

Constructing a Green Developmental State

*A Critical Discourse Analysis of Climate Politics in the
Republic of Korea*

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Master Thesis in Political Science
Institute for Political Science
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Spring 2021

Word count: 33 092

Abstract

Since the introduction of the Korean Green Growth Initiative in 2008, Korea has demonstrated excellence in announcing ambitious climate policies. However, the lack of result in combating climate change has been equally excellent. How can the Korean state continue to implement inadequate climate policies while at the same time proclaim that the country is headed towards a greener future? This thesis aims to investigate what enables the gap between official discourse and reality in climate politics in Korea. Drawing upon Normal Fairclough's three-step model, the analysis reveals how representations of climate change, Korea's national history and economic model enable a specific set of policies. Empirically, speeches held by the Korean President are explored in order to tease out the prevailing ideas in Korean climate politics. These ideas tie into two separate discourses: an economic and a national. Through the study of the discursive practice the analysis demonstrate how President Moon combines these two discourses with elements from green discourses in order to construct a green narrative of Korea. This narrative justifies a certain way of organizing Korean efforts to counter climate change. Given the assumption of a dialectic relationship between discursive and non-discursive elements, the thesis thus identifies how the constructed green narrative both constitutes and is constituted by the social practice.

The green narrative constitutes a frame for what are seen as the best solutions, what is possible to do, what is legitimate and what must be prioritized, hence it has implications for the broader social practice, such as concrete climate policies. However, the social practice is also constitutive on the narrative. The thesis demonstrates how structural legacies of the Korean developmental state construct a frame for what can be said and done within the social field of climate politics. The most vital structures are the Korean economic model which entails a 'growth first' policy, the tight links between the state and the chaebols, and the weak environmental movement. In this way existing industrial practices provide the basis for the construction of the green narrative, ensuring that this narrative corresponds with essential features of the Korean developmental state. Hence the paradox: the green narrative never fundamentally challenges the basis of a growth model that rests upon extensive use of fossil fuels, features that are yet to be challenged in public discourse. This thesis argues that the discursive and social practice together enable the growth model that contributed to the climate crisis to be adopted as the legitimate solution to the very problem it caused. Hence, the gap between discourse and reality is maintained.

Acknowledgments

Above all, I would like to thank my two excellent supervisors, Vladimir Tikhonov and Øivind Bratberg. Your belief in this project, academic guidance and never-ending optimism has been invaluable. I will be forever grateful for your encouraging words, constructive comments, patience, interesting discussions, and for everything you have taught me. What a journey – and what a team! And in my rather poor Korean: 세계 가르쳐 주신 모든 것에 감사드립니다.

My time at UiO would never have been the same without you, Malini. We will always have ‘de grønne sofaene’, and luckily the rest of our lives together as well. A huge thanks also to Hanna, Ingeborg, Julie, Mette, Sunniva and Axel for making my last two years at UiO unforgettable.

Without my family and friends, I would never had managed to finish this project. To my mom and dad, and my two sisters for always being there for me. Lastly, to Kari for always making me laugh, and for always sticking out with me. Without you there is no me.

Thanks also to Kari, Malini and dad for proofreading drafts.

The responsibility for any omissions, mistakes or misinterpretations is solely my own.

Oslo, 15 June 2021

Karin Ness Kjølstad

Abbreviations

CDA	Critical discourse analysis
EMP	Energy Master Plan
FMRRP	Four Major Rivers Restoration Project
GDP	Gross domestic product
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GG	Green growth
HCI	Heavy and chemical industries
IEA	International Energy Agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KGGI	Korean Green Growth Imitative
MITI	Ministry of International Trade and Industry (Japan)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
TPES	Total primary energy supply
UN	United Nations

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Empirical Puzzle

In 2008, the then President of the Republic of Korea (hereafter Korea), Lee Myung-bak, announced the Korean Green Growth Initiative (KGGI). In his address to the nation in August 2008, President Lee declared that Korea from now on would seek further economic growth and simultaneously respond to climate change through the notion of ‘Green Growth’ (GG). Based on the idea of a positive symbiosis between environment and economy, GG believes environmental protection and economic growth to be simultaneously achievable (Kim, 2016). Prior to the KGGI, climate change policies had been absent in Korean politics. Lee’s predecessors had been implementing environmental laws and regulations since the 1960s and 1970s, however, the year of 2008 marks a starting point for climate politics in Korea (Han, 2015; Kim & Thurbon, 2015).

Following the trajectory of the developmental state model, the Korean state draws its legitimacy from securing economic growth (Haddad & Harrell, 2020). The principle of ‘growth first’ was introduced during the early industrialization in 1960s and 1970s, and the overarching goal of economic growth has ever since served as the backbone of the Korean state (Cho Han, 2000; Yang, 2006). As a consequence of Korea’s development trajectory, continuous economic growth is dependent on the export of goods manufactured by a fossil fuel-based and energy demanding industry. The industrial sector accounts for 55% of the total final energy consumption, which is the highest among countries in the International Energy Agency (IEA) (IEA, 2020b). Furthermore, the share of energy generated from renewable energy was in 2018 only around 4%, which is the lowest for any country in the IEA. Korea’s ‘brown’ growth model has secured the country astonishing growth rates. In the year between 1960 and 2000 the gross domestic (GDP) grew with an average 7,9% per year (Lee, 2016, p. 72). However, several cases in the early 2000s demonstrated Korea’s vulnerability against fluctuations in the global oil prices (Kim & Thurbon, 2015). Furthermore, the last decades the Korean economy has shown declining growth rates (World Bank, 2021). Thus, to secure future economic growth a new growth model was required. Against this backdrop President Lee announced the KGGI.

The KGGI quickly caught attention in the international community. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations (UN) praised Korea’s effort to tackle climate change and internationally Korea was given the role as the

leading nation on GG (Jones & Yoo, 2011). Korea earned praise for its swift deployment, ambitious and systematic strategies, and for the amount invested in the strategy (Kim & Thurbon, 2015). Since 2008, GG has served as the guiding notion for Korea's climate change policies. However, while the idea of simultaneous economic growth and environmental protection serve as an alluring rhetoric, it proved difficult to put into practice. Both the economy and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have continued to grow. In the years between 2000-2017 GHG emissions grew at an annual rate of 2%. In 2017, which marked the peak year for emissions, Korea was ranked the 7th largest emitter in the world (Lee & Woo, 2020; Smith & Cha, 2020; Yonhap, 2019). Hence, the KGGI have earned Korea international praise, however contributed minimally to combating climate change.

President Lee was highly criticized during his term and his GG strategy has been perceived as solely being a growth strategy for Korea's big businesses (Kim & Thurbon, 2015; Lee, 2020; Mathews, 2012). However, the notion of GG continues to serve as the guiding principle for Korean climate policies. In July 2020, the current President, Moon Jae-in, announced the ambitious 'Korean New Deal'. The Korean New Deal was presented as the overarching developing strategy for Korea's next 100 years (MOEF, 2020). As a part of the Korean New Deal, the 'Green New Deal' serves as the guiding document for climate policies. Together with the 2050 Carbon Neutrality Strategy, released in December 2020, they represent Korea's response to climate change (MOEF, 2020; Republic of Korea, 2020). Demonstrating noteworthy environmental ambitions, the Moon administration continues to proclaim Korea's leading role in fighting climate change. However, critiques have questioned how 'green' and effective this Green New Deal really is (Choi, 2020; Macdonald, 2020). Furthermore, others argue that history reminds us to be skeptical of Korea's ambitious climate politics. The Green New Deal has been argued to simply be an echo of Lee's KGGI (Lee, 2020; Watts, 2020). Historically, Korea has demonstrated excellence in announcing ambitious climate policies, however, the lack of result in combating climate change has been equally excellent.

The mismatch between language and action in Korean climate politics is what motivated this master thesis. Hence, I set out to reveal how it is possible that a given solution to climate change continue to be legitimized even though it has shown to be an inadequate climate change response. In order to do so the following research question will be investigated:

What enables the gap between discourse and reality in contemporary climate politics in Korea?

Given the empirical puzzle I deem Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the appropriate method.

1.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourses are important to study in the context of climate change as it is through discourses we define, interpret and address climate issues (Dryzek, 2005, p. 11). The language we use contribute to produce and reproduce the social relations we live with and in (Skrede, 2017, p. 11). Thus, to understand how our social world is created it is crucial that we analyze language. This thesis employs Fairclough's CDA. The objective of this method is to map out the link between language and social practice. CDA combines social constructionism with structuralism and post-structuralism. Consequently, CDA assumes that all knowledge we have of the world is constructed, there exists more than one representation of reality. Our knowledge is historically and culturally dependent, hence one must always be critical towards knowledge that is taken for granted (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, pp. 4–5). Furthermore, influenced by structuralism and post-structuralism CDA claims our access to the real world goes through language. We create representations with language. Hence, meaning can appropriately be captured by analyzing language (Bratberg, 2017, p. 39; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 8). Along these lines, CDA set out to understand how certain '[...] representations of reality are created, maintained and challenged' (Bratberg, 2017, p. 39)

We act based on how we understand the world around us. Meaning is the basis for action and practice (Bratberg, 2017, p. 37). The cognitive and normative frames which guide our actions are maintained, changed and constructed through language (Mathisen, 1997). In this thesis the social consequences of discourses are of particular interest. In order to reveal what enables the gap between discourse and reality in Korean climate politics it is important to understand what the consequences of the discourses are. How can discourses within climate politics give way to policies that are not climate friendly? To understand the relation between discursive and non-discursive elements I deem Fairclough's CDA highly adequate. As Fairclough (1995, pp. 132–133) himself points out, CDA should aim to investigate the relation between discursive practices (texts) and the wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes. There exists a dialectic relation between discourse and social structures. It is crucial to understand this relation within climate politics in Korea in order to answer the empirical puzzle.

Within the framework of Fairclough's' CDA I will in this thesis analyze several speeches held by the Korean President. These speeches all have climate change as the overarching theme. I choose to focus on speeches held after the presentation of the Korean New Deal in July 2020. The Korean New Deal was presented as Korea's new development strategy in a post-COVID 19 world. This also entails Korea's road to a greener future through the Green New Deal. Together with the 2050 Carbon Neutrality Strategy, they represent Korea's response to climate change. In order to tease out the ideas underlying both these documents, I choose to analyze speeches held between July 2020 and February 2021. The speeches are meant to convey the ideas in the policy documents to the public in a strongly persuasive way. Thus, I regard these texts as the adequate empirical material in order to identify the prevailing ideas in Korean climate politics.

This thesis will be able to reveal how the Korean state can continue to implement inadequate climate policies while at the same time proclaim that Korea is headed towards a greener future. Furthermore, this analysis can shed light on the general importance of language and meaning-making in climate change communication. The gap between discourse and reality in climate politics is not unique for Korea, rather, this is arguably common in climate politics (Burke-Kennedy, 2021; Pielke, 2019). In order to critical investigate this gap one should include the study of discourses. Fløttum & Gjerstad (2017, p. 1) argue that the narratives '[...] used to communicate climate change knowledge shape opinions and preferences, and analyzing such narratives can help explain how they are constructed and how they influence us on personal and societal scales'. Thus, the study of climate-change narratives can reveal what enables the gap between discourse and reality. In this thesis I set out to understand how discourses are drawn upon in order to create a green narrative of Korea. Moreover, this thesis will map out the societal consequences this narrative has. Through CDA, Fairclough argues that the goal is to accomplish 'critical language awareness'. The objective is to make people more aware of the frames which both restricts and creates opportunities for language use, thus enlighten people on how to resist these discourses (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 88). If people are aware of the discursive practice, the social structures and power relation in which they are a part of, it also enables them to break out of these frames. This thesis aims to contribute to such critical language awareness.

1.3 Structure

In this introductory chapter I have briefly outlined the background for the empirical puzzle and presented the research question for this thesis. Furthermore, I have given a short introduction to the method employed in this paper. In chapter 2 a broader elaboration of both Korea's development trajectory and climate politics will be given. The emphasis will be on bringing forward the political context of the country and how the developmental state model has created particular conditions for the interface between economic and climate policy that we observe today. An extensive background is deemed appropriate in this thesis as the social structures and relations of the Korean state are vital in understanding the empirical puzzle.

Chapter 3 presents Fairclough's CDA which serves as the analytical framework for the analysis. This chapter consists of two parts. The first elaborates on the philosophical premises for CDA. The second part presents CDA as a methodological approach. Furthermore, this part demonstrates how Fairclough's model, comprising text, discursive practice and social practice, is adapted to the empirical analysis of Korean climate politics.

Chapter 4 and 5 constitute the analysis. Chapter 4 analyzes the two first dimensions of Fairclough's model, text and discursive practice. In order to tease out the prevailing ideas in the speeches this chapter employs a textual analysis. The last part of the chapter analyzes the discursive practice in demonstrating how the ideas tie into two separate discourses that the President draws upon in order to construct a green narrative.

In chapter 5 the last dimension, social practice, is analyzed. Here the two discourses are fully addressed. How the President draws on the two discourses and several green discourses to create a green narrative is illustrated in the first part of this chapter. The rest of the chapter analyzes how this narrative both shapes and is shaped by the social structures and relations of the Korean state. This chapter will draw heavily on chapter 2 and secondary literature. Chapter 6 summarizes the thesis and its main findings.

2. Background

Korea's historical trajectory has created particular conditions for the interface between economic and climate policy that we observe today. It is important to get a grip of some of these aspects of Korean history to be able to delve into contemporary climate politics. This knowledge will enable a greater understanding of what enables the gap between discourse and reality in Korean climate politics. Thus, this chapter elaborates on some aspects of Korean history that I deem important given the empirical puzzle.

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part will give a brief outline of Korea's economic development from the 1960s. This part will touch upon the most important elements of the developmental state model and the arrival of neoliberalism in the 1990s. A discussion on the consequences of Korea's developmental trajectory will end this first part. The second part of the chapter will focus solely on climate politics. The emphasis will be on the years after 2008, when the KGGI was introduced. Contemporary climate politics will be briefly outlined, before the last section will summarize the chapter.

2.1 The Rise of the 'Miracle on the Han River'

In 2018, Korea was ranked the eleventh largest economy in the world measured in GDP (Lim, 2020). The country is known for its cultural and technological influence which to a large degree is thanks to the spike in interest for Korean culture (Hallyu) and companies such as Samsung and LG. Korea is the seventh largest exporting country and one of the top importing countries in the world (Szmigiera, 2021). Contemporary Korea is a strong middle power with growing influence inside the global order. Behind this success lies the story of one of the greatest economic transformations in world history.

In the aftermath of the Korean war (1950-1953), Korea was left war-torn with a GDP per capita of only \$79 in 1960 (Howe, 2020). However, in the following decades Korea transformed into an economic powerhouse. This meteoric rise, led by rapid industrialization, is referred to as 'the Miracle on the Han River' (Han, 2015; Howe, 2020). Together with Taiwan, the two countries are the only ones in the world which have managed to achieve a 5 percent annual growth rate consistently over five decades (Breen, 2017, p. 198). Following a development trajectory similar to that of Japan – Korea together with Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong made up the group of the 'Four Asian Tigers' (Suh & Kwon, 2014). This group has been subject to a large scholarly debate regarding the reason for their economic success. Beyond the diverging

positions in that debate, there is a relatively broad consensus on the developmental state model being an important explanatory factor for these countries' economic success (Amsden, 1989; Johnson, 1982). In Korea, this specific development trajectory is perceived as essential to the country's phenomenal transition from a poor, agricultural nation into an industrialized, leading economy in just a couple of decades (Amsden, 1989; Kim, 2020; Song, 2020).

2.1.1 The Korean Developmental State: The Park Chung-hee Era

The developmental state model was first coined by Chalmers Johnson and initially used to explain the economic success of post-war Japan (Johnson, 1982). In his study of the Japanese economic bureaucracy, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Johnson investigated motivations and effects of state intervention. He showed how the industrial policy formulated and executed by the MITI played an active and strategic role in Japan's extraordinary economic growth post-1945 (Um, Lim & Hwang, 2014). The developmental state model refers to a development paradigm which emphasizes the state's interventionist role to bolster what is essentially a market economy and enable export-oriented industries to flourish. The state's legitimacy is based primarily on the ability to accelerate material growth, thus – at least, at certain later point – improving its citizens' consumption standards (Haddad & Harrell, 2020). Given Korea's development trajectory the country is often characterized as a developmental state. This development started with Park Chung-hee becoming President in 1961 (Gemici, 2013).

Park Chung-hee came to power through a military coup in 1961, throwing the democratic elected government aside. President Park clearly drew inspiration from the state regulated capitalism of Japan. The Park Chung-hee era is characterized by an authoritarian political environment, rapid structural changes, remarkable economic performance, and a heavy industrial deepening (Amsden, 1989; Koo, 1993; Yang, 2006). A vital part of the Korean developmental state was the logic behind its 'strategic industrial policy', emphasizing export-oriented industrialization (Uttam, 2019). By imitating the Japanese interventionist state, the Park administration created an industrial class of family-owned business conglomerates (Uttam, 2019). At first the governmental assistance was given to all exporting companies, however, at the end of the 1960s, the Park regime strategically selected heavy and chemical industries (HCI) to receive state assistance. This included industries such as steel, machinery, shipbuilding, electronics, petrochemical and nonferrous metal industries (Koo, 1993; Suh & Kwon, 2014, p. 681). In 1973 this selected state assistance was driven up to full scale and the 'Big Push' was

launched. The government chose large domestic firms as the target for the HCI drive. It was argued that these firms were able to lead the rapid economic development to come. Thus, during the 1970s these large businesses were transformed into major conglomerates known as 'chaebols' (Kim, 2017). The government took responsibility for all risks, and the chaebols received unlimited support (Suh & Kwon, 2014). At the same time the state succeeded in keeping the global market window open so they could utilize the competitive market pressure to develop the conglomerates into global competitive businesses. Through the alliance with the chaebols, the Korean state was able to influence the conglomerates to focus on achieving export targets (Uttam, 2019). The state created a market logic that neatly picked the 'winners' of these conglomerates. It skillfully chose those chaebols that became the strongest in the global market. This is a market logic that has been credited as an important part of the country's rise from a poor, agrarian state to one of the largest economies in the world (Amsden, 1989).

It is widely agreed that the rapid industrialization and economic success of Korea was due to a strong and autonomous state intervention, hence defining Korea as a developmental state. The developmental state trajectory requires both institutional capacity (a strong state) and political space (Kim & Thurbon, 2015). Both of which existed in Korea in the 1960s and 1970s. The country was characterized by a centralized bureaucracy and a modern class structure still under construction. Big capitalists were emerging, the industrial working class was still fledging, and old landowners had disappeared with the land reform in the late 1940s (Song, 2020). In such a society in flux, the military regime of Park Chung-hee managed to consolidate its power in the 1960s (Amsden, 1989, p. 52). These conditions in the 1960s and 1970s enabled the state to have full autonomy and authority over the economic development. Furthermore, the Park regime took great advantage of the low wages as competitive advantage (Amsden, 1989). At the end of the 1970s, however, economic crisis and discontent with the regime lead to the assassination of Park in 1979 (Song, 2020). In the aftermath the political environment changed drastically. With the democratization movement in the 1980s and the arrival of neoliberal reforms in the 1990s there has been debate over the Korean state's weakened position. These changes have raised the question of whether the strong Korean developmental state is withering and transforming into a neoliberal state instead (Suh & Kwon, 2014)

2.1.2 The Post-developmental State? Democratization and Globalization

In the aftermath of President Park's death anti-Yushin demonstrations spread across the country.¹ After employing Martial Law on the national level on 17th of May, the government sent military troops to the city of Kwangju on 18th of May. Demonstrators and civilians were brutally killed, and the demonstrations were eventually suppressed, leaving between 800 and 2000 dead (Song, 2020, p. 220). Shortly after the oppression of the Kwangju Uprising, Chun Doo-hwan, a general who had seized control over the military after Park's death in 1979, was elected President under the Yushin charter.

