THE ART OF GOVERNANCE AND THE POLITICAL GRAMMAR OF LEGITIMACY: TALES OF THE STATE FOR A UNIFIED KOREA

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Abstract: This inquiry demonstrates that the political legitimacy of a certain society is historically determined, reflects specific institutional and contextual features, and employs a variety of meanings. These meanings can describe both a state of affairs and a process that ultimately involves justifications for legitimate agents and socio-political structures. This paper attempts to understand how the meanings of political legitimacy are conceptualized in society. As a case study, it questions: What are the conditions for the existence of political legitimacy and how have they been constructed? How is political legitimacy endorsed in South Korea today, and how does it differ from the past? This paper applies a deconstructive theory of political legitimacy that explores a distinctively modern style, or 'art of governance' that has an all-encompassing, as well as individualized effect upon its constituencies. By this approach, this paper argues that the concept of unification does not have a solid significance in the real world, but rather, it is an imaginary idea imposed by the dominant elite class, which is constantly imposed, reinterpreted and transformed in its political context.

INTRODUCTION

The political meaning of legitimacy can be accounted for from many different perspectives, because there are various views, which result from historical and social constructions. Modern conceptions of political legitimacy reflect vastly diverse assumptions about the autonomy, capacity, and functions of political legitimacy in any given society. Disagreements over the ontological character of political legitimacy and its formation in relation to society are seen as irresolvable. Some scholars treat political legitimacy in a Weberian sense: that is, as a bounded, rational, and completely autonomous agent. Others understand it in Marxian terms, either within the all-encompassing domination of society, or in a relatively autonomous fashion. Still others envision political legitimacy in ways that combine both Weberian and Marxist conceptions. Scholars, however, particularly Webe-

rian institutionalists and instrumental Marxists, have focused on the ontology of political legitimacy at the expense of the epistemology. Rather than attempting to identify the ontology of legitimacy, I propose to examine how the meanings of legitimacy are shaped, and how such meanings are legitimized by discursive practices. Contrary to state-centered or society-centered understandings, political legitimacy can best be understood as a structural effect, or as "the metaphysical effects of discursive practices" (Mitchell, 1991: 94).

The meaning of political legitimacy is best explained by examining how the state's activities are legitimized in practice. The question of what enables the political legitimacy of the state to emerge, endure, and decline is intimately related to how and, under what conditions, political legitimacy is constructed. The central puzzle of this inquiry is: how is political legitimization possible? In addition to this central puzzle, this inquiry also examines the following questions: By what political means is political legitimacy constructed?

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How does the state introduce certain actions that are legitimate today but different from the past? Under what conditions is the state able to or prevented from constructing particular meanings of political legitimacy? The main puzzle is not the ontological character of political legitimacy, but the processes by which political legitimacy have been formed.

To answer these questions, I will apply a deconstructive theory of political legitimacy. Deconstructive theory concerns itself with, among other things, social and historical constructions of subjects and with the corresponding interactions between the discursive practices of structures and subjects. Its method is genealogical in that it explores historical meanings of subjects and the political legitimacy attached to them. Deconstructive analysis is designed to explore how symbolic politics constructs particular beliefs as if they were universal. It also attempts to explore a distinctively modern style, or 'art of government,' that has an all-encompassing as well as individualized effect upon its constituencies. Thus, this study aims to explain how the notion of political legitimacy is conceptualized and justified in the particular political context of South Korea. Based on a deconstructive theory, I argue that political meanings of legitimacy are the products of historically and socially contextualized politics or "discursive practices."

The argument in this inquiry is divided into four parts. The first section classifies the historical meanings of political legitimacy that entail what is legal, morally right, culturally natural, militarily justified, and politically manipulated in given societies. The second section illustrates theoretical conceptualizations of legitimacy in liberalism/pluralism, Weberism, Marxism, and postmodernism. By introducing a deconstructive theory of political legitimacy, I explain how the state and its actions have become accepted as legitimate. The third section examines the discursive construction of

political legitimacy in a specific case: South Korea's unification policy. The question is: How does the South Korean government legitimate its unification policy to its constituencies? I attempt to explore the modes of construction of South Korea's unification policy, the methods of political simulation, and the symbolic politics of its legitimization. The fourth section examines the implications of the case study and concludes that a multiplicity of meanings of legitimacy is the result of the "discursive practices" that deliver particular political meanings of legitimacy.

HISTORICAL MEANINGS OF POLITICAL LEGITIMACY

Political legitimacy has been variously recognized as legal, rightful, self-evident, militarily justified, and politically manipulated. The basis of political legitimacy are largely grounded in legal/constitutional authority of an administrative judicial entity, normative evaluations of moral propriety, cultural definitions of appropriateness or comprehensibility, militarily justified ideological claims, and political assessment of stakeholder relations (Rogowski, 1974; Connolly, 1984; Barker, 1990; Colazingari and Rose-Ackerman, 1998; Arato, 2000). Because of its multifaceted meanings, political legitimacy is more often described than defined, and is often invoked through certain symbols, rituals, and codes that become substitutes for its 'real' meanings.[1] The multiplicity of its

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1) In this inquiry, I use the terms legitimacy and political legitimacy interchangeably. Their meanings can be traced from a theoretical or analytic perspective, although they are interactive and intermingled in reality. Throughout, I use legitimacy as a complex, dynamic, and multifaceted feature that can be understood in a degree rather than a simple dichotomy of legitimacy and illegitimacy. Legitimation is an interactive process in which the political meanings of legitimacy are constructed between the rule--the signifier, and the ruled--the signified. Terms like "multifaceted meanings"

meanings implies that political legitimacy is not something to be thought of as having an ontological content. That is to say, there is no objective definition of political legitimacy (Schaar, 1981; Beecham, 1991; Suchman, 1995). Thus, the question "What is legitimacy?" overlaps with the questions of "Legitimacy for what or for whom?" and "How is political legitimacy constructed?" In this vein, meanings of political legitimacy are best understood by investigating particular contextual processes that construct political meanings of legitimacy.

