

Professor Cho Kook's Controversy and Discursive Politics of Witch Hunting

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Abstract

The controversy surrounding Cho Kook, a professor and former Minister of Justice, is still underway. While some argues he deserves such a series of mishaps, the others believe that he was victimized by Witch Hunting heralded by the conservative media. The truth remains at large. The authors sense, however, that the case can be the product of discourse politics cooperated by those who want the status quo in Korean peninsula. Therefore, the authors explore two questions related to this controversial debate. First, this study explores to reveal why the public, which initially did not respond much to criticism discourse about its homeland, actively responded and the forces that led the situation. Secondly, this paper pays particular attention to deciphering discursive strategies adopted by the media believed to collaborate with Christians, anti-Communists, North Korea fugitives, and U.S. government. With regard to the first topic, analysis shows at first that four factors including anti-communism, flunkyism toward America, development mentality, and collective feeling against unfair society were called into play while responding to target audience. It did also reveal that those beneficiaries of national division have taken a critical part either by participating in public demonstration or signing on statements. Final discovery lies in the social construction of 'Angel and Devil' elaborated seamlessly by logical, emotional and ethical arguments. Such tactics as agenda setting, framing, and sourcing were found in addition. The authors insist thus that what matters is not improving journalism quality but exposing the reality of discourse politics which stands in the way toward a peaceful unified nation.

Keywords: Discourse politics, Cho Kook controversy, Witch hunting, Anti-Communism, U.S-South Korea alliance

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‘조국사태’와 마녀사냥의 담론정치

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국문요약

전직 법무부 장관을 둘러싼 논쟁은 지금도 진행 중이다. 한편에서는 정의실현으로 보지만, 다른 쪽에서는 마녀사냥으로 본다. 진실은 무엇일까? 본 논문은 이 사태를 언론에 의한 담론정치의 결과물이라는 전제에서 출발해 그 실체를 분석하고자 했다. 연구문제는 두 개로 잡았다. 첫째는, 애초 별로 호응하지 않았던 대중이 조국에 대한 비판 담론에 적극적으로 응답하게 된 배경과 이 상황을 주도한 세력을 밝히는 작업이다. 둘째는, 배후세력 확인 과정에서 드러난 관련 언론사가 구사한 담론전략을 파헤쳤다. 관련 자료도 두 갈래로 구분된다. 담론주체를 밝히는 작업에는 인터넷 검색, 언론 보도, 각종 성명서, 학술적 논문과 저술 등이 활용되었다. 텍스트 분석에 필요한 자료는 표본으로 선정된 언론사에 실린 칼럼, 사실, 인터뷰, 분석기사 등에서 모았다. 분석결과, 첫째, 조국에 대한 비판적인 여론이 공명할 수 있었던 요인은 크게 네 가지로 추론되었다. 반공주의, 한미동맹, 발전주의 및 불공정 사회에 대한 집단적 거부감 등이다. 둘째, 담론정치를 주도한 세력으로는 <조선일보>를 축으로 하는 언론복합체가 있다는 점이 확인됐다. 그들은 한편으로는 동맹세력을 위해 자신의 상징광장을 대여해주고 다른 한편으로는 뉴스라는 담론을 통해 직접 선수로 뛰었다. 그들이 활용한 담론전략은 셋째 ‘천사와 악마’ 낙인찍기로 밝혀졌다. 조국과 그의 가족, 문재인 정부에 대한 부정적인 뉴스를 집중적으로 부각하는 한편, 특정한 프레임을 강조하는 방식이다. 끝으로, 보수언론은 이 과정에서 독립성과 전문성이 의심스러운 정보원을 전략적으로 활용했다. 반공주의와 한미동맹을 신성하게 생각하는 정보원이 특히 많았다.

주제어: 담론정치, 조국사태, 마녀사냥, 반공주의, 한미동맹

I. Implementation of Justice or the Witch Hunt

On October 14, 2019, ten days after Cho Kook resigned from his office as Minister of Justice, an arrest warrant was issued for Chung Kyung-sim, ending the Cho Kook controversy that had become a black hole in Korean society. Justice was finally served to the many people who waved the Korean flag at Gwanghwamun, pointed out the unfairness of Cho Kook's appointment at the National Assembly, and demanded his resignation through the media. In their view, Cho Kook was problematic from the outset. He was a criminal who had violated the National Security Act, which, albeit an unjust law, clearly reflected the public's agreed view. Appointing such a man as Minister of Justice was contrary to the constitutional spirit based on the "liberal democratic" order. It turned out that he and his wife used their status to help their daughter get into college and tried to make money unfairly. The Cheong Wa Dae, which sided with Cho Kook, is even more problematic. While joining hands with North Korea, which threatens our survival with nuclear weapons, it criticized the U.S., a traditional ally, and rejected Japan. The nation's fate is at stake because of pro-North Korean leftists-turned-activists who have no experience making money through their own labor. The majority of people seem to support this view. But on a closer look, there are many logical pitfalls hidden here.

First, the claim that a former advocate of socialism cannot become the Minister of Justice and the concern that if Cho Kook is appointed, the Republic of Korea could turn communist are unrealistic. Cho Kook was tried in June 1993 for activities related to the South Korean Socialist Workers' Alliance. However, the National Security Law, the basis for judging him guilty, is an infamous example of an unjust law. Enacted shortly after establishing the independent government in 1948, it is a relic of the Cold War and anti-communism. Discussions about its abolition have frequently taken place at the National Assembly, and in 2018 the UN Human Rights Council recommended abolishing it. Concerns about a communist-led unification or turning into a communist country are far-fetched, given South Korea's military and economic capabilities. Second, there is much criticism about identifying his family as a group of criminals.

On December 23, 2020, the court found Chung Kyung-sim guilty in the first trial. Criticism toward the Prosecution that it was unreasonable from the outset subsided. However, there is reason to point out that it was a collaboration between politicized prosecutors' excessive investigation, the partisan opposition party, and conservative media. Third, it is a stretch to criticize the Moon Jae-in government as "leftist" while arguing that strengthening the alliance with the U.S. and Japan is the only way to further the national interest.

Before the Moon Jae-in government, Korean society lived amidst the fear of war. It managed to free itself from the security crisis through a series of inter-Korean dialogues following the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics. There is no reason to be criticized as leftist simply for seeking to improve relations with North Korea. One can take issue with American policy on the Korean Peninsula as well. Part of why the Korean Peninsula is the only place trembling in fear of nuclear war even after the Cold War is because of the U.S. forces in Korea and the South Korea-U.S. military drills. It is also a fact that the U.S.'s hostile policy against North Korea is geared toward its military-industrial complexes and to check China. Fourth, it is necessary to look at the Cho Kook controversy by considering who is benefiting from it and paying for it.

On October 3, 2019, many young people in their 20s, including homemakers living in Gangnam, took part in the Gwanghwamun rally. However, a leading force behind the rally could be called "vested interests based on peninsular division." First is the conservative Protestant group represented by Pastor Jeon Kwang-hoon. Armed with anti-communism and pro-Americanism, the group has held emergency prayer meetings since the early 2000s. Many of the people leading the Liberty Korea Party are former public security prosecutors. Representative figures include Hwang Kyo-ahn, called "Mr. National Security Act," Kim Jintae, Lee Chul-woo, Chung Jeom-sik and Kwak Sang-do. Those belonging to the faith community of the Protestant Church are Cho Gab-je of the *Monthly Chosun*, former Gyeonggi-do Governor Kim Moon-soo, and public security prosecutor Go Yeong-ju, who was found guilty of defamation with his remark, "Moon Jae-in is a communist." In addition, there is a group of North Korean defectors funded by the U.S. government, reserve generals forming an interest group with the U.S. military-industrial complex, and a former NIS member involved in fabricating an espionage case. This shows the possibility that the Cho Kook controversy developed as a kind of ideological war.

The truth is yet to be revealed. However, it is natural to recall Professor Song Doo-yul, who was imprisoned after being falsely accused of espionage upon his return from Germany in 2003. Although one cannot say it was a scheme, there was a typical "witch hunt." How was the Cho Kook controversy even possible? How was an old-fashioned witch hunt possible in the digital age of collective intelligence? If someone manipulated the discourse to start a witch hunt, who were they, and how did they intervene? Starting from these questions, the researcher looked for answers to how the Cho Kook controversy's discourse politics developed. There are two main research problems. First, what was the background that made the Cho Kook controversy possible, and who was behind the scenes? Second, if an agent was behind the discourse, what strategy did they use? The Korean Peninsula is still in danger of war in 2021. It spends astronomical sums for defense, but peace is far away. The collective sentiment that sees North Korea as "the devil" is also unwavering. The Cho Kook controversy, which at first glance appears to be a collective resistance to the wrong choice made by the government, can be seen from this perspective. This study aims to give an academic explanation for this phenomenon.