The Kwangju Uprising gave rise to nationwide struggles for democracy during the 1980, cumulating in the 'June Resistance' in 1987 (Song, 2020). Throughout the 1980s anti-governmental movements grew stronger and radical student groups emerged. The tension exploded with the death of a university student, leading to nationwide anti-governmental demonstrations in June 1987. The June Resistance peaked on June 26th when the number of people participating reached 1.8 million (Song, 2020, p. 224). The Chun government eventually gave in to the demand of the democratic movement and accepted constitutional reform. However, military elites continued to hold control until Kim Young-sam was elected President in 1992 ending the military rule in Korea (Song, 2020).

With the election of President Kim, 'globalization' was introduced in Korea. Under the term 'segyewha' the Kim government introduced economic liberalization based on the promise that it would depart from the old developmental state model (Um et al., 2014). Globalization was understood as a mean to free the economy from heavy state intervention, letting the economy survive on free-market principles, competition, and business autonomy. Several authors have argued that this liberalization contributed to the Asian financial crisis in 1997/1998 (Song, 2020, p. 229). Others, however, argue that the developmental state contributed to the economic crisis (Uttam, 2019). The focus of this thesis is not the reason for the economic crisis, but rather what effect it had on the developmental state, and especially on the capacity of the Korean state. There is consensus around the fact that the Asian financial crisis did create changes to the

¹ The Yushin system was established by President Park in 1972. It was an authoritarian system that recognized the Presidential power as a supreme leader, leaving all political in the hands of the President. See Lee, K. R. (1990). Bureaucratic-mobilizational regime: The Yushin system in South Korea, 1972-1979. *Asian Perspective*, 14(2), 195-230. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42703949>

political and economic environment in Korea. However, there has been scholarly debate whether the neoliberal reforms introduced at the end of the 1990s have dismantled the Korean developmental state or if the state remains strong and autonomous.

Neoliberalism is understood as a system emphasizing the market over the state. Accentuating free trade and privatization it understands capitalism to be the most effective economic system. Neoliberalism values individualism, freedom over equality and constrains the role of government to maintaining infrastructure and keeping internal order (Harvey, 2005). Since its emergence in the 1980s neoliberalism has been the hegemonic norm of global organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The Asian financial crisis in Korea is often called the IMF crisis, as the country had to turn to IMF for emergency loans. Until this point the developmental state had been the leading model for the state, however, with the IMF-crisis, some of the core principals of the developmental state had to give way to neoliberal economic reforms meant to generate economic recovery in the country (Hong, 2020; Koo, 2016). In order to receive the financial bailout package, Korea accepted the IMF's mandated neoliberal economic reforms.

For Korea the mandatory economic reforms meant financial deregulation, privatizing the public sector, labor reforms and an attempt of the dismantling of the state-governed economy in favor of market governance. However, compared to many other countries, the state remained relatively strong in Korea (Kalinowski, 2008). The neoliberal reforms were left for the state to implement. To accommodate the domestic situation, the tempo of the market reforms was regulated by the Korean government. Furthermore, the state also held control over the structural reforms in the financial and corporate sector, thus limiting the role of private initiative and market forces (Park, 2011). In the aftermaths of the crisis, governments have continued to support domestic firms, and implement comprehensive industrial policies, showcasing a continued strong and interventionistic state (Kalinowski, 2008). Contrary to what the neoliberal reforms intended; the Korean state retained a measure of control over the financial system. Neoliberal reforms did not dismantle the developmental state completely.

The Korean state has continued to play a vital role in the country's economy. However, it is argued that the 1997 financial crisis did weaken the Korean state to some extent. First of all, the structural reforms led to an increasing share of foreign ownership in the Korean stock market, which again have limited the capacity of the Korean state to govern its national economic policy

(Park, 2011). Furthermore, the chaebols that survived the 1997 crisis grew even stronger in the aftermaths of it. While the structural reforms at first contributed to reducing the chaebols, leading conglomerates like Samsung Electronics and Hyundai established themselves as global leading firms in the years after the economic crisis. Hence, as a result of neoliberal reforms the relative power of the chaebols grew against the weakened power of the state (You, 2021). In this context, ‘President Roh Moo-hyun in 2005 famously stated that the real power is no longer possessed by the state but by the market, or the chaebol’(You, 2021, p. 86).

Despite the weakened power of the state and the increased influence of the chaebols in post-1997 crisis Korea, several authors argue that this does not mean a dismantling of the developmental state (Hundt, 2014; Kim, 2020; Park, 2011; Uttam, 2019; You, 2021). The Korean state has continued to play a vital role in the country’s economic policy, both with the state guided structural reforms after the 1997 crisis, and the state intervention in the aftermaths of the global financial crisis in 2008. Thus, contrary to conventional wisdom, the legacy from the Park regime has continued to prevail as the most important policy framework for the Korean state.

Korea’s developmental trajectory has made immense impacts on the structures of the state. In this thesis the effect this trajectory has had on the capacity of the Korean state is of particular interest. What kind of state is left behind, and, furthermore, what defines the window of opportunity with regards to the policy-making process? To understand what enables the gap between discourse and reality in the Korean climate politics there are some consequences of Korea’s development that I deem particularly important.

2.2 Economic Growth at What Cost?

There is no question that Korea’s sensational economic development has created a better and prosperous life for many. A large portion of the post-war generation that grew up with next to nothing, have been able to watch their children grow into a wealthy life, with opportunities for a great education, steady income, and greater freedom. However, the cost behind this leap has been high. The praise for the Miracle on the Han River overshadows the simultaneously grave consequences it created. Park Chung-hee’s political achievements are by outsiders admired; however, this period was also characterized by an authoritarian regime, dissident movements, student demonstrations, and grass-roots labor protests (Koo, 1993, p. 3; Yang, 2006). Furthermore, this development trajectory has caused severe political and environmental

consequences. Here I will touch upon three consequences I deem important for the context of this thesis: 1) the cohesive ties between the state and the chaebols, 2) the brown growth model, and 3) the importance of energy security.

2.2.1 The Cohesive Ties Between the State and the Chaebols

Along with the rapid industrialization an unequal social structure rose in Korea. Society was restructured in a pyramidal form where the top was constituted of, among others, the political regime and executives from major firms (Yang, 2006). The HCI drive contributed greatly to this social structure, as the strategy of this development project was that of an asymmetrical distribution. It encouraged concentration of capital by nurturing the chaebols whilst maintaining cheap labor (Yang, 2006). This created a proximity between the state and big businesses. This ‘developmental alliance’ has been a vital contributor to the decades of tremendous economic growth (Kim, 2017).

The characteristics of the developmental alliance has, however, changed greatly over the years. While the Korean state initially had the upper hand, this has gradually tilted in favor of the business side as the chaebols have grown into global firms. In the 1960s and 1970s the chaebols were dependent on the state support, and the strong developmental state enjoyed great autonomy and authority (Kim, 2017; You, 2021). In exchange for subsidies, private firms had to fulfill performance standards imposed by the government. The Park regime handpicked the chaebols for the HCI drive; thus, the chaebols was dependent on delivering to the state. Firms demonstrating excellent results in R&D, exports or in creating new products were rewarded with authorization to further expand. In this way, the chaebols were able to consolidate power by delivering on the imposed performance measures (Amsden, 1989, p. 14). The handpicked chaebols contributed greatly to the economic growth and industrial deepening in the 1970s and helped maintain Korea’s annual growth rate at 7,9% despite two oil shocks in the 1970s (Kim, 2017). However, what started out as a state dominated relationship slowly turned into a relation of equal dependence between state and businesses.

As the chaebols continued to grow, the power dynamics, too, tilted in favor of the chaebols. These huge conglomerates are no longer dependent on state support. The chaebols have slowly become a more dominant player and have strengthened their position vis-à-vis the state. The great economic concentration in these firms alongside the weakening of the developmental state, especially after the democratic transition of 1987, have changed the balance of power

completely. The Korean state is now to a great extent dependent on the chaebols to sustain its economic growth (You, 2021). Collusive ties and corruption have characterized the Korean state since the 1960s (Kang, 2002). However, as the power balance tilted in favor of the chaebols, this arguably changed the character of the collusive ties as well (Amsden, 1989; You, 2021). While it used to be the chaebols that had to solicit politicians' benevolence, it is now politicians who have to solicit chaebol 'sponsorships'.

The growing economic power have increased the chaebols ability to influence the policy-making process. The 'chaebols participate as main actors in establishing economic policies [...]' (Kim, 2020, p. 27). This is problematic no matter what political issues one is interested in: inequality, economic growth, democracy or, as in this case climate change policy. The current administration financed the US\$1 billion to bail out of Doosan Heavy Industry Company without any demands that the company now had to invest in greener industries (Lee, 2020). Thus, one can question if there exists capacity and will within the Korean government to exert pressure on the chaebols to 'go green'. Given the shifted power balance between the state and the chaebols one could argue that there is a potential for 'double speak'. The Korean government could maintain a green discourse which in reality functions as a mask for business-as-usual.

2.2.2 The Brown Growth Model

Two of the defining features of Korea's current growth model is that of an extreme dependence on the export of manufactured goods, and a heavy reliance on high energy-intensive industries. Both of which are a result of the rapid industrialization initiated under the Park regime. Under this economic development the regime chose a handful of industries that would create the backbone of the Korean economy. While, these industries have become the backbone of the Korean economy, they have simultaneously contributed greatly to the rising GHG emissions (Republic of Korea, 2020; Sonnenschein & Mundaca, 2016). In order to combat climate change Korea is in desperate need of cutting emissions drastically in the industrial sector.

In addition to the dependence on fossil fuels, this economic model is also based on the export of manufactured products from these industries. Under the Park regime, exports were not a choice for the private firms, rather the pursuit of export-oriented growth was mandated by the government (Amsden, 1989, p. 69). The percentage of exports of the growth national product rose drastically from less than 5% in the 1950s to around 35% in the 1980s. Given the relatively

underdeveloped and poor domestic market Korea became extremely dependent on foreign trade (Amsden, 1989, p. 70). This dependence is just as evident today, with exports accounting for approximately 39% of the GDP in 2019 (Global Economy, 2021).

Korea's brown growth model turned the once war-torn country into an economic powerhouse. However, the environmental consequences of this model were for decades overlooked. With the rapid industrialization the Park administration introduced the 'growth first' policy (Yang, 2006). Continuous growth was the only goal. However, today the consequences of this model are no longer only lingering in the background. In addition, the brown growth model is reaching its growth limit. The growth rate of the economy is now measured to be only around 2-3% yearly, a great contrast to the annual growth rate of 7-9% between 1960-2010 (World Bank, 2021). Thus, there is consensus around the need for a new growth model. However, given the dependence on the industrial sector the situation for the Korean state is widely different from the 1960s. There now exists a strong economic elite in the country, which is no longer subordinate to state's demands. The state is weakened in its autonomy and authority over the country's economic and political development. Thus, while there is consensus that Korea is in need of a new growth model, the question is how 'green' different actors prefer this model to be.

2.2.3 The Importance of Energy Security

The last consequence of the developmental state trajectory that I deem important to touch upon is that of energy security. With the rapid industrialization and economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s followed an increasing demand for energy. Given Korea's lack of natural resources, apart from a small coal mining industry, the dependence on import of fossil fuels grew extensively alongside industrialization. During the first 20 years the electricity demand increased at annual average rate of 19% (Lee, Jung, Lee, 2019). Since then Korea's energy policy has been driven by energy security considerations. Korea is one of the top five largest importers of natural liquefied gas, coal and petroleum liquids in the world in 2019 (EIA, 2020). Of the primary energy consumption in the country nearly 85% is derived from fossil fuels, and 97% of the country's energy sources are imported (Kalinowski, 2021; Kim & Thurbon, 2015). Further, the country's economic success is to a great extent grounded in an energy intensive industry, with the exports of electronics, semiconductors, petrochemicals, shipbuilding, and automobiles being a backbone in the economy. Thus, to maintain a steady economic growth,

Korea needs to fulfill the industry's energy demand, making energy security an economic issue as well.

The dependence on importing natural resources has revealed how vulnerable Korea is to volatility in the global energy market. The development of nuclear power has lowered the country's external vulnerability, however, several incidents during the early 2000s revealed this vulnerability. During the early 2000s emerging economies (among them neighboring China), the Iraqi war, and the 2008 financial crisis created a tremendous spike in the global oil price (Kim & Thurbon, 2015). These incidents demonstrated that the dependence on imported fossil fuels is no longer only a bump in the road for Korea, rather it is a serious threat to economic growth. Hence, the belief that brown growth could meet Korea's development concerns lost its persuasive power (Kim & Thurbon, 2015). This arguably increased the interest for the notion of GG in Korea.

Korea's development trajectory since the 1960s has created the unique characteristics of the contemporary Korean state. While the Korean state is still regarded as strong state, with great authority, it significantly differs from the state in the early 1960s. With the growth of both an economic elite, the arrival of democratization, and globalization the weakened position of the Korean state is evident. However, does this mean that the Korean developmental state lacks the capacity to combat climate change and transition into a greener future? The Korean state still plays an active role, and with innovation and technological advancement, which is the country's strengths, playing a key role in the green transition, a green future seems fairly possible for Korea. At least it is rhetorically possible.

2.3 Climate Politics

In 2008, Korea imported 97% of its energy according to the first Framework Plan on National Energy (2008-2030) (Kim, 2016). At this point Korea was the fifth largest importer of oil and the second largest importer of coal in the world (Kim & Thurbon, 2015). Furthermore, the recent spikes in the oil price during the first years of the 2000s revealed Korea's vulnerability to volatility in the international energy market. Against this backdrop the newly elected President Lee Myung-bak announced the KGGI on the 15th of August 2008 (Blaxekjær, 2016). Previous governments had been implementing environmental laws since the 1960s and 1970s, and the country also embraced 'sustainable development' as a leading principle in its

environmental policy from the 1990s (Han, 2015; Lee & Woo, 2020). These earlier policy initiatives emphasized environmental challenges, such as local pollution, water contamination and deforestation. However, prior to the KGGI, climate change policies had been absent in Korea (Kim & Thurbon, 2015).

2.3.1 The Korean Green Growth Initiative (KGGI)

During his campaign and after inauguration President Lee pledged to stabilize and fix the economy with his new development paradigm. Lee Myung-bak was a former businessman turned conservative politician. He had previously been a chairman of Hyundai Engineering and Construction, a centerpiece in the Hyundai empire, thus having strong ties to the industrial and private sector in the country (Hahm & Choi, 2009). Through, green jobs, green technology and green energy he promised to create a new growth engine (Ha & Byrne, 2019). President Lee proclaimed that Korea from now on would be a nation that copes with climate change while at the same time seek further economic growth (Kim, 2016). GG serves as the building block of the KGGI. The notion of GG entails that coping with climate change and economic growth do not need to be two competing goals. Rather the idea is that of a positive symbiosis between environment and economy, where the two walk hand in hand into a world of simultaneous environmental protection and economic growth (Kim, 2016). The strategy accumulated into the Framework Act on Low Carbon, Green Growth in 2010. The notion of GG have since guided climate politics in Korea (Republic of Korea, 2020).

2.3.2 Developmental Environmentalism?

Under Lee's presidency (2008-2013) GG was the top priority on the political agenda and it permeated the whole system of political rhetoric by attaining a strategic role in steering all national programs in a GG direction. Several authors point to the fact that Korea's climate policies are a continuation of the politics of the developmental state (Han, 2015; Kalinowski, 2008; Kim, 2016; Kim & Thurbon, 2015). Leading two of them to term the climate politics introduced in 2008 as 'developmental environmentalism' (Kim, 2016; Kim & Thurbon, 2015). Developmental environmentalism can be understood as an 'aggregate of the following ideas: pursuit of a new Green growth engine, a close nexus between the state bureaucracy and manufacturing businesses, and the exclusion of NGOs [non-governmental organization] from policymaking' (Kim, 2016, p. 456). Arguably, the policy features of GG do not radically depart from the ideas of the developmental state.

With the introduction of GG, the overarching goal was still economic growth, similar to the ‘growth first’ policy introduced under the Park regime. Moreover, this green notion maintained the strong corporatist link between the state and the chaebols. The green industrial policies initiated through GG ‘can be seen as an extension of these strategies, institutions and networks [tight direct links between state and businesses] but within the context of green industry promotion’ (Kalinowski, 2021, p. 9). Like in the developmental state model, labor and environmental groups were completely disregarded in the articulation of the climate change policy (Kim, 2016). The KGGI was introduced as GG strategy, where environmentalism was modified to fit the context of the Korean developmental state model. This entails a climate change response that, paradoxically, prioritizes growth over climate, maintains the strong links between the state and the chaebols, and leaves little room for the participation of environmental groups. However, compared to the Korean state in the 1960s and 1970s, the authority of the state was weaker amidst the strengthened power of the chaebols in 2008. The Four Major River Restoration Project (FMRRP) initiated by Lee is a great example of developmental environmentalism.

The Four Major Rivers Restoration Project

Based on the idea of GG, the Lee administration introduced the FMRRP in November 2008. President Lee argued that his project, involving massive construction of dams and weirs on four major rivers, would generate several hundred thousand jobs and long-time revenue. Furthermore, the project was proclaimed inevitable due to Korea’s increasing water shortages and recent floods and droughts. (Han, 2015, p. 816). The project, however, created huge domestic turmoil (Normile, 2010). Finished in 2011, the FMRRP have not yet produced the outcomes it was supposed to. Firstly, it has not been close to environmentally friendly as it deteriorated the water quality and destroyed several rivers. In addition, the project did neither generate the promised amount of jobs or revenue. Only some 10,000 workers were hired during the project, practically all jobs were non-permanent and low-paid, and 10 major firms accounted for 50% of the project budget, among them Hyundai. The top six firms were later accused of price rigging (Han, 2015, p. 822). Lastly, the policy processes in which this project came about was characterized by a top-down and non-participatory approach. Local governments, civil society and non-state actors were completely left out of the process. Even though several actors outside the Lee administration expressed concerns over the potential negative environmental impacts of the project, they were not consulted and there existed little to no feedback mechanisms (Han, 2015).

While President Lee's climate policy was met with enthusiasm within Korea in 2008, the mood had changed drastically by the end of his term. In 2013 President Lee Myung-bak was depicted as an elitist who had introduced economic policies which favored Korea's big businesses over ordinary Koreans (Kim & Thurbon, 2015). Furthermore, the disastrous FMRRP had created domestic turmoil nurturing the perception that Lee Myung-bak's relation to private businesses was too close. In the years after his presidency allegations of corruption surrounded former President Lee, and in October 2018 he was convicted on corruption charges and sentenced to 15 years in prison. The court ruled that Lee had received bribes from Korea's largest companies, among them Samsung, making him the country's fourth ex-leader who have been convicted of corruption. In February 2020, two years were added to this sentence as an appeals court found out that the bribery Lee had taken was larger (Choe, 2020; Haas, 2018). However, this has not meant the end of GG policies.