Historically, political subjects of legitimacy have been either people or socio-political structures.[2] Political legitimacy is conceptualized in ways that contain either agents or structures that may be seen as causes or consequences of legitimacy or legitimation. Ethnic leaders, kings, political authorities or representatives, and the people have been regarded as legitimate agents. Their legitimated positions have been linked to the divine will and regarded as the legitimate agents of the patriarchal community, of social contracts or foundations, and of the general populance. The meanings of political legitimacy have also resided in social and political structures such as religious institutions, mass societies, markets and governments.

These historical meanings of legitimacy are classified into three ideal types: "traditional, charismatic or emotional, and legal-rational" (Weber, 1978: 33~38). The divine rights of kings are justified as legitimate by appeal to authorities, such as the Bible or mythology. Charismatic legitimacy is often perceived as an exclusive form of authority that is derived from either traditional or legal

categories of legitimacy. The legal-rational category of legitimacy includes theories of authority that stem from the social contract and majority principles. Legal-rational legitimacy provides a means of introducing 'mutually acceptable order' to the members of the society through formal prescriptions that regulate social behavior. This legal-rational legitimacy, according to Weber and his followers, plays the most important role in the modern state, and is applied to the functional meanings of political legitimacy.[3] Functional legitimacy is related to the effectiveness of a political regime.[4] This includes the representative character of the administrative state, equal access to decision-making process, the placement of bureaucracy in democratic government, the efficient and effective performance of the government, and a sense of social security and economic prosperity.

Weberian functional conceptualizations of legitimacy are connected with what is legal and what is morally right; that is to say, legal-constitutional and moral-normative account of legitimacy. Legal-constitutional conceptions depict legitimacy as a set of constitutional rules that govern the formation and administration of politics. According to Weberians, determining whether certain actions of the state are legitimate depends on the interpretation of the literal meanings of the constitution,

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and "the multiplicity of political legitimacy" are used to indicate a process whereby two or more political institutions construct a particular discourse, or a specific meaning that justifies a certain pattern of social order.

2) For extensive discussions of political subjects of legitimacy, see Barker (1990), pp. 1~22; Dye (1990), pp. 3~20; and Schiera (1993), pp. S11-S33.

3) According to critics of Weber's conception of legitimacy, Weber distorts the essential meaning of legitimacy. To them, political legitimacy needs to signify a normative evaluation of a political regime in terms of: "the correctness of its procedures, the justification for its decisions, and the fairness with which it treats its subjects" (Grafstein, 1981: 456). Although critics point out the need to evaluate the essential meanings of legitimacy in a political regime, their concerns about legitimacy need to be broadened to include the wider structures and agents of society. See Schaar (1970), pp. 276~327 and Grafstein, (1981) 43: 456~472.

4) Seymour M. Lipset (1959) maintains that effectiveness as evaluated by objective standards and legitimacy is judged by subjective expectations of the government.

of the motives and interests of the framers, and of previous court decisions.[5] Thus, legally acquired positions and representations in governments are legitimate. In addition, international approval of a state's sovereignty is applied to the legitimated activities of the state. In the case of South Korea, Weberian scholars would argue that the Syngman Rhee administration received international recognition of its legality. Weberian followers also maintain that legitimacy is the popular belief about whether "a system of decision-making is right or proper or just" (Dye, 1990: 4). This means that moral-normative legitimacy reflects what the state ought to do and rests on judgments about whether the state's activity is the right thing to do. Many less-developed countries that have acquired political power by military coup d'tat have lacked this moral-normative account of legitimacy. In South Korea, the Park Chung-Hee regime would be an example.

However, these Weberian functional accounts of legitimacy are limited in their explanation of the historical meanings of legitimacy. Weberian conceptualizations do not grasp the cultural, militarily justified, and politically manipulated meanings of legitimacy. In the first place, political legitimacy is regarded as being embedded in the cultural heritage of a given society. It is naturally manifested in a community's language, history, territory, economic life, and feelings. In other words, legitimacy involves "the capacity of the system to maintain the cultural belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society" (Lipset, 1959: 77). Cultural accounts of legitimacy also rest on the availability of cultural models or

the comprehensibility of and the self-evident.[6] For example, both North and South Korea have based their cultural accounts of legitimacy upon the legendary founder of Korea, *Tangun*, and on the spiritual heritage of *Hongikingan* (the devotion to the welfare of humankind) of *Tangun* Korea.[7]

Secondly, militarily justified meanings of legitimacy represent the political and ideological claims of a militarily conquered state. Victors of war or military conflicts claim territorial possession and ethnic homogeneity. Historical records also show that religious affiliation, economic expansion, and cultural factors have been excuses for military legitimation.[8] Based on its assumptions of cultural homogeneous identities and communist ideological proclamation of salvation for the South Korean people, North Korea initiated its military accounts of legitimacy, while the South declared the democratic government's counter-attack against the military invasion in 1950.

