

CENTRALIZED CURRICULUM CONTROL DISCOURSES:
THE CASE OF SOUTH KOREA

By

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ABSTRACT

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Three independent but related studies in this dissertation consider how social conditions, political alignments, institutional arrangements, leadership, media, and rhetoric collectively shape national-level curriculum reform in South Korea. Drawing on the empirical investigation on the 2015 National Curriculum Reform (NCR), the three papers explore different dimensions of national-level curriculum deliberation. Complementing conventional curriculum decision-making studies, this dissertation aims to explore the potentiality of the field of curriculum deliberation, which can gain analytical strength by applying theories in political science.

First paper looks at how key participants experienced national curriculum making in a centralized system particularly focusing on their meaning making process. Using constructivist grounded theory, I tried to answer two questions: (a) What meanings do key policy actors make of making national curriculum given their varied experiences? And (b) How do these meanings of national curriculum making relate to the way policy actors actually experience the curriculum making process? Findings show that participants attach variety meanings to the act of NCR and centralized system, the MOE's asymmetric power structures, impacts the deliberative environment in interesting ways.

The overarching goal of second paper is to understand how the 2015 NCR was talked about—across supporting and opposing groups—in public deliberation spaces. Specifically, I examined problem redefinition and public persuasion procedures while focusing specifically on

the following questions: (a) How the problems are constructed to justify the need for another national-level curriculum reform? (b) Which problem definitions get more public support and attention in Korean educational policy context? And (c) How did consensus form around one of the proposed problem definition? Findings revealed that the 2015 NCR was reframed as: a curriculum that (a) teaches more common contents, (b) is better organized, (c) addresses societal needs, (d) empower local schools and teachers, and (e) meet individual students' needs.

The final paper asks: How education reform agenda get public attention in social media? To be more precise, it looks at the role of policy entrepreneurship in the production and circulation of 'a math failure' framing in social media. Using text mining and critical discourse analysis, this paper explores the patterns in the aspects of frequency, word clusters, types of social media outlets, and associations with different user groups. I discuss the significance of using social media as going public strategy for education policy entrepreneurship.

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To Mom, Dad, and Grandma

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CHAPTER 1: MEANINGS OF MAKING NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Introduction

South Korea has a strong national curriculum (NC) that covers all subject areas in all grade levels. It also mandates the vision and the goals of South Korean public education, standard instructional practices, explicit teaching of Korean values, assessment/evaluation guidelines, and so much more. A NC is more than learning standards; it decides what counts as right, appropriate, and important in Korean society. It is public representation of purposes of education that “focuses on what the community as a whole deems to be valued knowledge” (Reid, 2005, pg. 13).

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has historically been the agency responsible for drafting the national curriculum and aligned textbooks. Prior to 1998, the national curricula and textbooks had been written by the Supervision and Textbook Compilation Office in the MOE (Sung, 2008). Since the early 2000s, the curriculum policymaking system has begun moving towards more participatory decision-making processes, encouraging the participation of classroom teachers, education researchers, and citizen organizations (Kim *et al.*, 2003). However, within the centralized Korean education governance system, curriculum reform still originates in the executive branch and academics and practitioners who are invited by the MOE draft curriculum documents. Some empirical studies also revealed that the MOE still holds asymmetrical decision-making power in the reform process (Sung, 2008; So, 2008).

Central to this study is the idea that individuals’ experiences and discourses may capture what is changing at the macro-level; specifically, I am interested in how key policy actors experience national curriculum making in a centralized system. Centralized system, the MOE’s asymmetric power structures, impacts the deliberative environment. The fact that “the Korean

people have lived under the authoritarian rule of government in relative poverty for many centuries” shape the forms and substance of NC decision-making process (Kihl, 2015, p.3). Unlike in Western society where the notion of curriculum centralization is rooted in the “neo-conservative” turn in the 1980s with simultaneous emphasis on national testing and accountability (Brennan, 2011; Apple, 1993; Ball & Bowe, 1992), a NC in South Korea has a much more deeply rooted history.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate contemporary meanings of making national curriculum among key participants of the most recent NC reform in South Korea. A key aspect of this project is to explore the tensions within the ideology of the NC in a modern Korean society where the authoritarian rule of government, and its related values and practices, is quickly losing power.

Through constructivist grounded theory methodology and critical discourse analysis, I tried to answer two questions: (a) What meanings do key policy actors make of making the national curriculum, given their varied experiences? And (b) How do these meanings of national curriculum making relate to the way policy actors actually experience the curriculum making process? Given that national curriculum making eventually shapes what counts as valuable knowledge in one’s society, it is critical to examine its process and key participants. Through elite interviews focused on their meaning making process and experiences, I study how school knowledge is selected, excluded, and justified.

I begin by situating this study within the literature on official curriculum and education reforms. I then examine the case of the 2015 National Curriculum Reform (NCR) and what were the meanings of national curriculum making based on the interviews with key participants. I conclude by discussing the impacts and outcomes of hidden values and tensions.

Related Literature

Curriculum problems are uncertain, practical, and complex. In this section, I describe studies on official curriculum and their consensus building process.

Official Curriculum and Consensus Building

The language of the official curriculum influences the nature of professional discourse in the ways in which it organizes knowledge and names professional practices, shapes professional associations, and informs the allocation of resources (Reid, 2005). The ideology of the official curriculum marks the stance of an educational system legitimating some activities and delegitimizing others; the purpose and the forms of official curriculum are shaped by and shape particular ways of seeing the world and the purposes of education (Reid, 2005). In this sense, national curriculum can be “mechanism for the political control of knowledge” (Apple, 1993, p. 234) and its decision-making process show “who has power in society” (p. 222).

There are at least two significant ways to approach the process of forming this document with a number of possible variations. One is to make the official curriculum document with a small number of education bureaucrats *within* the MOE, which is often followed by consulting outside writing teams for developing drafts and circulating them for comments by teachers in very short time frame (Reid, 2005). Another is to go a more radical route and create “the conditions necessary for *all* people to participate in the creation and recreation of meanings and values” (Apple, 1993, p. 238). In the first approach, teachers and students are passive and play no active role in conceptualizing the curriculum; in this view, teachers are invited mostly to the consultation process or through professional development for smooth implementation (Reid, 2005). In addition, this whole process is repeated as the ‘experts’ redevelop the official curriculum every few years (Reid, 2005). In the latter approach, it is ambiguous and

controversial to unpack ‘all people.’

Chisholm (2005) showed how it was complex to include ‘all people’ in the case of the Revised National Curriculum Statement in South Africa between 2000 and 2002. Fifty percent of governmental representatives and 50% of non-governmental representatives formed the curriculum developing teams. When they made available for public comment, different advocacy groups—i.e., a conservative Christian and homeschooling constituency, university-based scientists, NGOs, and teachers’ union—lobbied, resisted, and formed campaigns (Chisholm, 2005). The advocacy coalitions in these major curriculum reforms are often loose and temporary. They contain diverse interests that unite behind a particular curriculum reform issue (Walker & Soltis, 2009).

Education Reform for Economy

In the era of international comparisons, similar structures of policy narratives are evident across countries. The growth of international testing emphasizes the view that education is a central requirement for national economic development and political democratization (Kamens & McNeely, 2010). Baler and LeTendre (2005) found that international testing often fuels interest in national assessments and works as a stimulus for further cycles of education reform. The idea that education is a source of national and world progress and the idea that an educational system can be managed to produce desirable outcomes fuel the diffusion of international testing and related ideologies (Kamens & McNeely, 2010). International comparison, along with the influence of supranational organizations (Priestley, 2002), is one of the factors fueling the justification as a means for future national economic success.

This argument resonates with traditional nation-building discourse. In 19th-century Europe, France and Germany used nationalism to implement centralized education systems

(Satoru, 1990). In East Asian countries with highly centralized systems and patronizing discourse (Yoon, 1995), the nation-building justification of education system has been around for a long time. The discourse is often infused with psychological aspects, such as fear, and the intensity of the discourse increases in times of the national crisis—often, when the standing of the country in the global market seems insecure. Goodson (1990) argued that this sequence followed by crisis rhetoric is strikingly similar among many nation-states. With the global economic recession and intense international comparison, the foundation for national-level curricula deliberations is getting narrower, and an education goal that does not aid economic competitiveness is less able to find strong support. These arguments, which assume connections between standards-based reforms and economic competitiveness, are readily adopted by politicians, business leaders, and education reformers (McDonnell, 2004; Walker, 2003). A climate of crisis replaces the ordinary procedure of curriculum-making and invites extraordinary actions and new actors to participate (Walker, 2003).

Context

The constitutional arrangements of governance, which vary by country, can have huge implications for education policy and the actors involved in curriculum decision-making (Mintrom & Walley, 2013). Because education secretaries, ministers, and vice-ministers are appointed by the president and “gain their authority from a presidential blessings and from the chain of command that it implies,” they are likely to play critical roles in policy formulation stage (Kingdon, 2011, p. 28). In his analysis of the previous forty-five Ministers of Education in South Korea, Yang (2004) found that the ministers were appointed based on political considerations rather than their expertise, and they had shorter average office terms compared to other executive heads. The ranks of career bureaucrats are often dominated by the president’s

political appointees in a top-down model. Many critics have argued that the President can dominate her political appointees and that the appointees can dominate the national curriculum making (Sung, 2008).

Many academics and researchers are appointed as governmental consultants or work as members of various commissions sponsored by the MOE. Rather than indirectly influencing the debates through their academic papers, Korean curriculum academics and researchers thus sometimes serve as influential agents in drafting curriculum documents (So, 2013). Some researchers and academics travel between academia and government, and they build their career as ministers, vice-ministers, secretaries in the presidential office, education reform commissioners, and many other positions (Yang, 2004).

