

## Peace Public Diplomacy: Concept and Directions for Korea

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### I. Middle–Power Public Diplomacy

As changes are taking place in the global distribution of values and norms, as well as material capabilities, in this century, many pundits are expecting acceleration of great power competition revolving around the U.S.-China rivalry in a post-pandemic world.<sup>1)</sup> Public diplomacy has traditionally emphasized its instrumental role of serving the purpose of advancing a country’s foreign policy and national interests, and accordingly, has been performing its part in justifying and legitimizing competing powers’ positions, thereby intensifying conflicts and confrontations in the international arena.

Against this backdrop of confrontational world politics, and the enduring role and value of conventional public diplomacy in power politics, this report raises the following questions: What should be the role of non-great powers’ public diplomacy in today’s world politics, in which values are increasingly bloc-ized between liberalism and counter-liberalism?<sup>2)</sup> What should be the roles of

non-great powers’ public diplomacy and the role of the Republic of Korea’s (hereafter Korea) public diplomacy in particular, in the Northeast Asian regional structure amid the stalled peace process on the Korean Peninsula? This report aims to address these questions by introducing two perspectives on public diplomacy, which will be employed to assess Korea’s policy advocacy as a sub-type of public diplomacy. This report suggests a “peace public diplomacy” as the middle-power Korea’s policy advocacy.

### II. Two Perspectives on Public Diplomacy

Public diplomacy has traditionally underscored its task of serving as an instrument for attaining a country’s foreign policy goals and maximizing national interests. This conventional view perceives public diplomacy as non-traditional diplomatic activities to inform, influence, and engage foreign publics to contribute to achieving a country’s foreign policy goals and advancing national interests. Public diplomacy’s primary toolkit aims to help a particular state induce foreign countries to craft policies favorable to its own interests and raise its profile and reputation on the global stage. This view postulates that public diplomacy focuses on

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1) For a discussion about changes in two pillars of international order, see Taehwan Kim, “The U.S.-China Competition in the Changing International Normative Order and Its Implications,” *IFANS Focus*, IF2019-25E (October 24, 2019).

2) For a discussion on “blocization of values,” see Taehwan Kim, “The Rise of

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Value Diplomacy and Bloc-ization of Values: Comparing Great and Middle Powers,” *IFANS Focus*, IF2018-31E (October 5, 2018).

the content of messages to be disseminated and the projection of desirable national images and brands. This instrumental perspective is related to the realist schools of thought in International Relations (IR). They share such premises of self-help in an anarchic international society, maximization of national interests, security interests in particular, and the universal applicability of the notion of fixed national interests to countries.

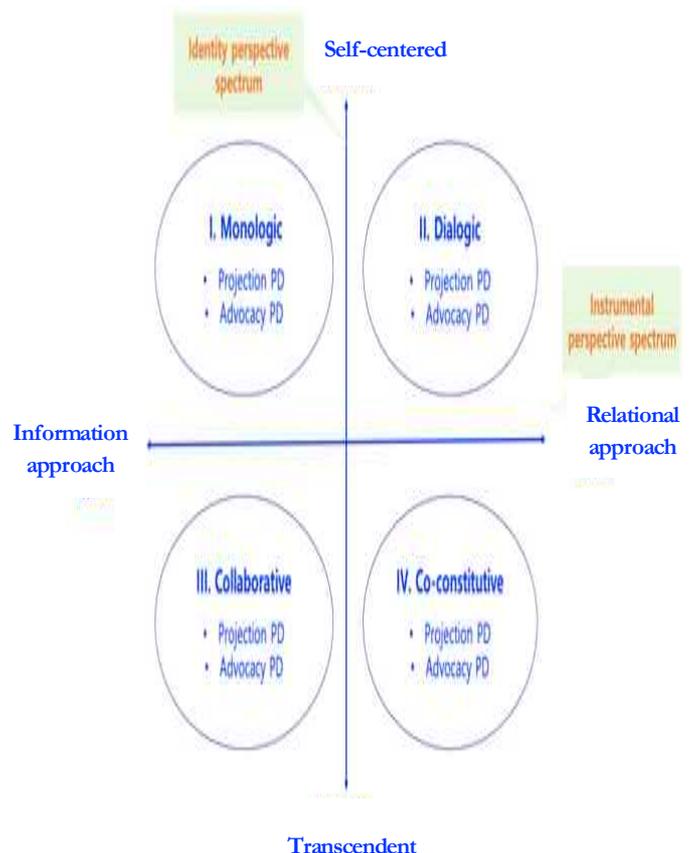
The identity perspective, on the other hand, pays keen attention to the process of breeding intersubjective meanings, namely, shared understandings and meanings, with others on specific phenomena, objects and issues, and to socially constructing inter-state and international relations. Seen from this perspective, public diplomacy could be defined as “communicative practices seeking recognition of a nation’s state/national identity,<sup>3)</sup> or some elements consisting the identity.” As the subjective identity of self is not received in the international society as initially conceived by the self, states and non-state actors engage in material and discursive practices of recognition-seeking, the latter of which is the central area of public diplomacy. When one’s cognitive practices earn empathy and recognition through interactions with others, the subjective self-identity is eventually established as “recognized identity” in the international society.<sup>4)</sup> The recognized identity, in this sense, is a social construct. The identity perspective shares commonalities with constructivism in IR as it values interactions with others over self-centeredness, and supposes that identity itself is subject to change and reconstruction in the process of generating intersubjective meanings with others. Identity thus (re)constructed in turn shapes a country’s national interests.