II. Literature Review

"Discourse" refers to the interrelated texts that make up social entities and the act of producing, disseminating, and accepting them (Parker, 1992; Philips & Hardy, 2002). Lee Gi-hyung (2006) points out that discourse provides a strong framework and system for interpreting the world and objects by "grasping the perception we have of things, structuring the way we decode them, and distinguishing and presenting what can and cannot be said, what can and cannot be perceived (p. 116). On politics that develops based on discourse, Kang Myung-gu and Park Sang-hoon (1997) explain that it is "Not only the ruling party's process of producing political symbols and value systems to consolidate their interests and secure support and legitimacy from members of society, but also the dynamic process that encompasses the public's and the opposition party's response to it" (p. 125). On discourse analysis, they say that it is a task of identifying "the who (creators of the discourse), at what point (social context), what is said (issue and agenda) and in what form (thematic structure of discourse), and in what style (the link between non-discourse systems and organizations) it is practiced."

Discourse is not only defined differently for each researcher, but its method is not unified, either (Kang Myeong-gu, Park Sang-hoon, 1997). For example, some study the politicization of discourse in textbooks (Ryu Chan-yeol, 2012; Park Hyung-jun, Min Byung-wook, 2009; Won Jong-chan, 2018; Cha Hye-young, 2005), and others analyze anti-communist discourse in movies (Oh Young-sook, 2009; Lee Ha-na, 2012; Yoon Ji-hye, 2014; Jang Yeon-i, 2009; Han Sang-jung, 2009). Others conduct discourse research through observations and analysis of symbols such as the statue of MacArthur and the Syngman Rhee Memorial and War Memorial (Kim Hyung-gon, 2007; Lee Jung-jae, Park Min-ha, 2010; Lee Hee-hwan, 2017). Recent research trends go further and note that the agent of discourse politics is differentiating and diversifying. For example, Kim Sung-hae and Kang Kook-jin (2019) analyze the political discourse of the Korean media complex on the U.S. and North Korea, and point out that unlike in the past, the forces leading the discourse are differentiated and political purposes vary.

In previous studies, the subject of analysis was media discourse, mainly produced by the media. Media discourse was preferred because it is accessible, has a truth effect, and is easy to analyze. It is connected to the view that "as systematized speech, discourse is an interpretive or cognitive framework that perceives various events and actions that unfold in reality" (Cho Hee-yeon, 2005) and to the view that "discourse is a cognitive reflection of social reality that is a combination of the words, actions, and texts of individual actors or groups with different power mechanisms and devices" (Hong Sung-tae, 2005). Also, news discourse has a decisive impact on the public's understanding of the content and format of social issues (Cho Hee-yeon, 2005; Hong Sung-tae, 2005). As is well known, the news reflects or reproduces reality and defines it and plays an active role in giving meaning to the events (Hall, 1982; Bennet, 1982). The mass media undergoes a process of "conversion to news articles," i.e., it reconstructs the nature and meaning of the issue by applying symbols and their structural laws that the reader can understand. News related to war or crises is where this aspect of the media is most clearly revealed. In particular, when war breaks out or confrontation and conflict are brought to the fore as in the Cho Kook controversy, it defines the situation in binary oppositions, such as "friend versus foe", "us versus them", "justice versus injustice", "good versus evil", "civilization versus barbarity", and "rational versus irrationality," and tends to explain the situation accordingly (Baek Sun-ki, 2005; Lee Bong-hyun, Kim Sung-wook, 2011).

Throughout a discourse war, the dominant forces seek strategic interests and manage the media from a "propaganda" perspective to gain moral advantage (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). As Lee Bong-hyun and Kim Sung-wook (2011) explain, when conflicts about certain issues escalate and the differences between the two sides become clearer, the conscious structure and discourse of "us versus them" are formed. Based on this, a meaning struggle begins over "the normal and the abnormal," "rationality and irrationality," and "what is acceptable and what is unacceptable." All negative and bad characteristics are attributed to the other person's identity, and a dichotomous confrontation between "good (us) and evil (them)" is created. Also, it maximizes the effectiveness of message delivery by deliberately telling fragmented and straightforward facts about the substantial truth, which can only be grasped by understanding the intricate context.

III. Research Problem, Research Method, and Data Collection

1. Research Problem and Research Method

Journalism scholars tend to assess media behavior in dealing with the Cho Kook controversy as an issue of journalism quality and political faction (Park Young-heum, 2019; Park Joo-hyun, 2020; Chae Jin-won, 2019; Choi Joong-heung and Lee Hyo-kyu, 2020). However, as noted above, some studies raise the possibility of a "discourse politics" led by specific forces. For example, Kim Myung-in (2019) sees the situation in terms of class struggle. The view is that the far-right vested interests, which account for only the top 10 percent, opposed the reforms wanted by the 90 percent, who suffer from peninsular division. As an argument similar to the researchers' view, it is an extension of the following questions. Did conservative media such as Chosun Ilbo, Dong-A Ilbo, Munhwa Ilbo, and JoongAng Ilbo, representing domestic vested interests, really think that Cho Kuk committed such a great crime that deserves the downfall of his entire family? Did they believe that he would promote the ideology of a "socialist" group that he was briefly involved in 30 years ago as Minister of Justice? Did they think that the Moon Jae-in government was a mouthpiece for Kim Jong Un, and that reforming the National Intelligence Service and the Prosecution would lead to communism? Probably not. As pointed out by former Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun, in a positive light they were simply being faithful to their beliefs, but seen negatively, they took advantage of the Cho Kook controversy to safeguard their interests and conducted a discourse war that suits their taste. Based on such awareness, this paper sets out the following research problems.

Research Problem 1: If a discourse-based witch hunt was conducted, what conditions made it possible? In other words, what collective memories, collective sentiments and structured references did many of the people, who gradually became critical "subjects" over the course of the Cho Kook controversy, respond to? Against what background was this symbolic structure built and developed? Also, if interpellation was done, who was behind it and what is their purpose?

Research Problem 2: If there are forces that led the discourse politics, what discourse strategy did they use and how is it taking effect? In addition, who are the people and groups classified as "us" and "them"? What logical frame was used to create "enemies"? And who were strategically mobilized as information sources?

Two research methods were used. The first is abduction. It is a method of constructing a particular hypothesis, gathering the relevant evidence, and drawing logical explanations. It is deeply related to the nature of the Cho Kook controversy. The witch hunt conducted against Cho Kook and his family seems to have been largely successful, but it is not easy to grasp the background and context. An objective and verifiable explanation that everyone agrees with is virtually impossible. The only option is to find connections in reality based on the researcher's intuition. This method was proposed by Charles Peirce, a logician and semiologist. It refers to "a type of reasoning where, after observing the facts, one argues about what idea caused those facts" (Lee Hee-eun, 2011, p. 84) or "a method to choose an inferential hypothesis that best explains the faced facts" (Kim Moo-gil, 2010, p. 12). Based on these theoretical discussions, the researchers attempted to interpret the implications of news discourse after establishing the research problems and collecting and analyzing the discourse data. The other method is discourse analysis, which we looked at in the theoretical discussion. The focus is on text analysis.

It analyzes whether the method for distinguishing friend and foe used in previous studies was used in this case, what kind of logic, sentiment and ethics were mobilized in the process, and which experts the media placed in the public forum to indirectly convey what it wanted to say. The Cho Kook controversy, however, unfolded in a situation where no one had the upper hand. Therefore, this study assumed that the agents of discourse were "vested interests based on peninsular division" rather than "class" or "power class." To find this class, the study used "snowball sampling," a method for finding suitable samples from a large population. It is a method of gradually expanding to other relevant samples based on the first samples obtained when a particular sample cannot be identified (Han Jin-seok and Kim Nam-jo, 2018). The researchers used this method to find specific people in symbolic public forums, physical squares, political stages and statements, and then identify related people, organizations and associations.

2. Data Collection

The method, scope, and content for collecting data vary depending on the research problem. First, the researchers gathered papers, books, rallies and events, press releases, and media reports to identify the background, context, and conditions of discourse politics' success. The data to identify the discourse's leading forces were found in media reports, Internet searches, and existing research. Specifically, the study looked at those who participated in events where the discourse equivalent to a witch hunt was announced, which groups and figures issued statements and columns containing similar views, and how the networks were formed between those who led the discourse in the National Assembly and the court. After finding the core group, the study focused on the editorials and columns of media companies known to have a competitive advantage in terms of readership and popularity. The data collection period for the research problem was from early August 2019, when Cho Kuk was appointed Minister of Justice, to the end of October 2019, when he resigned and an arrest warrant was issued for Chung Kyung-sim. That was the period when reports on Cho Kook became a key agenda in the public forum. The significant events are listed below in Table 1 Major Events Related to the Cho Kook controversy. Table 2 is a list of the media companies examined in this process. The size of the samples was not organized because quantitative data were not needed. Around 200 discourses were analyzed. The content cited in the analysis results was limited to those media companies belonging to the top tier in terms of readership and influence.