According to sociological theory, policies can achieve authority through legal status, consistency with norms, the support of experts, and charismatic advocacy (Spady & Mitchell, 1979). Both strong equity norms and intense academic competition have fueled centralized institutional authority in South Korea. Koreans are well-informed about the relevance of human capital and social justice rationales for nation-building (Darling-Hammond, 2010). The public demands that the central government create an equal and just social mobility game for every student, and accordingly, the central government has established strong institutional authority over the school curricula. Many Koreans believe that success in the education system promises a successful life; thus academic competition is very intense, and students and parents are highly sensitive about the need for fair assessments (O, 2000). This effectively gives the central government a mandate to create a fair system on behalf of citizens. In order to meet public expectations to guarantee every child an equal chance to succeed, the Ministry mandates a fully prescribed national curriculum to all schools including private schools (Darling-Hammond,

2010).

In all, ten major national-level curriculum reforms have been initiated since 1954 (Kang, 2003). In the first three reforms, the MOE itself initiated and drafted the new curriculum documents (So et al., 2006). In the next four reforms, the Ministry merely established a roadmap (or vision) for reform which public research institutions and reform committees subsequently used to guide the drafting of the final documents (So, 2013). In the most recent reforms before the 2015 NCR, presidential education committees were formed which had higher authority than the MOE. These committees then led the policy formation and proposed the reforms (So, 2013).

The case of this is the most recent curriculum reform. The 2015 NCR exhibited a top-down collaborative approach in its formulation. It primarily involved government actors, academics, and researchers, although there was also a public participatory and deliberative aspect since the process required practitioners and public to participate via official forums and public hearings. The 2015 NCR originated from the concerns of a small number of policy elites in the MOE who were interested in expanding ‘common curriculum’ in high school.

Methods

In order to study how policy actors experience the process of making a national curriculum, this study used the one-on-one interviews with members of the 2015 NCR Committees, key bureaucrats in the MOE, or participants I defined as “key participants.” Elite interviewing is one of widely used means of data collection in political science. It allows researchers to obtain accounts from direct witnesses and to fill the gaps and limitations in documentary evidence (Tansey, 2006). The insights of carefully selected key players can be critical in uncovering informal processes and considerations that precede decision-making (George & Bennett, 2005).

In the summer of 2015, twenty two interviews were conducted. Of those interviewed, three were career bureaucrats, two were the chief researchers in drafting teams, three were affiliated with non-government organizations, and fourteen were members of different committees of the 2015 NCR. These semi-structural interviews focused on their motivation and experiences of participating in the reform process. Table 1.1 is the summary of participants' biographies and demographics. All participants received a about \$25 gift card for the interviews, which lasted between approximately 45 and 90 minutes.

Table 1.1: Participants with Background Information

Initial	Self-Identified Relation to NCR	Affiliation	First Participation (Y/N)	Self-Identified Expertise Area
KKJ	Committee chair	University	N	Curriculum studies
HKH	Committee member	University	N	Curriculum studies
HES	Committee member	University	Y	Education philosophy
KDJ	Committee member	University	N	Curriculum studies
KDH	Committee member	University	N	Curriculum studies
JMH	Committee member	University	Y	Vocational education
GJH	Committee member	University	Y	Social studies education
SJW	Committee member	University	N	Science education
KIK	Committee member	University	Y	Teacher policy
KMR	Committee member	Public middle school	Y	Extra-curricular programs
SKH	Committee member	University	N	Curriculum studies
LSS	Chief MOE official	MOE	N	Secondary social studies
YMJ	MOE official	MOE	Y	Math education
	MOE official	MOE	N	Math education
SIS	Committee member	Parents' organization	Y	Citizen representative
CSI	Practitioner expert	Parents' organization	N	Math education, textbook development
JYH	Practitioner expert	Teachers' union	N	National curriculum
JNS	Committee vice chair	Public research institution	N	Curriculum development
LGW	Chief researcher of subject curriculum drafting teams	Public research institution	N	Curriculum development
KMH	Committee member	University	Y	Mathematics
PSH	Math curriculum drafting team co- leader	Public research institution	N	Math education
KON	Math curriculum drafting team co- leader	University	Y	Math education

Data analysis consisted of open and axial coding techniques, constant comparative

analyses, and simultaneity of data and analysis (Charmaz, 2006). I also used extensive memoing then open coding of both the interviews and my memos to develop initial coding constant comparisons to update the previous codes and fill out emerging categories. After subsequent revisions, I established the final coding scheme that was used to recode all interviews. To aide in the management of the coding process, I used Nvivo 11 Pro.

Findings

This study examined the ways key policy actors evaluate the significance of participating in the process of making national curriculum. Findings are presented by outlining multiple meanings that policy makers endorse to the work of making national curriculum which motivated them to participate in the first place. Then I present findings on how they have experienced the actual process.

Meanings of Making National Curriculum

As participants described their rationale and experiences of participating in the process of making national curriculum, it became clear that they attach a variety of meanings to it. These meanings included (a) preparing the nation's future economy, (b) fixing the education system, (c) constructing the vision of the nation, (d) setting rules, (e) reproducing hegemony, and (f) providing education services to students and parents. Table 2 outlines the six different forms of how participants evaluated the work of making national curriculum, along with descriptions and illustrative quotes.

Preparing the nation's future economy. This meaning frame is based on instrumentalism; public schooling is a means to advance the nation's economy by preparing the nation's future workforce. In this view, the future is more valued than the present and the economy is emphasized more than other sectors. The key aspect of making a national curriculum is to predict

and control the future, particularly with regards to the changes in the market. Therefore, people who have expertise in industry, technology, and markets, not necessarily in education, gain legitimacy for the work of making a national curriculum.

Fixing the education system. Policy actors who have participated in national curriculum reform several times viewed that a national curriculum document can fix some of the major problems in the Korean education system. For example, a wide social phenomenon that high school students sleep during their classes because they have to study late in the shadow of education institutions after school was viewed as something a national curriculum document can solve. In other words, this meaning frame viewed that a national curriculum document is capable of changing the competitive learning environment that the Korean students are in. In this view, curriculum experts, who can design a whole national curriculum with sequence and scope, should be the main group involved in making national curriculum.

Constructing the vision of nation. Making the national curriculum was viewed as national-level deliberation towards constructing the vision of Korean society. People who had this rationale all agreed that making national curriculum should be a long-term plan, which needs to be managed by an institution that goes above and beyond government and politics. Since the MOE cannot work independently from the presidential office, national curriculum reform will be affected by the power change as long as it is led by the MOE. People who advocate this view argued that a variety of different social groups should participate in envisioning their future community.

Setting rules. Making a national curriculum was seen as providing a framework for local schools in order to hold them accountable. People who had this rationale defined a national curriculum document as a set of learning standards, which is not so much prescriptive as it gives

a certain level of autonomy to local schools. They viewed a national curriculum document as the basis of holding local schools accountable. In this meaning framework, practitioners' participation was emphasized because a national curriculum is the rules that will be applied to their education practice.

Reproducing hegemony. One of representatives of teachers' union, an organization that actively opposed the 2015 NCR, viewed that making a national curriculum is the ruling class' way to reproduce their ideology. This meaning frame was different from other meaning frames in that it took critical perspective towards a national curriculum document; in other words, there is more harm than good that a strictly centralized curriculum control can do. The Korean Teachers Union (KTU) has led activism to improve working conditions and reforming school system against the MOE's overly centralized control for many years. According to this view, the ruling class in Korean society represents neoliberal, pro-Japanese, and pro-dictatorship values¹ and they try to reproduce these values through making a national curriculum. Therefore, ruling class, elites, should be excluded from the work of making the national curriculum.

Providing education service to students and parents. One of parents' organizations actively participated in the 2015 NCR. Their rationale was that citizens, redefined as students and parents, were excluded from the process of making the national curriculum for so long even though the document directly impacts their lives; therefore, from the 2015 NCR, they

¹ "After [Korea's] independence [from Japanese colonization], the liquidation of Pro-Japanese [groups] were absolutely necessary task of nation and history; however, it died on the vine because of the failure of the Public Special Committee. Henceforth, Pro-Japanese groups supported dictatorial government and were revived as a ruling class in Korean society. Pro-Japanese groups occupied critical positions in all areas during the long years of dictatorship. Dictatorship was a strong protection for the Pro-Japanese groups' revival and Pro-Japanese groups were the strong foundations for dictatorship. In this sense, the presence of Pro-Japanese groups was the obstacle of Korea's democratization; the liquidation of Pro-Japanese groups, therefore, has democratic values [in Korean society]." (Park, 2011, pg. 130)

participated in the deliberation as citizen watchdog groups. Particularly, they used many means to reduce the number of topics from math curriculum, and it was justified as an attempt to improve the quality of education service for students. It was emphasized that education customers, students and parents, should take a large involvement in the making of a national curriculum.