3) For a discussion of public diplomacy as recognition-seeking practices and accompanying empirical case studies, see Taehwan Kim, “Seeking Recognition in Anarchy: An Identity Approach to Public Diplomacy,” *IFANS Perspective* (forthcoming in May 2021).

4) Michelle Murray, *The Struggle for Recognition in International Relations: Status, Revisionism, and Rising Powers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Depending on which elements of state/national identity to communicate, there could be two types of public diplomacy. “Projection public diplomacy” places emphasis on presenting “Who We Are” by communicating essentialist or primordial elements of state/national identity, such as ethnicity, language, and history and culture shared by a nation through a long-lived experience. “Advocacy public diplomacy,” on the other hand, concentrates on such ideational elements as values and norms, and the policies and institutions reflecting those values and norms, to demonstrate “What We Stand For” in the international society. Advocacy of a status – e.g., great power status, middle power status –, and the role attached to a given status, are also crucial elements of a country’s external identity that constitute the content of advocacy public diplomacy. When the instrumental and identity perspectives on public diplomacy are combined, we could have four ideal-types of public diplomacy as shown in [Figure 1].

**[Figure 1]**  
Four types of public diplomacy across spectrum of the two perspectives



The horizontal axis of [Figure 1] indicates the spectrum of the instrumental perspective all the way from unilateral information dissemination to medium- and longer-term relation-building via persuasion and engagement. In contrast, the vertical one displays the spectrum of the identity perspective ranging from the self-centered pursuit of maximizing national interests to the extension of the boundaries of identity by breeding shared meanings and understandings with others. Quadrant I represents an approach focusing on self-centered monologic information delivery, while Quadrant II the realm of an approach turning on dialogues and exchanges with foreign publics, however asymmetrical they might be. Quadrant III signifies an approach underlining cooperation and collaboration with others to devise and implement collaborative public diplomacy programs, while Quadrant IV represents an approach focusing on constructing common identity and interest by generating intersubjective meanings. Each approach, however, is a conceptual ideal-type, while in reality, different approaches are intermingled and overlapping.

### III. Korea’s Policy Advocacy: Evolution and Challenges

Policy advocacy is a sub-type of public diplomacy, “seeking recognition of a state’s policies, especially foreign policies, in the international society by communicating them and persuading foreign publics, and capitalizing on knowledge and media resources, to deepen their understandings of, and eventually garner their support for, those policies.” Particularly when policy advocacy seeks to engender mutual understandings and shared meanings of policies that reflect a country’s values and norms and expanding their discursive dissemination, it could be a co-constitutive type of public diplomacy. Korean public diplomacy has evolved significantly for the past two decades. Its evolution of policy advocacy since the Roh Moo-hyun administration (2003-2008) in particular could be summarized as in [Table 1] in terms of subject, content, audience, and medium.