2.4 Contemporary Korea

Since the announcement of the KGGI in 2008 this notion has served as the guiding policy principle in Korean climate politics. Even though the policies of the KGGI have shown incapable of combating climate change GG continue to serve as the guiding principle for climate policies (Kalinowski, 2021; Kim, 2017). GHG emissions have increased steadily with an annual rate of 2% from 2000 to 2017, and in 2017 emissions reach a record high (Lee & Woo, 2020; Yonhap, 2019). Korea is one of the countries within the OECD with the fastest-growing GHG emissions, and was in 2017 the seventh largest emitter of GHG in the world (Kalinowski, 2021; Lee & Woo, 2020). The industrial sector remains highly carbon dependent, and Korea continues to be heavily dependent on the imports of energy. Korea imports 85% of its total primary energy supply (TPES), and around 40% of its electricity comes from coal (IEA, 2020b). In 2018, renewables accounted for only 4% of the generated electricity in the country. This is the lowest share among all the member countries of the IEA (IEA, 2020b). Moreover, Korea's international image as a leading green nation has started to deteriorate. In 2016, Climate Action Tracker (an international NGO) listed Korea as a 'climate villain' (Lee, 2020). In the context of increasing GHG emissions, failed green policies and a crumbling green reputation Moon Jae-in was elected President in 2017. In 2020, his administration launched both an ambitious Green New Deal and a carbon neutrality strategy, raising the hopes of a green Korea.

2.4.1 The Current Administration

The current President, Moon Jae-in, was elected to office in May 2017, after his predecessor Park Geun-hye was removed from her position after severe corruption allegations. Following months-long street protests, President Park became the first democratically elected President to be successfully impeached (BBC, 2018).² She was in January 2021 sentenced to 20 years in jail (Kwon & Hollingsworth, 2021).

President Moon Jae-in won by a landslide and became the first liberal President to hold office in a decade. In his campaign he pledged to generate more jobs, expand welfare, and make the Korean society safer and more equal for women.³ The ‘feminist’ President also promised to phase out nuclear power, enhance the government’s role in tackling air pollution, and overhaul the disastrous FMRRP initiated by Lee Myung-bak (Korea Herald, 2017). Further, President in aimed to raise the share of renewables to 20% of the energy mix in 2030, marking a clear break with the previous government’s target of 11% renewables in 2030 (Park & Koo, 2018). The goal of increasing the share of renewable energy was followed by the announcement of the ‘Renewable Energy 3020 Implementation Plan’ in December 2017 (IEA, 2020a). Furthermore, the ‘Third Energy Master Plan (EMP)’ which was announced in June 2019 followed Moon’s promise of phasing out nuclear power and the increased focus towards renewable energy sources (IEA, 2020b). Thus, creating a hope that this was the time Korea would really embark on the journey towards a greener future. Expectations which only grew bigger when the Moon administration announced the ‘Korean New Deal’ in July 2020 (MOEF, 2020).

Truly Green? A New Deal and Carbon Neutrality

The Korea New Deal was announced as a post-COVID-19 recovery plan. The deal consists of two parts: 1) a Digital New Deal; and 2) a Green New Deal. With the inclusion of the Green New Deal this forthcoming recovery are meant to ‘decarbonize’ the economy and society (Lee & Woo, 2020). With the Green New Deal the government pledges to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy and to embark on the journey of making Korea a zero-emissions society (MOEF, 2020). This is the first time in the country’s history of climate politics that a government pledges to reach a zero-emissions society, and the Green New Deal was also the first of its kind in Asia (Lee & Woo, 2020). The Green New Deal was in October 2020 followed

² President Roh Moo-hyun was attempted impeached in 2004, but was eventually acquitted in court (<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20161208000727>).

³ The World Economic Forum ranked Korea as the 108th out of 153 countries in its 2020 Gender Gap Index (<https://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2020/>)

up by President Moon's pledge that Korea will be carbon neutral by 2050 (McCurry, 2020). The 2050 Carbon Neutrality Strategy was released in December 2020 (Republic of Korea, 2020).

The Green New Deal has caught attention internationally, however, received a great deal of criticism from activists, innovative firms and experts on energy, ecology and engineering sectors, questioning how 'green' this new deal really is. One of the major criticisms is that the deal is ineffective (Ko, 2020). While one of the main focus areas in the deal is infrastructure, it has been argued that the reduction in GHG emissions from the increased production of electric vehicles will be insignificant (Ko, 2020). Furthermore, several academics have argued that many of the new business fields are in fact neither innovative or new, but rather replicate the policies of previous governments of Lee Myung-bak and Park Geun-hye (Ko, 2020). Like the previous plans, experts argue that the deal lacks real structural changes needed in social and economic sectors to successfully realize a low-carbon transition. Environmental non-governmental organizations, Trade Unions and The Green Party have argued the Green New Deal to simply be an update of Lee Myung-bak's 'Low Carbon, Green Growth' strategy (Lee, 2020). Thus, arguing that this plan is just another investment plan and stimulus package for the major conglomerates.

2.5 Summary

Korea's astonishing economic transformation brought wealth and hope to a people who had lost everything in the Korean War. However, alongside this development Korea's carbon footprint has expanded at an equally astounding rate. The rapid industrialization in the 1960s and 1970s initiated by Park Chung-hee created an export-led economic miracle dependent on fossil fuels. The development trajectory of the Park regime created a strong state with autonomy and authority. With strong interventionist policies the state created a group of major conglomerates that contributed heavily to the economic growth which the Korean economy in turn became heavily dependent on. While strong links between the state and businesses have been an evident part of the Korea state since early industrialization, the characteristics of this alliance have changed over the years. This power balance has now tilted in favor of the chaebols. With the neoliberal reforms introduced in the aftermaths of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the state was additionally weakened against the chaebols. This proximity between state and

business is still very apparent in Korean politics, clearly showcased by the fact that both of President Moon's successors are in jail on corruptions and bribery charges involving chaebols.

Compared to the 1960s the current Korean state is limited in its capacity to execute autonomy and authority over climate policies. The current government continue to support polluting industries and show no signs of demanding any real climate regulations on the chaebols. The climate policies since 2008 has shown to be no more than a rhetorical play trying to improve the global reputation of the Korean brand, hence the gap between discourse and reality continue to live on.

3. Critical Discourse Analysis

To be able to understand what enables the gap between discourse and reality in Korean climate politics I deem critical discourse analysis the appropriate method. Discourse analysis is by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002, p. 4) defined as an integrated whole: theory and method are united, one cannot separate one from the other. That is, discourse analysis includes both the philosophical (ontological and epistemological) premises regarding the role of language and methodological approaches with specific techniques for conducting the analysis. This chapter consequently consists of two parts. First, I delve into the theoretical underpinnings on which CDA is based. In the second part I present the methodological tools that will be used in the analysis.

3.1 Politics: A World of Discourses

In this paper I understand discourse as '[...] a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)' (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 1). Through our language we construct representations of reality; the concept of discourse seeks to capture and classify this meaning-making. According to Dunn and Neumann (2016, p. 2), discourses help us understand the world and how we can act upon this understanding. Discourses are thus structures that create cognitive and normative grounds for our actions (Bratberg, 2017, p. 36). By contributing to the construction of our reality, discourse contribute to the meaning-making on which we act. Discourse analysis is an interpretive analysis. While textual analysis plays a vital role, this type of analysis also attempts to go beyond the text in order to reveal the cognitive structures that give text meaning, hence, enables action (Bratberg, 2017, p. 38). To be able to explain action we need to understand the process of meaning-making, and as meaning is created through language, we have to analyze language to understand actions. Therefore, 'discourse analysis set out to shed light on how specific representations of the world are created, maintained and challenged' (Bratberg, 2017, p. 39).⁴

In order to understand political actors and their actions one fruitful approach is to analyze the language they use. Neumann (1999, p. 179) argues that 'if we know these prerequisites and conditions we get a more in-depth understanding of specific political actions'. In this sense it is important to understand the narratives that political actors communicate. Narratives could be seen as the stories or representations that actors convey to justify their actions. Such narratives

⁴ Own translation

can include elements from several discourses, provided that they do not explicitly contradict each other. Discourse analysis can help us reveal what legitimate discourses political actors can draw on to construct a given narrative. In politics there is always a continuous contest between different narratives. The outcome of this battle is policies that are based on a certain representation of the world. The debate around different policies is then a battle for which representation should be understood as the adequate one.

Given that narratives are constructed through language, and these narratives arguably guide the way we understand the world and act upon this understanding, discourse analysis is an adequate approach when analyzing climate politics. Discourse analysis can highlight how climate politics is defined and how discourses contribute to define the political agenda (Mathisen, 1997). This method can help us understand the underlying cognitive and normative reasoning that guide climate policies. How is climate change perceived, and based on this understanding, what are defined as the most adequate policies to solve it? One way to answer these questions is to analyze how political actors talk about and understand climate change. In order to understand what enables the gap between discourse and reality in contemporary climate politics in Korea one must first understand how climate change is perceived, and which discursive elements the President draws on in order to construct a narrative within climate politics. How is this narrative constructed in order to appear as the only legitimate one, and how does it survive? Through analyzing language, discourse analysis can address exactly these types of question. Furthermore, a CDA enables an understanding of the broader social consequences of these discursive elements. By conducting a CDA this thesis aims to answer how a given climate narrative can survive, when this narrative serves to justify climate policies that do not address climate change in an adequate way.

3.2 Critical Discourse Analysis as Theory

To be able to conduct a CDA it is important to understand the philosophical grounding on which this method stands. Within the broader term of CDA numerous approaches exist, Fairclough's CDA being one of them. Hence, several elements unite these approaches. In this section I will discuss the underlying philosophical grounding of the CDA and what premises this creates for the forthcoming analysis.

3.2.1 Philosophical Grounding

Jørgensen & Phillips (2002, pp. 60–64) identify several characteristics that unite these approaches. First and foremost, discursive practices are important parts of social practices as they justify and legitimize collective forms of action. Secondly, discourse is understood as both constituting and constituted. Discursive practices are in a dialectic relation with other social practices, meaning that discourses both create and reproduce social practices while at the same time being constituted – that is, shaped and affected – by social practices. Thus, language is both an action in which one can influence the world and an action which is placed in a social and historical context. Fourthly, discourses are ideological, meaning that the focus of the analysis is both on discursive practices and on how these discourses help the interests of certain social groups. CDA wishes to reveal how discourses maintain the social world and unequal power relations. Hence, CDA is critical research. The aim is to reveal how discursive practice contributes to maintaining social injustice and unequal power relations. Thus, it is not merely a descriptive project, but rather ‘[...] normative as it identifies and criticizes problematic societal relations in its discursive milieu and proposes possible solutions to tackle these problems’ (Skrede, 2017, p. 23).

The extensive focus on the meaning of language in understanding the world around us, CDA takes from structuralism and poststructuralism. These traditions argue that our access to the real, material world always goes through the language we use (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 17). Language works as a social system that constitutes the reality in which we live. Through language our understanding of the world is created. Furthermore, through language this understanding is legitimized and naturalized. In this sense, language is fundamentally malleable. The object of discourse analysis is then to map out how we make sense of the world through language and how these representations legitimize patterns of action. While structuralism argued that the structures within language are unchangeable, poststructuralism understood these structures as something that change with both time and context. Through the use of language, we create, reproduce, and change these structures. Hence, words can have different meanings, and through political communication there is a continuous battle over meaning-making (Remøy, 2014, p. 25).

With its interpretive approach the critical discourse analysis is rooted in social constructionism. This tradition is manifold and diverse, there is not one description that unites them all. However, there are several premises that are shared by all social constructionist approaches, among them

CDA (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 5). First and foremost, social constructionism argues that the world is subjective, thus we need to interpret it in order to understand it. These approaches distinguish themselves from positivism and argues that objective observations are unrealistic (Bratberg, 2017, p. 19). Our understanding of the world is both historically and culturally specific. Hence, one has to be critical to the knowledge that is presented. There exists no objective truth as our reality is a product of discourses (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 5). Lastly, our knowledge is created through social action, and our social construction of knowledge guide our actions, thus have social consequences. Within a given representation of the world, some actions are legitimized, and others are not. Different representations will lead to different social actions. Hence, how we perceive the world around us have social consequences. This thesis set out to understand how a given narrative of climate change is constructed and legitimized in Korean climate politics.

3.2.2 Premises for the Analysis

The theoretical framework which CDA rests upon creates certain premises for the analysis.

First and foremost, it '[...] is based upon the assumption that language is an irreducible part of the social life [...]' (Fairclough, 2003, p. 2). Meaning-making can be appropriately captured by studying language. Furthermore, there exists a link between how we understand the world around us and how we act upon this understanding. Our knowledge of the world has social implications. Language has social, political, cognitive, moral and material consequence, hence, it will influence the window of opportunity within political fields (Fairclough, 2003, p. 14). Finally, within a specific domain of society there will always be alternative representations that complement or challenge each other; the relationship or hierarchy between these are of particular interest for the analysis (Fairclough, 2003).

Fairclough's approach is rooted in linguistics; hence, textual analysis plays a vital role in this approach. However, part of Fairclough's project is to combine texts and social structures, thus there is a need to combine the textual analysis with social research (Fairclough, 2003, p. 16). Through a detailed textual analysis, a macro orientated analysis of social practice and an interpretive micro orientated analysis from sociology Fairclough makes it possible to examine the interlinkages between texts and social practices in society (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 78). Fairclough's CDA is a synthesis between critical linguistics and critical sociology. The latter tradition wishes to reveal the mechanisms that sustain social injustice and suggest

strategies that could counter and rectify it. In such, CDA is to a great extent a critical project (Fairclough, 2003; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

A vital part of Fairclough's CDA is the argument that the world consists of both discursive and non-discursive elements. Moreover, there exists a dialectic relationship between these elements. While discourses contribute to construct the social structures around us, these structures are also influencing which discourses that are understood to be legitimate within a specific area. This assumption testifies to the critical element of CDA, to which neo-Marxist theory has been a vital inspiration. While CDA would not subscribe to the Marxist dictum that the reigning ideas in a society are determined by the rulers (and their control of the means of the production), Fairclough encourages awareness of which interests and structures stand to gain from a specific representation of the world. In this way discourses are not only constitutive, but are also constituted (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 65). Discourse is an essential part of social practice. It '[...] both reproduces and changes knowledges, identities and social relations including power relations, and at the same time is also shaped by social practices and structures' (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 65). It is crucial to explore this dialectic relation when conducting a CDA (Fairclough, 1995, p. 131).

In this analysis the objective of interests is the meaning-making around climate change in Korea. How climate change is perceived will have consequences for what is understood to be the best solution, what is possible to do, what is legitimate and what must be prioritized. The key in answering the empirical puzzle is to tease out how this specific way of understanding climate change is constituted. How this representation is constituted have consequences for which concrete climate policies that will be implemented. Simultaneously, the social practice of climate politics – political and economic institutions, actors, and policies – work as constitutive factors back on the discourses and the meaning-making process.

3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis as Method: Fairclough's CDA

With a solid account of the philosophical grounding of CDA, I will in the following present the methodological approach of the empirical analysis. In the first section Fairclough's three-dimensional model will be presented, before I show how this model will be used to study

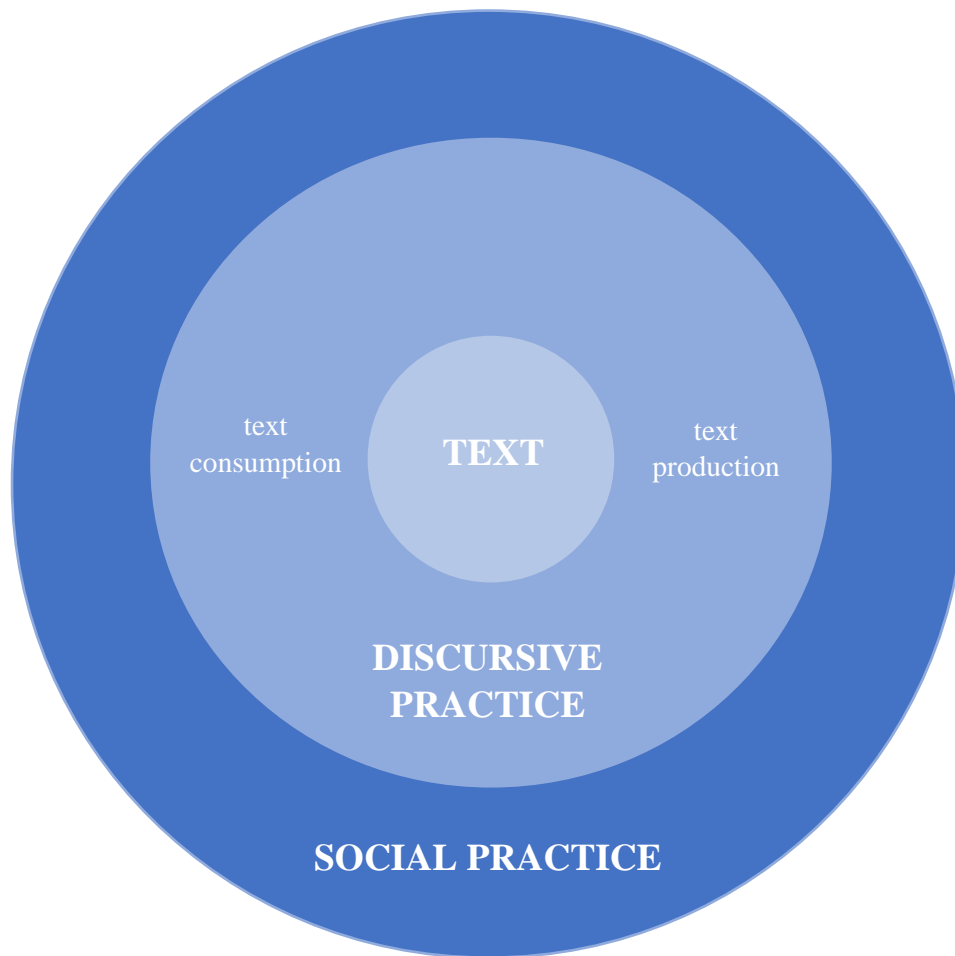
Korean climate politics. The last section of this chapter will discuss some methodological challenges with CDA.

3.3.1 The Three-Dimensional Model

When analyzing a discourse, one should focus on two things: 1) the communicative event and 2) the order of discourses (Fairclough, 1995, p. 135). The communicative event represents a case of language use, for example a speech, a news article, or a policy document. The order of discourse entails all the different discourse types that exists within a social institution or a social field. It is a system, however not in a structuralist sense, as it both shapes and is shaped by creative use of language (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, pp. 71–72). The order of discourse delimits what can be said within a given social field, however, users of language can challenge this notion by incorporating discourses form other orders of discourse.

Every use of language is defined as a communicative event, which in turn consists of three dimensions. 1) text, 2) discursive practice and 3) social practice. Figure 1 is an illustration of the relationship between the three dimensions. This model is meant as an analytical framework for empirical research. When conducting a critical discourse analysis all three dimensions need to be included. By analyzing texts as social events, one is interested in grasping the interactive process of meaning-making. Understanding this process will enable us to reveal what social consequences texts have (Fairclough, 2003, p. 11).