Table 1.2: Meaning of Making National Curriculum

Meaning	Description	Illustrative Quote
Preparing nation's future economy	Making NC is accurately predicting possible changes in future society, particularly in areas of industry and technology, and preparing younger generations to advance nation's competitiveness in global market.	<p>“We’ve been continuously claiming that ‘Don’t do curriculum [making] with just a few education scholars.’ Our country has a variety of experts, [they can decide] how the world is changing, what to teach and what not to teach, what basic knowledge we should teach children who have to carry our society, how to cultivate that ability in elementary and secondary schools to be a certain type of human capital. These things.” (Professor KMH)</p> <p>“우리가 계속 주장하는 게 교육과정은 교육학자 몇 사람 모여서 하지 마라. 세상이 어떻게 변하는지, 여러 우리나라 전문가들이 있으니까. 이런 건 가르쳐야 하고 이런 건 빼야 하고, 우리가 미래에 우리 사회를 짊어지고 나갈 아이들이 어떤 소양을 초·중고등학교에서 길러서 어떠한 형태의 인재로 자라나야 할 것인지 이런 것부터 먼저.”</p>
Fixing education system	Making NC is seen as an effective solution to fix current educational issues regarding public schooling.	<p>“Education experts’ desperate acknowledgement was there: Lecture-based classes and multiple choice evaluation, those things can’t cultivate a person who can lead future knowledge information society. Then, [let’s] change teaching. If we don’t remove these heavy learning contents from curriculum and textbook, we can’t change teaching.” (Mr. LSS)</p> <p>“강의 식 수업에다가 객관식 평가. 이걸로는 어쨌든 미래지식정보사회를 이끌어갈 인재를 만들 수 없다는 절박한 인식이 교육계 내부에 퍼져있던 거죠. 그러면서 수업을 바꿔야 되겠다. 수업을 바꾸려면 이 과도한 지식의 양을 교육과정과 교과서에서 덜어내지 않으면 바꿀 수 없다는 거예요.”</p>
Constructing the vision of nation	Making NC is a national-level deliberation process of constructing the vision of nation.	<p>“A society thinks about what kind of a country we want to build in the future; and for that, what we should include [in curriculum]—I think it should be a space where we can fully discuss those things.” (Professor GJH)</p> <p>“한 사회가 미래에 어떤 방식의 국가를 만들 것인가를 생각을 하고, 그걸 위해서 최소한의 어떤 내용을 담아 내야 되는가에 대해서 충분히 논의할 수 있는 그런 자리여야 한다고 저는 생각을 해요.”</p>

Table 1.2 (cont'd)

Setting rules	Making NC is seen as setting universal rules for education practices of local schools.	<p>“I think we need the national curriculum. National curriculum, somewhat, if I speak technically, controls—it is social control anyways—the school curriculum. Like in the sixth grade, you learn this and this, for this goal; I think we need this part.” (Professor KDH)</p> <p>“저는 국가교육과정은 필요하다고 봐요. 국가 교육과정이 학교 교육과정을 어느 정도, 정확하게 말하면, 어느 정도 통제할까요, 어차피 사회 통제잖아요? 초등학교 6년 동안에 어떤 것들을 배우라, 어떤 목표를 향해서, 이런 부분은 있어야 된다고 봐요.”</p>
Reproducing hegemony	Making NC is ruling class’ attempt to reproduce their hegemony particularly to justify the history of pro-Japanese and dictatorship.	<p>“[National curriculum] is to ideologically rule [people]. ‘An educated person,’ that section has a lot of very conservative and capitalistic values. Ideology needs to be reproduced. What is the standardization of history textbook? It’s an attempt to erase pro-Japanese activities and dictatorship from the history. It’s the ruling class’ reproduction of ideology. (Mr. JYH)</p> <p>“이념적으로 지배하려는 거죠. 바람직한 인간상, 이 부분은 대단히 보수적이고, 자본 친화적인 가치들이 많이 들어와 있습니다. 이념은 계속 재생산 되어야 한다는 거죠. 교과서 국정화가 뭐예요. 친일과 독재의 역사를 지우고자 하는 시도예요. 지배계층의 이념의 재생산입니다.”</p>
Providing education service to students and parents	Making NC is seen as one of tools to prove the quality of education service for students and parents.	<p>“To our members and to public, we need to give some hope. ‘[Math content] is reduced a bit by bit and less pressure for our children,’ ‘Pain of studying math can be reduced.’ Right now, parents’ outcry about math pain (their children’s stress of studying math) is so great. Our members [say that]. So, we need to give them some answers.” (Mr. CSI)</p> <p>“우리 회원들에게, 또 시민들에게 조금씩 줄어서 애들한테 부담이 좀 적어진다, 수학교육이 좀 줄어들 수 있다, 이런 희망을 좀 줘야 되잖아요. 지금 부모님들이 수학 고통에 대한 호소가 대단히 세거든요. 우리 회원들이. 그래서 그거에 대한 답을 우리는 좀 줘야 되잖아요.”</p>

What It Means to Make National Curriculum

In terms of the second research question on how meanings of making a national curriculum policy makers endorsed, it was related to how they experienced the actual process. As I probed further for how policy actors came to actively engage in the 2015 NCR process, I found that there are common patterns of experiences that influenced their dominant reasoning of the significance of making national curriculum. In the following, I provide examples of what these experiences looked like for participants.

Disciplinary Hierarchy: Elitism. Multiple participants in this study described the hierarchy in academic disciplines. Particularly, it was predominant culture of science and mathematics fields to devalue science or math education experts. For example, Professor SJW, a science educator, who led the science team in the 2015 NCR said: “Here’s [scientists’] default attitude: ‘Science teachers must have not been doing their job right in secondary schools; that is why our students, in university, don’t even know these basics.’” In the example, the scientist group blamed secondary science teachers for university freshmen’s lack of science knowledge, for not teaching “right” lessons. A chain of blame comes to science educators: “[and they eventually say] What happened to teachers? Isn’t it because the college of education dominates teacher preparation?” In addition, Professor SJW explained that it is not uncommon that scientists publically insult science educators in places like public hearings.

Participants described why university faculties in science and mathematics have a certain level of expectation for their freshmen. Since most of Korean universities are using “the same textbook that the prestigious US universities use,” which are designed for students who completed “A-Level or AP courses,” university faculties expect Korean students to be at the same level (Professor SJW). In a similar vein, Professor KMH, a mathematics professor in the prestigious university said: “Those good universities in the US, in Europe, and many

private schools teach a way more things and expect more from their students than us.” He thinks that the Korean education system, compared to private schools and good universities in the US and Europe, is not academically excellent and it is a problem that those elite schools abroad teach more than Korean schools. Professors SJW and KMH’s narratives show an elite scholar group’s interest regarding making a national curriculum: What goes in the national curriculum affects the level of their university courses. Elite scholars who share this figured world hope their classroom to be similar to that of prestigious universities in the US or in Europe. Within their figured world, they have desire to maintain scholarly rigor and academic prestige.

Mr. CSI, a policy entrepreneur² who has affiliation in a parents’ organization also experienced the disciplinary hierarchy and elitism. At one of the conferences that his organization hosted, four panelists—a parent, a journalist, a teacher, and a math educator—discussed the topic of math curriculum. At the end of their presentation, a mathematician who was sitting in the audience stood up and asked why there is no mathematician in such an important discussion. People at the conference tried to explain to him that there is a university professor sitting on the stage but he said, ‘That person is not a mathematician.’ Mr. CSI described, “It was a scene that captured the field of mathematics disdaining a math educator and it was exposed to general public. I was in shock.”

Disciplinary Hierarchy Combine with Extrinsic Value of Education. Disciplinary hierarchy was not always in the form of superiority or elitism. In fact, it was more common in the form of the extrinsic value of education. In this line of reasoning, public schools and national curriculum were viewed as means to economic prosperity; thus it was important for people who have expertise in industry, technology, and science to take the lead on making the

² Policy entrepreneurs are “[h]ighly motivated individuals or small teams that can do much to draw attention to policy problems, present innovative policy solutions, build coalitions of supporters, and secure legislative action” (Mintrom & Norman, 2009. pg. 649).

national curriculum. Professor KMH and the groups of scientists and mathematicians repeatedly complained about a member of the Reform Committee. They could not accept a science or a math educator as one of their own because: “They are people doing *that* (education). They don’t have idea about future society and how things like ICT will change future” (Professor KMH). Professor KMH believed that making a national curriculum is important because it is the work of preparing younger generations for the future. Therefore, it is important for experts who can predict those changes to set the directions for the national curriculum.

Politicians including the presidential office also viewed public schools and national curriculum as an instrument: “One of the president’s pledges was ‘Creative Economy,’ which requires someone like Mark Zuckerberg and Steve Jobs who can make creative products and those kind of economy, which is then transferred to the national curriculum” (Professor GJH). The emphasis of science and technology education in relation to economy was prevalent as Professor SJW recalled: “Some of the leaders in science and technology field along with those politicians who don’t have background in science and technology seemed to think [science and technology education] was important. There were a lot of talks about Steve Jobs then.” By prioritizing economy, disciplines which directly related to the means of production gain more significance in national curriculum. For example, the 2015 NCR included computer programming (Software) in the school curriculum because “it’s highly valuable in the global market” which “may help advancing market competitiveness” (Mr. JYH).

Administrative Authority. National curriculum reform originates and is supervised by the central government mainly by the MOE. When a national curriculum reform occurs, the central government reifies their administrative authority throughout the reform process. A national curriculum document decides what should be included and excluded in classrooms, which decides the fate of a subject. Whether or not included in a national curriculum

document, for how many required credits, impacts “the number of teacher candidates” that a “department can prepare” and “its position in elementary and secondary schools” (Professor GJH). All participants agreed that the national curriculum is an access point for a series of profits such as a number of teaching credentials, department’s political position within a college or university, or perhaps potential research grants. A total number of credits are limited and the MOE has power to decide which subject gets priority. This incomparable power is exercised every time a national curriculum gets revised.

Dr. PSH, who was a chief researcher in the middle school math curriculum drafting team, experienced the MOE’s power while her team was drafting the math curriculum. The MOE pressured the drafting team to reduce 20% of learning contents; the team resisted but the MOE ordered, “Without an excuse, uniformly reduce 20%.” Her team finally gave up:

“Well, what can we do? After all, the MOE is the one who is in charge.