[Table 1] Evolution of Korea’s policy advocacy since the Roh Moo-hyun administration

Components	Content	Characteristics
Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central ministries and dedicated institutions including                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National Image Council (Roh admin.)</li> <li>- Presidential Committee on National Brand (Lee admin.)</li> <li>- Presidential Committee for National Unification (Park admin.)</li> <li>- Public Diplomacy Council (Moon admin.)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Korea Foundation</li> <li>Policy &amp; research institutes (both public &amp; civilian)</li> <li>Local governments                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private-sector organizations &amp; institutions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PD programs carried out fragmentedly by diverse subjects without coordination</li> <li>The 2016 PD Act provided a basis for cooperation &amp; coordination between diverse subjects of PD.</li> <li>Full-fledged policy advocacy set out in the Park admin.</li> <li>Policy advocacy towards the U.S. has increasingly gained importance throughout succeeding administrations.</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roh admin. – Peace &amp; Prosperity policy, Northeast Asian Multilateral Cooperation</li> <li>Lee admin. – Global Korea                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park admin. – Korean Peninsula Trust Politics, Northeast Asia Peace &amp; Cooperation Initiative, Eurasia Initiative</li> </ul> </li> <li>Moon admin. – Korean Peninsula Peace Process, New Korean Peninsula System, New Southern Policy, New Northern Policy, Northeast Asia Peace &amp; Cooperation Platform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Korea-U.S. relations, North Korea policy, and regional and global policies constitute the main content of policy advocacy.</li> <li>Diametric fluctuations in important policies including the Korea-U.S. alliance and North Korea policies between progressive and conservative administrations.</li> <li>Priorities in regional- and global-level policies also have fluctuated between different administrations.</li> </ul>
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy community (think tanks, experts, scholars, and journalists)</li> <li>Next-generation leaders</li> <li>Civil society organizations &amp; general public</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on policy community has increasingly diverged to next-generation leaders, civil society organizations and the Korean diaspora.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Moon administration has</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Korean diaspora</li> <li>• Foreigners including students, foreign correspondents and multicultural homes residing in Korea</li> </ul>	<p>enhanced policy advocacy towards foreigners residing in Korea.</p>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monologic – lectures, policy briefings, writings for the press, etc.</li> <li>• Dialogic – hosting and participating in bilateral &amp; multilateral conferences &amp; seminars</li> <li>• Publications, old &amp; new(digital) media activities</li> <li>• Policy research grants             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intellectual exchanges</li> <li>• Educational &amp; training programs for foreigners</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Alumni networking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conferences, seminars, and intellectual exchanges have been dominant as the medium for policy advocacy.</li> <li>• Policy advocacy in the form of knowledge sharing through educational &amp; training programs has increased in the ODA framework.</li> </ul>

The Roh Moo-hyun administration mainly employed a public relations approach to public diplomacy, underscoring the importance of cultivating a national image and cultural relations. The perception of public diplomacy as a crucial part of foreign policy began to take hold during the Lee Myung-bak administration (2008-2013). And it was also under the presidency of Lee that public diplomacy was declared as one of the three pillars of Korean diplomacy, together with security and political affairs, and economy and trade. Policy advocacy commenced as a sub-type of public diplomacy in earnest in the form of “unification policy advocacy” under the Park Geun-hye administration (2013-2017). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs set its goal as “deepening foreign public’s understandings of North Korea, inter-Korean relations, and the situations on the Korean Peninsula at large, to galvanize international support for Korean unification and enhance Korea’s national image.” The Park administration had carried out unification policy advocacy to facilitate the politics of trust on the Korean Peninsula until Pyongyang’s fourth nuclear test in early 2016, after which it was conducted primarily as part of the administration’s hardline policy toward the North.