Figure 1: Fairclough's three-dimensional model



While the three dimensions are visualized as separated spheres in the model, they are in reality closely interlinked. The model sets out to understand how meaning is constructed in text, how texts then appeal to discourse (and therefore must be understood in light of discourse) and how discourses enable or naturalize social practices. Finally, the critical element also invites discussions on why the practices (policies) may be unjust or normatively regrettable (Bratberg, 2017; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). In table 1 the characteristics and analytical focus of the three dimensions are explained.

Table 1: Explanation of the three-dimensional model⁵

	Description	Analytical focus
Text	Is a speech, writing, visual image, or a combination of these. Texts are analyzed through linguistic tools provided by CDA.	The text's linguistic features. E.g. vocabulary, grammar, syntax and sentence coherence.
Discursive practice	Is the practice through which texts are produced and consumed (such as a doctor-patient consultation or a job interview).	How authors of texts draw on already existing genres and discourses to produce a text. How receivers apply discourses and genres in their consumption and interpretation of texts.
Social practice	All social activity of which discursive practice is only a part. Social practice includes both discursive and non-discursive practice	How does text through discursive practice influence the wider social practice? Must be combined with other social and cultural theory.

The objective of this paper is to understand how controversial climate policies attuned to business interests can continue to be understood as legitimate, when they have yet to prove to be a liable solution to combat climate change. To answer the empirical puzzle, this paper sets out to understand how a given narrative of climate change is constituted. Furthermore, I wish to reveal what makes this narrative capable of maintaining its grasp over the way in which the interface between climate and industrial policy is approached in Korea. By using the three-dimensional model of Fairclough, I aim to understand how linguistic elements are used to constitute this narrative. Moreover, in light of the discursive practice the analysis seek to understand how this discursive practice constitutes and are constituted by the social practice. In the next section the concrete methodological approach for this thesis will be outlined.

3.4 A Critical Discourse Analysis of Korean Climate Politics

I have now discussed the theoretical and methodological implications of CDA. By utilizing Fairclough's three-dimensional model, this paper aims to answer what enables the gap between the climate discourse and reality in Korea. It is worth mentioning that Fairclough comes from a linguistic background, however, the linguistic elements are not the main objective of this

⁵ Adapted from Hess Johnsen (2014, p. 27) based on Jørgensen & Phillips (2002, pp. 66–71)

paper. Rather, given the political scientific puzzle, discursive elements and their implications for the broader social practice will be emphasized in this thesis. In the following section elements important for the forthcoming analysis will be discussed. In the last part of the chapter the concrete analytical tools are listed.

3.4.1 The Social Field of Korean Climate Politics

A social institution can be understood as a ‘speech community’, in which there exists certain speech events, participants, scenes and settings, and own norms for how these are combined. Thus, Fairclough (1995, p. 38), suggests that you can see the social institutions both as constraining and facilitating the social action of its members. Fairclough (1995, p. 38) writes: ‘it provides them with a frame for action, without which they could not act, but it thereby constrains them to act within that frame’. Furthermore, this institutional frame includes a set of ideological representations: a certain way of speaking which is based upon a certain way of seeing things. This is similar to the order of discourses. Within a given social field there exists a certain number of discourses that are understood as legitimate. The order of discourse restrains what can be said within this social field.

In this thesis I understand Korean climate politics as a social field where such a ‘speech community’ exists. Hence, in the analysis I aim to reveal what defines this speech community. What legitimate discourses can President Moon draw on in order to create his green narrative? I deem it important to reveal what defines this speech community to answer what enables the gap between discourse and reality in Korean climate politics. In what ways are President Moon constrained by the social structures around him, and how does he create an identity that works back on these structures? With the analysis I aim to map out how the institutional frame of Korean climate politics both constrain and facilitate its actors.

3.4.2 Assumptions and Ideology

The ideological effects of texts are of major concern for CDA. Hence, an important question is: do texts sustain or challenge ideologies? Fairclough (2003, p. 9) defines ideologies as ‘[...] representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation’. According to Fairclough, texts are ideological when they contribute to the production or reproduction of these power relations. This understanding of ideology can be said to be ‘critical’, which distinguishes it from the descriptive understanding of ideology, seeing ideology as positions,

attitudes, beliefs of social groups without reference to power or domination of these groups (Fairclough, 2003, p. 9).

In order to reveal the ideological effects of texts, Fairclough (2003, p. 58) argues that assumed meanings are of particular significance. Assumed meanings are meanings that within a community are shared and taken as given. They are understood as natural and create a 'common ground' within the community. No social interaction and communication is conceivable without some 'common ground' (Fairclough, 2003, p. 55). The capacity to define the content of this 'common ground' is closely linked to the capacity to exercise social power, domination, and hegemony. Fairclough distinguishes between three types of assumptions: existential (what exists), propositional (what is or can be), and value (what is good or desirable) (Fairclough, 2003, p. 55). In this thesis, value assumptions are seen as the most essential. Of particular interest is what Fairclough (2003, p. 173) refers to as 'assumed values'. These are values that are deeper embedded in the text. These values are communicated as objective truths and naturalized through language. They are often 'triggered' by something threatening them or that they should be 'helped'. To disclose if the speeches have ideological effects, assumed values will be search for in the empirical analysis.

To arrive at the conclusion that texts are ideologic work, however, one must consider the causal effect they have on social life. Moreover, one must ask if they contribute to sustain or change power relations (Fairclough, 2003, p. 9). Thus, while the textual analysis can reveal assumed values, one must study how these values effect the social practice in order to conclude whether or not they are ideological. By analyzing these values within the social practice, one will be able to reveal if they contribute to maintain or change the power relations within the social field in question.

The ideological practice of discourse argued by Fairclough is rooted in a neo-Marxist tradition as CDA believes that the discursive practice contributes to the creation of dominance patterns where one group is subordinated to another (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 63). The production of meaning plays a vital role in maintaining the social order. In this sense, neo-liberalism and new capitalism has been of particular interest for Fairclough. How these notions have been justified and naturalized through language, and thus, how they enable a certain social practice have been of great importance to Fairclough (Fairclough, 2000, 2003). In this thesis a similar take on the language of the developmental state and its legacies will be important to emphasize.

The developmental state could have similar ideological connotations; thus, it could possibly serve to justify certain policies and certain interests.

3.4.3 Agency and Social Change

In the forthcoming analysis several speeches held by the Korean President will be analyzed. Thus, President Moon becomes the explicit political actor in this analysis. However, it is important to note that actors should not be understood as individuals. It is not President Moon as an individual that is of interest in this analysis, but rather the collective identity the President contribute to create through the process of meaning-making (Mathisen, 1997, p. 6). It is important to analyze which identities are evoked at the expense of others. CDA can be used to enlighten us on how political actors establish identities and how politics is defined and interpreted. Furthermore, it can be used to understand why and how ‘[...] some issues are organized into politics while others are organized out’ (Mathisen, 1997, p. 6)

According to CDA President Moon can be understood as both a master and a slave of language (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 17). Here CDA differs from Foucault, and Laclau and Mouffe, in that the subject is freer. CDA do not understand the subject to be fully determined by the structures around it. By constructing narratives, actors can use language as a resource to tie together discourses in new and innovative ways. In CDA people are understood to be important actors for social and cultural change as they have an active role in reproduction and transformation of discourses (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 17). At the same time, however, the subject is limited by the structures in which it exists. Discourses restrain the subject’s actions. Given the dialectic relation between discursive and non-discursive elements, the social structures around the subject contributes to define which discourses are seen as legitimate within a given social field.

3.4.4 Speeches as Empirical Material

Neumann (2001, pp. 51–52) argues that the empirical material in a discourse analysis should be texts that are canonical, thus texts that are an important part of the discourse in question. This can be speeches, interviews, or political platforms. In order to answer the empirical puzzle of this thesis I have chosen to analyze speeches held by the President of Korea. These speeches all have climate change as the overarching theme. Furthermore, they are all held in the aftermath of the presentation of the Korean New Deal. The Korean New Deal was presented as the overarching developing strategy for Korea for the next 100 years (MOEF, 2020). As a part of

the Korean New Deal, the Green New Deal serve as the guiding document for climate policies. Together with the 2050 Carbon Neutrality Strategy they represent Korea's response to climate change.

The speeches all make explicit references to both the Green New Deal and the 2050 Carbon Neutrality Strategy. I argue that the speeches represent these strategies in an adequate way. The Korean New Deal and the 2050 Carbon Neutrality Strategy, and other important climate policy documents, such as the 3020 Implementation plan and the Third EMP, were all read alongside the speeches, however for the in-depth analysis I chose to focus solely on the speeches for several reasons. Arguably, the speeches capture the 'whole story' of Korean climate politics in a more comprehensive manner. The ideas and assumptions on which the climate policies are built are to a greater extent communicated in the speeches. Here the whole narrative and identity of Korea as a green nation is constructed. These texts are supposed to succinctly convey the main ideas beyond the policies to a large non-specialist audience in a strongly persuasive way. Through the speeches, the President address the Korean public and other political actors. These texts are means in trying to convince the Korean people that this administration's climate policies are the adequate solution to climate change. While the policy documents can enable an understanding of what elements the climate discourse is built upon, I argue that the speeches are important to understand *how* these discursive elements are used, and thus *how* a green narrative is constructed. Given the empirical puzzle, it is vital to understand how the narrative is constructed. Thus, the speeches were chosen for the in-depth analysis.

In order to understand how the narrative within climate politics is constructed I will through the textual analysis tease out the prevailing ideas and assumptions in the texts. To do this I will utilize several analytical tools.

Analytical Tools for Identifying Discourses

In this thesis I set out to reveal what enables the gap between discourse and reality in Korean climate politics. Hence, the first step of the analysis is to identify the discourses President Moon draws upon in order to construct a green narrative. When this process of meaning-making is mapped out, I will be able to reveal what broader implications this has for the social practice within climate politics. The analytical tools are constructed by Jevne (2013, pp. 40–41) and Hoff (2016, pp. 33–35). They are based on Fairclough's work (Fairclough, 2003, pp. 191–194).

1) Identify main theme

What are the main themes of the texts?

2) Identify perspectives

Different discourses create different representations of the world. How are elements in our world perceived and understood?

3) Study intertextuality and interdiscursivity

Intertextuality relates to how the texts communicate with other texts, and interdiscursivity concerns if there is a mixing of discourses. Which discourses are drawn upon and how are they textured together? This is of great importance in this thesis.

4) Identify assumptions in the text

What value assumptions are made? Are these a case of ideological work?

5) Evaluate values in the text

To what values do the authors commit themselves? This is closely interlinked with value assumptions.

6) Orientation to difference

Is there a focus on openness and accept, dialog, or difference and conflict? Is there a battle over meaning and power? Do the texts attempt to overcome difference with a focus on solidarity and a common ground?

3.5 Methodological Challenges

While I deem discourse analysis the appropriate method to answer the empirical puzzle, several methodological challenges follow this choice. First, discourse analysis is built on the social constructive premises that all knowledge of the world is constructed and that all discourses are representation of the world (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 22). There exists not only one representation of the world. If all truths are produced by discourse, how can we claim our findings as researchers to be true? One can argue that the ‘truth’ derived from any research is just another representation of the world. Furthermore, as a researcher you are also part of a given representation. This decides both what you as a researcher choose to examine and what you see during your research. This brings us to the question of objectivity. Fairclough (2003, p. 14) writes: ‘textual analysis is also inevitably selective: in any analysis, we choose to ask certain questions about social events and texts, and not other possible questions’.

Purely philosophically, these problems remain unsolvable (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 22). That does not mean that the results from discourse analysis should be deemed useless. Rather it means that the analysis needs to be truly transparent. It requires theoretical consistency and that you openly discuss your position towards the discourse in question. There are tools to use as researcher to be able to validate your own research. First and foremost, validity should be understood as the validity of research in its broadest terms. It should not be limited to the criteria's of causation and having a clear population (Bratberg, 2017, pp. 62–63). Rather, the researcher must give the reader a clear understanding of what documents are being analyzed and the analytical tools that are being used in this analysis. There should be a clear outline of how the texts are read, and in order to conduct a credible and transparent analysis the researcher should use an extensive amount of quotes or paragraphs from the texts in order to document and exemplify for the reader (Bratberg, 2017, p. 63)

Based on an interpretive grounding one can question if discourse analysis is suitable in explaining causations. If one understands causation in a strict and positivistic sense, with quantified effects etc., the discourse analysis falls short. However, the objective of the discourse analysis is not to study causal effect and consequences in this strict sense. Rather it is a study of how we construct, maintain and challenge the dominant institutions and perspective around us (Bratberg, 2017, p. 58). In this way the discourse analysis is well equipped to account for how and why certain practices are sustained or changed over time. Through a discourse analysis one can ask two questions in order to say something about causation: 1) where does the discourse come from, and how does it sustain its hegemonic position? and 2) what does this discourse lead to (Bratberg, 2017, pp. 58–59)? Through a discourse analysis one can reveal consequences and implications of a given discourse on the broader social sphere. To map out the interlinkages between language and action entails to identify causal effects, as the social and political practice are effected by the dominant discourse (Bratberg, 2017, pp. 58–59). In this thesis these two questions are asked in order to answer the empirical puzzle. How the dominant green narrative of Korea is constructed and sustained will be answered through the in-depth textual analysis and a discussion on the discursive practice. In the analysis of social practice there will be an extensive discussion on the consequences of this dominant narrative. Through a discourse analysis this thesis aims to explain what enables the gap between discourse and reality in Korean climate politics.

In this chapter CDA as both theory and method has been outlined. In chapters 4 and 5 the analysis will follow. Chapter 4 will analyze the first two dimensions of Fairclough's model (text and discursive practice), while chapter 5 will examine the dialectic relationship between the discursive and social practice.

4. Empirical Analysis

The subject of interest for this thesis is to understand what enables the gap between discourse and reality Korean climate politics. In this chapter the first two dimensions of Fairclough's model will be explored: text and discursive practice. The documents I have deemed important will in the following be analyzed in accordance to these two dimensions. My objective has not been to capture all linguistic and rhetoric elements; thus, I have not conducted a linguistical in depth-study. Moreover, the use of translated documents would have made such an analysis difficult. However, I set out to show how the Korean President draws on discursive elements to create a green narrative of Korea. The aim is to understand how this narrative is constructed, how it relates to Korea's success story, and how this story now is revised by the challenge of climate change. Thus, the objective is to bring to the surface how economic growth and the green transition is mobilized as parallel aims. While this chapter focus solely on the texts and their discursive elements, the next chapter will analyze the consequences for the broader social practice.

4.1 Texts

The empirical analysis is based upon the texts that I have deemed important to answer the empirical puzzle. As mentioned in the former chapter, the analysis of text enables an understanding of the relationship between discourse and society (Skrede, 2017, p. 22). In texts one can analyze how actors both interpret and shape the environment in which they operate – in our case, how the issue of climate change is understood and incorporated in existing policy frameworks by political leaders in Korea. In such sense-making, language is instrumentalized to maintain and revise certain discourses. A key analytical challenge is the simple fact that there are usually far more texts available than what is possible to include in any thorough analysis. In order to select texts, one needs to be familiar with the entire textual universe relevant to the field of study. I have strategically chosen a set of texts that I deem to be representative of the variation in the universe. In the previous chapter I argued that the speeches themselves represent the ideas in the relevant climate policy documents in an adequate way. They capture the guiding principles of Korea's climate policy, thus are relevant to study given the empirical puzzle.

The speeches are from after the launch of the Korean New Deal, in July 2020 and until February 2021. As mentioned in chapter 2, the Korean New Deal and the 2050 Carbon Neutrality Strategy are the basis for Korea's new climate policy. Hence, the time frame also captures

speeches held in accordance to Korea's announcement of carbon neutrality in 2050. I argue that this time frame is adequate to analyze discourses in contemporary Korean climate politics. The speeches were chosen out of the total of 129 speeches that I found using the search words: 'green growth', 'Korean New Deal' and 'climate change' on the official website of the President (Cheong Wa Dae, 2021a). Given the similarity between the search words, several speeches emerged repeatedly. Thus, there were only 26 unique speeches of importance. In the first reading all 26 was read, however, for the in-dept analysis 7 was deemed important. In addition to these speeches the most important environmental policy documents have been read, however they are not subject for the in-depth textual analysis.

4.2 The Construction of Green Korea

In the first part of this chapter the prevailing ideas in the discursive order of Korean climate politics will be identified. These ideas serve as reference points in the discursive framing of Green Korea. The ideas will be clarified through paragraphs from speeches held by President Moon Jae-in. The analysis will in the following show how these ideas are communicated and which assumptions they rest upon. In the second part of this chapter the ideas will be summarized and linked to two co-existing discourses that President Moon mobilizes to create the narrative of Green Korea. Finally, a discussion on these discourses follows.

4.2.1 Climate Change as a Challenge for Korea

I will start with a paragraph from President Moon's remarks regarding the announcement of Korea's 2050 carbon neutrality strategy. Following the announcement by major economies to achieve net zero emissions, Korea announced in October 2020 that it will match the ambition for carbon neutrality by 2050 (McCurry, 2020). In December Korea presented its strategy for achieving this goal, and in this regard President Moon held a speech where he addressed the Korean people. With the vow to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 follows the assumption of a 'transition'. To go green implies greening and dynamics of change. Like other crises, the climate crisis presents a challenge, but also opportunities. We will start with how it poses a clear challenge to Korea.

In this excerpt, President Moon emphasizes how rapid changes in environmental regulations creates huge challenges to Korea, given the country's heavy dependence on energy-intensive manufacturing.

Countries around the world and multinational companies are cooperating to achieve common goals for humanity while speeding up innovations to secure competitiveness befitting a new era. Starting with the European Union, major countries have already made it a fait accompli to introduce a carbon border tax. There is a growing movement to limit transactions and investments primarily to eco-friendly companies, and international economic regulations and the trade environment are rapidly changing. Such challenges are never easy for Korea as we are heavily dependent on manufacturing and have many high energy-consuming industries such as steel and petrochemicals. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020f)

President Moon seemingly acknowledges that climate change is going to be a challenge for Korea. The articulation of this idea serves as an appropriate point of departure for the further analysis, as this idea is a strong indicator on how President Moon perceives the challenge of climate change. It is evident that Moon understands that Korea must make changes, but that they not necessarily are going to be easy. Moreover, how Moon perceives this challenge will eventually also guide what he understands to be the best solution to solve it. Problem definition is intimately related to policy solution; the way the challenge of climate change is framed dictates what responses are appropriate for Korea. Thus, it is important to understand what President Moon means when he articulates the idea that climate change is a challenge for Korea.

As this paragraph shows, President Moon says that Korea will face challenges due to introduction of carbon border taxes and other environmental regulations globally. Thus, while these restrictions on the use of fossil fuels seek to counter climate change, they put an external strain on the Korean economy. As mentioned in chapter 2, the Korean economy is extremely dependent on the industrial sector in order to grow. Hence, what President Moon here defines as challenges are the environmental regulations. Climate change is perceived as a challenge because it poses a threat to the ability of the Korean economy to continue to grow. With the new environmental regulations countries and companies will, to a greater extent, stop investing in industries that are based on fossil fuels. For Korea, whose industrial sector runs on fossil fuels, this could eventually lead to loss of investments in the most important parts of its industries, which in turn will have huge consequences on the Korean economy. Thus, climate change is expressed as a challenge, not necessarily because of its environmental degradation and the threat that represents to the quality of life, but rather as a challenge to the future growth of the Korean economy.