Thirdly, socio-political accounts depict political legitimacy as socially or politically created for the political assessment of certain governmental activities.[9] Legitimacy is regarded as 'an operational resource' and the state extracts its meanings from the contextual environment, and employs them in pursuit of their purported interests.[10] In conven-

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5) Meanings of legal legitimacy are constructed through the imposition of either positive or intuitive law, officially or unofficially. Positive law, as opposed to intuitive or judge-made law, is law made in and by legislatures consciously to fit a specific occasion (Renner, 1976). For more details, see also Kinsey (1983), pp. 11~42.

6) To Mark C. Suchman, legitimacy "stems from the availability of cultural models or comprehensibility that furnish plausible explanations for societal stability" (1995: 582). Taken-for-granted cultural accounts depict legitimacy as necessary or inevitable for societal order.

7) For a review of Korean history, see Kim (1983) and Lee (1991).

8) See Anderson (1991), pp. 1~46, 83~111, and 163~206 and Kennedy (1989), pp. xv-xxv and 143~193 and (1994), pp. 3~134.

9) Legitimacy, to Rodney Barker, is the relationship between the state and its constituents, which involves the belief in "the rightfulness of state, in its authority to issue commands, so that those commands are obeyedbecause its constituents believe that they ought to obey" (1990: 11).

10) See Gramsci (1971), pp. 206~218, 227~239, and 242~270 and Ferrarotti (1979), pp. 101~123.

tional wisdom, appeals to legitimacy, rather than repression, have proven to be a more effective way to induce the public's compliance. The use of force is a sign of legitimation failure, and legitimacy as 'an operational resource' is a key ingredient of governance. In the same vein, Antonio Gramsci (1971) argues that capitalist societies are sustained not only by the formal and potentially coercive power of the state, but also by complex cultural and ideological processes that secure hegemonic meanings and values of political legitimacy within the established social order. Thus, legitimacy is a political demand that requires a manipulable social context. In other words, legitimacy is viewed as a function of political stakeholders' abilities to produce their own appropriate governance. The political elites seek to persuade others to accept their own values within the community by idealizing the symbolic tools that are the basis of legitimacy. The political meanings of legitimacy are constructed through "the politics of renaming" (Schram, 1995: 25) and power relations play a significant role in such a construction.[11] In the case of South Korea, unification policies are formulated and implemented through the politics of renaming, which affirms the prevailing ideas of delayed, emotional, and gradual unification policies.[12]

As the multiplicity of meanings of political legitimacy illustrates, the conceptions of political legitimacy are subject to constant modification by multifaceted processes. Since the meanings of political legitimacy are dynamic or diachronic as

opposed to stationary or synchronic, the recognition of political legitimacy establishes itself as legal, rational, morally acceptable, militarily justified, and politically manipulative. Political legitimacy includes the ever-changing meanings constructed through various structural relationships within particular social, cultural, economic, and socio-political contexts. Historically, political meanings attached to legitimacy show arbitrary use of power by which the proliferation of meanings is disciplined and narrative interpretations are imposed upon the contextual environment. Such practices displace the divine will to legitimated agents or socio-political structures. The political meanings of legitimacy are constantly being reconstructed in light of changed contextual conditions and understandings.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical reflections on what legitimacy is in contemporary political thought are truly disparate, and give rise to dramatically differing viewpoints on the meaning of political legitimacy. Scholars argue that the political meanings of legitimacy are recognized in terms of perceptual, structural, and relational characteristics in both a state of affairs and a process of legitimation (Habermas, 1976; Denitch, 1979; Schaar, 1981; Schiera, 1995; Naticchia, 1999). Legitimacy is recognized when people accept particular political forms, political cultures, and social artifacts, and it denotes not merely the beliefs, but the justification of beliefs. Structural characteristics of the society and state, as forms of power, become the sources of what people believe. The relational conceptualization involves both perceptual and structural meanings of political legitimacy. According to George Ritzer and Pamela Gindoff (1994), the basis of recognition of political legitimacy is largely three-fold: subjectivism (agency), objectivism (structure), and constructivist structuralism (agency-structure).[13] Behavioralist

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11) The politics of renaming or a political euphemism "highlights sameness and difference simultaneouslyand seeks to both affirm and deny difference, by stressing what is consistent and de-emphasizing what is inconsistent with prevailing [hegemonic] discourse" (Schram, 1995: 24~25).

12) The detailed discussions of delayed, emotional, and gradual unification policies are detailed below in the case study of political spectacles in South Korea's unification policy.

narratives (subjectivism) assert "the dependence of structuralism on practice," while structural narratives (structuralism) favor "the dependence of practice on structure." Constructivist structuralism puts forward the integrated duality of structure and practice. Theories of subjectivism, objectivism, and constructivist structuralism include the five-fold typology of political legitimacy (discussed above) in their theoretical framework, but emphasize either what people believe in or how the social structure affects people's beliefs. Following the three approaches of subjectivism, objectivism, and constructivist structuralism, existing theories of political legitimacy can be classified into liberalism/ pluralism, Weberism, Marxism, and post-modernism.

A basic tenet of liberalism/pluralism is that all humans are rational and utilitarian, and that the state is a political arena in which various groups demand, compete and coalesce their interests. Liberals/pluralists argue that individuals or groups react to the state's right to rule based on their calculated interests (Lipset, 1959; Buchanan and Tullock, 1962; Dahl, 1982; Schmitter and Karl, 1991; Touraine, 1998). As opposed to the absolute monarch as a political subject, rational individuals or groups accept the state's right to make decisions depending on whether their interests are met or not.