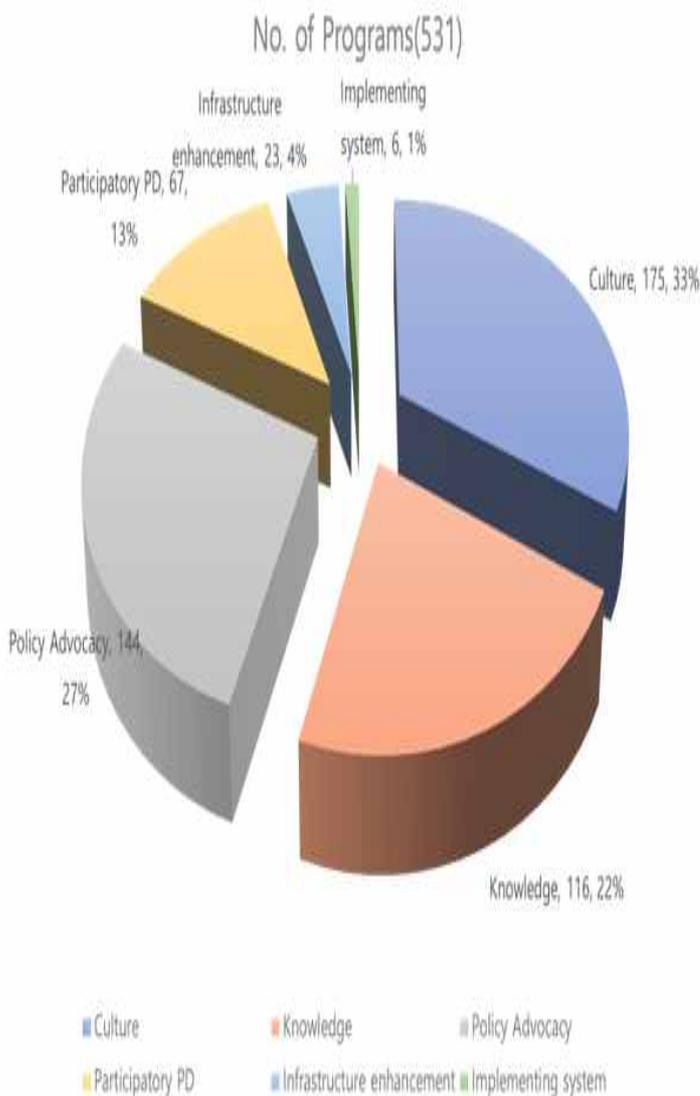
Under the presidency of Moon Jae-in (2017-present), policy advocacy has taken firm root as one of the three official sub-categories of Korean public diplomacy, together with culture diplomacy and knowledge diplomacy. “Enhancing rightful perceptions of Korea and the pursuit of strategic public diplomacy to garner international empathy and support for Korea’s vision and foreign policy” was set as a goal of the task of ‘advancing national interests through people-centered diplomacy and public diplomacy,’ one of the one-hundred tasks of the Moon administration. Policy advocacy in the Moon administration particularly underlines the engagement of Pyongyang and peacemaking on the Korean Peninsula, combining different modes of advocacy that include monologic, dialogic, and collaborative programs. The Moon administration’s emphasis on policy advocacy is clearly demonstrated in the increase of its share in both numbers and budgets of public diplomacy programs as shown in [Figure 2] and [Figure 3]. In total number of public diplomacy programs to be implemented by both central government ministries and local governments, policy advocacy programs have more than tripled from 7.9% in 2018 to 27-28% in 2019 and 2021, while their share in total budgets has jumped from mere 2.2% in 2017 to almost 20% in 2021.

Korea’s policy advocacy is currently facing some challenges in terms of its subject, audience, and medium,<sup>5)</sup> and particularly of its content seen from the two perspectives on public diplomacy. The self-centered instrumental approach and projection of public diplomacy to inform “Who We Are” in particular, has been holding a dominant position in Korean public diplomacy. With greater emphasis on policy advocacy since the Park administration, it certainly has been moving towards advocacy public diplomacy, but with clear limitations: Korea’s policy advocacy has concentrated chiefly on individual foreign policies of incumbent administrations, without reflecting the values and norms embedded in Korea’s national/state identity. As a result, the content of

5) For details, see Taehwan Kim, “Evolving Policy Advocacy in Korea’s Public Diplomacy: An Identity Perspective,” *Public Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, 1:1 (March 2021), pp. 1-28 (in Korean).