The idea communicated by President Moon in this paragraph leans on the assumption that growth is inherently necessary. By communicating that new environmental regulations will create challenges for Korea's industries the President is framing growth as something of deeper value. This is what Fairclough (2003, p. 173) defines as 'assumed values'; values that are deeper embedded in the text, and which can be provoked by the fact that something is threatening them. The object that is defined as under a threat is thus a desirable good. In this case, international environmental regulations pose a threat to Korea's industry, which in turn poses as a threat to Korea's economy given the heavy dependence on these industries for further growth. What is framed as the desirable good in this context is growth. Hence, I argue that the idea that climate change is a challenge to Korea is based on the assumption that growth is inherently necessary. I argue that this understanding of 'challenge' has consequences for what is understood to be the solutions and what can be defined as the best strategy to tackle this challenge.

4.2.2 Green Transformation is Mandated by Global Competition

Climate change is by President Moon also understood to be a challenge due to the changes it causes in the global production system. This perception of climate change spurs another idea in the narrative of Green Korea, namely that the green transformation is mandated by changes to the 'rules of the game' related to global economic competition. In the keynote address at the presentation of Korean New Deal Initiative President Moon communicates this idea by emphasizing how the Green New Deal initiative should serve as a response to the changing dynamics in the global competitive market:

The Green New Deal is about responding preemptively to the climate crisis, a desperate reality already confronting us. The COVID-19 pandemic has reaffirmed the urgency of responding to climate change. Amid a consensus that climate change responses are also indispensable for preventing infectious diseases, advanced countries in Europe and elsewhere have already been pushing a Green New Deal as a key task. On the whole, our country lags behind in this area, but we also have strengths. This is because the green revolution, too, should be built upon our strong suit: digital technology. When Korea – which has received global acclaim for its COVID-19 response – strives to foster its Green New Deal, we will be able to lead a new global order of solidarity and cooperation to resolve the climate crisis. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020a)

With the backdrop that countries in Europe now have begun to see Green New Deals as the future economic strategy, President Moon acknowledges that Korea still lags behind, while also arguing that the country will be able to rise again and lead the global community in climate change response. Hence, while President Moon starts off this paragraph by referring to climate

change as the reason to respond, Korea's green transformation is in reality a response to other countries launching green new deals. Along these line, Korea's green transition is not a direct response to climate change, but rather a response to other countries climate change response. Moreover, given Korea's high trade dependence, measuring 63,51% of GDP in 2019, making this connection is arguably practically inevitable for Korea as an industrial powerholder (Bae, 2020).

In light of Korea's high trade dependence, it might not come as a surprise that President Moon, in this excerpt, emphasizes the green economic policies of other countries, and that he explicitly mention that Korea has great capacity to manage a green transformation. By focusing on what other countries are doing, the Korean green transformation appears to be a respond to changes in the global market. More importantly, the extensive focus on how Korea will become a global leader frames the green transformation as a competition. The country that can manage this task will be able to receive investments from other countries Furthermore, when the whole world is revamping its production system, the country who can provide the world with green technologies will be able to sustain its economy. As the Korean economy is greatly dependent on the export of manufactured goods, it is of great importance that the global community do not turn away from these goods, but that Korea 'wins' the role of being a country that other states continue to invest in. Hence, the export-dependent Korean economy is dependent on Korea being victorious in this competition.

The idea of the green transition as mandated by global competition stems from Korea's fear of lagging behind. Within the narrative of Green Korea this competition is about economic survival. This fear is evident in several of Moon's speeches on climate politics, like in this paragraph from a speech the President held at an intergovernmental meeting on carbon neutrality:

The world is already accelerating this transition to a carbon neutral society and economy, and a new international economic order is on its way. Major economies, including the European Union and the United States, have made the adoption of a carbon border tax a fait accompli. The move by global businesses and financial firms to limit their transactions and investments primarily to eco-friendly companies is spreading. As such, international economic regulations and the trade environment are rapidly changing. We should respond to these grand shifts actively rather than being dragged down by them. Taking it a step further, we need extraordinary determination to turn the current challenges into opportunities instead and catapult the Republic of Korea to an even higher level. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020e)

Here President Moon explicitly mentions how this new economic order, following the transition to carbon neutral societies, will create changes in environmental regulations. Again, this is, by the President, argued to be a great challenge to Korea. If Korean companies like Samsung, Hyundai or LG etc. are considered to be harmful for the environment this will most certainly affect the Korean economy. A potential environmental boycott of these big companies will most certainly set a halt to the growth rate in the country. The top 10 chaebols did in 2017 account for 44% of the country's GDP (Park & Cho, 2018). The Korean economy hinges on these companies, thus it is vital that these companies maintain a good climate reputation. With an increased global competition and new environmental regulations, it is vital to implement a green shift to secure a good 'green' reputation for 'Korea Inc'. Moreover, political support from these companies is crucial for any elected politician and political party wishing to stay in power. The fear of rapidly changing environmental regulations creates a great incentive for the realization of the Green New Deal.

In the first part I have shown how responding to climate change both is communicated as a challenge and as mandated by global competition by President Moon. These ideas stem from the fear of lagging behind, the assumption that growth is inherently necessary, and the need of maintaining Korean companies' global reputation. However, as I now will discuss, once these ideas are communicated, the President also offers a solution which is articulated in the idea that Korea possess strengths to meet this challenge.

4.2.3 Korea has the Capacity to Meet New Tasks

What all the speeches held by President Moon have in common is an extensive focus on the capacity of Korea to meet the challenges of climate change. This optimism is communicated both in general terms, but also with an explicit focus on Korea's industrial strengths and innovative technologies. To highlight these arguments, I will start with a paragraph that articulates the more general idea of how Korea possess strengths to facilitate the green transition. This paragraph is from a speech the President held at the intergovernmental meeting on carbon neutrality:

Nonetheless, we can do it. The history of the Republic of Korea attests to this. We created the Miracle on the Han River from the ruins of war. Amid the foreign exchange crisis that necessitated a bailout from the IMF, we stood tall as an IT powerhouse. Even at this moment, Korea is playing a leading role in the world in terms of epidemic prevention and control. In our economic response, too, the country is performing miraculously well. We are more than capable of taking on the challenge

of becoming carbon neutral as well. We possess the potential to turn this challenge into yet another opportunity to take off. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020e)

In this paragraph the echo of Korea's success story is fairly explicit. This is where the very idea of Korea's strengths stems from. As mentioned in chapter 2, Korea rose from the ruins of war into an economic powerhouse in just a couple of decades. While Korea again finds itself lagging behind other countries, the decades after 1960 have demonstrated that Korea are capable of surpassing European powers. Furthermore, President Moon also mentions how Korea in very recent decades has shown to be resilient in crisis when the rest of the world struggles, i.e. the economic crisis and COVID-19 pandemic. Korea is a country that has shown to be adaptable also in the context of the 21st century. Based on these assumptions the conclusion is that Korea has great capacity to also take advantage of this challenge and further progress into a green future.

What is interesting with this paragraph, and this idea of Korea's strengths in general, is the fact that it is based on economic growth as the only viable measurement of success. The Miracle on the Han river is, arguably, an *economic* miracle. When it is referred to Korea's success story it is always in the name of economic growth. Scholarly debates and international praise focus on Korea's astonishing growth rate in the decades since the 1960s. That is not to say, that the economic growth did not have positive effects on the Korean society. It arguably lifted the general welfare level of the country. However, what this story by default excludes are the consequential side-effects of Korea's growth model. The increasing GHG emissions caused by the rapid industrialization are rarely mentioned. Thus, when the President articulates ideas which lean on the assumption of Korea's success story, this is based on the country's *economic* success. When using the Miracle on the Han river as an argument for why Korea is capable of a green transition, he is essentially using the growth model that contributed to climate change as the solution to the problem. The Korean miracle, which is heavily dependent on fossil fuel-based industries, is what made Korea to one of the largest emitters in the world. What this miraculous transformation evidently has failed to do however, is tackling climate change. President Moon, somewhat paradoxically, argues that it is the legacy of this economic transformation that is defined as Korea's strength in meeting with the challenges of climate change.

As mentioned, the idea of Korea's strengths is also communicated in more specific terms, often in the name of industrial or digital strengths. In an address at the opening of the 21st National Assembly, President Moon clearly articulates this idea:

If we could also utilize our strength in terms of green economy, there is limitless potential for further growth. We already possess world-renowned solar power company and technologies and we are also spearheading hydrogen economy by producing world-class hydrogen cars. We also rank among the best in electric car and battery industries. Although there are many fields in which we still lag behind, we will be able to create a giant tide of green revolution if we use our strength in digital technology as a platform. This will enable us to lead the global order of solidarity and cooperation geared towards resolving the climate crisis, and also enhance our industrial competitiveness in the midst of ever-tightening international environmental regulations. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020b)

In this paragraph Moon confidently argues that even though Korea is behind in some areas, it is essentially not a problem given the capacity the country possesses in green technologies and industries. Concurrently it stems from Korea's formidable governmental administrative capacity, demonstrated, for example, by its success in containing COVID-19. However, in addition to echo of success the fear of lagging behind is also evident. It has now become evident that Korea's green transition to a great extent is about the country's survival. Survival in this context is linked to maintaining a position as one of the top economies in the world. Thus, for this survival to be possible, Korea is in desperate need to utilize its strengths.

Through the articulation of Korea's strengths, I argue that President Moon mobilizes a collective understanding that this is the only way for Korea to survive. In this paragraph, utilizing Korea's strength is framed as the only viable solution to climate change. The transition to carbon neutrality will be made possible if, and only if, the country takes advantage of its industrial capacity. Furthermore, the presentation of Korea's industries as leading in the world is also an argument for why these industries should be invested in. While the idea is communicated as the solution to solve the green transition, the way it is communicated can also be argued to have similarities to a company promoting its products. This tendency in texts is referred to as 'promotional culture' (Fairclough, 2003, p. 106). The following paragraph from President Moon's address at the Davos Agenda in 2021 exemplifies the tendency of 'promotion' explicitly:

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Korea has never enforced any lockdowns or border closures. This clearly demonstrates that Korea, more than anything, is a safe

and stable business partner and investment destination. I hope that the Korean New Deal will lay ground for global companies and venture start-ups to take on new challenges and become a catalyst for expanding cooperation in future industries. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2021b)

In this paragraph, President Moon explicitly states that Korea will be a safe place to invest. This is argued on the basis of Korea's shown resilience in crises, e.g. the country's COVID-19 response. The message that President Moon wishes to deliver, is that Korea with the Korean New Deal is a reliable investment partner in a world which faces the challenge of climate change. This can be considered to be a promotional message, as this speech represents Korea, advocates for why Korea is a place for secure investment and also with reference to the Korean New Deal anticipates where Korea is going (Fairclough, 2003, p. 113). Given the Korean economy's dependence on investment and export, the trade dependency ratio measured to 63,51% in 2019, it is of vital importance for President Moon to convey the message that Korea is a safe place to invest in, in order to achieve a greener future (Bae, 2020). Thus, President Moon is trying to safeguard Korean Inc's global reputation.

The narrative in the speeches is built upon the construction of a predicament, in response to which the government can present a solution. Climate change (and COVID-19) is forcing Korea to change its growth model, however, Korea has great capacity to turn crisis into opportunities if they focus on their strengths: technology and digitalization. The general theme is an optimism stemming from Korea's history of exceptional growth. The lessons from the Miracle on the Han River will be used to create a new growth miracle. This narrative of scenario and solution is evident in all of President Moon's speeches. By creating interlinkages between Korea's capacity, the growth potential of climate change, and technology advancement as a solution to climate change, President Moon creates a narrative where further economic growth equals an adequate climate change response.

The idea of Korea possessing capacity to meet the new tasks caused by climate change is clearly linked to another idea that is of vital importance within the narrative of Green Korea. Within the context of responding to climate change, technological optimism plays an indispensable role.

4.2.4 Technology Represents Salvation

The single most important factor in Korea's green transition is technological advancement within the country's competitive sectors: industry and digital technology. This is explicitly addressed on several occasions, like in the two paragraphs under. The first is from the intergovernmental meeting on carbon neutrality and the second is from the address on Korea's declaration of 2050 carbon neutrality:

Science and technology are the main forces driving a civilization's transformation. Every country is in a life or death struggle to secure innovative low-carbon technologies and entering an era of unbridled competition for technological innovation. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020e)

And:

To achieve the 2050 carbon neutrality goal, technological advancement is paramount. We have to reduce energy transition costs through technological advancement. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020f)

In the first paragraph, President Moon dramatically emphasizes the vital role that science and technology will play for Korea's green transition. The idea that technology will be the salvation for this crisis is communicated as the only way to survive the competition on the global market. Again, framing the green transition as mandated by global competition. Moreover, he argues that this competition is the matter of life or death for countries. In this context it entails that countries that manage to create green technologies ahead of other countries will be able to survive. The victorious countries will in turn be able secure investments and export goods and technology to the global market. Thus again, survival means economic growth.

The idea that technology represents salvation is communicated both in terms of responding to climate change, but also as the solution to the extensive global competition. Hence, technological advancement represents the mean to successfully implement green growth strategies. Technology will enable a continued growth in the economy while it simultaneously contributes to climate change response. This idea stems from the Korean climate policies introduced in 2008, namely the belief that growth and sustainability can be simultaneously achieved. I argue that this is a vital part of the narrative of Green Korea. By articulating the assumption that growth and an adequate climate change response can be simultaneously achieved, President Moon is essentially saying that there exists no limit to growth. The relationship between growth and climate change is not conflictual, rather it is one of mutual

benefits. By framing it as a relation based on reciprocity the President is able to create legitimacy for the green growth project. By arguing that digital technology is the most vital part to solve the climate crisis, President Moon has paved the way for legitimizing the focus on development within the digital technology field. Thus, the continued development of the digital age, despite the possible negative impact on the environment, is legitimized as digital technology is the solution to the climate crisis.

The idea that technology represents salvation is delivered as an uncontested truth in several of President Moon's speeches. Especially the focus on the opportunities of digital technology is evident on several occasions. Like in this paragraph from the speech Moon held at the presentation of the Korean New Deal Initiative:

This path is not exclusively reserved for the Republic of Korea. It is an unavoidable trend of the times that the entire world must follow together. The Fourth Industrial Revolution and a digital civilization have already commenced and are defining the future of humanity. The Korean New Deal is a national development strategy designed to stay ahead of those vigorous trends. Building upon robust employment and social safety nets, we will establish two pillars – the Digital New Deal and the Green New Deal. Through these, we will move closer to becoming a leading nation at the forefront of this historic global transformation. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020a)

The three excerpts are an echo of the Park regime and Korea's success story. Science and technology were highly appreciated during the Park Chung-hee era. In this period science and technology were means to achieve economic growth. Back then, institutes and ministries was used to create interlinkages between factors of science and technology and economic institutions in order to achieve a higher growth rate (Song, 1999, p. 108). Thus, the way President Moon is currently articulating the need for technology in order to respond to climate change is very similar to the way President Park utilized science and technology to achieve a higher growth rate. In 2021, digital technology is what President Moon particularly emphasizes. In this last paragraph there is an explicit reference to the 4th Industrial Revolution. In this sentence President Moon accepts this digital revolution as an objective truth. There are no questions asked whether digitalization necessarily is the right solution for responding to climate challenge, rather Moon, frames the 4th Industrial Revolution as something that everyone agrees benefits humanity. However, this concept is fairly contested (Morgan, 2019). Moreover, in Korea there exists no academic consensus on what the notion of the 4th Industrial Revolution entails, thus, different meanings are invested in the term leading to constant semantic shifts in

its applications (Hong & Moon, 2017). This, furthermore, opens for political actors to adapt this notion in the way they wish.

At the end of the last paragraph President Moon is communicating another vital idea contributing to the narrative of Green Korea. The fact that the green transformation can be an opportunity for Korea to become a global leader.

4.2.5 Korea can be a Global Leader

The ideas of the green transition being mandated by global competition, Korea's strengths and technology as representing salvation all cumulate in the idea that the green transition is an opportunity for Korea to become a global leader. This is on several occasions communicated by President Moon, like in the paragraphs below. The first is from the address at the opening of the 21st National Assembly and the second is from his address at the presentation of the Korean New Deal initiative:

The Korean New Deal will be the key that unlocks the future of new promise. It is a national development strategy that will enable us to take the leap to become an elite nation. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020b)

And:

We already have the world's leading competitive edge in the digital sector. Adding our digital capabilities to industries across the board can help transform our economy from a fast-follower into a pacesetter (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020a).

The idea of Korea as a global leader is first and foremost based on the country's success story. With a clear reference to what Korea has been able to accomplish in the past, this new challenge of climate change is a golden opportunity to continue this legacy and create another miracle. Moreover, Korea's development trajectory is often mentioned as an admirable model for developing countries (Kim, 1998). Korea has previously shown to be a country to follow. Furthermore, what is evident in both these paragraphs is that the green transition is something that will help or enable Korea into becoming a global leader. Here again, we are back to what Fairclough (2003) terms 'assumed values'. In this case these values are evoked by the fact that it is framed as something that is desirable. Fairclough (2003, p. 173) argues that whatever is being 'helped' is the real desired good. In this case then, the desired good is not necessarily the green transition, but rather what the green transition can bring about: namely an opportunity for Korea to become a global leader.

What is also evident is that President Moon articulates this idea as something all Koreans value. This is exemplified in this paragraph from the opening of the 21st National Assembly.

This is not a pipe dream. We already possess global competitiveness in the digital sector, and are ranked No. 1 in the world in terms of ICT and semiconductors. As such, we are equipped with requisite technology and capacity to lead the digital revolution. There is fertile ground for untapped industries to blossom, while the boom in innovative startups is creating a dynamic economy. If we could apply our digital prowess into all industrial fields, we will be able to transform our economy into playing a pace-setting role instead of catch-up. We can turn our dream of building a top-notch digital nation that leads the world into reality. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020b)

President Moon is presenting the dream of becoming a global leader as an objective truth. He creates a frame for what can be discussed within this context. This idea, I argue, assumes that growth is seen as inherently necessary. If Korea manages to utilize the green transition into becoming a leading nation on digital technology and other green technologies, it essentially means that the Korean economy will continue to grow. This means that Korea eventually could gain more economic and political power.