Table 1 Major Events Related to the Cho Kook Controversy

Date (2019)	Major Event	Notes
August 9	Announcement of Cho Kook's nomination for minister	
14th	Submission of agenda for confirmation hearings to the National Assembly	
19th	Controversy over his daughter's scholarship to Busan National University Medical School	
20th	Controversy over first author of a high	

	school paper	
23th	Reversal of announcement of private equity funds and Woongdong Academy	First rally calling for resignation as candidate at Seoul National University and Korea University
27th	Prosecutors begin search and seizure	
September 2	Candidate Cho holds a press conference at the National Assembly	
3rd	Prosecutors search and seize Dongyang University, Seoul National University Medical School, etc.	
4th	Choi Sung-hae, President of Dongyang University, alleged forgery of certificate	
6th	The National Assembly holds a confirmation hearing	The Prosecution indicts Chung Kyung-sim
	Liberty Korea Party accuses Yoo Si-min	Outside pressure on fake certificate
9th	Appointment of Cho Kook as Minister of Justice	
10th	The Prosecution searches and seizes Cho Kook's younger brother's ex-wife and the home of Wells CNT's representative	
	Professor Jang Kyung-wook of Dongyang University refutes forgery of certificate	
11th	Chung Kyung-sim's rebuttal on social network	Court dismisses warrant for CO-LINK PE representative
16th	Court issues warrant for cousin once removed	
23th	The Prosecution searches and seizes Cho Kook's Bangbae-dong home	
October 3	Yoo Si-min is accused (Committee for the Livelihood of Commoners)	
4th	TBS interviews Cho Kook's daughter	
8th	Yoo Si-min's interview with Alileo and Kim Kyung-rok broadcast	Criticism of KBS collusion
9th	Arrest warrant for Cho Kook's younger brother rejected	
14th	Cho Kook resigns	
24th	Arrest warrant issued for Chung Kyung-sim	

Table 2 List of Media Companies Analyzed

Category	Media company
Newspaper	Comprehensive daily newspaper Chosun Ilbo, Dong-A Ilbo, Munhwa Ilbo, JoongAng Ilbo
	Religious daily Segye Ilbo, Kookmin Ilbo,
	Financial Mael Business, Money Today, The Korea Economic Daily
Magazines	Monthly Chosun, Shindonga, Monthly Korea Journal, Zeitgeist, Future Korea, News Plus
Internet	New Daily, News Town, Pen and Mike, Media Pen, Media Watch, Dailian, Jayu Press, Frontier Times, News & People, Doknip Sinmun, Blue Korea Dot Com, Blue Today, Why Times, All-in Korea

IV. Analysis Results and Interpretation

1. Symbolic Structures and Background Forces

The Moon Jae-in government is sensitive to public opinion. This is inevitable. It learned that failing to reflect public sentiment adequately can lead the water of the people to capsize the ship of power. Appointing Cho Kook, a professor at Seoul National University, as Senior Presidential Secretary for Civil Affairs and then as Minister of Justice can be seen as an effort to meet such sentiment. In the early days of the Cho Kook controversy, the president's choice was not such a big problem. The mood changed with the revelation of Chung Kyung-sim's alleged certificate forgery and dubious scholarship, her family's corruption and suspicions about private equity funds. The younger generation, not usually swayed by ideological issues, began to complain and divisions within the liberal camp were also revealed. The government's refusal, in reaction to Japan's export restrictions, to extend the Korea-Japan General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) also had repercussions. Concerns grew that the government was trying to take advantage of anti-Japanese sentiment to break apart the South Korea-U.S.-Japan alliance when, regarding the book *Anti-Japanese Tribalism*, Cho Kook reportedly commented, "It makes me sick."

In the third week of September 2019, support for the evaluation of presidential performance fell to 40 percent for the first time. The biggest reason for the poor evaluation was personnel issues (i.e., appointment of Cho Kook). Public opinion of the Moon Jae-in government slowly recovered after October 14, when Cho Kook resigned from his post as Minister of Justice. How was such a dramatic reversal possible for Cho Kook, who was once considered a potential presidential candidate? A clue to the question can be found from the model S-M-C-R-E. Factors with marked changes when noted in a particular period are found in the message (M). This can be seen clearly in the Newspaper Broadcasting Monitor Report published by the Citizens' Coalition for Democratic Media. From September 1, 2019 to September 9, the day Cho Kook was appointed Minister, there were 185 reports on Cho Kook in seven daily newspapers. JoongAng Ilbo had the most reports, followed by DongA Ilbo, and Chosun Ilbo. Broadcasting time was considerable as well. There were 57 cases by Channel A and 25 by TV Chosun. As Walter Lippmann pointed out, it was similar to a situation where reality is distorted when the media highlights only certain parts. The Citizens' Coalition for

Democratic Media report also shows that the media focused mainly on "suspicions related to his children" and that the sources came overwhelmingly from the Liberty Korea Party and the Prosecution.¹

In addition to various statements, discourse through large-scale rallies near Gwanghwamun and City Hall had also been steadily increasing. The public, which had taken a passive stance with comments, Internet petitions, and poll responses, took to the streets after the appointment of Cho Kook and the commencement of the Prosecution's investigation. What made them turn into active agents? On what occasion, against what background, and in what context did they "suddenly" respond to the call of discourse put forward by conservatives? Was it not the case that structured references, collective emotions, and collective memories that have accumulated gradually over a long period of time, and which do not show easily, were triggered by a special occasion? More specifically, was there not something that aroused the elderly people, the housewives from Gangnam, college students, TK locals, and centrist professionals, who became "subjects" around the time of the Gwanghwamun rally on October 3, 2019? Was there perhaps a kind of stage to help collective action take place? This study considers it as a symbolic structure formed over a long period. Needless to say, construction date and completion date are different concepts. The starting point for anti-Communism and the Korea-U.S. alliance was the 1950 war. Developmentalism began in the mid-1960s under the Park Chung-hee administration and grew until just before the financial crisis. Unfairness is the most recent structure and is deeply related to the 1997 financial crisis. The first of these is "anti-communism." This is deeply related to those in their 70s and older, Protestants, and Cold War forces.

Anti-communism

Among the slogans frequently witnessed at rallies calling for Cho Kook's resignation were: "The liberal Republic of Korea is dead"; "We will surely protect liberal Korea"; and "Let's protect liberal Korea." The concern was that if a former sympathizer of the socialist revolution becomes the Minister of Justice, the "basic order of liberal democracy" stated in Article 4 of the Constitution could collapse. This reflects the confrontational view between capitalism and socialism, which were the two pillars of conflict during the Cold War. In particular, there is apparent hostility toward North Korea, China, and communism. Anti-Communism, which was not the dominant discourse until the 1950s, has since seen growth in earnest as the Cold War order consolidated. The Korean government, included in the Cold War system created by the U.S., mobilized sticks like the National Security Law and the Anti-Communist Law on the one hand and used carrots like movies and textbooks on the other. A combination of war experience, government-led cultural policies, and the everyday punishment behind it turned Korea into an anti-communist and disciplined society (Kang Jung-gu, 1991; Kim Dong-chun, 2011; Kim Jung-hoon, 2000).

In Korea, large conservative churches are a living force. Many of them are from North Korea. In particular, they are from Pyeongan-do and Hwanghae-do. These people defected to South Korea, leaving their homes and assets when the socialist regime came to power in North Korea (Kang In-cheol, 2007). Since the Japanese colonial era, they have fought

¹ Citizens' Coalition for Democratic Media (19/9/19) What did the media report "exclusively" cover about Cho Kook (19/9/19) <Media Today >

<http://www.mediatoday.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=202448>

fiercely against communism. The background was the clash between the American worldview based on American missionaries and the socialist revolution that unfolded after the Russian Revolution. For example, the Joseon Youth Party Congress officially adopted the anti-Christian movement in 1923, and after 1925, the view that the church was an imperialist frontman was strengthened (Lee Ji-young, 2011). With the experience of liberation and war, their hostility rose to a level that could never be reconciled. Not only was collective identity a problem, but they had no choice but to hate North Korea for its "reason of existence." Many of the Protestants that defected to South Korea were at the center of power during the U.S. military rule. Forming irregular troops such as the Northwest Youth Corps, they took the lead in suppressing domestic unrest and played a central role in distributing property and land left behind by Japan. For example, seven out of 12 members of the Joseon Education Committee, consisting of an advisory body for the U.S. military government, were Protestants. Of the nine South Korean directors involved in the military government, six were identified as Protestants. At the time, only 3% of the population was Protestant (Bae Deok-man, 2019). Korean Protestantism had close connections to the military, the public security forces, and the U.S.

With improvements in North and South Korea relations during the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun governments, this was the backdrop against which the people took to the streets. When did these people start to gather? We can find a clue from an observation by Japanese scholar Takeshi Fujii. "The most dramatic growth in the conservative movement was in 2003-2004," he said in an interview. "On March 1, 2003, security groups gathered under the 'Anti-nuclear Anti-Kim Liberal Unification National Congress.' Conservative Christians also gathered in January at events such as fasting meetings. At the June 25 event that year, the two sides united under the slogan, 'strengthening the Korea-U.S. alliance.' There were more than 100,000 at the rally. In 2004, another rally of 100,000 people was held when the National Security Act became an issue. The New Right movement also turned into a public movement, starting with the Liberal Solidarity in November 2004."² The Moon Jae-in government, which was launched following the impeachment of former President Park Geun-hye, was perceived as a threat to the "core interest" of the vested interests based on peninsular division, and the Cho Kook controversy served as an opportunity for them to raise their voices. Groups in which experience and interests combined include public security forces, soldiers, and North Korean defectors. These groups regularly took part at Gwanghwamun rallies. A related issue is that Cho Kook presented at the hearing the view that the National Security Act should be abolished.