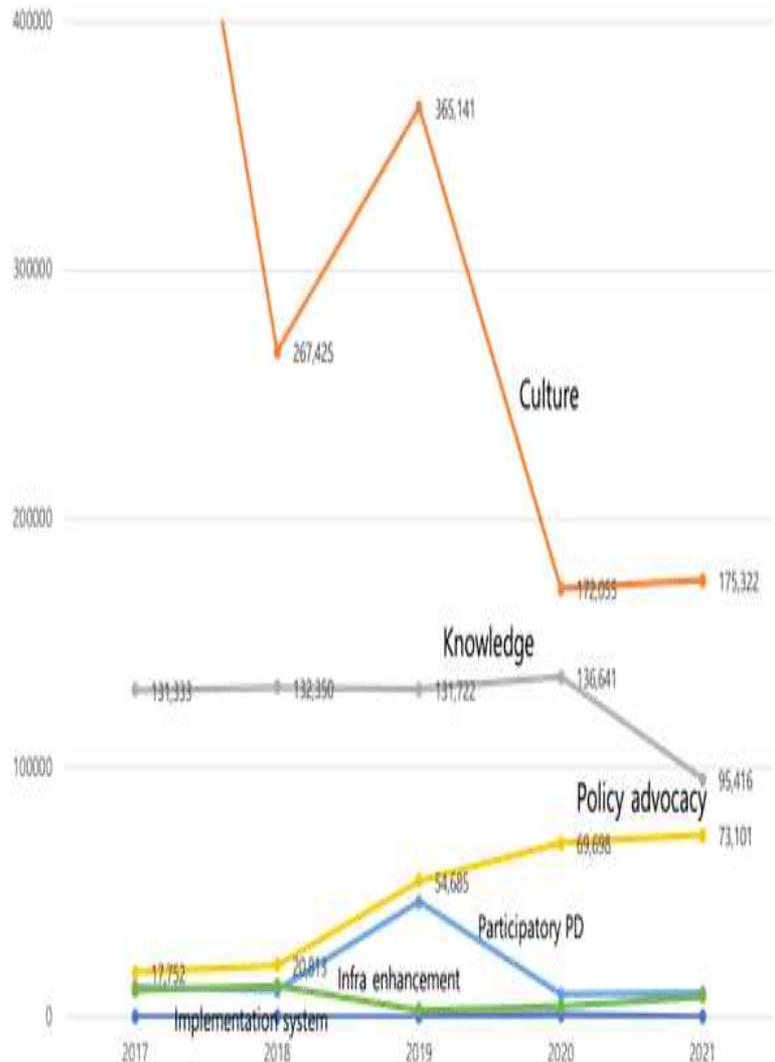
policy advocacy has revealed huge fluctuations across different administrations, particularly between conservative and progressive administrations, leading to conflicting messages in such realms as North Korea policy and the Korea-U.S. alliance. This brings about the problem of policy inconsistency, and eventually adversely affects the credibility of Korea’s foreign policy at large. Korea’s policy advocacy has yet to advance towards a co-constitutive type to nurture shared understandings and meanings of its foreign policy, through which the common identity and shared interests come into being.

[Figure 2] Numbers of public diplomacy programs in 2021



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Public Diplomacy Annual Implementation Plan (2021).

[Figure 3] Budgets of public diplomacy programs from 2017 to 2021 (unit: million Korean Won)



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Public Diplomacy Annual Implementation Plan (2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021).

### IV. Peace Public Diplomacy

The question of which type of public diplomacy a country should pursue can be considered in three dimensions as shown in [Table 2].