13) Since scholars conceptualize human beings or social events as both subjects and objects that result in endless debates between the individual as either a prime-mover or a recipient of social change, the controversies are "irresolvable." In the paper, methodological individualism, liberalism/pluralism, and Weberian institutionalism are categorized into subjectivism. Methodological holism, structural Marxism, and post-structuralism are classified into structuralism. Methodological relationism and synthetic dualism are categorized into constructivist structuralism. For extensive debates on subjectivism, objectivism, and constructivist structuralism, see Dessler (1989), pp. 441~473; Hollis and Smith (1991), pp. 393~410; Wendt (1992), pp. 181~185, and Ritzer and Gindoff (1994), pp. 3~24.

Thus, the political legitimacy of democracy and capitalism derive from individual reason and consent and the recognition of individual rights to life, liberty, and property (Dorn, 1990: 71). The political authority will be legitimate as long as it balances the social interests through neutral representative mechanisms. In a properly regulated society, the state provides "a structure and apparatus capable of building and maintaining the consensus and participation of the citizen-subjects[and] of demanding and obtaining appropriate social behavior from those subjects" (Schiera, 1995: S14).

The state, to Weberian institutionalists, is a powerful entity that realigns the socioeconomic, political and cultural artifacts and structures of society. Weberians perceive the state as an autonomous entity that makes its own claim to legitimacy (Yankelovich, 1974; Grafstein, 1981; Skocpol, 1992; Wallace, 1994; Rueschmeyer, 1996; Banchoff and Smith, 1999). Thus, the state is not a reflection of societal factors but is an autonomous apparatus with its own interests and goals. The supreme political authority has the right to exercise its legitimate use of force, to administer a given territory, to levy taxes and implement policies for the support of state activities. The supreme political authority includes the bureaucracy or state apparatuses. The government controls state apparatuses and the rules that structure the form and operation of both bureaucracy and government (Greenberg, 1990: 12~13). In this sense, Weberians replace the traditional ties with new rational ties based on legal and constitutional institutions.14) They hold that the political system is

14) Weberian institutionalists have also placed a great emphasis on the relatively autonomous performance of administrative managers and their control at the center of analysis. To them, the emphasis on the people as a political subject that bears political legitimacy is inappropriate, due to the inconsistency and arbitrariness of human rationality. See Greenberg (1990), pp. 11~40.

so autonomous that it creates its own legitimacy through governmental apparatuses without reference to the public or political culture.

Contrary to liberals/pluralists and Weberian institutionalists, Marxists contend that the state does not entail a wide variety of pluralistic interests and values. Rather, it is a reflection of class struggles. Instrumental Marxists see political legitimacy simply as an instrument of the ruling class (Miliband, 1970; Block, 1986; Ferguson, 1995). Political legitimacy is fulfilled through the operations of symbolic power that "disguise the truth of social relations based on material dependence or on the implicit threat of force and thereby facilitate the general acceptance of such relations" (Cronin, 1996: 65). Criticizing the economic reductionism of instrumental Marxism, structural Marxists maintain that the economic, political, and ideological structures of the state dominate a particular mode of production and determine the political meanings of legitimacy which are derived from the ruling class (Althusser, 1971; Wright, 1978; Poulantzas, 1980). Such legitimation is secured by the exercise of state power on the one hand, and by the ideological repressive apparatuses on the other (Althusser, 1971: 148). Post-Marxists argue that the political discourse of legitimation is open to manipulation by those who monopolize the symbolic power to represent particular interests as universal values. In Habermas's terms, modern, advanced industrial states are in a perpetual crisis of legitimacy because of the contradiction between imperatives in the market and in society.[15] The state must maintain the market mechanism and intervene to prevent the social crises produced by market failures. In order to meet social expecta-

tions and accumulate the resources that are necessary for structural and social maintenance, state involvement often requires further intervention in the market and society. The state's involvement in one set of imperatives, however, often results in a weakening of its legitimacy with the other sectors of society (Plant, 1982; Connolly, 1984; Offe, 1984; Habermas, 1976, 1991).

Neither liberalism/pluralism nor Weberism explains the structural and socio-political factors that affirm the multiple meanings of political legitimacy. Based on the universal rationality of individuals, groups, and governmental apparatuses, the accounts of political legitimacy are limited in explaining the ever-changing meanings of legitimacy. A particular meaning of political legitimacy is constructed by the elites to justify a specific pattern of social order by the dominant elites whenever the political opportunity structure changes.[16] The meanings of political legitimacy cannot be understood in terms of a simple dichotomy between perceptual or institutional legitimacy and illegitimacy. Although institutional Marxists explain the socio-political account of legitimacy, they give little attention to societal beliefs and values that provide strategic resources for political legitimacy. If legitimacy is the product of structural discursive practices, then the next questions are how the products are shaped in our society, and how the political meanings of legitimacy are constructed or substituted for the 'real' thing.

Advocates of critical approaches and post-modernists argue that traditional theories only offer satisfactory explanations on the 'real' meaning of legitimacy and the ever-changing patterns of social and historical justifications of it. Postmodernists

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15) The situation of crisis includes "accumulation crisis, legitimation crisis, fiscal crisis of the state, motivation crisis, and the crisis of crisis management" (Holton, 1987: 502). Crisis here is referred to as a social problem that needs to be resolved by governmental or societal actions.