4.2.6 ‘Green Energy can Contribute to Energy Security’

Energy security is the most vital part of Korea’s energy politics. Chapter 2 mentioned how the rapid industrialization in the 1960s and 1970s led to an immense demand for energy. Given the path dependency of its energy intensive growth model, the need for energy is still as evident in contemporary Korea. In his speech at the intergovernmental meeting for carbon neutrality President Moon slightly touches upon this subject:

Achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 is never going to be easy. Korea announced its 2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction target a few years ago, however, the country’s actual output only began to decline last year. For this reason, compared with other countries, time is short for us to achieve carbon neutrality. Manufacturing and other industries with heavy carbon emissions make up a disproportionately high percentage of our economy. Our energy mix’s high reliance on fossil-fueled power plants and the insufficient supply of renewable energy remain immense stumbling blocks in our efforts to achieve carbon neutrality early. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020e)

President Moon acknowledges that Korea’s energy system is causing the country problems with regards to the green transition. However, while it is mentioned in this speech, the issue of energy security is rarely touched upon in the President’s speeches. There definitely exists a clear

acknowledgement that sufficient energy supply is an immense challenge for Korea, however, this challenge is rarely spoken of. The only exception is from a speech the President held at a green energy site:

Green energy is also an area that will spearhead a great socioeconomic transition for our future generations while fundamentally reshaping the national energy system. It will also allow us to keep our energy security robust without relying on imports like coal and oil. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020c)

Here President Moon explicitly refers to the issue of energy security. In this paragraph the idea that green energy can contribute to energy security is communicated. However, green energy is first and foremost presented as a mean to lead what he calls ‘a great socioeconomic transition’. What this entails is that the issue of green energy is of great importance, however, usually represented as growth or development strategy. It is rarely connected to the more problematic issue of energy security. Another paragraph from the same speech exemplifies this clearly:

Green energy constitutes a growth strategy to create jobs, reduce inequality and promote our society’s inclusiveness while at the same time resolving the climate crisis. It is the path for a mutually beneficial takeoff that will enable us to preemptively respond to ever-tightening international environmental regulations and to simultaneously develop new green industries and the existing industries where we have a competitive edge. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020c)

With this paragraph, we again return to the underlying assumptions of growth as inherently necessary, growth and climate change response as something that can be mutually achieved, and the fear of lagging behind the global market, and, as the worst consequence, lose the opportunity for further national progress. The idea of green energy rests upon these assumptions. In this way, President Moon is steering the attention towards the opportunities that green energy give, instead of focusing on how problematic this issue is for Korea. Moon creates a context where the issues of energy only should be discussed with regards to these opportunities. In doing so, he is trying to steer away from the conflictual issue of securing the country’s energy demand whilst also responding to climate change.

The Green New Deal initiative has received criticism precisely regarding energy demand and security. The extreme low share of renewable energy together with the policy for phasing out both nuclear and coal power plants, have raised questions on how Korean will be able to meet its energy demand (Kim, 2019; Ko, 2020; Korea Herald, 2019). In 2018, the share of renewables

accounted for only 4% of the energy mix, and in 2021 Korea was ranked as number 49 out of 115 countries on the Energy Transition Index (IEA, 2020b; Yonhap, 2021b). As the share of renewable energy in the energy mix in Korea is extremely low it is fairly reasonable to argue that a conflict between responding to climate change, using less energy, and continue securing energy demand for economic growth will emerge. This is the conflict President Moon is trying to avoid; however, it is an issue that Korea definitely will need to respond to. As green energy essentially is understood as growth strategy, it becomes apparent that in such a scenario the goal of further growth triumphs that of climate change response.

4.2.7 Climate Change is an Opportunity

What all the previous ideas eventually cumulate into is that climate change is an opportunity for Korea. At the presentation of the Korean New Deal Initiative President Moon presents climate change and the post-COVID-19 world as an opportunity for Korea to rise to the top once again:

Beyond surmounting the COVID-19 crisis, the Government intends to seize this epochal global transformation as an opportunity to leap forward once again with the power of the people. If change cannot be avoided, we will actively take the initiative in making that change. Korea will lead the world in opening a new path to the future. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020a)

It is with great confidence that President Moon delivers the idea that climate change is an opportunity for Korea. However, what is it an opportunity for? Again, the emphasis is on the fact that this is not the first time that Korea will leap forward. Hence, there is a clear reference to Korea's economic development. The success of the transformation from a poor agrarian society, to an economic powerhouse is used as an argument for how Korea will manage the green transformation and turn the challenge of climate change into an opportunity instead. As mentioned, this success is measured in growth, hence, the opportunity is intricately connected to that of economic growth. Korea's development trajectory is often presented as a model to follow for developing countries (Kim, 1998). In these discussions the ecological implications of the model are, naturally, omitted. However, with regards to achieving economic growth and technological advancement Korea has shown to be a leading example in the world. Hence, the idea that climate change as an opportunity is also connected to the idea that Korea can utilize climate change in order to become a global leader.

While the opportunity in this first paragraph is only implicitly a reference to economic growth, President Moon also make explicitly interlinkages between climate change as an opportunity and economic growth in several of the other speeches. Like in this paragraph from a speech the President held at the first International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies:

Second, we will turn the climate and environmental crisis into an opportunity for economic growth. The Green New Deal, a key pillar of the Korean New Deal, is a strategy to overcome COVID-19, a policy to respond to climate crisis and a growth model to create jobs and enhance inclusiveness in our society. (Cheong Wa Dae, 2020d)

The International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies was initiated by Korea to the UN. This initiative can by itself be argued to demonstrate how Korea wishes to utilize climate change as an opportunity to enhance the country's global reputation as a green nation. In this paragraph President Moon clearly articulates the idea that climate change is an opportunity for Korea. This idea is based on the underlying assumptions that growth is inherently necessary, and that there exists no conflicting relationship between responding to climate change and economic growth. This is the baseline of the KGGI that was introduced in 2008.

By presenting Korea's current climate policies, both the Green New Deal and the 2050 Carbon Neutrality strategy, as an opportunity for growth, President Moon appear as an echo of his predecessor Lee Myung-bak. In his speech in August 2008, President Lee stated that the KGGI would be 'a new national development paradigm that creates new growth engines and jobs through green technology and clean energy' (Presidential Commission on Green Growth, 2009). Thus, while current President Moon rarely evoke the term 'green growth', Korea's current climate policies clearly resembles the climate policies of the Lee administration.

While there are clear interlinkages between the current administration's climate policies and the previous ones, the assumption of growth as something that is inherently necessary traces all the way back to the start of the rapid industrialization in the 1960s and 1970s. During the Park regime economic growth became, what one can argue to be a quasi-religion, in that economic growth was pursued no matter what the consequences. Until the 1980s, all other demands from society was pushed aside. Economic growth was promoted as Korea's survival strategy (Cho Han, 2000, p. 53). It is evident that this assumption of economic growth as the only way to survive continue to live and steer Korean politics. That President Moon's currently is

communicating the idea of climate change as an opportunity of economic growth indicates how growth also has infiltrated the country's climate policies. However, what is even more worrisome is that is still articulated as the only viable solution to solve this crisis. Again, an echo of how the Park regime framed economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s.

In this first part of the analysis I have conducted a textual analysis to identify the prevailing ideas in Korean climate politics. Furthermore, the assumptions on which these ideas are based upon have been identified. It is important to note that these ideas solely are representative for the official political discourse as the texts that has been analyzed are speeches held by the President. The second part of this chapter set out to show how these ideas and assumptions are linked to two discourse that President Moon draw extensively on to construct the narrative of Green Korea.

4.3 Discursive Practice

Through the textual analysis I have shown which ideas that are prominent in President Moon's construction of Green Korea. The ideas are summarized in table 2. Moreover, I have emphasized the assumptions upon which these ideas are built, showcasing a high degree of intertextuality. In this analysis the objective is to reveal which shared assumptions President Moon addresses and mobilize through the narrative of Green Korea. In order to understand what appears as objective truths in the narrative of Green Korea, I will now discuss the discourses they draw upon. I argue that the President extensively mobilizes two different discourses: an economic discourse and a national discourse. The two discourses draw selectively on a set of ideas as conceptualized above, and these ideas can be understood in light of certain assumptions about past practices and current demands and opportunities arising from climate change. A short elaboration on the discourses will follow in this section, however, the discourses are fully addressed in chapter 5, seen against the structural backdrop on which they work.

Table 2: Overview of ideas, assumptions, and main arguments

Idea	Assumptions	Main argument
Climate change as a challenge for Korea	Growth is inherently necessary	President Moon understands the challenge of climate change first and foremost as a threat to the future growth of the Korean economy.
Green transformation is mandated by global competition	A fossil-dependent economy that does not adapt will lag behind	Korea’s green transformation is a response to environmental regulations and other countries climate change response. This creates a global competition over production of the green technologies the world needs, a competition Korea must win. In this sense it is important to build a ‘green’ reputation of Korean companies.
	Maintaining the global reputation of Korea Inc.	
Korea has the capacity to meet new tasks	Korea’s success story	Given what Korea has accomplished in the past, President Moon argues that Korea has capacity to meet the tasks mandated by the green transformation. Korea’s capacity is measured in economic growth, and President Moon seeks to secure investments by maintaining the global reputation of Korea Inc.
	Economic growth is a survival strategy	
	Maintaining the global reputation of Korea Inc.	
Technology represents salvation	Growth and climate change response can be simultaneously achieved	Technological advancement is seen as the most important solution to climate change. The digital civilization and the 4 th Industrial Revolution are accepted as objective truths. This is an echo of the Park regime. With technological advancement Korea will be able to
	Korea’s success story	

		respond to climate change and secure future growth of the economy.
Korea can be a global leader	Korea's success story	Given what Korea has achieved in the past, the country serves as blueprint on economic development for developing nations. This story show how Korea can lead the world, and hence, that Korea can utilize climate change to again be a leading example for the rest of the world. Becoming a global leader essentially entails a growth in both political and economic influence, and it is framed as something all Korean wants.
	Growth is inherently necessary	
Green energy can contribute to energy security	Growth and climate change response can be simultaneously achieved	President Moon is actively framing green energy as a development strategy that will enable Korea to respond to climate change and achieve growth simultaneously. The fear of lagging behind in the global competition is mandating the transition to green energy. Moon argues that green energy will contribute to energy security, however, he rarely addresses the severity of energy security in the green transition. Growth triumphs that of climate change response.
	Growth is inherently necessary	
	A fossil-dependent economy that does not adapt will lag behind	
	Economic growth is a survival strategy	Climate change is by President Moon presented as an opportunity for Korea. Both in more general terms, that

Climate change is an opportunity	Korea's success story	Korea can become a global leader, but the idea is also more specifically connected to the opportunity for economic growth. Given that Korea managed to utilize the crisis in the 1960s, President Moon proclaims that climate change is a new opportunity for Korea's economy to grow. This idea is an echo of both President Lee Myung-bak's green growth strategy and the Park regime's belief in economic growth as the only way to survive.
	Growth and climate change response can be simultaneously achieved	

The economic discourse plays a dominant role in the narrative of Green Korea. Arguments about global competition, how Korea can become a global leader and how the climate challenge is an opportunity for economic growth are vital in the economic discourse. The economic discourse relies heavily on the assumption that growth is necessary to survive. Due to the global competition caused by climate change Korea must carry out a 'green shift'. It is here the economic discourse incorporates green elements. It offers an approach to the challenge of climate change. In order to survive this 'green' competition Korea ought to develop its industries and adapt its economic model to be able to survive in this new global context.

To construct this narrative of Green Korea, President Moon also draws extensively on the national discourse. This discourse rests upon the assumption of Korea's success story and the legacy of the developmental state model. Based on the country's successful development trajectory, Moon argues that Korea is once again able to turn a crisis into an opportunity. The success of Korea is connected to the experiences with the developmental state model starting with the Park regime in the 1960s. The rapid industrialization and economic development in the years after 1960s is based upon the principle of 'growth first' (Yang, 2006). When Moon refers to the success story of Korea it is this economic success that he is referring to. The legacy of the Park regime solely created an economic miracle. Thus, the national discourse also offers an approach to climate change. By reinventing the logic from the developmental state model, the climate crisis will be solved.

Through the economic and national discourses President Moon creates a green narrative of Korea. This narrative is based on the logic of a capitalist economy and Korea's successful development story. While these discourses themselves are not green, they are both presented with an approach to climate change, thus in this way they are used to create a green narrative. The economic discourse argues that there is a need for a green transition, and economic growth is necessary to conceive this transition. In order to justify this argument, President Moon draws extensively on the national discourse. Korea's successful development story has shown that prioritizing growth is the recipe for success. Thus, the national discourse also offers a solution to the climate crisis: Korea must reinvent the developmental state model in a green format. As shown in chapter 5, President Moon also draws on several green discourses as theorized by Dryzek (2005) and Zannakis (2009). The economic discourse, the national discourse and discursive green elements are textured together to create a green narrative.

As Mathisen (1997) argues it is important to understand how actors perceive the characteristics of climate challenge in order to get a better grasp of the relationship between economy and ecology. What are the deeper assumptions that the prevailing ideas rest upon? In Korea, the government acknowledges that the climate crisis is a result of the way that we are currently living, and that there is a need to change the current growth model. However, while this acknowledgment is evident it seems to co-exist with the assumption that economic growth is necessary to survive this crisis. The growth model created an economic miracle, however also created some unfortunate consequences, i.e. the climate crisis. However, what is interesting here is that economic growth per se is never directly connected to the climate crisis. The characteristics of climate change is not necessarily expressed as a fundamentally wrong relation between human and nature. There is in essence no conflict between ecology and economy. It is acknowledged that Korea will have to change, but this change is not directly connected to the climate crisis, but rather to the changing global context caused by climate change. Thus, by mainly arguing that the green transition is mandated by global competition and a changed global context President Moon avoids the conflict between the growth model and environmental degradation. Environmental degradation is to a greater extent presented as result of a more general way of living. It is acknowledged that we need to respond to this challenge, but this does not mean that there is a need to turn away from economic growth as a guiding principle. Rather the need to implement a 'green shift' is a reason to continue to pursue economic growth. In this way the green transition never challenges the goal of economic growth. Rather economic growth is presented as the solution: based on the legacy of Korea's success story and

technological advancement Korea will rise as green developmental state capable of leading the global community on a green and prosperous path.

In this chapter several speeches have been analyzed to identify what discourses President Moon mobilize in order to construct the narrative of Green Korea. The texts in this part of the analysis are the communicative events of the analysis. This part of the analysis has analyzed two of the three dimensions in Fairclough's model: text and discursive practice. In the next chapter the last dimension will be explored when the wider consequences for social practice are analyzed.

5. Social Practice

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to link the third dimension of Fairclough's model, (social practice), to the discursive practice identified in chapter 4. The previous chapter was dedicated to identifying prevailing ideas and the discursive elements President Moon draws upon to create a narrative of Green Korea. This chapter sets out to discuss what social implications this discursive practice may have. Discourse is both constituted and constitutive, thus there is a mutually dependent relationship between text, discourse and social practice (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

It is challenging to draw an exact demarcation line between discourse and non-discursive elements. However, this chapter aims to understand how the discursive practice that make up the narrative of Green Korea, enables a continuation of climate politics attuned at business interests. How is it that a narrative that on the surface dictates a green transformation of the economy allows for a continuation of production patterns that are unsustainable for our climate? This presents a particular challenge to CDA, given its assumptions that policies and patterns of behavior are 'naturalized' by discourse. As Jørgensen & Phillips (2002, p. 90) argue, one can investigate how discourse is used to create a framework of beliefs and statements that are seen as 'good', 'meaningful' and 'natural'. I argue that this is crucial in order to answer the empirical puzzle. What appears as a divergence between discourse and policy should instead be seen as a particular relationship between Korea's history and economic model on the one hand and the mandate of countering climate change on the other. This relationship, which manifests in the forging of the Green narrative analyzed in chapter 4, enables the bridging of what is ostentatiously a wide gap between discourse and 'reality on the ground'.

Social practice refers to the social environment that are non-discursive in Fairclough's parlance: the institutional and structural context and patterns of behavior. This can be political or economic institutions, power relations etc. (Skrede, 2017, p. 32). In political analysis, social practice would typically imply the specific actions, decisions and priorities that are 'naturalized' or enabled by discourse. Depending on the perspective chosen, social practice could focus either on political elites or mass behavior; the latter is exemplified by electoral analysis or other forms of analysis where citizens' patterned behavior is the practice that the analysis sets out to explain. In this thesis the focus is on political elites and the legacy from the developmental state model; thus, the social practice is defined in this thesis as the political and economic structures, and the

power relations this trajectory created. The discussion on social practice will mainly circle around how the structural legacy from the developmental state model and powerful economic and political actors nourish the gap between discourse and reality.

In the following there will first be a discussion on how the narrative of Green Korea is created and how the divergence between discourse and reality is maintained through this narrative. The chapter will later discuss the interests of key actors in maintaining this divergence, before turning to the question of the possibility of a green developmental state in Korea. The analysis in the previous chapter was solely based upon texts. However, discourse analysis alone cannot answer the question on social implications, as this includes both discourse and non-discursive elements (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 69). Hence, in this last part of the analysis I draw extensively on secondary literature.

5.2 The Narrative of Green Korea

From the analysis in chapter 4 it became evident that President Moon draws on an economic discourse and a national discourse in order to create the narrative of Green Korea. The two discourses offer two approaches both to the climate crisis and the necessity of a green transition. However, the two discourses are not green per se. The economic discourse is based upon the assumption that growth is necessary and serves as a survival strategy. The national discourse is grounded in Korea's success story and the legacy of the developmental state model. In order to construct a 'green' narrative based on these 'brown' discourses, they both incorporate green elements from green discourses. Thus, what chapter 4 has teased out is a form of interdiscursive entrepreneurship on the part of President Moon. In the following section I will show how the green narrative of Korea is constructed through the interlinkage between an economic discourse, a national discourse, and green elements. Firstly, I present the green discourses derived from the literature on the politics of climate change. Secondly, I discuss how the economic and national discourse incorporate elements from these discourses respectively.

5.2.1 Green Discourses

The green discourses I present here are based on the works of Dryzek (2005) and Zannakis (2009). These discourses have been neatly summarized by Torkil Remøy's master thesis, and it is his concise summary that I take inspiration from in my discussion (Remøy, 2014). For this thesis I deem three discourses important: *industrialism*, *ecological modernization*, and *green*

radicalism. The first two are the ones that the economic and the national discourses incorporates green elements from. The latter serve as an alternative notion to the narrative of Green Korea. This will be discussed in section 5.2.4. All three discourses are summarized in table 3. It is important to emphasize that discourses are analytical constructs. They are ideal representations that the real world borrows from. Obviously, we cannot expect that President Moon has studied Dryzek et.al. However, discourses function as analytical tools that enable us to better understand the messy world of politics. In this thesis I intended to use discourses as analytical tools to understand how President Moon understand the climate challenge, and therefore also best way to solve it.

Table 3: Overview of discourses and analytical dimensions. ⁶

	Units	Assumptions about actors and their motives	The cause of environmental problems	How to solve environmental problems	Narrative	Norms
Industrialism	Nature as a mass Actors of the marked States	Egoistic Rational	Consequences of other good objectives	Economic growth Wealth Globalization Innovation and creativity	The resourceful earth	Efficiency
Ecological modernization	States Private sector Business interests Civil Society	Shared motives Egoistic	Inefficiency Temporary solutions Wrong incentives	Technological advancement Prevention Planning Right incentives State-private cooperation Be prepared Polluter pays	Win-win between development and environment Reduced pollution pays off Sustainable development	Efficiency Rational
Green radicalism	Humans Nature Structures (political, economic, social)	Shared motives	Inequality Capitalism Industrialism Economic growth Globalization	Restructuring of the economy Decentralization Power to marginalized groups Polluter pays	Ecological fairness Alternative knowledge systems	Fairness Equality Climate equity

⁶ From Torkil Dyb Remøy's master thesis. Own translation

				Increased awareness		
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In the industrial discourse, growth and material prosperity are the overall goals. There is a strong belief in the capacity of people to be creative and innovative, and nature serves only as an instrument to achieve the goal of humanity: namely growth (Remøy, 2014). There exist no limits in nature, and ecology and economy are treated as two different categories.

