

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In answering this thesis' research question; "How does President Moon Jae In's Presidential Character explain his tendencies towards exercising successful public diplomacy?", this analysis has found evidences that concluded how President Moon's Presidential Character indeed has a strong impact in his decision-making process which led to his tendencies in resorting to public diplomacy in addressing national issues.

This research has dived deep into South Korea's public diplomacy under President Moon Jae In and elaborated on his tendencies in resorting to public diplomacy when addressing national issues. He invited Kim Jong Un to have North Korea collaborated with South Korea in hosting the Winter Olympics in 2018 by parading under one flag on the opening ceremony and by uniting both countries' women hockey team to compete together on the game. He also managed to hold a cultural concert on North Korean grounds, introducing South Korea's K-Pop as they presented one of their famous girl groups, allowing them to perform in front of North Korean officials. These efforts have helped President Moon to gain quite a friendly relationship with North Korea and earned him the chance to hold a face-to-face talk with Kim Jong Un, having him sign an agreement to denuclearise the Korean Peninsula.

The successful public diplomacy exercise was also seen in how President Moon handled South Korea's strained relationship with China in the beginning of his presidency. Xi Jinping's administration heavily sanctioned South Korea for installing a US-made defence system, the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD). President Moon then addressed the issue by holding a bilateral talk with Xi Jinping while also bringing along *Hallyu* envoys to the event. He neutralised the situation by adhering to China's demands of 'Three Nos' that demanded South Korea to stop further instalments of the THAAD, stop cooperation with the United States' defence system, and stop trilateral cooperation with the US and Japan. The talk also concluded with China lifting the sanctions imposed on South Korea's tourism and the boycott towards South Korean supermarket branches in China.

This positive image building has managed to grant South Korea a friendly relationship with the United States, reflected in how the United States brought President Moon to speak at the 2021 G7 summit. A good reflection of successful image-building by the Moon administration was also seen by Moon's success in establishing NSP+, cooperating with ASEAN to help development within the sectors of healthcare, education, culture, sustainable trade, and infrastructure development. The positive image of South Korea built by Moon Jae In has paved the way for South Korea to start a global leadership role, starting with G7 and Southeast Asia.

The analysis on chapter two shown just how keen President Moon was on exercising public diplomacy during his term. He resorted to it as a strong basis to develop a much positive image of South Korea internationally. Not

only was he actively exercising public diplomacy during his term, he gained fruitful results that deemed his public diplomacy as successful. His administration fulfilled what Mark Leonard described as the impact gained from a successful public diplomacy; gaining positive perception from foreign individuals, having foreign nationals appreciate the country's values, engaging them with the country's programmes, and influencing them to invest towards the country.

President Moon's extensive exercise of public diplomacy was a behaviour unique to his administration and is studied further in the third chapter by figuring out his Presidential Character to see how it explains his decisions.

The psychobiography approach revealed that he grew up with the traits of an advocate for peace and welfare. He was known by his schoolmates as someone who constantly helped the ones in need. He actively protested against Park Chung Hee's dictatorship back in his college days even though it got him expelled from law school and detained for being the frontman of said protests. He practiced law to become a human rights lawyer and protect people who were suppressed under the Chun Doo Hwan's dictatorship. Entering politics, he showed his beliefs in peace by dialogue for the first time as he helped Roh Moo Hyun's administration to hold South Korea's very first peaceful, face-to-face, bilateral talk with Kim Jong Il, North Korea's supreme leader at the time.

Such behaviour was continuously reflected once he entered the presidential office. Not only reflected in his foreign policy that is a series of public diplomacy exercise, domestically, he also showed his desire for a positive opinion towards him and his administration. He positioned himself on the middle ground when it comes to social issues. He stated his opinion regarding the LGBTQ+ community by saying that he opposes homosexuality but is also against discrimination on the basis of sexuality. With this, he gained favourable opinion from the Christian community that he himself is a part of and is very outspoken within the country, but he also got to stay true to his root of being an advocate for human rights, although South Koreans that are supporters of the LGBTQ+ community would beg to differ.

With the analysis on President Moon's character, style, world view, power situation, and climate of expectation in the third chapter of this thesis, it is concluded that he falls under the **passive-positive** typology of James Barber's Presidential Character. Barber described this typology as a president who seek validation in everything they do and aims to be agreeable by other people rather than to assert his own values and opinion in certain things.

With this, we can connect how Moon's Presidential Character explains his constant resort to public diplomacy during his term. His need to be agreeable by public and to gain positive opinion regarding him and his presidency has pushed him to keep on resorting to 'safe' measures in addressing issues that South Korea faced during his term. 'Safe' meaning that President Moon avoided direct aggression for preserving South Korea's

national interest and instead addressed issues by exerting measures that could enable a friendly, positive environment for accomplishing national interests.

Although this thesis has went through the intricates of Moon Jae In's personality and his tendencies in resorting to public diplomacy during his presidential term, it bears a weakness as it only perceives South Korea's foreign policy through its president's perception and how his personality plays a part in the formation. This thesis did not go through South Korea's foreign policy formation process as an institution, but rather see South Korea's public diplomacy as President Moon Jae In's differing factor to extract his personality and make sense of his tendencies to resort to public diplomacy.

But nevertheless, this thesis is hoped to contribute to the study of political psychology to understand how the personality of state leaders affects the state's formulation of foreign policy and thus, how it affects the states relationships with other states and its standing in the international arena. Furthermore, this thesis would fit to be a part of further researches regarding South Korean presidents, especially those who bears different values and ideologies from Moon Jae In, and see how it impacts South Korea's foreign policy.

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