of their relation with North Korea. Any state behaviors of North Korea are understood as rational and predictable in this perspective. In addition, proponents of this school of thought argue that South Korea should avoid depending too much on the military alliance with the United States. Rather than solving problems by using military means, they prefer to take more independent and cooperative methods in their North Korea policy. They believe that expanding foreign policy options to cooperative approach will better serve in achieving political goal of South Korea. When connected to this research, it suggests that leaders with high values in both P-1 and I-1 will be categorized in this group. Among the four presidents in this article, President Roh Moo-hyun is closest leader to this line of thought.

The opposite line of thought is called 'conflictive-dependent' school of thought. This school of thought starts from the beliefs of South Korea's relationship with North Korea is conflictive in nature. They don't have confidence in North Korean regime's stability and capability to survive in the international system. They believe that North Korean government is already failed state and should collapse in the near future. Also, they think that the only effective way to defend from North Korea's military provocations is to rely on the military power of the United States. Therefore, leaders who are in the category of this school of thought has a high possibility to interpret all of security challenge provoked by North Korea as unavoidable and try to solve the problem with escalatory military actions with the help of the alliance. This thesis suggests that leaders with low scores in both P-1 and I-1 should be put into this category. Among the four presidents of this study, President Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye best fit to this group.

Similar to the first 'cooperative-independent' school, the 'cooperative-dependent' school of thought also begins from the understanding the relationship of two Koreas as a harmonious in orientation. They share basic beliefs on the cooperative nature of North Korea relation. However, it differs from the first school in terms of their emphasis on the dependence on military capacity to solve the security problem. Proponents of this school of thought argue that South Korea should firmly rely on the military alliance with the United States as a necessary condition for the establishment of cooperative relation with North Korea. Based on the stable security guaranteed by the United States, South Korea can prevent North Korea from further serious provocations. Only after the assurance of the security, South Korea can build cooperative relations with North Korea such as promotion of economic exchange, development assistance, and humanitarian aid. It is suggested that the leaders with high P-1 score and low I-1 score will fit this group. President Kim Dae-jung can be classified to this school of thought among the four presidents of this study.

The last school of thought is called 'conflictive-independent' school of thought. The political leaders of this line of thought is relatively small in portion during the history of South Korea. The fundamental concept of this idea is that South Korea should have as many viable options as possible to solve the problems with North Korea. Proponents of this idea claim that South Korea should not only depend on military strategies under the alliance with the United States, but also focus on South Korea's independent principles and policies to solve security challenges of North Korea. Even

though they regard the nature of the relationship between two Koreas as conflictive, they don't think the only way to handle the problematic relationship is military means. They believe that South Korea's deep dependence upon the United States makes even harder to solve the North Korea's security challenges. Based on the thoughtful examination of the cause of the security threat, the leader will try to find the best strategy to address the problem with an independent mindset. According to this point of view, expanding the South Korea's possible policy choices to deal with North Korea would increase possibility in solving the conflictive relation with North Korea. This research suggests that any leader with low P-1 score and high I-1 score should be categorized in this group. However, no president out of four of this study fit into this group.

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