Ecological modernization is a more familiar discourse in climate politics and has played a vital part in climate politics in the Western world since the 1980s. This discourse has been influential in several countries, among them Sweden and Norway.⁷ Dryzek argues that this is one of the reasons these two countries ranks high on environmental responses (2005, pp. 166–167). In ecological modernization, one crucial point is that growth and responding to climate change are two simultaneously achievable goals. Economic growth serves as a mean to solve the climate crisis. However, compared to the industrial discourse, ecological modernization does not assume growth as prerequisite for climate change policies. Climate policies can also be a mean to achieve economic growth (Remøy, 2014). In a way, this is the essence of a supposed green transition, implicating a shift in patterns of production and consumption, rather than a reduction. Standards of living are thus expected to rise further, by exploiting resources that are different from the ones that the industrial society has relied upon. In ecological modernization technological advancement, right incentives and a close state-business cooperation are expected to enable this shift in production and consumption (Dryzek, 2005; Remøy, 2014; Zannakis, 2009).

5.2.2 The Economic Discourse

I argue that the economic discourse draws on elements from industrialism and ecological modernization. The economic discourse is organized around the logic of the capitalist economy, in which growth implies a continuous stream of profits and rise in material wealth. It is built upon the premise that growth is necessary for the survival of Korea. Thus, to be able to respond to the climate crisis, Korea needs to prioritize growth. This is similar to the assumptions which industrialism rests upon. In this discourse, climate change is presented as a consequence of other worthy causes. Thus, while climate change is negative and the need for a green transition is acknowledged, this discourse does not directly blame any explicit structures of society.

⁷ Finland, Japan, Germany and the Netherlands are also mentioned by Dryzek

This is similar to how climate change in the narrative of Green Korea is understood. Climate change is presented as a challenge, and there is acknowledgement of the need for a green shift. However, there is no direct link between economic growth and climate change. Korea's economic development is constantly praised for its achievements, and its legacy is argued to be valuable to overcome the current climate crisis. Thus, climate change is presented as a consequence of other good objectives. Similar to industrialism, economic growth and climate change are in the narrative of Green Korea treated as two different categories which are not interlinked. Given the decoupling of economic growth from climate change, industrialism can present economic growth as a solution to solve this crisis. This is an assumption that the economic discourse draws extensively on.

Ecological modernization argues that the most vital factor to resolve the climate crisis is technological advancement. This discourse heavily emphasizes how technology will enable the green transition. This is very similar to how technology is presented within the narrative of Green Korea: technology represents salvation. It is technological advancement that will enable Korea to resolve the climate crisis. Through the development of green technology Korea will be able to maintain its industrial sector and export of manufactured goods. Thus, through technology Korea can secure economic growth while simultaneously respond to climate change. This assumption is also crucial in ecological modernization. This discourse argues that there is a win-win between economy and development. I argue that this is one of the most important assumptions in the narrative of Green Korea, too. This assumption dismisses that there exists a conflictual relationship between economic growth and climate change response. As it is articulated as an assumption it is presented as something 'natural'. By incorporating green elements in the economic discourse, I argue that President Moon construct a green narrative where this assumption is presented as an objective truth. Economic growth and climate change response exists as two separate categories that are simultaneously achievable.

The economic discourse in Korean politics draws on both industrialism and ecological modernization in trying to pin down what the causes of climate change are and how they should be countered. In this way, the economic discourse can be used to construct a green narrative of Korea. However, in order to complete this narrative President Moon also draw extensively on the national discourse.

5.2.3 The National Discourse

The national discourse is built upon the legacy of the developmental state and Korea's success story. The discourse circles around the capacity Korea has shown to possess when facing crises. President Moon draws extensively on this story when talking about how Korea will meet the challenge of climate change. This is a crisis where the capacity of Korea and the legacy of the country's successful development can be revisited. When Moon draws on the national discourse to create the narrative of Green Korea it is both with reference to the Miracle on the Han River, but also more recent crises, like the 2008 global financial crisis and the current COVID-19 pandemic. One of the most vital assumptions in this discourse is that Korea will be able to solve the crisis of climate change with similar means: the capacity of the Korean people and technological advancement. The strong belief in science and technology is articulated as an objective truth and is an echo of the Park regime. Based on what they have managed before, Korea will be capable of utilizing the legacy of its successful development in a new, green version.

The belief in the Korean people as creative problem solvers and technological advancement as the solution to the climate crisis is something that the national discourse has in common with both industrialism and ecological modernization. Industrialism has an extensive focus on the innovative and creative capacity of people, which is exactly what the national discourse is built upon: Korea possesses the capacity and innovative abilities to grow out of this crisis. Furthermore, the endless technological optimism that President Moon clearly articulates with the national discourse, is a reciting of how ecological modernization see technological advancement. Thus, by incorporating the notion of people as problem solvers and technological advancement into the national discourse, President Moon draws on 'green' elements. Korea has proved to be able to develop the technology the world wants before, and the country will once more prove to be the necessary technological hub.

The national discourse also contributes to construct an idea that Korea is 'one' nation. It gives rise to the creation of a Korean identity.⁸ Neumann writes that 'politics can be understood as an attempt to answer who 'we' are, and an analysis that do not consider this is not an adequate analysis' (Neumann, 2001, p. 124).⁹ Thus, by drawing extensively on the national discourse

⁸ What I define here as a Korean identity is not an ethnic Korean identity, but rather a political *South* Korean identity. The national story of capitalist success explicitly excludes North Korea.

⁹ My translation

President Moon is trying to answer the question of who Korea is in encountering the challenge of climate change. By looking at the official political discourse one can analyze how politicians and leaders are constructing collective identities through the textual mechanisms of linkage (with desired qualities) and differentiation (from what we do not wish to become) (Hansen, 2006, p. 60).

It becomes evident that a vital part of the Korean identity is being a people who turn challenges into opportunities. In the speeches President Moon holds, he acknowledges that the climate crisis will be a challenge, however history has shown that Korea rise from turn challenges into opportunities (for economic growth). The people of Korea have dealt with hardships before, however, fought them off and never given up. This is a great part of the Korean identity sustained by the national discourse. Furthermore, the national discourse creates the identity of Korea as a leading nation. Korea firstly became known for its miraculous economic transformation. A development that in later years have been argued to be a model for other developing countries to follow. Korea is now a part of the G20 and are also accepted to attend G7 meetings (G20, 2021; Yonhap, 2021a). Korea is also currently a leading nation culturally. The Korean cultural wave (Hallyu) comprising music, movies, food and beauty products (the K-brand) has increased Korea's global impact (Kuwahara, 2014; Marinescu, 2014). The ideas of Korea as a leading nation and a country that turns challenges into opportunities are articulated through the national discourse to create an identity that all Koreans can relate to. Abstaining from this vital part of the Korean identity would mean losing a part of oneself. More explicitly it would mean losing the essential building block of Korea's model society developed since the 1960s. Hence, it is important to draw on the national discourse to maintain this identity. Furthermore, this identity help legitimize the overarching goal of economic growth.

5.2.4 Green Korea: Domesticating Ecological Discourses

The economic discourse and the national discourse do not respond to climate change on the premise of ecology, but rather on the premise of a capitalist economy, Korea's experience with the developmental state model, and how this model can be redefined in a green context. By incorporating 'green' elements from 'green' discourses, the economic and national discourses are used by the President to construct a green narrative. Based on this narrative, Korea must play the role as a leading green nation. Thus, Korea must continue to develop its industry. In this way, Korea can export the necessary green technology to the rest of the world. It is argued

that this technology is needed for the world to be able to combat climate change. The world and Korea are dependent on the further development and economic growth of Korea.

Furthermore, by constructing the narrative in this way, Moon avoids conflicts within the narrative. The economic and national discourse are not 'green' by definition; they do not experiment with transformative ecology or any structural change of the Korean model, like most 'green' discourses theorized by Dryzek (Dryzek, 2005). Hence, there exists no friction as the discourses used to create the green narrative do not really challenge structures of the Korean state. The contemporary Korean model is built upon the legacy of the country's historical development trajectory and growth as a survival strategy. 'Green' discourses would have challenged these legacies and created friction between the Korean model and climate change response. In this case, climate change response had entailed a total restructuring of the Korean model. However, the economic and national discourses avoid this conflict as they instead adapt climate change responses to fit within the Korean model.

Until now the discursive elements President Moon draws upon to construct the narrative of Green Korea have been analyzed. However, an important part of discourse analysis is to also examine what discourses are excluded from the debate (Skrede, 2017, p. 29). While it has become clear that President Moon create a green narrative by interlinking an economic and a national discourse, it is equally important to discuss which representations that are suppressed by this narrative. Discourses mark a clear line between what is allowed to say and the things that are excluded (Bratberg, 2017, p. 34). Within the narrative, President Moon constructs legitimate arguments based on the assumptions of economic growth as necessary to survive and Korea's capacity to lead the world in a green direction. However, what is excluded from this story is more radical solutions to climate change that would challenge the Korean model.

One of these alternative solutions is degrowth. This notion argues that economic growth is incompatible with simultaneously achieving environmental sustainability (Gunderson & Yun, 2017, p. 244). Degrowth is both a critique of growth, which seek the abolishment of economic growth, and it offers a desired direction for policy. The objective is societies using fewer natural resources, which entails a downscaling of both production and consumption (Kallis, Demaria & D'Alisa, 2015, pp. 3–4). Thus, as opposed to what the current green narrative of Korea is built upon, this notion argues that the solution to the climate crisis is a degrowth of the global economy. This degrowing of the economy should be done in economies that are 'overdeveloped'

and in developing countries which have ‘overdeveloped’ industries (Gunderson & Yun, 2017, p. 244). In addition, this concept also argues that there is a need for more public participation in the development of climate policies. The notion of degrowth has clear resemblance with the discourse Remøy (2014) defines as ‘green radicalism’. This discourse argues that, among other things, industrialization and economic growth are the causes of environmental problems. Thus, to solve the climate crisis there is a need to restructure the economy and give more power to marginalized groups. Both the notion of degrowth and green radicalism pose a threat to the current Korean model. According to both representations, Korea would have to turn away from the guiding principle of Korean politics: ‘growth first’. This would also mean to reject the legacy of the successful development that created contemporary Korea – a rejection that seems unlikely for the time being.

Degrowth and green radicalism also rest upon the assumption that we must accept sacrifice to combat climate change. Human life cannot continue to expand, nor can our consumption patterns or emissions etc. The concept of sacrifice is not particularly evident in the green narrative of Korea. It is recognized that the climate crisis poses a challenge to Korea, however, within the narrative there is an extensive focus on the opportunities this challenge creates. There is little focus on the ‘negative’ consequences of this transition. Climate change is by President Moon mainly presented as an opportunity for growth and further national progress, rather than a challenge we must overcome by using less. The earth has signaled that the current model has reached its limits. However, if we modify our consumption and production patterns to be more sustainable, it would be possible to continue to utilize the earth. Thus, within the narrative of Green Korea the notion of sacrifice is to a great extent absent. Representations such as degrowth and green radicalism has minimal resonance in contemporary Korea, as observed by Gunderson & Yun (2017, pp. 244–245). The narrative of green Korea is based upon the assumption that growth is necessary for Korea to survive. In consequence, representations challenging this are by default excluded.

5.2.5 Discourse Cooptation: Economic Growth to Save the Environment

In constructing the narrative of Green Korea, President Moon draws on two discourses that in a selective way appropriates certain ecological points. In this way, the growth model that contributed to the climate crisis can be adopted as the legitimate solution to the very problem it caused. The history and legacy of Korea’s development trajectory is often used as an argument

of how Korea is going to turn the climate crisis into yet another opportunity. Thus, the growth model that caused the environmental degradation will in turn also save Korea from it. I argue that this is similar to what Jensen (2010) defines as ‘discourse cooptation’ in his article on Norwegian oil drilling. This term describe ‘how a discourse in a discursive battle enters the core of the opposing discourse, turning its logic on its head into a core component of its own make up’ (Jensen, 2010, p. 185). Consequently, he argues, the ‘aggressive’ discourse attains a powerful component, and is strengthened while the other discourse is weakened, hence contributing to hegemony and political support for the aggressive discourse.

In the construction of the narrative of Green Korea, the economic and national discourses enter the radical, green discourses (green radicalism and degrowth) and coopt selective ‘green elements’ from these discourses. While these discourses present economic growth as the cause of environmental problems and call for a restructuring of the economy to solve this crisis, the economic and national discourses use green elements to demonstrate how economic growth and continued development actually is the solution to the climate crisis. Hence, the narrative of Green Korea turns the logic of less growth to solve the climate crisis into the idea that more growth is an adequate climate change response. As a result, Korea’s development of green industries and priority of economic growth is not a hinder for saving the earth from climate change, rather it is needed to successfully respond to climate change. Korea has the capacity to develop the green technology the world needs to respond to climate change. That Korea develops green technology becomes important not only for Korea, but for the rest of the world as well. In this sense, economic growth as an appropriate response to climate change is strengthened.

In this first part of the analysis on social practice I have clarified how the economic and national discourse draws on green elements, and how these two discourses are linked in order to create the narrative of Green Korea. I argue that the way the narrative of Green Korea is constructed by President Moon contributes to maintaining the divergence between discourse and reality. However, the social practice in which Moon exists also limits and guides what discursive elements Moon can utilize. This social practice also plays a vital role in maintaining the divergence between discourse and reality. In the following section there will be a discussion on how this gap is enabled through both discourse and context.

5.3 The Divergence Between Discourse and Reality

In Korea climate challenge is defined as a question of economics and how Korea can continue the legacy of the developmental state. Climate change is not defined on the base of ecological issues, but rather connected to both economic growth and the reinvention of Korea's great capacity. Within system theory, Luhmann argues that communication within society's most important function systems is regulated by binary codes. In the economic system it is about whether you have enough money or not (Mathisen, 1997, p. 11).¹⁰ When something is communicated within the economic system this communication is defined by these binary codes. Thus, when President Moon defines the climate crisis as an economic question, is treated within the language and logic of money. When the government draws up climate policies it is based on a capitalist economy, rather on what should be the premise, namely ecology.

Critics of Luhmann argue that it is too elementary to define the economic system in such closed terms, only taking economic measures into account. The economic system is defined by more than purely economic factors. Furthermore, money is not the only measure of success within this system (Mathisen, 1997, p. 12). The higher degree of moral consensus that exist within society or the higher number of other institutions or groups that monitor the economic system, the more it can be balanced out by other factors, for example climate policies. However, as I have shown through the empirical analysis and the background chapter in this thesis, these balancing voices are particularly weak in the Korean society. Economic growth permeates Korea. It has since the Park regime in the 1960s and 1970s served as some sort of quasi-religion.

Given the history of rapid and miraculous growth created by state-industry cooperation, Gunderson & Yun (2017) argue that to change this notion of growth to save the environment will be extremely challenging. While there exist a civil society in Korea which in theory can function as legitimate counterweight (as it has shown to be in the democratic movement), the environmental movement is still very weak (Kalinowski, 2021). Thus, in contemporary Korea, there are few actors that function as a valid opposition to the quasi-religion of economic growth. In 5.4 there will be a more in-depth discussion on actors in Korean climate politics, however, firstly I will turn to how the use of discursive elements enables the creation of one unquestionable solution to the climate crisis.

¹⁰ Own translation

5.3.1 The Only Viable Solution?

Discourse represents aspects of the world from a certain point of view. Every representation chooses some elements and exclude others in order to hide that there exist other alternatives or to hide responsibility. Political rhetoric evolves around making one alternative appear as unquestionable (Skrede, 2017, p. 169). By suppressing alternative discourses of degrowth and green radicalism, President Moon avoids conflicts in the green narrative. There is no alternative solution to how Korea should meet the challenge of climate change because these alternative solutions are restrained from making any appearance in the debate. I argue that this contributes to maintaining the divergence between discourse and reality.

GG rose as the political solution to climate politics in Korea. It started as President Lee Myung-bak great project for giving Korea a new development path. It has since become the country's undisputable answer to climate change. Even though President Lee was highly criticized both throughout his term, in the aftermath of it, as well as now being imprisoned, his successors have continued on his developmental path (Lee & Yun, 2011). President Moon have rarely evoked the term 'green growth', however, his administration's policies are clearly rooted in the GG paradigm that was launched in 2008. Still, the Green New Deal and the 2050 Carbon Neutrality Strategy can be argued to be more 'radical' than the KGGI. The Moon administration has pledged to phase out nuclear power and have suspended the permits to build new coal-fired plants (Kim, 2017; Republic of Korea, 2020). Despite this, President Moon is still continuing the legacy of the GG project through his language. The overarching goal of economic growth still guides climate change policies. Furthermore, since the launch of the KGGI alternative representations that challenge the notion of GG has yet to be invited into the debate.

The established way of talking about climate politics in Korea can function as what Mathisen (1997, p. 15) defines as a 'preservative'. By locking the discussion and debates within climate politics to a given narrative and the established norms, the dominant narrative can enable a suppression of competing or alternative narratives. Thus, if the narrative of Green Korea that President Moon constructs by drawing on the economic discourse and the national discourse serve as a 'preservative', it limits the debate within climate politics to this understanding of what the climate crisis should be met with. As a result, alternative representations, of for example degrowth or green radicalism, are excluded from the debate.

Throughout the empirical analysis I pointed to several assumed values, which according to Fairclough (2003) is of great importance with respect to ideology. When changing circumstances forces Korea to change its model, it is interesting to reveal which assumptions are considered to be natural or desirable. Shared assumptions have particular ideological significance as relations of power is best served by meanings that are taken for granted (Fairclough, 2003, p. 9). Furthermore, Neumann (2001) argues that assumptions reduces difference within a representation, and when representations are relatively unchallenged and appear as objective truths, there exists hegemony. I argue that this is the case in Korea today. The assumed values of growth as necessary, and economic growth and climate change response as simultaneously achievable are ideological work. These meanings are articulated as something that is taken for granted. Furthermore, as this analysis shows the developmental state have ideological connotations. Through the ideas which the national discourse is based upon the developmental state is justified and naturalized. These articulated assumptions remain unchallenged. In this way, alternative meanings and ideas are excluded. These assumptions reduce difference within the narrative of Green Korea, thus contributing to the hegemonic position of this narrative.

Contemporary Korea has a pretty stable conservative two-party system which has existed since the late 1990s. Middle-of-the-road liberal conservatives, like Moon, are through elections replaced by hardcore conservatives, and vice versa. However, with regards to climate politics there are few 'real' differences between the political parties. More liberal politicians, like Moon, do not necessarily implement more radical climate change policies than their opponents in the conservative party. Liberals and conservative offer similar solutions to climate change (Kalinowski, 2021, p. 7). The declaration of climate change as a 'crisis' was agreed on by both the liberal Democratic Party and the conservative opposition in the National Assembly (Byeon, 2020). All solutions fit within the context of the Korean model and the overarching goal of economic growth. There exists no real opposition to this representation of climate change response within Korean politics. Climate change response is presented with only one viable solution.

5.3.2 The Legacy of the Miracle on the Han River

While the analysis until now has circled around how discursive elements have contributed to maintain the gap between discourse and reality, I will now turn to discuss how the social practice contributes to maintain this divergence. Discourses are constitutive in the sense that

they have implications for the social practice. The way President Moon draws on discursive elements is contributing to maintain the divergence between discourse and reality. However, neither the President Moon nor the discourses he draws on are created in vacuum. The social structures of the Korean society are working as constitutive factors on these discourses. Thus, discourses are both constitutive and constituted.