16) The political opportunity structure refers to the dimensions of the political environment that open up the access to participation, shift the ruling alignments, and exacerbate cleavages within and among political elites. See Tarrow (1994), p. 86 and passim.

engage in a critical history that dismantles and goes beyond the political rhetoric of legitimation (Barthes, 1974; Foucault, 1977; Baudrillard, 1988; Derrida, 1994, 1998). By examining the articulation and normalization process of the rhetoric that controls an individual's subjective perceptions and aspirations, postmodernists argue that political legitimacy is a mythical concept manufactured from symbolic politics, political culture, and logocentiric articulation.[17] Overall strategic discourse, or 'the grammar of governance,' frames the individual's perceptions about the social order in ways that frequently legitimate omnipresent "power relations" (Gasche, 1987; Bartelson, 1995). Power imposes constraints upon humans and forces them to behave in certain articulated ways. These constraints are systemized, totalized, and hierarchically organized. This requires the state constantly to rearticulate its message to its constituencies in order to maintain the existing power relations. The political and social constructions of political legitimacy are rooted in different systems of legal/moral/cultural/political understandings vis-à-vis social identities and cultural roots. Such practices are constructed in light of dynamic contextual environments.

Postmodernists are committed to unearthing rhetorical and textual practices to expose social constructions. Through deconstruction, postmodernists question how legitimized codes and symbols signify certain voices, how themes are constructed by those textual codes, and what sets of knowledge are invoked and deferred. To decon-

structive theorists, political legitimacy is a belief that has to be specifically justified through the dualistic structure of logocentrism. By means of binary oppositions or antinomies, such as the one and the other, masculinity and femininity, or the ruler and the ruled, the symbolic politics of the state attempt to obliterate difference, extinguish contingency, and deconstruct the other (Gregory, 1989: xv-xviii).[18] In short, they question the relationship of the political subject bears to the complex matrices of power that legitimate its actions. Postmodernists attempt to highlight the plurality of political legitimacy and the multiple constitutions of meanings so that the reader is treated "not as a consumer but a producer of the text" (Barthes, 1974: 4). A deconstructive theory explores the political meanings shaped by discursive practices, observes who does what to whom, and identifies what process is to be used to communicate knowledge. The political meanings of legitimacy "have been replaced by simulation, and simulation is a matter of substituting signs of the real for the real itself" (Baudrillard, 1983: 4). Through deconstruction, postmodernists attempt to question how discourse or symbolic politics constructs political meanings of legitimacy.

POLITICAL SPECTACLES: SOUTH KOREA'S UNIFICATION POLICY

By employing a deconstructionist analysis of political legitimacy, I will illustrate how successive South Korean governments have constructed political meanings of legitimacy manifested in their unification policies. The research question of this case study is: How has the South Korean government developed the concept of political legitimacy, and how is it different from the past? I wish to argue that the South Korean government's

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17) Similarly, Antonio Gramsci (1971) notes that there are two routes in the articulating and normalizing process of a particular discourse into the universalized ideological view: *caesarism* (coercion or imposition) and *transformisco* (consent or transformation). The hegemonic worldview of the dominant groups is imposed upon the subordinated groups by coercive forces, and universalized norms and beliefs are created by broadening particular ideological elements for all groups in given societies.

18) See Gasche (1987), pp. 3~20; Gregory (1989), pp. xiii-xxi; and Derrida (1992), pp. 1~83.

unification policies have become increasingly divorced from 'reality.' That is to say, the words and symbols, that are communicated and manifested in the unification policies, are unlikely to endure. This inquiry looks specifically into the terms and descriptions used by the South Korean government and for the "logocentric other" posited by Jacques Derrida (1992). The deconstructive approach used here explores the interaction between the structure and the discursive practices during the last half a century of South Korean unification policy.

Throughout the more than 50 years of division (since the independence of Korea in 1945), unification has been one of the most critical issues for Koreans. Seoul's unification policies have displayed both a realistic and neorealistic approach that dominated in the establishment of the 'Korean Commonwealth.'[19] The means to achieve unification in this state-centric approach have included economic assistance, diplomatic recognition, economic absorption, strategic isolation, and forceful integration.[20] Its policy also supports the liberal or functionalist theory of regional integration that

advocates incremental community-building approaches. This institutionalist approach emphasizes a pluralistic arrangement or networks that will promote a peaceful environment by increasing confidence building measures, agreement on arms reduction, consensus on nuclear non-proliferation, and eventual social and political integration.[21] South Korean unification policies can be classified as follows. First, Korea faced the settlement phase of international negotiations between the two Koreas (1945~1949). That was followed by the military phase of the attempted Korean unification (1950~1953). Third, Korea entered the post-armistice confrontation in the Cold War postponed unification phase (1954~1970). Fourth came, the gradualist phase (1971~1986); and finally, the mixed version of gradualism and collapse theory in the new international order (1988-present).[22]

During the international negotiation period (1945 ~1949), legal-constitutional meanings of legiti-

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19) Generally, in South Korea, unification policy proposals were represented as the intent of the presidents and a few of their personal aides. Thus, political power resided in the hands of a few bureaucrats at the very top of the central government structure who delegated a certain amount of legitimacy to organizations and individuals below them. Top policy aides in the National Security Council, the National Intelligence Agency (the former Korean Central Intelligence Agency and the Agency for National Security Planning), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Unification, the National Unification Board, the Ministry of National Defense, and the Ministry of Culture and Information share the power and legitimize government positions dealing with security and unification policies.