Towards the end, we were threatened by saying, ‘Okay, Do what you want. At the end, we can change whatever the way we want them to be.’ We heard that [kind of threat] a lot.”

Professor KON, in the same incident, felt that the MOE did not “acknowledge [her teams’] expertise completely or respect [their] opinions” and those experiences “happened frequently.” As a chief researcher in high school math curriculum drafting team, also as her first experience in making national curriculum, she experienced the emergence of a new figured world. Before she participated in the 2015 NCR, Professor KON believed that the MOE would acknowledge and appreciate her and her team’s expertise and autonomy; however, her expectation was negated. She learned the lesson and decided not to participate the next time.

Through the reform process, other executive branches and the presidential office also got to exercise their administrative authority. In those cases, even the MOE was clearly

subordinate to higher authority. For example, Professor Jang, one of the leading scholars in vocational education, captured how the president's policy agenda impacted the 2015 NCR:

“[The MOE] didn't have to consider [about vocational tracks when they revised the national curriculum] in the past but [in this time] it was not something Minister and Vice Minister could ignore. [Because] the President emphasized the vocational training and its infrastructure, which could lead to employment; she had great interest. Therefore, the MOE also had great interest [in vocational education].”

Professor GJH also experienced the power above the MOE: “If the Reform Committee disagrees with those policies coming from central government, then, there were points [we got] stopped by the system. [I] felt ‘subordinate.’” She also described that she felt the power of politics “throughout” the deliberation process.

There was an incident that the MOE revealed their subordinate position to the other executive branch (the Ministry of Science, ICT, and Future Planning), which made Professor KDJ, a member of the Reform Committee upset. The chairperson of the scientists association, with the Ministry of Science, ICT, and Future Planning's support, “paged a director of a bureau at the MOE” to “get a scolding” because scientists wanted the 2015 NCR to emphasize more science education but the Reform Committee disagreed (Professor KDJ). When Professor heard about this incident, he felt “resentment” because he expected the MOE to do a better job. In this incident he learned that the influence of “politics” over the curriculum making is too strong and it is inevitable because “politics” has “authority over personnel affairs.”

Idea Matters. One of the key issues of the 2015 NCR was the standardization of the history textbook. From the existing approval system, the Park administration tried to shift back to a government issued history textbook. Mr. JYH, who led a number of activism

opposing the 2015 NCR described it:

“Standardization of a [history] textbook is a part of the NCR. [The current administration or the right] try to dominate ideology. ‘Desirable person’ section [in the national curriculum document] has a lot of very conservative and market-friendly values. What is a [history] textbook standardization? It’s an attempt to erase the history of pro-Japanese [activities under colonial era] and dictatorship [in the 60s to 80s]. It’s the reproduction of the ideology of the ruling class.”

Mr. JYH has been doing activism work regarding the NCR for the past ten years and was actively opposed to the national curriculum revisions in 2007, 2009, and 2011. He believed that, “when someone gets political power, [s/he] wants to make the national curriculum to their taste.” He assumed that President Park and her conservative government were trying to regulate the historical narrative: “It’s curriculum coup” (Mr. JYH). He described the motivation for his activism as: “for democracy.” Polarized ideologies are pervasive in Korean society and affect the national curriculum reform as well. The interpretation of pro-Japanese activities under Japanese rule (1910 to 1945) and military dictatorship (60s to 80s) is one of key criteria signaling the political left or right in South Korea. The 2015 NCR under the Park administration, particularly with its initiative in the history textbook, was strongly criticized by political left for romanticizing dictatorship.

The pervasiveness of idea polarization was also experienced by Professor KDJ. He was invited to one of the conferences held by the parents’ organization—the organization led a campaign against elite mathematicians for a more accessible math curriculum—and found out that other university faculties were sparing themselves from participation and did not join those citizen-organized and critical conferences. He described: “I think it’s because our society is political. It’s a hard situation to speak [one’s opinion]. To go those places and speak

[freely], right? It's also easy to get 'Pro-North Korean' label³. So it's hard." Professor KDJ's narrative delineates that expressing critical view on the 2015 NCR, which was led by the conservative government, can be seen as extreme left to political right.

The chief official at the MOE said he was mindful about the ideology dichotomy and tried to maintain neutrality throughout the reform process.

"This time (the 2015 NCR), in regard to process, [the MOE] didn't do curriculum [revision] by the color of administration's ideology or anything like that. [Instead] we did it based on what was really needed in terms of social change and how teachings should change. [We] did it from an *innocently* pedagogical stance and social change stance."

The chief official used a phrase, "the color of ideology," which is a part of bigger discourse in South Korean society that may trigger issue polarization. His utterance implies that he was aware of the ideology criticism such as Mr. JYH and his supporters'. Along with activism, Mr. JYH and opposing groups "provided materials for journalists and taught them" and "talked with the members of National Assembly and superintendents" (Mr. JYH). As a result, the MOE tried to dissociate the 2015 NCR with the existing government's political stance by using expression "innocent (*sunsoo*)."

As a chief official leading the 2015 NCR project, he seemed to be afraid of the opposing groups' notion of devaluing the whole reform project by labeling it "ideological."

The Rise of Public versus Populism. One of the assumptions that are often held by participants was that if more "people" participate in curriculum deliberation process, it is

³ "The Korean neoliberalism is paradoxical. It is a combination of nationalism that oppresses individuals' political liberty and economic ideology which defines liberty as unlimited expansion of capital. Particularly, regarding nation, national interest, national defense, and national security, the phantom of olden days' ideology dominates the cultural hegemony; all the challenges to that ideology are forbidden with hyperbolized language such as 'the crisis of liberal democracy,' and 'color theory.' It is bizarre phenomenon [of Korean society]" (Bae, 2014, pg. 108).

more “democratic.” Particularly, opposition groups persistently complained that the MOE and the Reform Committee excluded them from the deliberation process. For example, Mr. JYH, who participated in TV debate programs several times on the issue of national curriculum reform said:

“[The MOE and the Reform Committee] didn’t respond to the invitation to a television debate. They didn’t invite [me or opposing groups] to official discussions. [The 2015 NCR] is going without deliberation. How can this be a public consensus? The democratic system is not working. It’s dogmatic.”

Mr. JYH and teachers’ unions were excluded from the official deliberation settings in the 2015 NCR. However, more “people” had a chance to participate in the process.

In the 2015 NCR case, a relatively new policy actor, a parents and citizens’ group, actively engaged with the curriculum making process. A co-representative of this organization explained their motivation to participate in the process:

“Since curriculum is pretty complex, the [past] governments often worked only with stakeholders and different subject experts. So the public was left out while stakeholders tried to negotiate with government secretly. Public didn’t know while [the national curriculum] was silently made. [Public] missed a very important thing. So, given that it shouldn’t be that way this time, we participated in this work. Also, from now on, we made a decision to take a part on behalf of students and parents, who are impacted by this curriculum policy decision.”

He evaluated the national curriculum making “very important,” and said that the public should not be “left out” “from now on.” “On behalf of students and parents,” his organization pressured the math curriculum drafting team, specifically, to make the math curriculum more accessible for all students.

He was invited to one of the official evaluation committees by the MOE; there, he experienced a variety of pressures from academic groups: “All sorts of pressure from academics closely permeated through all levels—the Minister of Education, the Blue House (presidential office), the Vice Minister of Education, some government officials, and committee members, and even drafting teams—their demands silently influence all.” In those committee meetings, he had to argue with the rest of the members who were all university faculty. He described them as “extremely uncomfortable and confused” because those elite groups did not have to deal with “public or parents” in “the deliberation process before.” He said the public or parents’ participation in the national curriculum making process is the “right thing.”

Mr. CSI, who led a citizen campaign on the math curriculum in the same organization described that the organization’s agenda—reducing the number of topics in math curriculum in order to make it more accessible for all students—is widely supported by the public and parents. He said, “Right now, parents’ outcry about [their children’s] math pain is absolutely huge.” He found the significance of him and his organization’s work as “giving [parents] hope.” He framed that students’ “pain” in learning math is due to “very conservative” “academic elites” in the field of mathematics who are the enemy of “students” and the “public.”

As the organization’s agenda quickly got public attention, it was threatening to mathematicians. Professor KMH, also a member of the same committee with Mr. SIS who had a number of heated debates with him named the organization’s work as “populism.”

“They (the organization) get signatures every day from people on the street. Of course there are many people who think, ‘Math is difficult,’ and ‘I don’t need math.’ That’s how they get so many signatures. [They claim that] ‘Few thousands signed just in a moment’ but who wouldn’t say yes if you ask them

‘Does it make sense to pay this large amount of tax? Let’s sign a petition for tax cut.’ My point is, this is a typical populism issue and they are abusing our democratic system.”

Professor KMH described this conflict as “almost a war.” He and few of his colleagues in science and engineering field “very passionately collected data” to make sense of the situation and to develop a counter argument; however, “they didn’t listen.”

While the tension between the group of mathematicians and a parents’ organization intensified, the MOE did not become actively involved. At the first public hearing, Professor KON, who led a high school math curriculum drafting team, presented the team’s first draft. Throughout her presentation, the parents’ organization held signs as a part of their activism. Professor KON felt that the MOE hid behind her back: “At the first public hearing, someone shook his fingers to me. What can I say? It was like being an avatar; the MOE’s avatar. I felt like I was fighting a lonely fight; but for what? Yes, I had those thoughts.” The experience of the 2015 NCR was disappointing for Professor KON:

“In the very beginning, we [participated] with really good intentions, for country and future, even though we don’t have much time. Research fund wise, they gave us less than ten dollars per meeting. And we have to fill out forms every time. Who would do this if they don’t have good will?”