The core support for the Park Geun-hye government was the military and the security forces. This is easily seen by looking at those who were at the center of power. At the very center was Kim Ki-chun, Chief of Staff, who was involved in enacting the Yushin Constitution. He became Minister of Justice in 1991 and entered the National Assembly in 1996. He was a member of the 16th, 17th, and 18th National Assembly, and led Roh Moo-hyun's impeachment when he was Chairman of the Legislation and Judiciary Committee of the Grand National Party. While in charge of public security, he also fabricated several spy cases. The Kang Ki-hoon case, which the Supreme Court recently acquitted, is a representative case. Congressman Kwak Sang-do (Jung-gu, Daegu), who served as a secretary for the Senior Presidential Secretary for Civil Affairs, is the prosecutor in charge of the case. Congressman

² Lee Na-mi, Jung Hwan-bong, Takeshi Fujii, Jeong Hyun-gon (2016) How Do Conservative Social Organizations Act, *Changbi* 44(3), 447-475

Chung Hyung-geun, a former member of the National Intelligence Service who was deeply involved in spy case fabrications and torture, also belongs to the Kim Ki-chun circle. Hwang Kyo-ahn, leader of the Liberty Korea Party, who made a public appearance at the Gwanghwamun rally and is known to provide legal advice to Pastor Jeon Kwang-hoon, is also a key figure. He was Minister of Justice, Prime Minister, and acting president during the Park Geun-hye government. He was a colleague of Park Han-chul, Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court, who decided to disband the Unified Progressive Party. Ko Young-joo, who was appointed to take control of MBC, was also a public security prosecutor. These people will be the first to lose their jobs and lose power once peace comes upon the Korean Peninsula and spies disappear. The Moon Jae-in government set out to reform the National Intelligence Service and the Ministry of Public Security immediately after its inauguration, and Cho Kuk, a victim of the National Security Law, caused the anti-communist forces to feel threatened and opposed when he said at a parliamentary hearing that the National Security Law should ultimately be abolished.

On September 24, 2019, Pen and Mike published a statement saying, "Stop the socialist train to hell immediately." It read, "The 100 North Korean defector-intellectuals, representing 34,000 North Korean defectors who have come to find freedom, call for the resignation of President Moon Jae-in and Minister of Justice Cho Kuk, and demand that they stop their hell-bound march for a federal unification toward a socialist system and communism." Although the general public is not aware, there are many North Korean defector groups in South Korea. Groups that can easily be found on the Internet include: North Korea Strategic Center, NK Intellectuals Solidarity, North Korea Democratic Forum, North Korea Democratic Network, The Federation of North Korean Defectors' Human Rights, the Institute for Liberal Culture and Unification, Christian Federation of North Korean Defectors, Free North Korea Movement Federation, Free North Korean Broadcasting, North Korean Refugee Corps for Freedom and Human Rights, the Federation of North Korean Defector Artists and NK Information. Many of them are supported by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Citizens' Coalition for Human Rights in North Korea is one of them. Kim Ho-joon, a former editor of *Munhwa Ilbo*, Kim Seok-woo, vice-chairman of the Ministry of Unification, Yoon Woo, vice-chairman of Liberation Association, Cho Eui-hwan of the *Chosun Ilbo*, and Lee Min-bok, president of the Free North Korean Association, are involved in the organization. In cooperation with Free Chosun Broadcasting, Open North Korean Broadcasting, and Daily NK, the Unification Media Group is also supported by the NED (Kim Sung-hae & Kang Kuk-jin, 2019).

South Korea-U.S. Alliance

There seemed to be no reason why the U.S. would be interested in the Cho Kuk incident. But GSOMIA proved to be an unexpected problem. On the surface, it was a response to Japanese sanctions on strategic materials. But there was something puzzling from the point of view of the U.S. What was the point of GSOMIA? The Moon Jae-in administration is well aware of the why, when, and what of the treaty. It is a game that the U.S. started in 2016 to keep North Korea in check. But on a deeper level, it was for security cooperation between South Korea, the U.S. and Japan against China. Whether intentional or mistaken, Minister Cho Kuk triggered this issue by publicly denouncing *Anti-Japanese Tribalism*. The logic was not so complicated. Prof. Lee Young-hoon, the principal author of the book, is an early advocate of the National Foundation Day. He is currently the principal of the Syngman Rhee

Academy. He truly believes that Korea is well off thanks to the United States. He thinks that President Rhee, who lived in the U.S. as a Korean-American, persuaded the U.S. government to participate in the war with his genius diplomatic skills, and that the U.S. rescued South Korea from North Korea and China (Kwon Young-geun, 2016; Yoo Young-ik, 2005; Lee Chun-geun, 2003).

According to that line of reasoning, the South Korea-U.S. alliance and the U.S. forces in Korea are sacrosanct. Nothing will change if China rises in the future. We need to unite more tightly around the U.S. Although we feel emotionally uncomfortable about the Japanese, they should be a valuable companion. However, Cho Kuk completely denied this by insisting on anti-Japanese views. As a result, he has been perceived as a danger to those who value the alliance more than military sovereignty and those concerned about a rift in the alliance, making pro-American views, which are against Cho Kuk, clearer. That is why Shin Won-sik, former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said, "The termination of GSOMIA is an attempt to cover up the Cho Kuk issue by reigniting the conflict between Korea and Japan." Kim Tae-woo, who served as the head of the Korea Institute for National Unification, criticized the abolition of GSOMIA as a "decision that cannot be understood rationally and is closely related to domestic politics" (*Pen and Mike*, Aug. 22, 2019).

*Developmentalist Mentalities*³

Among the groups that responded to the call of the Cho Kuk discourse are many supporters of President Moon Jae-in during the last presidential election. Although he had a left-leaning tendency, they believed liberal regimes were more moral than vested interests. The age range is those in their 40s and 50s. They are the "democratic" generation, which is distinguished from the "industrialization" generation that spearheaded the economic growth of the Park Chung-hee administration (Kwon Hyuk-eun, 2018). Among those commonly referred to as the 386 generation, Cho Kuk appeared to represent the spirit of sacrifice, fairness, integrity, and embrace of the disadvantaged. With the issue of his child's scholarship and certificate, fantasies about him disappeared. Rallying slogans and media columns and comments used neologisms like "Joronambul" (What is romance for Cho Kuk is adultery for others), "Jodongseol" (The world revolves around Cho Kuk), and "Jojeokjo" (Cho's enemy is Cho).

Jo Jeong-rae, the author of *The Taebaek Mountains*, is classified as a left-wing nationalist. He dreams of a world where the people become masters and looks at history from the perspective of ordinary people. That is why he published novels such as *Scarecrow Dance*, which criticizes the *chaebols*, or conglomerates with unrelated business units. From an early stage, the author was critical of the United States. *False Charge*, *A Legend*, and *Cheongsandaek*, written in the 1970s when he made his debut onto the literary scene, all share the issue of anti-Americanism. However, even he showed respect for Park Tae-joon, chairman of Pohang Steel, or today's POSCO, and wrote his biography. The following remarks illustrate the point. "It's the word 'constancy.' He guarded his heart with constancy

³ Mentality means "a system of thinking and behavior that has been built and accumulated for a long time within a single socio-cultural area." According to Kang Myung-gu (2004), there is a "developmentalist mentality" at the foundation of Korean society. It is "best expressed in the 1960s slogan 'Let's live well,'" and "accumulated based on poverty-stricken experiences in the first half of the 20th century under Japanese colonial rule and the Korean War, and was the motivation for rapid growth in the 1970s."

and walked on that path without wavering until he passed away. For the past 20 years, I watched him from up close and was moved by his unwavering love for his country. I could not help admiring him for his integrity and for not showing any self-interest on that path" (*Sisa IN*, Nov. 28, 2011). Chairman Park was also famous for not discriminating against former student activists who had participated in protests. There is an anecdote where he told an aide of his, who complained that he took care of left-leaning figures, saying, "Hey, if you let them be, they will really turn red" (*Jungang Ilbo*, Nov. 12, 2017).