20) Critics of the state-centric approach assert that mutual antagonistic and mutual existence approach will make the divided Korea a permanent fixture. See Gibney (1992), pp. 64~75; Shin (1993), pp. 603~611; and Lee J. (1995), pp. 87~92.

21) Contrary to community-building approaches, skeptics argue that problems of multilateralism can be found in the lack of common security interests, no common historical background or political similarities, unfulfilled promise of arms control, undermining existing institutions, and diminishing America's clout in the region. See Clad (1992), pp. 76~86; Cronin (1992), pp. 209~220; and Lee (1994), pp. 129~158.

22) This classification is not mutually exclusive, but only analytically possible. North-South dialogues initiated in 1971, although not successful, were intended for mutual recognition of their regimes as opposed to mutual confrontation. South Korea's *nordpolitik*, initiated by Roh Tae-Woo in 1987, have aimed not only to reduce military tensions but also to establish a regional environment for a peaceful process of unification. Although South Korea prefers gradual integration, it perceives the possibility that the North cannot be prevented from collapsing. Economic stagnation and food shortages in the 1990s may be signals of the North's systematic collapse. However, neither the North's collapse nor economic absorption by the South is a favorable or feasible option for both Koreas and regional major powers. At the moment, peaceful coexistence through economic engagement has been advocated for regional prosperity and order in Northeast Asia. See Kil (2001), pp. 1~22.

macy were applied to the unification policies of the Syngman Rhee administration (1948～1960). International recognition of the 'one and only lawful' government on the Korean peninsula had provided the formal source of commands in South Korea. As a symbol of the Rhee government's legitimacy, the principle of the 'one and the only lawful' government served as the foundation of national unification. Following the Weberian institutionalists and liberal/pluralist conceptions of the state and its legitimacy, the Rhee government established an independent national government and received United Nations recognition and support from the Western allies.[23] The Communist world recognized the North Korean government, and that recognition was claimed to be illegal and unjust because the North Korean government was a communist state (or *gong-san-jung-kwan* and *ppal-gang-i-jung-kwan*). By universalizing the Western allies' recognition as the only legitimate source of the government, the Rhee administration justified its particular interest; namely, the domination of South Korea. Thus, its unification policy could not be extended beyond the internationally negotiated boundary of the 38th parallel.

In addition, Syngman Rhee's image as a 'national father' who had spent half a century overseas fighting for Korean independence was so powerful that most members of the polity perceived his political institutions and commands as "right" and "proper" for governance. This image, however, was used to secure his regime against political rivalries within South Korea as well as against North Korea. Thus, the UN was instrumental in establishing the Republic of Korea, and Rhee's historical image for national independence was used as a symbol for legitimating the political regime. The Rhee administration justified its legitimacy by comparing the South to the North and arguing that the North

Korean regime is illegitimate because it was irrational or illegal.

The internal justification, combined with different international recognition of which Korea was the legitimate one, caused both governments' assumptions of a unified Korea to be manifested in terms of the politico-military accounts of legitimacy (1950～1953).[24] North Korea viewed its military legitimation as a liberation of the South from economic devastation, economic exploitation, feudal and authoritarian repression, and American imperialism. With the internationally legitimated assistance of peace-making forces, the South responded by equally applying the politico-military account toward unification. Neither side accomplished its goals. The result was the 1953 armistice and the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954.

This military phase generated further military tensions between the two Koreas. During this intensive military war, the North was seen as an evil puppet (or *gwe-rae-do-dang*) of the Soviet empire that killed all peace-loving human beings. The image of a young camouflaged North Korean soldier pointing his gun at dove-like South Korea became a symbol of the North Korean regime (Kim, 1989: 38～44). This symbol was used to justify the politico-military accounts of legitimacy for national unification. For the Rhee administration, the choice was between right and wrong and between freedom and communist tyranny. After the Korean War, the South was portrayed as a peaceful government, and the North portrayed as a war-like regime. From the Rhee administration's view, "restoration of the status quo" or "two governments within one nation" was unacceptable.

Security concerns dominated during the post-armistice confrontation era (1954～1970). The Korean War made the South Korean government shun the emotional or cultural attachment of

23) See Kim (1978), pp. 1～35 and pp. 63～86 and Yahuda (1996), pp. 1～17.

24) For a review of the Korean War, see Kim (1980), pp. 38～48 and 208～235; Kaufman (1986), pp. 1～106; and Kim (1989), pp. 31～50.

legitimacy to its unification policy, while state-centric views dominated for regime survival and modernization. The sheer weight of the national security state had forbidden any meaningful interpretations of legitimacy and debates about unification. The North Korean regime was portrayed as an anti-state or militarily compartmentalized, communist (*gong-san-dang or ppal-gang-i*) state that threatened the existence of the South. President Rhee clearly stated that the Korean question of unification could not be settled unless the punitive action against the communist aggressor was implemented. The Rhee administration prevented any talk of unification other than the official line of 'marching to the North' (Paik, 1993: 72). That is, integration by force--and if not by force, then 'existence through mutual antagonism'--was preferred.