First, the subjective need of Korea means a type of policy advocacy seeking recognition of its self-perceived status (status identity) and the role corresponding to the status (role identity) in the international society. As Korea has restlessly fostered its national material capabilities with

successful democratization, Korea came by the 1990s to have a firm identity status as a middle power, as evidenced by its annual Diplomatic White Papers. In the White Papers since the 1990s up to the present, Korea has proclaimed itself as a middle power in terms of its material position between great and small powers and its geographical and geopolitical location bridging the Northern continent and the Pacific Ocean. The White Papers have also identified Korea's role as building a multilateral security cooperation system in Northeast and East Asia at the regional level, and facilitating international activism at the global level that includes a bridging role between advanced and developing economies. Middle power diplomacy for Korea also carries a meaning of diplomatic diversification away from great-power-centered diplomacy.<sup>6)</sup>

[Table 2]  
Factors shaping a country's choice of public diplomacy

Factors	Content
A country's subjective need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for a particular type of policy advocacy depending upon a country's subjective perception of its identity (status and role identity in particular)</li> </ul>
Role expectation from the international society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to narrow the gap between a country's self-perception of its role and practice on one hand, and role expectations from the international society in order to establish a 'recognized identity'</li> </ul>
International reality/structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to construct and disseminate shared understandings and meanings of material reality and structure</li> </ul>

Second, although Korea's role at the global

level has been relatively well-performed as the expectations of the "generalized Others," or the international society at large, have corresponded to Korea's role identity and practice, the discrepancy between the expectations of the "significant Others" – the U.S., Japan, China, and North Korea, among others – and Korea's self-conceived role has constrained its bilateral relations with these countries, as well as its regional policy in Northeast Asia. Under the conservative administrations led by Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye, for example, the combination of hardline policy toward Pyongyang and intimate policy synchronization with Washington alienated Beijing, as demonstrated by the Seoul-Beijing friction over the Park administration's decision to deploy THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense). During the progressive Roh Moo-hyun administration, on the other hand, engagement policy toward Pyongyang coupled with the pursuit of relative autonomy in the Korea-U.S. alliance resulted in strained relations between Seoul and Washington. The discrepancy in Korea's role between the significant Others' expectations and Korea's self-conception has constrained bilateral relations with the surrounding countries, and its regional policies. With the intensifying U.S.-China rivalry, Korea's role position trapped in between the two great powers is likely to drive Seoul further into dilemmatic situations in the coming years. For Korea, therefore, it would be critical to narrow the gap between the significant Others and itself, which is intimately connected to the regional power structure.

The problem of the regional structure comes down to the issue of two contending interpretations, cognitions and meanings of the Northeast Asian material structure and reality, and the interactions between material and non-material cognitive structures as shown in [Figure 4].

Prevalent in Northeast Asia at the moment is a construction, or meaning-assignment, of material structure/reality as exclusionary geopolitical competition revolving around the Sino-American rivalry, which is expressed as discursive practices of exclusion, such as 'peace through security,' overshadowing inclusionary discourse such as 'security through peace' to generate shared meanings on peace and security

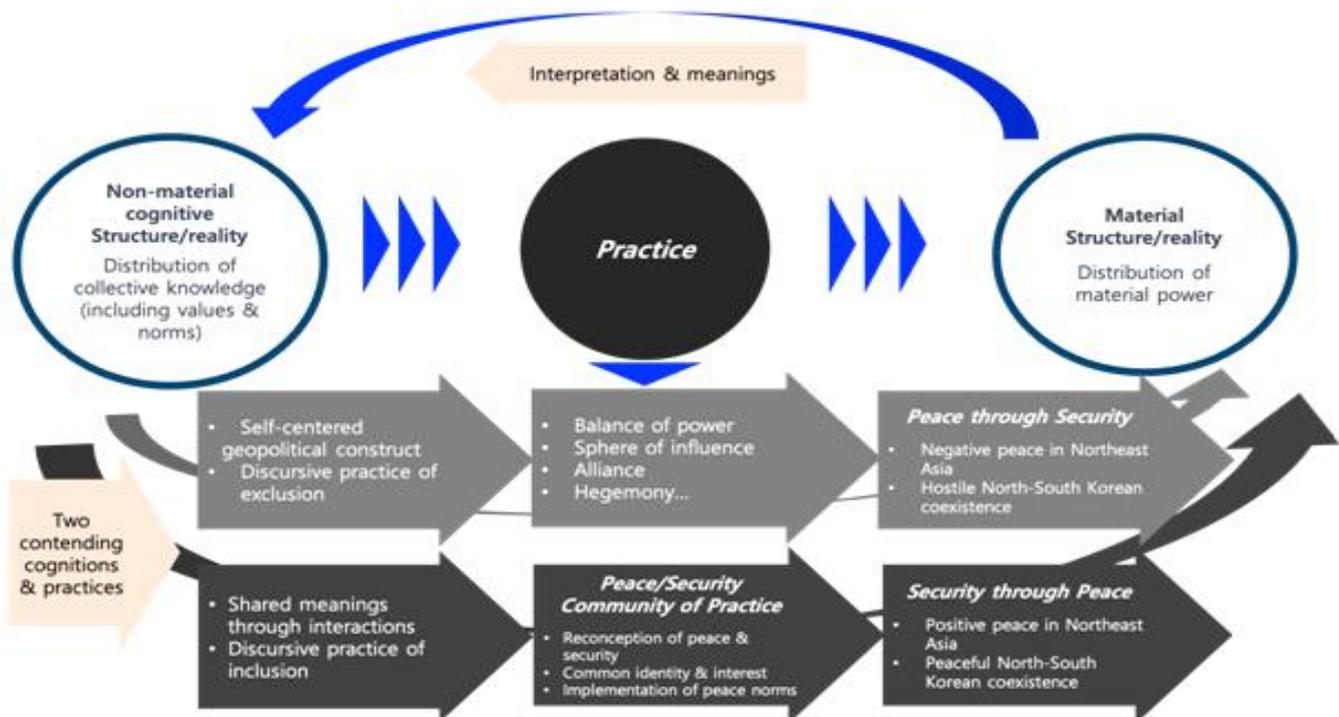
6)Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Diplomatic White Paper*, various years since 1990 up to 2019.