Discussion

This study examined the meanings policy actors who decided to participate in the process of the national curriculum reform make of the work itself. Many participants attached a variety of meanings to this process and these meaning frames often conflicted with each other. As an official curriculum that legitimizes comprehensive education activities in elementary and secondary schools throughout the country, the national curriculum document has its own authority and weight. The MOE, as an issuing institution, maintained its

administrative authority, which revealed itself through its decision-making power. From the selection of committee members to managing public hearings, the MOE's authority was central to the process of making the national curriculum and participants in this study had to navigate through it. Since the deliberation process was designed and controlled by the Ministry, the chance for alternative views to enter official deliberative space could be vastly limited.

This study found that the process of making the national curriculum in South Korea is getting more “market-friendly” as more nontraditional actors take the national curriculum as an effective reform device. The MOE faced the pressure from the presidential office both directly and indirectly through another executive branch office to emphasize science and technology education for economy. As more non-traditional-education groups were involved in the reform process, the notion of techno-instrumentalism was intensified. “Preparing the future economy” was a strong rationale that drove the 2015 NCR, which all participants in this study somewhat supported except Mr. JYH. Unlike the values such as pro-Japanese activities or the evaluation of dictatorship, economy rationale was easily shared by different factions; most people agreed that one of the goals of public schools should be enhancing economic productivity. In contrast, factions were divided on the standardization of the history textbook and finally it floundered with the President Park's impeachment.

Participants in this study valued “democratic” ways of making the national curriculum and defined “democratic” as “including more numbers of people in the official discussion.” Based on this assumption, the MOE held a number of public hearings along with wide practitioner reviews; scientists groups argued that the Reform Committee should not exclude non-education academics; and parents' organizations collected signatures. The parents' organizations won this number game and successfully bended policy outcome (reducing the content of the math curriculum by 20%). This finding disagrees with previous

research about the process of national curriculum policymaking in South Korea, which has been called a *fake* deliberative democracy because the system excludes the public from actual policy formation discourse and policy decisions (Sung, 2008). This study found that publicity placed the curriculum policy formation process under public surveillance.

In a pluralistic society, the process of reaching national-level consensus on its entire schooling system is an uneasy one. There are things relatively easy to agree on whereas there are things rooted in deeper controversies. In the case of this study, ‘productivity in future markets’ and ‘have difficulty in math’ were the two areas where society-level consensus was reached relatively easily; however, it is important to point out that popular support does not necessarily mean pedagogically right. If the MOE continues to seek the justification of a centralized official curriculum by popularity, the values that are pedagogically right but controversial, such as the interpretation of dictatorship in this case, is likely to be excluded from the official curriculum. If the only ‘common’ denominator that is shared in pluralistic society is “industrial productivity” or populist slogan, what does this imply for the process of making a national curriculum? Or, is there way for this ‘common’ document to capture ‘uncommonness’ in the deliberation process? How should a consensus seeking process look like in a pluralistic society?

This study also found that many curriculum reform ideas held by key participants were borrowed from the US or Europe. “Steve Jobs,” “Mark Zuckerberg,” “good universities and private schools in the US or in Europe,” and “A-Level or AP courses,” were suggested as ideal approaches for Korean students. This voluntary borrowing of foreign ideas and its automatic justification mechanism was repeated during the curriculum making process. Throughout the decades of poverty, the ‘advanced countries’ practices were used as an unquestionable benchmark, and this study found that reasoning was still popular among key policy actors.

Conclusion

This paper examined what motivated key policy actors to participate in the process of national-level curriculum making and what were their experiences. I began by reviewing related literatures pertaining to official curriculum decision-making and education reform discourses. The case of the 2015 NCR showed that national curriculum discourses were dominated by economic productivity and populist slogans.

Deliberation is a complex intellectual exercise that is necessarily eclectic to suit changing contexts with pluralities (Eisner, 1984). The role of unavoidable conflictual movements within the deliberation process can be viewed as fuel for vital democratic decision-making, which can promote education reform (Frey, 2008). Yet even with the desire for inclusive and vigorous curriculum deliberation among citizens, many curriculum policy elites and the majority of the public will remain accustomed to exclusive top-down policymaking. Although, this study suggests that defining what a 'democratic' deliberation decision-making process is could benefit future curriculum decision-making.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Full List of Interview Questionnaire

In our interview today, I would like to explore with you several topics related to the Humanities and Science Integrated Curriculum, which also known as the 2015 National Curriculum Reform. Particularly, I would like to know about the work of the 2015 National Curriculum Reform Research Committee and how the 2015 National Curriculum Reform began.

1. **[How involved]** How did you get involved in the 2015 National Curriculum Revision project?

- Do you know who recommended as a committee member?
- Have you participated in previous National Curriculum Revision work?
 - If YES,
 - How was it similar and different compare to the previous work?
 - If NO,
 - If you can, are you willing to participate on a National Curriculum Revision committee again?

2. **[How started]** How did the 2015 National Curriculum Reform initiated?

- What is the rationale for the 2015 National Curriculum Reform initiative?
- What or who contributed to the 2015 National Curriculum Reform initiative?

3. **[Policy core belief]** What do you think is the primary problem of Korean National Curriculum? Do you think the national curriculum needs to be more rigor versus student-centered?

- Need to identify whether “content rigorous” versus “student-centered”
- How would you describe your overall philosophy about what the proper role of public education/national-curriculum should be in educating children?
- How much do you agree with the following statements?
 - The Humanities and Science Integrated Curriculum was initiated to prepare students be more competitive in *science*
 - The Humanities and Science Integrated Curriculum was initiated to prepare students be more competitive in *humanities*

4. **[Targeted policy belief]** What do you think “the Humanities and Science Integrated Curriculum,” supposed to mean?

- Among five policy options below, which is the closest to your thinking?
 - Curriculum integration means to remove current science and humanities tracks in the high school curriculum and the national college entrance exam.
 - Curriculum integration means to overcome disciplinary divide and take a new competency-based approach.
 - Curriculum integration means to teach each track students more of the other track’s material.
 - Curriculum integration means to teach each track students more of their contents (teacher science track students more science; humanities students more humanities).
 - Curriculum integration means to encourage school- and teacher- level integrated

instructional approach (it is about implemented curriculum not intended curriculum).

5. **[Committee Meeting]** How would you rate the quality of the deliberations within the validation committee?

PROBS:

- Spent the most time on
 - Reviewing previous research
 - Competency-based reforms
 - Integrated curricula
 - Content reduction
 - others
- Data/evidence used for decision-making
- Relationships/collaboration between committee members
- evoked the most positive/negative reactions from committee members
- Satisfaction
- Decision-making power (what kind/how much)

6. **[Perceived decision-making power]** Who do you think had the most decision-making power within the General Curriculum Draft Development Research Team?

7. **[Centralized system]** What is your opinion about centralized curriculum governance (the Ministry of Education lead development, revision, and implementation)?

8. **[Closest colleague]** Who are your closest colleagues among the General Curriculum Draft Development Research Team? Have you talked about meaning of the Humanities and Science Integrated Curriculum with them?

- How much % of total conversation with each of them?
- Did you know the person before participating the 2015 National Curriculum Revision? For how long? In what way?

9. **[Advice seeking network]** Whom did you ask for advice in interpreting and defining the Humanities and Science Integrated Curriculum over the past year?

- How often? (once a month; 1-3 times a month; 1-2 times per week; 3-4 times per week; every day)
- **(Expertise)** Who do you think had the most expertise in integrated curriculum design within the General Curriculum Draft Development Research Team?

10. **[Closing]** Finally, if you were to give advice to people who participate in other national-level curricular reform in the future, what would you like to tell them?

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CHAPTER 2: LEGITIMIZING THE NEED FOR ANOTHER CURRICULUM REFORM

‘When issues are reframed, often through the highlighting of previously ignored evaluative dimensions, our basic understanding of an issue shifts.’ (Jones, 1994, pg. 50)

Introduction

Curriculum decisions are fundamentally political choices. From a school-level curriculum to national-level curricula, curriculum design is the outcome of dynamic, political, collective, and justificatory interactions among curriculum decision makers. Particularly, the complexity of deliberation gets intense in national-level curriculum decision-making because of the wide range of participants, the weight and sensitivity of curricular issues, and the comprehensiveness of the final design (Chrishorm, 2005). Curriculum problems are uncertain because the grounds for decisions are unclear: There are conflicts in aims, the problems are related to unique contexts, and people with different wants and desires are affected by the solutions to them (Reid, 1978, 1988).

According to curriculum reform theories (Decker, 1971; Schwab, 1978; Reid, 1992), a curriculum reform begins with intentions to improve current, problematic conditions, and it concludes with the selection of the best option among alternatives. In reality, however, this theoretically linear curriculum reform process rarely takes place. For example, in South Korea, where curriculum governance is centralized by the Ministry of Education (MOE), all national curriculum reforms initiated in the last three decades arose because of the dedicated efforts of a small number of innovative elitist policies (Kim, 2006). After the reform is selected as a policy solution, the government redefines the policy problem in order to persuade its audience that it is a necessary policy in the first place.