The Moon Jae-in government, which launched on the back of people's sentiments expressed through the candles in Seoul's downtown, aggressively pushed forward with "corruption cleansing" in the name of reform. The 386 generation, represented by Im Jong-seok, former Presidential Chief of Staff, congressmen Lee In-young and Woo Sang-ho of the Democratic Party, and Cho Kuk, Senior Presidential Secretary for Civil Affairs, emerged as leaders of the "corruption cleansing," and representatives of the industrial era were subject to that cleansing. They put forward a claim that while they went to jail and were unable to study properly for the sake of democratization, others lived comfortably. However, unlike those few who occupied the center of power, most senior citizens in their 60s and older simply lived hard lives. It is also understandable that they could not participate in the pro-democracy movement. Most of all, they had heavy responsibilities for their families. There is indeed the perspective of the industrial generation that underpins the Korean economy today (Kim Jong-tae, 2014). In their view, those who claim to be morally superior while invoking National Security Law violations as medals do not look good. Although they feel sorry on the one hand, they seem to be like children, ignorant of the rigors of life on the other,.

Cho Kuk's remarks at the confirmation hearing sparked the antipathy of those who pride themselves on being the force behind the growth of the market economy. Indicative of this is his remarks at the parliamentary confirmation hearing that "We need socialist policies under the framework of the Constitution," and "I am a liberal and socialist, and the concepts of economic democratization and common land (found in the Constitution) are socialist concepts." This led to the emergence of forces that framed the appointment of Cho Kuk as prelude to adopting socialist policies, representative of which is the Center for Free Enterprise. The Free Enterprise Center, established in 1997, was its starting point, with the aim of "providing alternatives for Koreans to thrive by continuing economic education projects, policy promotion projects, and corporate image improvement projects to create a free-market economy." During the Park Geun-hye administration, it supported the "asphalt right." Jeon Won-chaek, a well-known conservative commentator, Gong Byung-ho, who led the nomination of the Future Korea Party, and Kim Jung-ho, head of the Populist Legislation Watchdog, are all from that organization. Jung Kyu-jae, founder of *Pen and Mike*, once worked there, and he is especially close to the Syngman Rhee Academy which is under the *New Daily*. He also has close ties to Kim Jin-tae, Ko Young-joo and Hwang Kyo-ahn, former public security prosecutors.

Antipathy to Unfairness

One of the incidents that caused the Park Geun-hye government's downfall was the suspicion that Jung Yoo-ra, daughter of Choi Soon-sil, was illegally admitted to Ewha Womans University. Public opinion that "unfairness" should be corrected, centered around students suffering from competition for admissions, became the zeitgeist (Nam Mi-ja et al., 2019; Choi Jung-mook, 2016). Many people clapped when presidential candidate Moon Jae-

in promised that "there will be equal opportunity, fair process, and just results." Cho Kuk's family and its image, revealed through prosecution investigations and the media, destroyed such expectations. The disappointment was all the greater because he had been in several important posts in the Moon Jae-in government and was known to be favored by the president. This sentiment is well reflected in slogans such as "Gold spoons are encouraged scholarship," "Dirt spoons get academic warnings," "The students reject it," "Romance for me, adultery for you, hypocrisy," "Immediately cancel the illegal admissions," and "Oust Cho Kuk for admissions manipulation." For example, Prof. Jin Joong-kwon said he felt insulted by the progressive camp which showed the attitude of "Let's cover up the ethical issues if a legal defense is possible." The level of emotion felt by people in similar social and economic situations was thus precarious. The frustration that ordinary people must have felt was enormous.

How many in Korea can be appointed a professor at the age of 28 at the most prestigious Seoul National University Law School? Moreover, he was only in his mid-50s when he became the Senior Presidential Secretary for Civil Affairs and the Minister of Justice. His wife is also a university professor. Officially, his family has assets worth 7.5 billion won. He has also been quite outspoken about all sorts of things on Facebook. Due to that, he has been remarkably successful. What he did to send his daughter to medical school and prestigious universities exceeded "dirt spoons" imagination. Moreover, Cho Kuk had no experience fighting for democratization. That is why Kim Kyung-yul, co-chairman of the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, burst into anger after having investigated Cho and his family's corruption involving private equity funds. On Facebook, he wrote, "Professors, lawyers, and other expert pricks who presume to know better in civil society. Powerful reserved forces, incidental reserved forces pricks. You dirty jerks. ...You hypocrite jerks. You make me nauseous. Whenever you open your trap, you shout ** reform, @@reform. You dirty pricks, what did you do in the candlelight revolution other than hover around those in power? The cynicism with which the public views Cho Kuk is based on such sentiment. Two organizations played a decisive role in igniting the issue through the media. One of them is a group of professors whose identity has still not been clarified.

News about the Nationwide Group of Professors Who Want Social Justice (Jeonggyomo) was published almost simultaneously in *Chosun Ilbo*, *Munhwa Ilbo*, *JoongAng Ilbo*, and *Dong-A Ilbo*. They reported that professors from all over the country are taking part in the statement, "Social justice and ethics have collapsed due to the appointment of Cho Kuk as a minister." However, the group of professors was not without political leanings. *NewsToF*, which specializes in fact-checking, reported relevant information in an article posted on September 18, 2019. It says, "Out of the 47 people whose real names and affiliations are disclosed, 34 have a history of anti-gay activities," and "Four out of the 47 representatives have worked for New Right organizations." The more interesting part is the participants. Prof. Choi Won-mook belongs to the Lawyers for Human Rights and Unification of Korea, which legally supports anti-North Korean group activities. He also worked for Citizens United for Better Society, which was founded in 2002 and received exceptional support from The Federation of Korean Industries during the Park Geun-hye administration. One should also note Seoul National University's Truth Forum, which led a statement criticizing Professor Cho. It began from the "Daniel Prayer Group," backed by the Oryun Church (Rev. Kim Eun-ho), which is active enough in anti-North Korean activities to invite the North Korean refugee Ji Seong-ho as a speaker. The journalist Kim Yong-sam at *Pen and Mike*, Principal Lee Young-hoon at the Syngman Rhee Academy, and Sage Korea representative

Kim Mi-young, who formerly belonged to the Institute for Korean Unification, are regular speakers there.

2. Discourse Strategy: Creating Angels and Demons

The dichotomy of angels and demons also permeates the entire discourse on the Cho Kuk incident. As Table 2 shows, those included in the army of demons are groups or figures trying to change the current political, economic, and security order, such as President Moon Jae-in, the CheongWaDae presidential staff (the 586 generation), the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, and the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union. Left-leaning intellectuals like Yoo Si-min, Kim Eo-joon, and Gong Ji-young are accused of being the devil's spokespersons. They are blamed for deceiving the public with shallow knowledge. The citizens that gathered in Seocho-dong and the National Assembly, demanding prosecution reform, became the "Red Guard" or "Moon Jae-in supporters even if their heads are broken" (Daekkaemun). This means that severe pressure is exerted on groups that oppose them, backed by the Moon Jae-in administration. Those who take part in real-time search words on portals and post words like "Cho Kuk, cheer up" are also labeled as "Moon Fans" (Munppa) or "No-brain kids" (Muneuah).

On the other side, we find a group of angels. Choi Sung-hae, President of Dongyang University, who defended the conscience of educators by exposing Prof. Chung Kyung-sim's forgery of the certificate, and Kim Sang-hyun of Kukde Tteokbokki, who claims that the government is trying to hand over the country to North Korea, are portrayed favorably. The same applies to Yoon Seok-yeol, the Prosecutor General, Kim Kyung-yul, Co-chairman of the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, and former pro-Roh Moo-hyun commentator Yoo Jae-il. In addition, Prof. Lee Young-hoon, who caused an outcry with his book *Anti-Japanese Tribalism*, is considered to have kept his scholarly conscience. It is noteworthy that their original intentions were not anti-Japanese, but part of efforts to defend the alliance between South Korea, the U.S., and Japan. The Nationwide Group of Professors Who Want Social Justice, which played a decisive role in reversing public opinion about Cho Kuk around his appointment as Minister of Justice, is also praised as intellectuals in action.

Table 3. Family Tree

Category	Subcategory	Characteristics
Devil	Hypocrite	Cho Kuk, CheongWaDae 586 presidential staff,
	Offender	Cho Kuk's family, younger sibling
	Those who damaged the alliance	Moon Jae-in, CheongWaDae 586 presidential staff
	Totalitarians	Moon Jae-in, participants at the Seocho-dong rally, Internet leftist warriors, Daekkaemun
	Those who deceive the public	Yoo Si-min, Kim Eo-jun, Gong Ji-young
Angel	Persons of	Yoon Seok-yeol, Kim Kyung-yul (People's Solidarity for

s	principle	Participatory Democracy), Yoo Jae-il (Pro-Roh critic)
	Patriots	Kim Sang-hyun, Lee Eon-joo, Kim Moon-soo, Jeon Kwang-hoon
	Apostles of Justice	Truth Forum, Choi Sung-hae (Dongyang University President)
	Conscientious intellectuals	Lee Young-hoon, Choi Won-mok, Nationwide Group of Professors Who Want Social Justice

The news is an evolved content that includes all three essentials of discourse: logic, emotion, and morality. Based on this, Table 3 and Table 4 summarize media reports by level. The media materializes this content using at least three strategies. The first is raising public interest in the devil.