through cooperative interactions between the countries of the region. This exclusionary cognitive structure, bringing up practices of realist power politics that include the balance of power, competition for a sphere of influence, and alliance, falters Korea's efforts to gain momentum for peacemaking on the Korean Peninsula. It lies deeply within the currently stalled North Korea-U.S. negotiations, as well as strained inter-Korean relations.

practice' in Northeast Asia."

Peace herein has three meanings. First, peace refers to the situation where the probability of war is low enough for actors not to consider it a viable policy option. This situation is socially constructed when actors are engaged in breeding shared understandings and meanings of war and peace through interactions. In this sense, what is desirable for long-term peace and security is forging neither an alliance nor a collective security

[Figure 4] Interactions of material and non-material cognitive structures



In a longer horizon of peace on the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia, and considering the intensifying U.S.-China competition, it is imperative to make conscious efforts at altering the prevailing cognitive structure by reconstructing the current material reality and structure into a new social reality. And this is precisely what peace public diplomacy intends to achieve. Peace public diplomacy could be defined as “co-constitutive policy advocacy to establish, disseminate, internalize and institutionalize shared meanings of peace and security through discursive communicative public diplomacy programs that reflect the value and norm of positive peace,<sup>7)</sup> and eventually to realize a ‘peace-security community of

system, but the socio-cultural process of constructing conditions for promoting peace. Second, peace as a social construct functions as a norm as it constitutes actors’ identities, and regulates and evaluates their behavior. Third, peace gives an assurance that actors peacefully resolve conflicts and disputes without resorting to violence and war through the process of constructing a peace-security community of practice.

A Northeast Asian peace-security community of practice<sup>8)</sup> refers to a non-territorial cognitive, socially constructed space, which, once

7) Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London: Sage, 1996).

8) This concept derives from Adler’s ‘security community of practice.’ Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Adler, *Communitarian International Relations: The*

eventually realized in the Northeast Asian region, becomes a transnational region composed of sovereign states in which the members of the community maintain the reliable expectations that they peacefully resolve conflicts and disputes between them without resorting to violence and war.<sup>9)</sup> Practices here signify the realization of shared knowledge, including shared meanings and norms that constitutes a cognitive structure in the material world. What's crucial to the maintenance of a community is not a subjective sense of belonging, but a common identity constructed through intersubjective knowledge that includes values and norms and shared by the community members through the process of learning and internalization of the knowledge. In the community of practice, collective meanings emerge, discourse takes roots, identity is constructed, learning takes place, and new political agendas are generated. Seen from this perspective, peace is neither the 'absence of war' as many realists believe, nor ideal goals hardly attainable. It is rather the realization of the peace-security community of practice.