This notion of 'mutual antagonism' was more extensively supported by the Park Chung-Hee regime (1961~1979). The Park administration initiated the *Yushin* reform, stressing "total defense" as a guiding ideology for the maintenance of hardline authoritarianism to sustain national security.[25] To this end, President Park emphasized anticommunism, military self-help, and expanded economic growth. During this mutually antagonistic phase, any substantial attachment of legitimacy and meaningful debate on unification was forestalled. For both Koreas, it was useful to promote domestic solidarity by maintaining a relationship of "hostile reliance" toward the adversary. Any North Korean incursions near the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ) were widely publicized to justify the Park regime's antagonistic policy. Such threats were then used to justify the internal authoritarian dictatorship.[26] Economic

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25) See Scalapino (1976), pp. 60~122 and Kwak (1988), pp. 201~234.
26) North Korea has maintained about 60~70% of its total force below the Pyongyang-Wonsan line. These forces can reach South Korean targets in 5 to 10

indices were also used to mobilize people for the total defense and served the political end of justifying the existing power relations. The South Korean military and the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) probably did not see themselves as the beneficiaries of reduced tensions. The Park regime pursued economic growth for its own regime's political legitimacy; that is, to buy political legitimacy with economic performance. The unification issue was delayed for the consolidation of military self-help, modernization and internal solidarity.

The question of unification had become an emotional or cultural issue in the gradualist phase (1971~1986). It was the bitter memory of the Korean War that barred the use of force practically under all circumstances as a means of unification. In addition to the Park regime, the Chun Do-Whan administration (1980~1987) realized the need for an altogether different path toward unification. They ultimately arrived at a path that pursued unification more as a process than as a finished product. The Park Chung-Hee government "abandoned its unilateral entry [of Korea] into the UN, and changed its policy to propose simultaneous entry into the UN in June 23, 1973" (Pak, 1995: 618). 'Mutual coexistence' is regarded as a privileged strategy that accepts each state as sovereign and institutionalizes government-to-government relations. This strategy was manifested under the name of a special inter-Korean relationship that involved several North-South dialogues and occasional meetings of North/South Korean Red Cross. Limited exchanges of visits and correspondence between people were envisioned in the media and broadcasted to the public so that the evolutionary progress for unification could be achieved through the cultural attachment of legitimacy. Moreover, both the Park and Chun administrations extracted the cultural heritage of

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minutes and achieve dominance within a week.

the 'one' ethnicity (or *han-min-jok*) to institutionalize mutual coexistence. Both regimes' constant preoccupation with economic and security matters continued the pattern of delaying unification policies. Both North and South Korea "sought partial tension and strife as a means of justifying its regime and solidifying internal conflicts in the midst of economic difficulties, systematic uncertainty, and political unrest" (Lee M., 1995: 73).

Since the democratization in 1987, South Korea began to use economic incentives fostered by economic engagement instead of mutual hostility to prompt the North to open to the world. The Noh Tae-Woo administration (1988 ~ 1992) pursued *nordpolitik*, claming that it not only aimed at reducing military tensions but also at establishing a regional environment for a peaceful unification process. South Korea has attempted to establish a favorable climate in the region through economic and diplomatic interdependence. While expanding trade relations with China and Russia, South Korea has tried to convince the North to perceive the problem of security as an obsolete Cold War remnant. South Korea's new international orientation had transformed economic power into diplomatic influence and a strategic advantage over the North. This led to shifting patterns of power politics in Northeast Asia. The systemic transformation ended with diplomatic alignments between South Korea, China and Russia as the post-Cold War era emerged. With *nordpolitik*, it is safe to say that there have been three approaches to Korean unification: a gradualist approach, a collapse theory approach, and a mixture of the gradualist and collapse theory approaches.

Gradualists have proposed an incremental unification process through economic and political integration (Kim H., 1992; Mosher, 1992; Lee, 1993; Evans, 1994). The gradual steps of unification, blueprinted by the Kim Young-Sam administration (1993 ~ 1997), involve political reconciliation and cooperation through North-

South dialogues, the establishment of a Korean commonwealth, and eventually a unified Korea. But the gradualist approach draws a fairly optimistic picture of linear progress toward unification under the name of the same ethnicity (or *han-geo-rae*). Collapse theory, in contrast, holds that North Korea's systematic breakdown is already in progress; thus, gradualism will not work (Lee, 1978; Pae, 1993; Lee Y., 1995; Eberstadt, 1997). Those who foresee the North's collapse believe that a soft-landing of the North is not possible.[27] To them, offering assistance to Pyongyang is useless since it is a communist dictatorship (or *gong-san-dok-jae-jung-kwan*). If the current regime in the North remains, the people would suffer, not the regime.

South Korea's actual unification policy is contradictory because it involves both the gradualist and the collapse theory approaches, which are often manifested in the 'stick and carrot' strategy. This means that South Korea uses economic incentives to promote the North's economic opening and delay the timing of unification through economic aid, rather than using an ideologically antagonistic strategy to compel the North. This is done, not only to achieve a manageable unification, but also to prevent an abrupt collapse of the North. Thus, advocates of the mixed version argue that unification policies need to be dealt with under specific circumstances (Kim Y., 1992; Oh, 1993; Koo, 1993). They use the negative images of North

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27) The condition of a collapsed system in the North is not yet clearly defined. Generally, the situation of the North's collapse is speculated as one of structural dysfunction in which the system cannot recover from social unrest, economic decline and the breakdown of the command in the military. A military coup d'état in the North is one of the possible outcomes in that situation. The question remains, however, as to how the South will respond to the military-dominated North. Economic absorption and military takeover are speculated as the other alternatives, but the timing and method of such alternatives are not clear yet.