In this paper, I applied framing theories from political science literature to analyze the development and outcomes of national-level curriculum deliberation. The framing of policies, also known as “problem definition,” involves framing political conditions in a way that identifies the cause of the situation and indicates feasible solutions (Weiss, 1989). In doing so, the act of problem definition can legitimize a set of policy solutions and actors. By selecting and emphasizing some aspects of an issue, issue definitions focus the attention of the public and shape the constellation of actors and interests involved in policy deliberation (Dery, 2000; Edelman, 1988; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013; Weiss, 1999). Factions and the positions people take on a policy issue are neither fixed nor given. Policy framing and reframing can shore up support and marginalize political opposition (Schattschneider, 1960), and policy entrepreneurs may use framing strategies to build broader coalitions of support and overcome fragmentation (Weiss, 1989).

The case examined in this study is the 2015 National Curriculum Reform (NCR) in South Korea. The 2015 NCR rooted in President Park’s national vision called “Creative Economy,” which includes promoting a new convergence industry, investing in interdisciplinary research, and educating the “Creative, Integrated, and Competent” person (MOE, 2014). When the reform was announced, diverse groups and organizations, including teachers, professors, and parents, were initially opposed to attempts to institute a new national curriculum reform. The previous national curriculum (from 2009) was still in the process of implementation at the time, and teachers and parents expressed fatigue after three decades of policy churn (So, 2013). Consequently, as soon as the reform committee was formed in February 2014, its first task was to persuade the public that there was a need for another top-down national curriculum reform.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the complexity of national-level curriculum

reform deliberation in the case of 2015 NCR in South Korea. A key aspect of this project is to capture and evaluate how discourses evolved around a national-level curriculum reform in a centralized curriculum governance system. This paper examines problem redefinition and public persuasion procedures while focusing specifically on the following three questions: (a) How the problems are constructed to justify the need for another national-level curriculum reform? (b) Which problem definitions get more public support and attention in Korean educational policy context? And (c) How did consensus form around one of the proposed problem definitions?

I begin by discussing the literature on problem definition, focusing in particular on the justification process surrounding policy solutions. I then examine the case of the 2015 NCR and the public persuasion and framing processes that surrounded it. Based on the analysis of public hearing records and other evidences of public deliberation, I describe the legitimization process for the 2015 NCR as it faced public opposition. The impacts and outcomes of this process are also discussed. I conclude by discussing the significance of using a framing approach in analyzing curriculum deliberation processes. With those parts, this study explores the discursive patterns in curriculum reform discourse to identify the association and dissemination of values and beliefs leading curriculum policy trends.

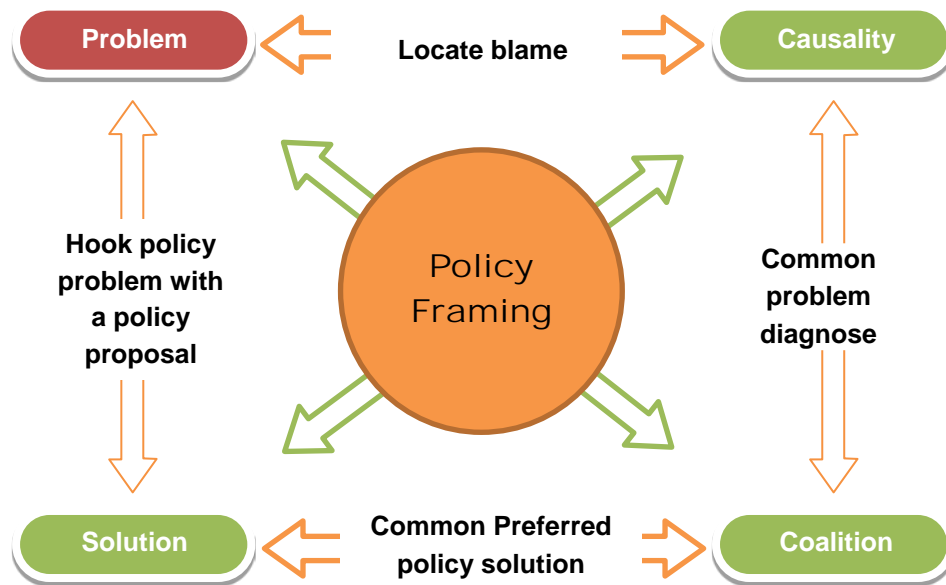
Relevant Literature

The policy framing research tradition originated from Schattschneider (1957, 1960), who believed that conflict is the lynchpin of the policymaking process. He studied the development of conflicts in terms of their intensity, visibility, scope, and direction, and he argued that the management of these factors can be a powerful political tool (Schattschneider 1960). If a problem is strategically defined in the public policy arena, it is possible to mobilize support and marginalize political opposition (Schattschneider 1960). The ultimate

function of defining a problem in political discourse is to persuade (Rocheffort & Cobb, 1994).

If a policy is initiated because of political reasons, such as changes in the national mood or the power of certain policy elites, then solutions are often identified before problems; since policy solutions are already fixed, a great deal of effort is made in search for a problem and aligned rationale (Zahariadis, 2014). A particular solution prompts the identification of causes because political actors who favor particular intervention strategies highlight those causal factors that can be targeted by their ideas (Rocheffort & Cobb, 1994). Policy entrepreneurs—policy actors who have the resources and willingness to intervene in policymaking processes—often define problems in such a way that their favored policy proposal becomes the preferred solution (McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). These policy entrepreneurs are usually indispensable in linking policy problems, policy solutions, and political dynamics (Kingdon, 1995). Skillful policy entrepreneurs use framing to capture the attention of policymakers and the public to advocate their policy proposals (Zahariadis, 2014).

Figure 2.1: Problem Definition Framework



Multiple factors—including cultural values, interest group advocacy, scientific information, professional advice (Rocheftort & Cobb, 1994), institutional structure (Baumgartner & Jones 1991; Jones, 1994), external events (Baumgartner & Jones 1991; Kingdon 1995; Rocheftort & Cobb, 1994)—affect the public’s perceptions of policy issues and the interventions that follow. Language is crucial because it is the medium through which the process occurs (Edelman, 1988). Often, rhetoric is used to generate blame in politics (Weaver, 1986). Blaming and fault-finding can be a strategic choice to create the momentum needed for a particular policy alternative; however, it ‘has both potential benefits and costs’ (Weaver, 1986). For example, in education policy discourse, it is not uncommon for classroom teachers to be blamed for students’ poor academic performance; however, strong accountability rhetoric may damage teachers’ efficacy and motivation (Kumashiro, 2011).

South Korean Context and the 2015 NCR

In general, as in most parliamentary systems, legislative initiatives in South Korea primarily originate in the executive branch (Weaver & Rockman, 1993). The national

education agenda (including curriculum reform) is set by presidential advisory committees or leaders in the MOE, who are appointed by the president. In curriculum reform, the MOE invites academics and other interest groups (e.g. teachers and citizen organizations) to contribute to the drafting of the curriculum document. After state actors and other interests are consulted, the Minister of Education makes an official notification. In a case like this, “[t]he mode of executive-legislative relations and state-society relations will determine the locus for and the extent of influence of societal interests in policy formulation” (Mazur, 1996, pg. 13).

Kim (2006) analyzed the institutional process of national curriculum reform in South Korea, describing it across four stages. The first stage is the establishment stage where the legitimization of the need for another national curriculum reform occurs. In order to secure a legitimization rationale, efforts are made to arouse public support and marginalize opposition. In the second stage, different subject area interest groups compete intensely to procure more instructional hours within the national curriculum. As the national curriculum document mandates the exact number of instructional hours of teaching in each subject per week, the time allocation issue is associated with a number of long-term benefits, including the number of teaching positions in the subject, the quota of university students enrolled in the subject, and the relative power of departmental university professors (So, 2008; Sung, 2008). In the third stage, teams are divided into their subject areas to draft curricula as isolated from the other subject teams. The last stage is where the final curriculum document is justified in a “nondecision-making” way without any evaluation, feedback, or questions. According to Kim (2006), in previous national curriculum reforms, a mainstream policy community was formed and their shared ideas and practices have been noticeably institutionalized.

The 2015 NCR started in October 2013 and ended in September 2015 as the MOE

released its final national curriculum documents. The other name for the 2015 National Curriculum was the Humanities and Science Integrated Curriculum because it originated with the Minister Seo's vision to integrate the humanities and science tracks to promote a common education for all high school students. On the other hand, echoing President Park's education slogan, "Happy Education," the MOE repeatedly advertised the 2015 NCR as a part of a "Happy Education" plan.

Methods

This study explores the curriculum deliberation process of the 2015 NCR which happened over two years from October 2013 to September 2015. In this section, I describe research design, data sources and approach to data analysis.

Research Design

This within-case qualitative study employs process tracing methods to explore the development of policy legitimization with regard to the national curriculum reform (George & Bennett, 2005; Bennett & Elman, 2006). Process tracing methods allow for insights into causal mechanisms which link the multiple features and actors involved in specific events (George & Bennett, 2005). The goal of process tracing is to obtain information about specific events and processes (Tansey, 2007; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). Applying process tracing, I organized the evolution of curriculum deliberation throughout policy formation process by lining public speech artifacts in chronological order. Then, I analyzed each artifact with a problem definition framework. I focus on curriculum deliberation in public spheres throughout the 2015 NCR process to explore how the justification for the need of another national-level curriculum reform develops, evolves, and changes.

Data Sources

Both process tracing and case study require an examination of a wide range of data sources— i.e., histories, archival documents, interview transcripts, and other sources (George & Bennett, 2005). In order to explore curriculum deliberation in public spaces, this study used public hearing records, news, editorials, columns, statements, press releases, and policy documents. 109 documents were archived and stratified by time to provide an initial overview of the event (Yin, 2013) (for the full list of documents, please see appendix A).