Peace diplomacy is an integrative notion that combines public diplomacy focusing on communicating peace discourse and practice with traditional diplomacy that fulfills the communicative discourse through concrete diplomatic roles. When diplomatic roles do not back up discursive and communicative practices, there should be a discrepancy between words and deeds, which will lead to a credibility problem of a country's foreign policy. The Northeast Asian peace-security community of practice should not be necessarily founded on such common essentialist elements as ethnicity, shared history, language, religion, and culture. It instead requires shared understandings and meanings of peace as a middle-of-the-road value and norm, common identity oriented towards particular issues (war, security, and peace), and great powers'

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*Epistemic Foundations of International Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

9) Some examples of peace-security community include Scandinavian countries, Southern Cone countries of Latin America, European Union, Europe and North America community, ASEAN, and the U.S and Canada.

commitment to peaceful conflict and dispute resolution. Also, it would be desirable for community members to have frequent communications, trade, travels, educational and cultural exchanges, common symbols, discourse, and narratives for a sustainable community.

## V. Epistemic Community for Peace and Security

First of all, for unswerving policy advocacy, it would be indispensable to formulate a consistent foreign policy identity<sup>10)</sup> founded on the values and norms embedded in Korea's national/state identity. Domestic consensus making is a prerequisite for Korea's foreign policy identity – namely, shared meanings on such important foreign policies as the Korea-U.S. alliance and North Korea policy, as well as fundamental foreign policy principles. But for a minimal domestic consensus, it would be almost impossible to steadily carry out policy advocacy.

At the international level, the role of a transnational epistemic community is crucial. An epistemic community refers to a network of experts and professionals engaged in generating intersubjective meanings on specific objects and issues. Its primary roles include formulation of theoretical premises, interpretations, shared meanings, norms and discourse on peace and security; dissemination of thus generated theories and discourse not only for domestic publics and political communities, but also for transnational realms; and eventually constructing common identities and interest on the issues of regional peace and security. A prime historical example is the role of an American, and later transnational, epistemic community on nuclear arms control in the 1960s, whose domestic and transnational works eventually led to the conclusion of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in 1972.

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10) Stefano Guzzini, "The Framework of Analysis: Geopolitics Meets Foreign Policy Identity Crisis," in Guzzini (ed.), *Return of Geopolitics in Europe? Social Mechanisms and Foreign Policy Identity Crisis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

A transnational epistemic community needs to be organized purposefully to propel multilateral approaches forward to end North Korea's nuclear ambitions, accelerate the peacebuilding process on the Korean Peninsula, and promote regional peace and security. The roles of the community should include conducting research on the new meanings of war, peace and security in this century; formulating multilateral approaches to those issues, discourse, and policy agendas that would include credit building measures (CBMs) among regional players; and disseminating research outcomes at both domestic and transnational levels. Currently, there are numerous bilateral and multilateral networks of experts and professionals in Northeast Asia. However, it is regrettable that most of them are struggling with a lack of capacity to nurture shared understandings and meanings on regional peace and security as they are functioning just as the venues for delivering a country's own views and positions without compromise, or recognizing the difference with others.

Under these circumstances, it is advised that Korea's peace public diplomacy should chart its path forward with the following sensible directions by: building transnational epistemic communities first; formulating and disseminating discourse based on such middle-of-the-road values and norms as positive peace, human security and Sustainable Development Goals against the current trends of the "blocization of values" between liberalism and counter-liberalism; devising and implementing co-constitutive multilateral public diplomacy programs that reflect those values and norms and, through which participants could socially learn and internalize shared meanings of peace and security; and building a coalition with both like-minded and like-situated states, international organizations and non-state actors to advocate and disseminate the middle-of-the-road norms and values, which eventually could be a cornerstone for shaping a new international normative order. Once Korea's peace public diplomacy succeeds in gaining due recognition from the international community, leading state and non-state actors on the global stage to empathize with its goals and efforts, and exerting influence on shaping a new international normative

order, it should eventually function as countervailing forces against a Hobbesian power politics. 

The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and are not to be construed as representing those of IFANS.

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