Strategy 1: Agenda building

The public follows issues that the media thinks are important. No matter how important an issue is for public interest, it will not get attention if the issue does not show up in the public forum managed by the media. Conversely, an extremely private and unimportant issue for the community will take on a different meaning once it goes through the public forum. This is the area about which Walter Lippmann said, "The media has no power over how to think, but it has power over what to think." Public attention may be attracted through advertisements or statements, but these are not comparable to the news and columns that are introduced by apparently fair arbitrators. The same content becomes more reliable when it is dressed in media reports. Given this, the strategy of demonizing others using media reports is to take advantage of human nature that is more attracted to bad stories than good ones. Before August 2019, the general public did not know much about Cho Kuk. He was just known to be a handsome, well-educated, and conscientious professor. Immediately after the inauguration of the Moon Jae-in government, he was attractive enough to be called, along with Chief of Staff Im Jong-seok, "prince charming." To turn him into a devil, one needed the materials to change such perception. Table 3 and Table 4 below summarize the contents.

Table 4 The Devil Discourse

Category	Statement
	Chosen by a group of frontline activists pushing for revolution as a profession.
	Raising anti-Japanese sentiment is about creating external enemies and consolidating vested interests.
Logos	Public opinion is manipulated in all sorts of ways and appointments are pushed forward as in military operations.
	Socialism is the starting point for totalitarianism. Socialism leads to dictatorship.
	Cho Kuk received money and help from the Communist Party of China through the CO-LINK.
	The interior of "peace" touches "pro-North Korean views," and the

	"nationalism" discourse is linked to "anti-foreign tribalism."
	The Cho Kuk controversy was a battle between common sense and senselessness, between truth and falsehood.
	Cho's appointment meant the tearing down of the three values of equality, fairness, and justice.
	He says he respects Mao Zedong and says the Communist Shin Young-bok is a great thinker.
	The essence of the rampant carrying out of reform under the pretext of "corruption cleansing" is the creation of positions.
Pathos	Criminal Cho Kuk; socialist; phony; anachronism; treachery; presidential hopeful; hypocrisy; inconsistency between word and action; duality; hypocrite; criminal; anti-justice; anti-moral; reckless hypocrisy; deceptive; counterfeit factory; shameless; brazen; incompetent left-wing; sophistry and verbose; eerie; private emotions; totalitarianism; monster; pseudoscience; undergraduate report; embarrassing; suspect; manipulative of superiors; idolatry; violence; leftist propaganda; ultra-rightist fascist; Daekkaemun (Moon Jae-in supporter even if head is broken); shameless; deviant; sophistry and stubbornness; prosecution intimidation; manipulation of public opinion; favoritism; strange; nouveau riche; man without work ethic; insulting of lives of public officials; contradictory; brash; mischievous; leftist leader; rally mobilization; high treason; traitor; con man; cholera; destruction of the Constitutional order; running dog
	Minister Cho needs to listen to public opinion about him.
	Cho Kuk is not the right person for "corruption cleansing" or prosecution reform, but is himself a corrupted person.
Ethos	President Moon Jae-in has to apologize before the public for abusing the Constitution.
	The Republic of Korea is a liberal democratic republic. Let us make this identity clearer.
	The Korea-U.S.-Japan alliance is really important. Liberal democracies need to strengthen their alliance.
	The devil cannot stand ridicule.

The first thing that appears is that he was punished under the National Security Law for his involvement in the South Korean Socialist Workers' Alliance. It was necessary to inform that treatise which seemed to have been written by him denied "liberal democracy" and pursued socialism. It was necessary to publicize that the series of reform work the Moon Jae-in administration was carrying out was, positively speaking, to change national identity, and negatively speaking, a precursor to a "red unification." Why did President Moon appoint him as Minister of Justice? A "smokescreen" had to be put up as to why, at a sensitive moment, he brought up the "bamboo spear song" by the poet Kim Nam-joo, who was jailed for the Namminjeon Incident, and what the connection was between his appointment and the

government's abolition of GSOMIA. Conversely, it was necessary to create grounds and emotions for those belonging to the angel family as shown in Table 4.

Table 5. The Angel Discourse

Category	Statement
Logos	Professor Lee Young-hoon is one of few liberals in Korea who really does his study.
	Yoon Seok-yeol is an investigator. He is not a politician.
	Prosecutor General Yoon fights a lonely fight against the powers that be.
	A rally participant where all members gather to cry out for justice instead of a rally with a political character
	It is a technique that was used frequently by the Communists, centered on Park Heon-young and others, before and after the liberation of Korea.
	Cho Kuk stigmatizes senior scholars as "pro-Japanese" and his students as "far right."
	The regime has become a prisoner of ideology, showing pro-China tendencies and shaking the foundation of the South Korea-U.S. alliance.
Pathos	By appointing the scoundrel Cho Kuk as minister, the country has entered a path to ruin.
	Patriotic tent; service; truth; candlelight rally; justice; voluntary; a man who follows the Bible; chastise; logic and demonstration; academic activity; descendant of independence activists; faithful enforcer of the system; rights of the people; expertise; law and order; professional sense of calling; belief in people; professor without political leanings; fair society; competence; gestures of resistance; wings of freedom; warm-hearted intellectual; a citizen of beloved South Korea; successful revolution; praying; committed; shouting; true master of the country; anger of the ordinary people; constitution; anti-Communist; freedom; Korean forces; South Korea-U.S. alliance; national revolution; Syngman Rhee Square; heir to Syngman Rhee; Taegeukgi; cross; hourglass prosecutor
	There will never be any compliance to or compromise of a political logic far from the public's level.
	Necessary to seek a proud country of all of us, a country for which our predecessors shed blood, tears, and lives.
Ethos	We need to wake up from slumber and make a gesture of resistance, flap our wings for freedom.
	Will become a small pebble for the new Republic of Korea, the proud Republic of Korea.
	Cannot support a person who inherits assets through expedients and social status.
	The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions convenes out of selfishness

and we gather out of patriotism.

In Korea, people are making history.

Strategy 2: Framing

The second step is presenting a logical explanation, namely the framing strategy. A few of such examples are cited as follows.

First frame, "Cho Kuk is a socialist."

Based on investigations by the prosecution, the slogans of the South Korean Socialist Workers' Alliance include "the confiscation of *chaebol* properties," "the free distribution of land," and "the establishment of a people's committee," and its goal is "commandos inducing a general strike, then rising up and bringing about a socialist revolution." ... The South Korean Socialist Workers' Alliance is attracting renewed interest these days. This is because Cho Kuk, former Senior Presidential Secretary for Civil Affairs convicted of violating the National Security Law for his activities at the South Korean Academy of Socialism, an organization under the South Korean Socialist Workers' Alliance, was nominated Minister of Defense to defend the rule of liberal democracy in Korea (Lee Myung-jin, Aug. 14, 2019, *Chosun Ilbo*).

Yoo Dong-yeol, head of the Korea Institute of Liberal Democracy, said, "As secretary-general and head doctrine researcher at the South Korean Academy of Socialism, Candidate Cho was a key theorist second only to Baek Tae-woong (pseudonym Lee Jung-ro). He may have engaged in socialist activities due to misguided perceptions and judgments, but if he wants to become a Minister of Justice of the Republic of Korea to defend liberal democracy and establish legal justice, he should clarify his position on the theory of revolution through armed uprising and resolve the public's misgivings" (Jung Chung-shin, Sept. 4, 2019, *Munhwa Ilbo*).

Second frame, "Cho Kuk the hypocrite"

Leftists, who always talk about fairness and justice, are busy defending themselves. They do not hesitate to use absurd sophistry. The CheongWaDae issued a full mobilization order to protect Cho Kuk. Public opinion is manipulated in all sorts of ways and appointments are pushed forward as in military operations. ... Not even sure if there is any morality or value in the first place. The flag is nowhere to be found, only comrades are remaining, and there is only ambition to take everything for themselves (Lee Dong-hoon, Sept. 4, 2019, *Chosun Ilbo*).

I feel unrealistic shame that a criminal suspect, who was found to have satisfied his self-interest using expediency and privilege, has been appointed Minister of Justice, who has the right to appoint prosecutors to investigate his family's corruption. I managed to contain my endless anger over the fact that he degraded the national status, which apparently had reached that of an advanced country, to the level of Colombia in the 1980s when a drug lord aimed for the presidency (Ahn Hye-ri, Sept. 12, 2019, *JoongAng Ilbo*).

Third frame, "Moon Fans, the Red Guards"

The entire nation has witnessed the online manipulations by the violent supporters of Moon Jae-in and Roh Moo-hyun. The 2018 opinion rigging scandal was not broadcast live. However, the existence and behavior of this extreme group were revealed to the public as a series of real-time search word manipulations, such as "Cho Kuk, cheer up," was revealed. Public opinion against Cho is twice as high, but public opinion on the CheongWaDae petition bulletin board was the opposite (Yang Sang-hoon, Sept. 5, 2019, *Chosun Ilbo*).