Broadly my goal was to understand how the 2015 NCR was talked about—across supporting and opposing groups—in public deliberation spaces. The records and sourcebooks of the official public hearings and forums, which were open to general public, were the main source of information for this case study. Those public deliberation events were not only hosted by the MOE or the Reform Committee but also by several members of the National Assembly, the Korean Federation of Teachers' Association (KFTA), and the Educational Broadcast System (EBS). In addition, columns and news editorials in the major newspapers on the topic of the 2015 NCR were collected via Naver (<http://www.naver.com>) and the Korean news data base (www.mediagaon.or.kr). Statements and press releases of different social groups and institutions (e.g., teachers' union, parents' organization, professors, etc.) were also selected as evidence of public deliberation.

Data Analysis

I analyze data in four stages. In the first stage of coding, I used a priori deductive codes, which were formulated from the Reform Committee chair's presentation manuscript titled "Why reform the national curriculum?" and other literature relevant to curriculum change and education reform. In the second stage of coding, drawing on insights from

grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), I conducted an “open coding” of all archived documents. Here, my goal was to code and analyze their essential themes (e.g., comparison with other countries), perspectives on the Korean education system and practice (e.g., heavy test-preparation), and problem definition structure (e.g., problem: students’ intensive academic stress—solution: reducing amount of learning contents in textbooks and curriculum). In the third stage of coding, I tried to identify patterns in the data using an automated text analyzing program (NVivo 11 Pro). I conducted multiple query searches including word frequency, cluster analysis, and word similarity comparison to identify meaningful patterns within and across data (e.g., by actor identity and time). In the last stage of coding, all codes and the analytic memos made during the previous three stages were read again. Drawing on constant comparison strategies, I combined, separated, and discarded codes with the goal of identifying problem definition frames across the collected data. While I placed the problem definition theory central to my analysis, my goal—in doing four distinct stages of analysis—was to enable salient dimensions of my framework to emerge *from* data rather than applying the framework *to* the data.

Findings

This study examined the ways the needs of the 2015 NCR were justified when it faced push back from different social groups. Findings are presented by outlining five problem definition frames that appeared during the public deliberation process. Then I report findings on the changes of the MOE’s position throughout the policy formation process.

Why Need another Curriculum Reform

As different artifacts representing public deliberation processes were examined, it became clear that both across documents and within documents themselves, the new NC was

expected to solve many existing problems. These frames included: (a) a curriculum that teaches more common content; (b) a curriculum that is better organized; (c) a curriculum that addresses societal needs; (d) a curriculum that empowers local schools and teachers; and (e) a curriculum that meets individual students' needs. Table 2.1 outlines the five problem definition frames, along with descriptions and subthemes.

Table 2.1: Problem Definition Frames

Problem Definition	Description	Sub Themes
Curriculum that teaches more common content	A new NC will make sure high school students learn more common content and better prepared as the future workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common Curriculum (Science and Social Studies) • basic knowledge • balanced education • global competitiveness
Curriculum that is better organized	A new NC will restructure curriculum documents around big ideas and competencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big ideas • ways of teaching/learning • global curriculum policy trends
Curriculum that addresses societal needs	A new NC will address the need of safety and character education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety education • Changing society
Curriculum that empower local schools and teachers	<p>A new NC will recognize teachers' autonomy and expertise.</p> <p>A new NC will increase the room for school based curriculum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local schools' needs
Curriculum that meets individual students' needs	A new NC will provide opportunities for individual students to develop their interests and talents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual differences • Choice

Curriculum that Teaches more Common Contents. The idea of the 2015 NCR was first suggested by the MOE as a part of the College Admission Reform Plan (MOE, 2013). It was a problem, according to the MOE's press conference on October 25 2013 that high school students showed specialized knowledge particularly when there is a global need of "a person with interdisciplinary abilities." The MOE suggested "balanced education" as a solution which was again defined as adding two new common subjects (social studies and

science) to the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) [3, 6]. Throughout the deliberation process, the phrase most frequently used was “basic knowledge in humanities, social science, science and technology.” In order to meet the nation’s need of preparing “a person with creativity and interdisciplinary abilities,” the need for a new curriculum that cultivates “basic knowledge in humanities, social science, science and technology” was justified [48, 49, 50, 51].

“Basic knowledge” was interpreted at least in three different ways in the deliberation process: (a) expanding liberal arts approach throughout the curriculum, (b) emphasizing basic academic ability, and (c) starting more advance information technology education. The importance of a liberal arts approach was argued based on the industrial need. For example, in a public debate at the National Assembly (June 14, 2014; hosted by Eun-Hee Kang, a member of NA), one of the presenters said: “Integrating the Humanities and Science tracks can produce a person integrating liberal arts imagination with science and technology. Steve Jobs also said that Apple could succeed not only because of technology but also due to their liberal arts background.”

For scientist groups, basic knowledge was important because many college level professors have been facing their freshmen’s lack of basic science knowledge (The Korean Academy of Science and Technology, statement, March, 2015). In their statement (August, 16, 2014) the Korean Federation of Science and Technology (KOFST) said that:

“Basic science education in elementary and secondary school is essential in [the nation’s] science and technology core plan. All advanced countries made math and science as their core subjects; and China, who is fiercely developing, emphasize science education the most. Every citizen’s basic science knowledge is the most important factor for global competitiveness in the

future.”

Throughout the deliberation process, one of the biggest debates was whether or not to include computer programming (“Software”) into one of core subjects. Teachers’ union, for example, claimed that the MOE was “accepting industries’ request without any filter” (Press release, September 12, 2014); however, it was justified as newly requested “basic knowledge in knowledge information society” (MOE, press release, September 23, 2015).

The values in this framing such as “global competitiveness,” “rigorous common curriculum,” “basic knowledge,” and “industrial need” were supported by different social groups, particularly scientists, academics, and conservatives. On the other hand, liberals (Press Release, Democratic Party, December 11, 2013; NA member, Ki-Hong Yu) and many practitioner organizations opposed the idea of requiring a more common curriculum.

Curriculum that is Better Organized. The MOE and the Reform Committee promised that the 2015 NCR would change the ways of teaching and learning in classrooms. In this framing, a new curriculum was described as the way to improve “the quality of the learning experience” and “to transform from ‘know-a-lot education’ to ‘happy education,’ where students can enjoy learning” [48, 49, 50, 51]. It was a problem that teaching and learning in classroom was heavily relying on “rote memorization,” which was caused by the way the current curriculum was structured. By restructuring the NC around “big ideas,” it was expected to “fundamentally solve the problem of heavy learning content.” This framing connected a new curriculum with two existing problems: (a) unhappy students and (b) need to adopt a competency-based approach.

According to the Reform Committee and a few supporters, the results of affective attributes in PISA and TIMSS, and outside views on the Korean education system showed the

need for a new curriculum [16]. For example, the Committee Chair said in one of the public debates that the Swedish news described Korean students as “unhappy,” with “low learning motivation,” and “exploited.” Then she presented a slide that said, “NC will prioritize students’ learning” and explained that a new curriculum will fundamentally change how students learn. In the early version of this problem definition, it was ambiguous whether students’ “learning pressure” was coming from competition or curriculum. However, throughout the deliberation process, “restructuring curriculum” was strongly tied to a means to advance learning experience in classrooms. One newspaper column labeled the current curriculum as “the curriculum of child abuse” because it drives students to “over-learn” [35].

The idea of competency-based approach and the debate around its adoption precede the 2015 NCR. As the Reform Committee suggested restructuring the NC around “big ideas,” it absolved the prior research and discussions on competency-based approach. The 2015 NCR was justified as an attempt to “educate core competencies that future society requires” [48, 49, 50, 51]. It was framed that because “many countries in the world have already recognized the significance of competency-based education,” and it was important to reflect the global trend in curriculum reform [10, 11]. During the drafting period, the MOE and the Reform Committee asked subject curriculum teams to complete a list of competencies in their subject areas. Along with “big ideas,” a new curriculum was presented as “competency-based approach.”

This problem definition frame involved a number of curriculum trends in other countries and international comparison data. For example, Korean students’ lack of confidence and interest in learning math and science, which requires a new curriculum that changes students’ learning experience, was argued based on the PISA and TIMSS data [15, 16, 35]. In addition, for the case of competency-based approach, the curriculum trends in the UK,

Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Taiwan were examined and used as a rationale for competency-based curriculum reform [10, 13]. Throughout the deliberation process, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) in the US was used as an exemplary approach [26] along with Singapore's 21st Century Competencies [26, 48]. For example, when the 2015 NC was finally announced, the MOE's press release said:

“(Global trend in curriculum) Advanced countries, including Singapore, teach less but with more depth in their curriculum, which increase the transferability and depth of learning; they value the quality of learning.”

However, not all people agreed with the problem (“rote memorization”)—solution (“newly organized curriculum”) link. Most of opposing groups agreed that rote memorization and students' stress is the Korean education system's problem; however, some of them argued that it was beyond the curriculum document's capacity to change the ways of teaching and learning. For example, a policy entrepreneur who leads an education think-tank and strongly opposed the 2015 NCR wrote in his column:

“The quality of learning can improve only through reforming the evaluation system such as college admission, CSAT, and GPA system. However, without changing those, they decided to restructure curriculum around core concepts applying a competency-based approach. Both of those [tools] lack capacity [to change the quality of learning]; therefore, the chance of [improvement in learning quality] is extremely small.” [54]

Curriculum that Addresses Societal Needs. “The need for safety education” framing added in the early deliberation process. The *Sewol* incident, which happened on April 16 2014, made a tremendous impact in Korean society and the 2015 NCR deliberation was not

exceptional. In different public hearings, debates, and documents, the call for safety education was repeated. For example, one of the practitioner forums in 2014 had an entire theme about safety education [40]. Another example is the MOE's press release justifying the need of the 2015 NCR: "Need to reinforce safety education: The sinking of MV *Sewol* and other incidents raised the societal concern on teaching safety consciousness and basic knowledge" [48]. However, the teachers' union and other teacher organizations criticized linking safety education, the MV *Sewol* incident, and a new curriculum together. For example, in one of the public debates held in the National Assembly Center, one elementary school teacher said in her presentation: "[The link] is misleading as if the cause of the MV *Sewol* disaster is because of teachers and students' lack of safety consciousness."