Korea's economic miracle has contributed to the structuring of the Korean state. As mentioned in chapter 2 the development trajectory left Korea with a specific model for how the state should be structured. The brown growth model, the importance of energy security, and the proximity between the state and businesses are social practices resulting from Korea's development starting in the 1960s and 1970s. I argue that these structures affect what discourses are regarded legitimate in the discursive order of climate politics in contemporary Korea. Based on the strategies and policies of the Park regime a specific state model was created. Defined by strong corporatist links, an export-dependent growth model, a high energy intensive industry based on fossil fuels, and a high energy demand, these structures influence which climate policies are seen as legitimate.

Historic institutionalism is often used to argue how a temporal phenomenon influence the origin and change in economic or political institutions (Fioretos, Falleti & Sheingate, 2016). Korea's development during the first decade of industrialization can be understood as temporal phenomenon that later have influenced the economic and political institutions in the country. This development created an institutional path-dependence. Path dependence is here understood as a conception where '[...] preceding steps in a particular direction induce further movement in the same direction [...]' (Pierson, 2000, p. 252). With further steps down the same path the costs of an exit (choosing an alternative route) rises. I argue that Korea has been following the same path of development that was laid out for the country in the early days of industrialization. Economic growth became dependent on a high level of export of manufactured goods. Thus, to keep up this export there was a need to continue to develop industry. While this economic development in the first decades was introduced to lift the country out of poverty, it created an economic model that is still dependent on the survival of this industry.

As stated by historical institutionalism, temporal phenomena like that of Korea's rapid industrialization can have far-reaching consequences for the strategies, preferences, and identities articulated by political leaders (Fioretos et al., 2016). I argue that this is the case in

Korea. While Korea's development trajectory has created a specific growth model, this model has throughout the years confirmed the idea and legacy of the rapid industrialization. The structural characteristics of the Korean state model limits the number of legitimate discourses within the field of climate politics. Discourses that challenge the *raison d'état*, i.e. economic growth are excluded from the debate. Thus, the social practice in which political actors, like President Moon, exists limits what discourses they can draw on to construct a green narrative of Korea. The strategies and policies resulting from the narrative that is created then again contribute to maintain the model of the Korean state. Hence, the narrative of Green Korea and the social practice of the Korean state are in a mutually dependent relationship, where they both are constituted by and constitutive on one another.

Given the structures the economic development and the developmental state created, the KGGI was adapted to fit this context. The policies and strategies introduced by the Lee administration has been highly criticized and showed to be way below par. President Moon has, at least rhetorically, tried to distance himself from President Lee by not explicitly employ the language of 'green growth'. However, the empirical analysis showed that President Moon's narrative of Green Korea is still very connected to economic growth and the legacy of the Miracle on the Han River. Furthermore, while the climate crisis surely has climbed higher on the global agenda since 2008, I argue that the economic and political institutions in Korea are quite similar to what they were in 2008. Thus, President Moon constructs the narrative of Green Korea in a similar context to what President Lee did in 2008. The number of legitimate discourse that Moon can draw upon in order to create this narrative are limited to the ones that do not challenge the legacy of the Miracle on the Han River. The social practice of the Korean state limits the way Moon can talk about climate politics. Thus, what can be presented as a viable solution to the problem is limited by the economic and political institutions. However, by not challenging the way climate politics are understood President Moon contributes, with discursive elements, to maintain the hegemony of GG.

5.3.3 The Mandated Policies: A Leeway for Korea Inc.

Based on the ideas from the empirical analysis I argue that President Moon creates a green narrative where growth is prioritized over climate change response. The climate policies are constructed to fit withing the structural context of the Korean model. Thus, climate change response is only legitimate as long as it contributes to the overarching goal of economic growth. I argue that this discursive practice implicates policies where climate change response is

secondary to economic growth. One clear example of this is the newly announced ‘K-semiconductor belt’ strategy from the Moon administration. With this new plan the government proposes to build the world’s largest semiconductor belt, however little attention is paid to how this is meant to be done in a climate friendly manner. Samsung and SK, two of the largest companies in Korea, are large investors in the project (Kim, 2021). In addition, as mentioned in the chapter 2, the ambitious Green New Deal has been highly criticized for being a strategy for Korea’s businesses to achieve economic growth (Ko, 2020).

The constructed green narrative of Korea entails no real structural change of the Korean model. The economic and national discourses do not represent any transformative changes, thus the discursive practice mandate policies where the Korean industry can continue on the same path without being challenged. However, by drawing on ‘green’ elements, the narrative creates an illusion that these new policies are an adequate climate change response, and not just economic policies with a green color. The annual growth rate has been in decline over the last decade. Between 1960 and 2000 the average growth rate in GDP was 7,9% (Lee, 2016, p. 72). This is in deep contrast to the average growth rate of 2-3% in the last couple of years (World Bank, 2021). Following this, there is a growing awareness around the fact that the current economic model is reaching its limit (Kim, 2008). Furthermore, if the international competition over green technology increases, this could pressure Korea’s industry to change. However, this analysis show that Korea has yet to introduce any real climate change response that challenge the notion of the Korean model. For the time being the narrative of Green Korea creates a leeway for Korean big businesses to continue the legacy of the Miracle on the Han river while simultaneously appearing green. If this narrative resonates with the global community and the dominant representation remains unchallenged within Korea, there are few incentives for political actors and businesses to change. Before any real green discourses are understood as legitimate representations in Korean climate politics, I argue that the gap between discourse and reality will remain.

5.4 Policies, Actors and Agency

While this thesis has analyzed the official political discourse in the quest of answering the empirical puzzle, it is important to discuss the role of other actors as well. President Moon is not constructing the narrative in a vacuum. To be able to fully grasp how the narrative of Green Korea remains unchallenged there are two actors I deem important to discuss: the powerful chaebols and the weak environmental groups.

5.4.1 The Power of the Chaebols: Business Interests as Raison d'état

Governmental organizations are argued to still be the main climate policy actors in Korea, playing a mediating role between civil society and business actors (Yun, Ku & Han, 2014). The Korean state is undoubtedly a vital actor in the policy-making process and has remained the main initiator of policies and strategies after the arrival of neoliberalism as well. However, the influence of the chaebols has increased to the point where it has weakened the Korean state's authority and power also in policy-making processes. Going back to chapter 2, in the 1960s and 1970s Korea's businesses needed to follow state planning, however as these businesses became a part of the global value chain, this dynamic changed. With the arrival of neo-liberal policies, the power balance shifted in favor of the economic elite made up of by Korea's big businesses. The chaebols still need the state to pursue policies favorable to them, however, they are now strong enough to influence the state in their direction.

The interests of the chaebols eventually have become the interests of the Korean state. In 2019, the 64 largest businesses accounted for 84% of Korea's GDP (Song, 2020), meaning that, for the time being, Korea is extremely dependent on these companies. In addition to their vast economic power, the chaebols can exercise power over public debate by utilizing their influence on media. Several media are chaebol-owned (Chungang Ilbo, JTBC), while others are chaebols themselves (Chosun Ilbo). Furthermore, practically all print media and major broadcasting stations derive large amount of their revenue from chaebol advertising. Thus, chaebols are largely able to shape public discourse (Jo, 2011). Furthermore, Yun et.al (2014) find in their study on climate policy networks in Korea, that there exists a 'growth' side and a 'environmental' side, and they argue that interests of the growth side have been stronger than that of the environmental side. Underlying the argument that growth still serve as the overarching goal of the Korean state, an echo of the 'growth first' policy introduced by the Park regime in the 1960s (Yang, 2006). In a state where the overarching goal is economic growth,

the actors that can fulfill this goal naturally possesses a large amount of power. In Korea, this power is located in the hands of the chaebols. When the power of influencing the public debate falls in the same hands, this cumulates into a great deal of power over the political agenda. Consequently, policies are to a great extent guided by business interests in contemporary Korea.

I argue that this structural characteristic of the Korean state hinders alternative representations of climate change from entering the debate on climate policies. The notion of degrowth or green radicalism would pose a threat to Korean businesses, thus they are seen as a threat to the Korean state model. The proximity between the state and businesses allows the chaebols to influence the policy-making process. This includes the field of climate politics. This is evident in the climate change policies and the speeches held by President Moon. There is little pressure on the already existing industries to change, they are on a very abstract level encouraged to ‘go green’. However, the focus is mainly on the establishment of new industries, creating a leeway for existing businesses to both continue on the same path while they remain a green reputation as they also invest in new green industries and technologies.

While I argue that the chaebols contribute to enable the gap between discourse and reality in Korea, civil society is an actor that have the possibility of challenging this gap.

5.4.2 Strong Civil Society, Weak Environmental Movement

Civil society in Korea has over the years shown to possess the ability to create vast political changes. The ‘June Resistance’ in 1987, and the more recent candlelight demonstrations eventually contributing to the impeachment of Park Geun-hye in 2017, are both examples of this. With regards to the fight for democracy, social welfare, and the battle to crush authoritarian rule, civil society has shown to be a powerful force (Kalinowski, 2021, p.12). As a part of civil society, environmental groups have also shown to be an important political force (Ku, 2004; Lee, 2000). As early as in the 1960s, environmental movements started demonstrating against the increasing pollution following the rapid industrialization. Over the decades environmental groups have opposed nuclear power and local pollution. In the late 1990s environmental movements managed to stop the construction of a dam on the Tonggang River, known as the Anti-Dam movement (Lee, 2000). Furthermore, environmental groups have a huge number of members. The biggest, the Korean Federation for Environment, count approximately 85,000 members alone (Kalinowski, 2021, p. 11). However, within the context of climate change civil society still lacks political power. While environmental groups have had some success in

opposing environmental problems, there has been little success in influencing climate change policies. Local pollution and oil spills can be argued to be more easily challenged because they don't necessarily oppose the structures of the industry. However, as I argue, an adequate climate change response entails a total restructuring of the Korean model which is a bigger threat to both businesses and political actors.

Kalinowski (2021, pp. 11–12) argues that there are three reasons for weak environmental groups in Korea: i) they have not managed to challenge the power the government holds over the political agenda, ii) they lack political power because the Green Party has yet to gain support in the public sphere, and iii) even environmental groups are closer attached to the fight for democracy and social justice. As this thesis has focused solely on the official political discourse there will be no in-depth discussion on the discourse of neither the environmental movement nor the Green Party. However, as the analysis has shown, the discursive and social practice within climate politics in Korea creates a clear framework of what can be said and done. Within the narrative of Green Korea, the government and the big businesses define the political agenda. This is similar to the first critique by Kalinowski. Any representation that challenges the notion of the Korean growth model is not considered legitimate in this debate, thus while some environmental groups and scholars argue that degrowth is the solution to the climate crisis, this notion is by default excluded from the debate. Degrowth and green radicalism is seen as a threat to the current growth model.

Chapter 5 has until now focused on what enables the gap between discourse and reality. I have shown that both discursive elements and the social practice contribute to this divergence. However, could this mean that a green developmental in Korea is solely a utopia? In the last section of the analysis I will discuss whether or not a Green Korea is possible in reality.

5.5 The Green Developmental State: A Possibility?

I argue that the absence of policies enabling a genuine transition of the developmental state model is maintained because such a transition would require the Korean state to challenge the very thing this successful model is built upon: 'growth first'. If Korea wants to embark on a journey of a genuine green transition there is a need to include alternative discourses that offers a more radical solution to climate change, i.e. degrowth or green radicalism, in the debate. For

the time being, however, transformative models and real structural changes of the Korean model are considered illegitimate representations of climate change response. The narrative of Green Korea serves as an ideology. The discursive elements of the economic and national discourses sustain the structures of the developmental state. The political and economic elites remain strong, while the ‘weaker’ groups, such as environmental groups, continue to be excluded from the debate on climate policies.

The lack of structural change to respond to climate change is not necessarily specific for Korea. However, the discursive and social practice within the social field of climate politics that I have discussed in this analysis makes the more ‘radical’ transformative ecological representations especially unattractive for the most powerful actors in Korea. These representations challenge the very core of the Korean state – for political actors and businesses, they are a threat. If notions such as degrowth or green radicalism are included in the debate, this could in turn mean less profit for the chaebols, and given how dependent the Korean state has become on these conglomerates it also means lower economic growth for the Korean state. Furthermore, given the proximity between politicians and chaebols, this could for politicians also mean less political support from the chaebols. Given the structural context of the Korean state model it is not surprising that the notion of degrowth is looked upon as an illegitimate solution to climate change. As long as economic growth serves as the dominant ideology of the Korean state a genuine green transition seems far away.

To entirely dismiss the possibility of a green Korean developmental state is, however, somewhat premature. I argue that there exist possibilities to conceive a genuine green transition in Korea as well. The Korean state still plays a vital role in the implementation of climate politics. Thus, it possesses the ability to implement more radical climate policies, had these policies been a part of the debate. In addition, the Korean public wants the state to act on the tangible environmental issues. While the focus from the public mainly has been on pollution and air quality, there is raising awareness around climate changes issues as well (Choi, Kim & Kang, 2020). Furthermore, while civil society for the time being don’t possess the political power to influence climate policies in a powerful way, civil society in Korea has demonstrated great force when standing united for a cause. Political actors like President Moon are limited by the structural context in which they exist, however, they also possess the ability to challenge these structures by including alternative representations and perspectives.

I argue that the first step to conceive a green developmental state is to include more radical green discourses as theorized by Dryzek (2005) and Zannakis (2009) in the debate on climate policies. In this way, these notions can challenge the dominant representation which today is based on economic and national elements and only slightly include green elements. The dominant representation in contemporary Korean climate politics is not green per se, but rather based on the logics of a capitalist economy and a successful development trajectory. The basis of the discussion on climate change response needs to switch from that of economics to ecology. In order to conceive a green developmental state Korea must accept the degrading of economic growth. The principle of 'growth first' must be challenged by alternative notions. In order to do this, alternative representations need to be recognized as legitimate.

It is already argued by scholars that Korea has grown into an eco-developmental state (Kim & Thurbon, 2015; Lim, 2020). By incorporating elements of environmentalism in the structural context of the developmental state Korea has over the years 'greened' its state model. The notion of developmental environmentalism was discussed in chapter 2. The Korean state has since the introduction of the KGGI in 2008 adopted environmental policies based on the same logic as the developmental state. Thus, climate change response has been adapted to fit the structural legacy of the Korean developmental state. However, this developmental environmentalism has lacked any successful climate mitigation and GHG reduction policies because such policies would require a radical departure from the developmental state model (Kalinowski, 2021, p. 2). Furthermore, environmental challenges are still prioritized by the voters, thus the Korean state is likely to focus on the issues of air pollution instead of emissions reduction as the electoral pressure on these issues still is non-existing. This analysis argue that the current climate policies sustain the legacy of the Korean state model. This contributes to enable the gap between the discourse where Korea is presented as a green leader, and the reality where faulty policies work solely as a mask for a business-as-usual approach. This gap will probably endure as long as any solutions suggesting a radical departure from the current model remains excluded from the discussion on climate change response.

Today, Korea is extremely dependent on carbon-driven growth. However, this extreme dependence exists to some extent because the overarching goal of the state is economic growth. If this ideology of 'growth first' had been replaced with 'less growth for better ecology' or degrowth, for instance, Korea would have been freed from some of this dependence. Then there would be no need to secure high rates of economic growth, thus the need to export a high

amount of goods manufactured by a fossil-fuel based industrial sector would be decreased. In this thesis I have emphasized some characteristics of the Korean state model; fossil fuel-dependence, energy import-dependence and proximity between the state and chaebols. As long as these characteristics continue to constitute the discursive practice within the field of climate politics, the constructed narrative of Green Korea will continue to reinforce these structures. Through this discursive practice, policies and strategies that maintain these structures are legitimized. Hence, to release Korea from the dependence on carbon-driven growth and to conceive a green developmental state, one step on the way would be to change the overarching goal to 'ecology first'.

6. Conclusion

In this thesis I have analyzed several climate speeches held by the Korean President. The aim has been to understand what enables the gap between discourse and reality in Korean climate politics. Korea has since 2008 fronted its green growth strategy as the ultimate solution to combat climate change. However, since then GHG emissions have continued to rise, peaking in 2017, thus showcasing the faultiness of the green policies in the KGGI. However, alongside the rise in emissions the Korean government has continued to promote the GG strategy as the only viable solution to the climate crisis.

Through the use of CDA I been able to capture the meaning-making process within the social field of Korean climate politics. Through interpreting speeches held by President Moon I have teased out a set of ideas which tie into two separate discourses. These discourses are in turn integrated with Dryzek's environmental discourses. What emerges from this interpretative analysis is a narrative of Green Korea. It is a narrative that allows for 'bridging the unbridgeable': arguing that economic growth (on the back of fossil-based and energy-intensive industrial model) is the best way to counter climate change. CDA assumes that meaning is captured through the study of language, and that all actions are based upon meaning-making. Thus, by analyzing the meaning-making through the texts this analysis has been able to reveal how a green narrative is constructed by the President. This narrative then legitimizes certain political actions and industrial practices – in essence, continuing along a well-trodden path to achieve aims that are fundamentally at odds with what the developmental state has previously been asked to accomplish. Consequently, this thesis argues that the way this narrative is constructed through language (discursive practice) give way to certain climate policies. However, as industrial practices provide the basis for the construction of the green narrative, these climate policies are not based on the premise of ecology. Rather they are based upon the logic of a capitalist economy. Hence, they contribute to maintain the gap between discourse and reality in Korean climate politics.

In CDA text, discourse, and social practice exists in a mutually dependent relationship. There is dialectic relation between discursive and non-discursive elements. Hence, while the discourse constitutes a given social practice, the social practice also constitutes discourse. Through the analysis of social practice, I showed how the legacy of the developmental state have created political and economic structures that generate a frame for what can be said and done within

the social field of climate politics. Hence, the social practice around President Moon restrains his opportunities and the available discourses he can draw upon in order to construct a green narrative. The most vital structures are the Korean economic model which entails a ‘growth first’ policy, the tight links between the state and the chaebols, and the weak environmental movement. These are all legacies from the developmental state. The ideas on which this state model is grounded serve as constitutive factors on the discursive practice. Through the discursive practice these ideas are again naturalized, thus through language use the ideas of the developmental state are justified. These mechanisms demonstrate how discourses are both constitutive and constituted. Both the discursive and non-discursive elements to the gap between discourse and reality.

In the analysis, I have mapped out the ideas in speeches held by the President, thus the ideas I tease out in this thesis are those of the political elite. Furthermore, my focus throughout the thesis is mainly on the economic and political structures of the Korean state. What this thesis then captures is the political elites’ understanding of climate change. I argue that this is a fruitful approach in answering the empirical puzzle. However, for further research it would be interesting to also focus on civil society and the public debate to get a broader understanding of how climate change is perceived by the broader public.

Through this thesis I have shown how the constructed narrative of Green Korea excludes other alternative solutions from the debate on climate change response. More radical green discourses such as degrowth and Dryzek’s green radicalism have never been understood as legitimate within speech community of Korean climate politics. In this way conflict is avoided as none of the legitimate discourses challenge the structures of the Korean developmental state. Rather the green narrative is constructed in such a way that it fits into the ideas of this model. As argued this meaning-making guides the political action within climate politics. Hence, in order to change political action one way could be to challenge this meaning-making process. Here lies the window of opportunity for change. Thus, to bring in alternative discourse of climate change into the debate one can create such a window of opportunity. Discourses of degrowth and green radicalism could challenge the meaning-making process, thus in turn challenge the social practice. If alternative discourses manage to challenge the overarching principle of ‘growth first’ it opens for the possibility of a green developmental state. By closing the gap between discourse and reality the next Miracle on the Han River could be a green one.

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