The fact that pro-Moon figures such as Yoo Si-min and the ruling party leaders are making remarks that break the records of the history of sophistry can be seen as a war between such tribes. In tribal warfare, what is important is fighting abilities, not reason and rationality. The pro-Moon group has become nothing more than a tribe with immense fighting power, cohesion, and mobilization capability, aimed solely at re-election, and has abandoned values like fairness and justice (Lee Ki-hong, Oct. 4, 2019, *Dong-A Ilbo*).

Fourth frame, "Damage to the alliance"

It is President Moon's turn to move. Instead of the inflammatory slogan "national interest over alliance," we should look at the strategic situation correctly. In addition to the Cho Kuk situation, the lame-duck period will come earlier if the South Korea-Japan conflict is prolonged, shaking the South Korea-U.S. alliance. There is a popular belief that anti-Japanese postures are advantageous in domestic politics, but the public's sentiment is not what it was in the past. Need to give up the idea of using it as a card for the general elections, and quickly replace the diplomatic and security teams obsessed with anti-Japanese views (Lee Mi-sook, Oct. 2, 2019, *Munhwa Ilbo*).

At the hearing, Cho Kuk raised his voice, "I am a socialist." How would the world look at Korea if President Moon appointed a socialist minister? They would see us as a socialist country. That is why foreign direct investment (FDI) has been halved and domestic companies are moving abroad for investment. Bloomberg pointed out that Korea's stock prices are low because of Gangnam leftists' socialism (Kim Se-hyung, Aug. 18, 2019, *Maeil Business Newspaper*).

The lawsuit for compensating forced labor in Japan, which shakes the foundation of our relations with Japan as well as the U.S., is a 2000 case where President Moon filed a warrant of attorney as the plaintiff's representative. At the Panmunjom summit President Moon said, "I have a dream that hasn't come true for a long time, and it's to hike Mt. Baekdu and the Gaema Plateau." He must be happy that his dream about hiking Mt. Baekdu came true in September last year. However, the South Korean President eventually advertised the legitimacy of the Kim Jong Un regime, the "Baekdu lineage" (Kim Soon-deok, Oct. 17, 2019, *Dong-A Ilbo*).

Strategy 3: Making all the arrangements (Sourcing)

There is a saying of making all the arrangements. It is a very attractive strategy, considering the communication model of SMCRE. Discourse communicator (S) can say everything while facing the audience. The person naturally receives the authority since it is a

position that someone has ‘arranged.’ Channels (C) such as exclusive interviews, columns, and discussions provided by the media are good in that there is no noise. Because the speaker is the protagonist, the reporter interviewing or the person who appeared with him actively supports the person’s argument. As an audience, it sounds much more convincing, credible, and even admired. As a complex, the press is very good at this. A representative example is Cho Gap-je of <Monthly Chosun>. As a devout Christian, he stands at the center of the conservative camp’s assembly, statements, and media activities. Since the early 2000s when the conservatives felt a sense of crisis, he went to church to give lectures or used a monthly magazine which he is a president of to lead this work. Only between 2000 and 2002, only the interviews of church leaders such as Cho Yong-gi (Full Gospel Yeouido Church), Kim Jang-hwan (Director of Far East Broadcasting and Suwon Central Baptist Church), Choi Sung-kyu (Full Gospel Incheon Church), Kwak Sun-hee (Hope Church), Lee Dong-won (Global Mission Church), Ok Han-eum (Sarang Church), and Gil Ja-yeon (President of the Christian Council of Korea) were published. This is an ideological struggle since he believed that “The only force against pro-North Korea is anti-communist Christianity, and the Kim Dae-jung administration’s unification policy is the suppression of conservative Christianity.” (Monthly Chosun, 2001/09). There are many traces of this strategy being used in the Cho Kook incident. Representatively, 4 people stand out. One of them is Yoo Dong-yeol known as a Pro-North Korean discriminator.

The following description of the Director of the Korea Institute of Liberal Democracy, Yoo Dong-yeol was introduced in [People] in the May 2019 issue of <Monthly Chosun>. “Working as a security measure researcher at the National Police Agency’s Center for Public Security and the Police Science Institute of the Korean National Police University for 25 years, he engaged in research and analysis of domestic pro-North Korean forces and North Korea issues” He often gives lectures on themes, “Emergency diagnosis, where should the National Intelligence Service (NIS) which is in crisis go?” (Weekly Chosun, 2014/4/28), “Truth of North Korea’s political maneuvering against the South” (New Daily, 2019/4/10), and “National Security Act, why is it necessary?” (Blue Today, 2017/4/5). He often socializes with Ko Young-joo, who is a former public security prosecutor in charge of the Burim incident that became the subject of the movie <The Attorney>, Ko Deok-jin, who is a chairman of Deokwoohoe created by a former employee of the National Security Agency, and Lee Dong-bok, the protagonist of the case of manipulating the order of the National Security Agency during the Kim Young-sam administration. In 2019, he was selected as the winner of the ‘Syngman Rhee Patriotic Award.’ Here, a large number of people from anti-communist, pro-American, and Protestant are included. They are Lee Do-hyung from <Chosun Ilbo> and the president of <Monthly Korea Forum >, Cho Gap-je of <Monthly Chosun>, Lee Min-bok who is a chief of balloon flier campaign to North Korea, Ko Young-joo who is a lawyer, Ahn Byung-hoon, who is the former vice president of <Chosun Ilbo> and the founder of <New Daily>, and Ju Ok-soon of Mother Support Corps. The second is Kim Sang-hyun, the president of Gukdae Tteokbokki.

Although he certainly attends church, the truth is not clear. However, finding connections and backgrounds around him is not very difficult. On October 20, 2019, <Dong-A Ilbo> features an interview with “Kim Sang-hyun, the president of Gukdae Tteokbokki “I am more afraid of a wolf (Cho Kook) leaving and a leopard (Lim Jong-seok) coming.” The person by whom he was most influenced is Lee Jung-hoon, a professor of law at Ulsan University. Lee Jung-hoon was significantly addressed by <News and Joy> through [Lee Jung-hoon’s Conspiracy Theory] on December 11, 2018. One of the places where he was invited to give a

special lecture is ‘Sarang Church.’ This is where Pastor Ok Han-heum, who was interviewed as a result of being persuaded for an interview by the reporter Cho Gap-je who stated that South Korea must be saved from the left in the early 2000s. He also gave a special lecture at Ohryun Church (Pastor Kim Eun-ho), which supports the “Daniel Prayer Meeting,” known as the root of the Seoul National University’s Truth Forum. On the church’s website, there is a notice of ‘2018 One Day Daniel Prayer Meeting with all Nations’ (Instructor: Professor Lee Jeong-hoon) on April 27, 2018. In the case of Cho Kook incident, he was treated as an apostle of justice or a persecuted martyr. Another source of information that often appeared as an authority is the ‘Association of National Professors for Social Justice.’

The first appearance is made in <Chosun Ilbo> on September 16, 2019. It includes the following content. “Over 1,000 former and current university professors across the country were confirmed to have signed declaration of state affairs, calling for the replacement of Cho Kook, 54, the Minister of Justice. The Association is an organization created for the purpose of this declaration of state affairs. On the 12th, professors who felt a problem with the appointment of Minister Cho without a representative or the executive branch gathered together and drafted the declaration of state affairs.” As mentioned earlier, their truth is still ambiguous. A noteworthy point to this group’s statement can be found in a list written in a completely different way than the one commonly used by academia. In the statement of this group, a list of schools and individual statements were separately released. This is a behavior that is difficult to understand in common sense. Specifically, instead of Hong Kil-dong (Korea University), Korea University was added to the school, and Hong Kil-dong was added to the entire ABC list. If only one of the university professors nationwide has the same name, they can be identified, but this is not the reality. Due to a large number of people with the same name, identifying exactly those who appear in the statement is difficult. This is a point where many questions arise about the reliability of this organization and its statement. It is difficult to see the fact that the domestic media (especially critical of the Moon Jae-in administration) has sent out almost ‘similar’ content about their statement and their meaning as a coincidence. One can see what it means by comparing the following editorials.

The fact that it is in fact ***the first large-scale declaration of state affairs by the professors since the declaration of the state affairs which urged President Park Geun-hye to step down during the incident of Choi Soon-sil’s manipulation of state affairs 3 years ago*** should not be overlooked (Dong-A Ilbo, 19/9/18).