Korea mentioned above to justify their claims. Only recently, the Kim Dae-Jung administration (1998-present) unilaterally formulated an initiative, "The Sunshine Policy," that aims to eliminate the North Korea's communist system (or coat) and induce that nation to adopt a capitalist democratic system. The policy toward the North, which was portrayed as an economic partner and ethnic brother as opposed to an ideological enemy during the 2000 North-South Summit, is based on a separation of economics from politics rather than on economic absorption of the North. Economic engagement is meant to induce the North into more economic cooperation (*kyung-jae-hyeup-reuk*) and peaceful coexistence and to open its society to the outside world.

In general, interactions between the state and its constituencies have illustrated "political spectacles" attached with different connotations over time and space. Along with the changes in the international security structure and perceived threats, the con- structed meanings of legitimacy have been used as a symbol for legitimating political regimes, defending mutual military antagonism, and justi- fying economic modernization. Terms of gradu- alism, collapse theory, and the 'stick and carrot' approach are also differently weighted: some having more use than the others whenever there are structural changes or politico-military events within South Korea and in international affairs.[28] Political legitimacy associated with institutional structures has provided the basis for claims for state actions, and those who define the political meanings of legitimacy constructed a social environment favor- able to them. Currently, its legitimated claim of unification is socio-political, involving the eco- nomic costs and social problems in the process of

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28) For example, when there are military conflicts along the DMZ, a hawkish perspective of the collapse theory has prevailed in the policy-making process. In other situations, the gradualist and 'carrot' approaches have been dominant.

unification, on the one hand and economic aid, guided by cultural-humanitarian reasons, derived from cultural-natural and moral-normative accounts of legitimacy, on the other. However, because of the contradiction between the state's imperatives in the market and in society, the voices of socio- political accounts have dominated.

In sum, the meanings of unification are produced and reproduced in the social construction of legal-constitutional, moral-normative, cultural-nat- ural, politico-military, and socio-political accounts of legitimacy. Within these interpretations of legitimacy, boundaries of socio-political/cultural/ economic/military communities have been estab- lished by a series of politically constructed meanings of legitimacy and unification. Its boundary-producing practices have drawn the lines from legal boundaries of the particular government, militarily conquered boundaries and separated socio-political communities either with mutual antagonism or limited cooperation, to culturally- bounded political communities. Moreover, there have been neither constant voices, nor a stable 'reality' manifested in South Korea's unification policies. Rather, a series of political narratives vis-à-vis the one and only lawful government, mutual antagonism, mutual coexistence, and the stick and carrot approach has been symbolically constructed for national unification. A sequence of images and symbols with uncertain reference points has proliferated in place of the self- legitimated unification policies of the political elites. In short, the South Korean governments' narratives of legitimation for unification have lost their credibility.

CONCLUSION: ART OF GOVERNANCE

As argued above, what is legitimate is that which is considered legitimate, and there appears to be no objective or rational standards in terms of which

legitimacy can be assessed. Political legitimacy is a belief that has to be specifically justified over different phases of a political context. The logic of unification is rooted in grand interpretations of legitimacy that firmly outline certain boundaries of political communities. Unification is a goal, but there are no 'real' means to accomplish that goal. Rather, both North and South Korea constantly established boundaries or uncertain reference points that separated and manipulated the other side. As a result, unification has no real meaning and its articulated meanings have shifted and have been reinterpreted with regard to specific circumstances. The political "art of governance" frames individual' perceptions about the social order, and produces what is contained in the legitimized or justified realm of society. The state constantly rearticulates political meanings of legitimacy to its constituencies through the politics of renaming and reinterpreting political legitimacy. This leads to the conclusion that there are not only many interpretations of political meanings of legitimacy, but also many variations of the interpretations.

In this inquiry, the deconstructive theory was used to evaluate the historical patterns of South Korea's unification policy and its interpretations of legitimacy. It demonstrated that structural transformations of political regimes have demanded new interpretations that favor either broader or narrower applications of political legitimacy. It also explained how symbolic politics has constructed social boundaries of legitimated communities and the political meanings of legitimacy. In the South Korean case, as Antonio Gramsci (1971) and Lois Althusser (1971) maintain, particular meanings of political legitimacy through both coercive imposition and transformation have been articulated and interpolated by the dominant elites in their formulation and implementation of unification policies.

Deconstructive theorists argue that traditional

scholars have focused too much on the appropriate ontology of political legitimacy at the expense of the epistemology. Most scholars have developed their theoretical themes based on this structural change within the state-centered or international system-oriented framework. However, scholars fall short of offering fully satisfactory explanations of the historical phases and policy patterns that have been linked to political legitimacy. Postmodernists maintain that traditional scholars have not offered a critical history that dismantles and goes beyond the political rhetoric of ordering and representing society. This rhetoric often reflects a partial understanding of reality, as discussed in the case of South Korean unification policies. This paper suggests that scholars need to unearth the rhetorical and symbolic practices of such interpretations so that multiple interpretations of reality, rather than those of manufactured meanings via the politics of renaming, are possible. In this vein, scholars must question the extent to which their own work corrects the prevailing biases of social order. Even though they are well known in scholarly fields, they hardly influence the public as public critics. Here, I do not advocate that social scientists act as technical therapists (Lasswell, 1941) or public educators (Merriam, 1931) who assert their own views as universal. Instead, I suggest that scholars should engage in critical debates that increase the social space by articulating a multiplicity of alternative views. The role of intellectuals is to deconstruct words, symbols, and signs of discursive practices that are increasingly divorced from reality. Scholars should criticize the selected practices and normalizing processes of a partial or biased understanding of reality.

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