The voluntary large-scale declaration of state affairs by the professors is in fact ***the first since the declaration of the state affairs demanding the resignation of President Park Geun-hye during the Choi Soon-sil incident in 2016***. This is the basis showing that the Cho Kook incident is as severe as the Choi Soon-sil incident that shook the country. (JoongAng Ilbo, 19/9/19)

They are similar to the 2234 professors who urged the resignation of President Park Geun-hye through the declaration of state affairs in 2016. The fact that such professors and lawyers represent the public sentiment is also demonstrated by the results of various public opinion polls recently announced one after another. Disregarding this means as being an anti-democrat starting from President Moon. (Munhwa Ilbo, 19/9/18)

The ‘Association of National Professors for Social Justice’ in which 3396 former and current university professors participated announced a declaration of state affairs in front of the Blue House on the 19th. This is ***a scale that exceeds 2,234 people who participated in the national professors and researchers’ declaration of state affairs which called for the resignation of President Park Geun-hye during the Choi Soon-sil incident in November 2016.*** It shows that the Cho Kook incident is as severe as the Choi Soon-sil incident that shook the country. (Law Journal, 19/9/19)

The last case of authority is not a person or group. It is an anonymous bulletin board at Seoul National University. <“Do you have double standards after criticizing professors”... Students of Seoul National University calling Professor Cho Kook to step down>. This article was written by reporter Choi Hyo-jeong of <Chosun Ilbo> on July 30, 2019. News from the same source appeared in the press one after another. <Dong-A Ilbo> published <Students of Seoul National University discussing the Minister of Justice, targeting Cho Kook, “Professor having double standards, resign from professor” > on July 31. There are also articles, “Professor ‘Cho Kook who criticized the leave of absence’ having double standards ‘boomerang’ (Munhwa Ilbo, 19/7/30) and “Cho Kook criticizing the students returning to Seoul National University today rather than welcoming” (Korea Economic Daily, 19/8/1). At first glance, many students at Seoul National University, which is the best university in Korea, seem to criticize Professor Cho Kook. It is in fact quite different. The source is an anonymous bulletin board that is difficult to be viewed as proper public opinion. This is a forum opened by the group <Truth Forum> mentioned earlier. It was established shortly after President Park Geun-hye was impeached, followed by a conservative Protestant group. The article titled “Like Daniel.. 20% of Korean churches participate in prayer meeting” published on October 16, 2019 by <Christian Today>, includes detailed information.

Daniel Prayer Meeting is large enough to say that “One out of five Korean churches participates in the Daniel Prayer Meeting. The number of churches in Korea is approximately 50,000. More than 10,000 of these churches pray with the same subject at this prayer meeting. Now, the Daniel Prayer Meeting has become a prayer meeting for Korean churches rather than Oryun Church (Head Pastor Kim Eun-ho).” Among the people invited as a lecturer this year is Ji Seong-ho, a North Korean defector who is introduced as a North Korean human rights activist. He is the president of NAUH founded in 2003. In 2018, the group received the <Democracy Award> given by the NED, which the US uses as a strategic card targeting North Korea. He was invited to President Trump’s speech on state affairs. His interview was introduced in VOA (19/11/4). He stated, “Communism is a bad ideology that misleads the people” and “I think although the Communist Party talks about the happiness of living together with equality, but the privileged class is enjoying the wealth by exploiting in it.” With the recommendation of the president, Hwang Gyo-an, he was ranked the 12th in the proportional representation of the United Future Party in the general election on April 15, 2020.

V. Summary and limitations

1. Research Summary

Justice Minister “Cho Kook” and his family fell. However, regardless of the judgment of the judicial branch, which is currently in progress, the shadow of discourse politics appeared in the process of being rejected and crashed through the media. The report released by the Democratic Party after being defeated in the re-election held on April 7, 2021 is the evidence. Among the major causes of defeat is the ‘Cho Kook incident.’ there was considerable antipathy for “their own league,” or “hypocrisy of the current regime.” It is consistent with the message that conservative media expanded and reproduced through discourse politics (Digital Times, 21/5/12).⁴

The researchers saw that the media attack on Cho Kook and his family was close to the ‘witch hunt.’ Through analysis, four structures where cultural resonance was possible were found. They are anti-communism, ROK-US alliance, developmentism, and antipathy against injustice. First, anti-communism directly experienced war, and from early on, targeting the Protestant members and those over the 70s who internalized anti-communist education. Second, the group that regarded the ROK-US alliance as sacred and inviolable was found to agree with the concern that the Moon Jae-in administration’s North Korea policy and the refusal to extend the GSOMIA could damage the ROK-US alliance. Third, developmentism favored economic stability and drew a class who opposed reckless welfare policies. In particular, they were motivated by the fact that the leftists, who advocated distribution and equality, were a hypocrite and had a double standard. Finally, the rejection sentiment toward the ‘unfair society’ attracted active participation of the younger generation. Some of the classes that belonged to the left camp such as Chin Jung-kwon revealed strong antipathy against the behavior of the 586 generations showing duality after seizing power. This feeling of rejection and hostility caused somebody’s intentional work and interaction, and developed into anger toward Cho Kook.

One of the forces that intervened through discourse was a conservative Protestant group that came down from North Korea right after liberation. They deeply participated in the US military government after studying in the US through Japanese colonization, and through this, they became the mainstream of Korean society. They were persecuted by the North Korean socialist regime and in conflict with the socialist family since the 1920s. They were inherently anti-communists. There was no choice but to stick with the military dictatorship that was incorporated into the anti-communist league led by the US. The atmosphere of inter-Korean reconciliation and peace on the Korean peninsula after the 2000s brought a sense of crisis to them and at last, led them to engage in group actions such as the prayer meeting for state affairs. Public security prosecutors, police information departments, the NIS and the military, who were able to enjoy all kinds of privileges through the division, also actively participated in the group. They attended the Gwanghwamun rally, became a producer of discourse directly through columns, or came to the fore through all the arrangements made by the media. Scholars from the Center for Free Enterprise sponsored by the Federation of Korean Industries also jumped into the discourse of politics on the grounds of opposition to populism. The founder of <Pen and Mike>, Jeong Kyu-jae, who insisted on the introduction of the National Foundation Day and Rhee Syngman’s wealth of nations, as well as Gong Byeong-ho who served as the chairman of the United Future Party’s

⁴ Kwon Jun-young (21/5/12) Report on the cause of the defeat of the Democratic Party in re-election... “Cho Kook incident, hypocrisy of the current regime” <Digital Times>

http://www.dt.co.kr/contents.html?article_no=2021051202109958079001

nomination committee, come from this background. In addition, <Truth Forum>, which started from Daniel Prayer Meeting, <Association of National Professors for Social Justice> which have connection links to anti-homosexuality and new light, and North Korean refugee groups are also major actors. As explored earlier, their discourse strategy was developed in the way of ‘making angels and devils.’

Of course, the devil is Cho Kook. Professor Chung Kyung-shim and his family belong to the devil’s family. President Moon Jae-in, the Blue House staff, and the Democratic Party together are guards trying to protect the devil. Yoo Si-min, Kim Eo-joon, and Lee Ji-Young are spokespersons, and those who attend the Seocho-dong rally become red guards trying to protect Cho Kook. The family of angels in the opposite direction includes Choi Seong-hae, the president of Dongyang University, Yoon Seok-yeol, the Public Prosecutor General, and Professor Lee Young-hoon, who is trying to protect the Korea-US-Japan alliance. Logos, pathos, and ethos, which can be viewed as the three main elements of the discourse, were all used in the process of creating a confrontational composition of ‘we’ and ‘they.’ Details are summarized in <Table 3> and <Table 4>. The strategic use of information sources and frame which makes people understand reality in a specific way was verified. The representative frames include ‘Cho Kook is a socialist, hypocrite Cho Kook, Moonpa of Red Guard, and damage to the alliance.’ In addition, the authorities that the media, which can be classified as a media complex, brought to the ‘forum for public discussion’ in cooperation with each other can be identified. One of them is Yoo Dong-yeol known as a Pro-North Korean discriminator. He emerged as a source of information that confirms “Cho Kook is a socialist” in a logical, and reliable way with the voice of authority. An anonymous bulletin board operated by Seoul National University’s <Truth Forum>, which appears to be named after the ‘Truth Campaign,’ promoted by the US Truman administration, was also used as a tool. <Chosun Ilbo> <Munhwa Ilbo> <Dong-A Ilbo> <JoongAng Ilbo> provoked opposition to Cho Kook based on the contents of this bulletin board of which qualifications were questionable as an informant.

2. Limitations and Follow-up Study

As of January 2021, the substantive truth of the Cho Kook incident has not yet been clearly revealed, and the judicial branch’s judgment on this is in progress. At this time, it is not easy to determine whether ‘attacking Cho Kook’ through discourse politics had been the right perspective. However, the approach of discourse politics seems to be useful in explaining the burial of Cho Kook, who was once considered a presidential candidate, as a ‘wicked man’ together with his family. It was found that there is a group called division vested interests, and they intervened in this process through media on one hand and the media itself intervened by being the main character on the other. Nevertheless, reflection on the results of the analysis is inevitable. First, the content itself revealed as a symbolic structure was not fresh and more rigorous academic analysis is required. However, uncovering the forces behind them and their dynamics that have not been revealed in the process thus far is the achievement of this study. The networks they form while proactively producing discourse were revealed. It is regrettable that various examples of frames and making all arrangements were not shown in the process of compressing and organizing the analyzed content. The fact that the discrimination of the discourse could not be revealed more clearly by comparing it with the alternative media rather than the media complex is also a limitation. Another limitation is that how the related discourse changed according to

the progress of the incident was not examined by using big data, what frames compete with each other by a media company and how they are distributed were not explored. This is why there is a need for a follow-up study by using TEXTOM, Ucinet-Netdraw, or Pajek together in the future.

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