The MOE and the Reform Committee emphasized from the beginning that "NCR should rightly address societal needs" [10, 11, 13, 26]. In order to address ever-changing societal needs in timely manner, the NC should be revised every few years; therefore, frequent NCR can be easily justified under this framing. The societal needs frame was supported by comprehensive social groups particularly outside practitioner groups. For example, a group of politicians hosted a public debate under the title of "the national and societal needs survey" to discuss the ways in which a new curriculum can address timely societal issues.

Other sub themes under the societal needs justification framing include: (a) economy, (b) shadow education⁴ issue, and (c) history education enforcement. Related to these subthemes, I found that a NC document was often associated with larger societal issues as an effective or a partial solution. For example, it was common to be argued that, by including certain topics and contents, the NC will solve enduring social problems such as

⁴ Private supplementary tutoring offered outside the mainstream school system.

unemployment, low birth rate, high private education spending, and awareness of national security. Those associations were rarely argued based on evidence; rather, tried to appeal to common sense.

Curriculum that Empowers Local Schools and Teachers. During the two years of the policy formulation period, the MOE tried to invite and keep practitioners in official deliberation spaces as one of the strategies to gain the legitimacy for the reform. The MOE and the Reform Committee repeatedly promised that the 2015 NC will empower teachers and local schools. For example, the MOE, in the first public hearing, said that the 2015 NCR is a “school voluntary curriculum which respects and supports local schools’ expertise and autonomy.” By recognizing and linking the existing problem—centralized curriculum control failing to recognize teachers and local schools’ autonomy and expertise—to a new curriculum, the empowering local schools and teachers framing was able to persuade many practitioners. In other words, practitioners and education experts who believe that local schools should have more power in their education practice could still consider the 2015 NCR as one of their options.

The 2015 NCR was framed that it would empower local schools and teachers by loosening restrictions in current curriculum. The 2009 Curriculum (current curriculum at the time) was quite innovative in that it introduced a number of new ideas, which then had a number of implementation issues. In addition, local schools had been under pressure due to too many legislations requiring teaching certain topics for certain hours. The MOE and the Reform Committee recognized those issues and promised that a new curriculum would fix those problems [e.g., 26, 44, 48, etc.].

However, there were people, mainly the teachers’ union, who raised suspicion that the MOE and the Reform Committee were using local school framing to justify the need for

another curriculum reform. For example, a teacher who participated in the first Expertise Forum said in Q & A session that, “Is it not [that you’re] adjusting the need of local schools into [this] because [you have to] revise the reform due to policy [order]?” Throughout the deliberation process, the teachers’ union persistently claimed that this problem (need to loosen restrictions in local schools)—solution (a new curriculum) framing was invented by the MOE and the Reform Committee [44].

Curriculum that Meets Individual Students’ Needs. One of President Park’s presidential pledges in education sector was “A curriculum that cultivates students’ dream and talent (꿈과 끼, *cum-gwa-key*),” which was basically to require one “exam-free semester” in middle school. The exam-free semester program was implemented soon after the beginning of the Park Administration and “*Cum-gwa-key*” became one of her significant policies. The exam-free semester program was such a big change, which called for directions and guides for local schools. The need for the 2015 NCR was again justified because current curriculum had nothing about the free-semester program. For example, in the September 12 2014 public hearing, the MOE press release said that the 2015 NCR will “provide the reference for the exam-free semester program.”

“*Cum-gwa-key*,” which emphasized individual students’ interests conflict with the idea to teach more common content; however, this tension did not get attention in the deliberation process. In a seminar with a small number of curriculum experts, though, a professor who was not a member of the Reform Committee said:

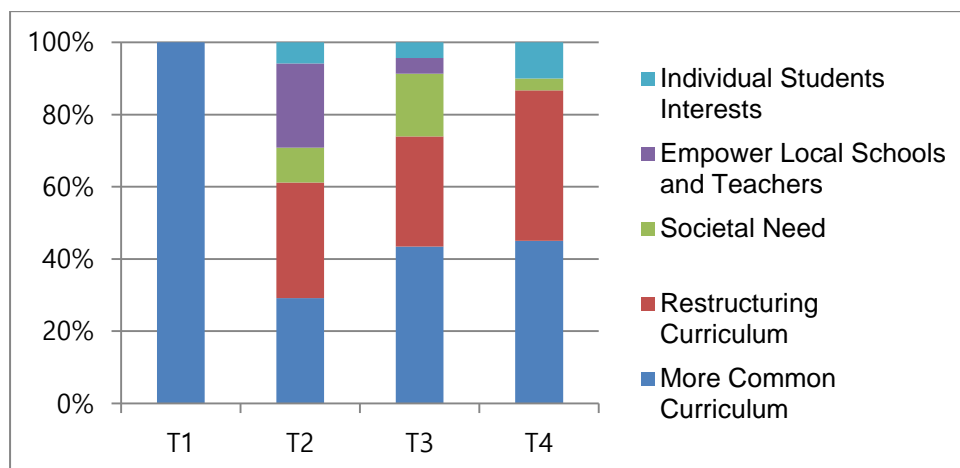
“*Cum-gwa-key*? Respecting [individuals’] right to choose? [The MOE] already [made the] elementary and middle school common curriculum, and high school to drop ten units [of common curriculum] and choose 12 or 15 units; I’m not

sure whether this was the initial intention.”

How Curriculum Deliberation Changed Over Time

In order to analyze how the MOE and the Reform Committee’s justification for the need of the 2015 NCR have changed over two years of deliberation process, I compared the MOE’s press releases and briefings at four different time points. They are: (a) T1: The MOE first officially announced the 2015 NCR plan (October 25, 2013), (b) T2: The MOE and the Reform Committee announced the vision and basic direction of the 2015 NCR (September 24, 2014), (c) T3: The First Public hearing with a full draft (August 6, 2015), and (d) T4: The final notification (September 23, 2015). Problem definition frames appeared in the MOE’s press release and briefing at each reference point are shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: The Composition of Problem Definition Frames over the Policy Formation Process



In Time 1, on the day when the MOE announced their medium and long term plan for college admission system, the 2015 NCR also became official. In order to “test” students for common curriculum in the CSAT, according to the MOE, a new Common Curriculum needed to be developed. About a year later, at T2, when the MOE announced the vision and

the basic direction of a new curriculum, four other problem definition frames were added including (a) restructuring curriculum (32%), societal need (10%), empowering local schools and teachers (23%), and individual students' interests (6%). "Empowering local schools and teachers" framing then reduced to 4% at T3 and was not mentioned at all in the final notification. On the other hand, "restructuring curriculum" to change the ways of teaching and learning was emphasized as one of the key features of the 2015 NCR. For example, the minister said at the briefing:

"In a Creative-Economy society, there are needs of a person who can integrate flexible and creative thinking with different knowledge. Right now, the Korean education is at the top in the international comparison tests such as PISA; however, due to intensive learning stress and test-prep instructions, students' learning motivation and positive feeling is very low. It is the time to change learning paradigm from 'rote-memorization-based' to 'happy education where students can enjoy learning.'"

An educational activist and one of representatives of the teachers' union's curriculum team, criticized, on the outcome of the 2015 NCR, that "it's a patchwork of all sorts of interests." He and the teachers' union claimed that unnecessary curriculum reform only gave a chance to different stakeholders to advance their interests. People at the opposing side repeatedly questioned the link between "change in the CSAT subjects" (problem) and "major national curriculum reform" (solution) but curriculum deliberation went on without the clarification of such a link.

Discussion

In this section, I highlight five patterns of national-level curriculum deliberation emerged through this study of the 2015 NCR: (a) coalition under ambiguous policy terms, (b) devaluing of teaching and individual difference, (c) adding without deleting, (d) voluntary subordination, and (e) silencing students. Grounded in the case of 2015 NCR in South Korea, my analysis offers possible insights about curriculum deliberation practices in other contexts.

First, ambiguity in policy words allowed different groups to form coalition. For example, as the Minister Seo used the term “Humanities and Science Integrated Curriculum” which then shortened and circulated as “Integrated Curriculum” in the beginning of deliberation process, different groups with different agendas came together under the term “integration.” For scientists and other industry related groups, integration signaled innovative science education approaches such as STEM; whereas, teachers hoped for school-level or classroom level curriculum innovation. The Reform Committee, on the other hand, the integration indicated connecting different units, grades, and/or subjects with common themes and big ideas. For the MOE and its research center, integration meant a competency-based approach. This ambiguity of the 2015 NCR allowed many different groups to support—or at least not oppose—the reform itself. This study’s results cannot tell whether the ambiguity was intended or not. However, the 2015 NCR case echoes Stone’s (2012) idea that ambiguity facilitates collective action because it allows policy entrepreneurs to imbue their behavior with different meanings.

Second, for people who actively participated in the deliberation process, across the spectrum, they share the view that curriculum document is such a powerful tool that it can change teaching and learning in classrooms, enhance students safety consciousness, and cultivate students’ creativity and ability to integrate. In this way of thinking, a number of

steps, efforts, and potential difficulties and chances of failure between “printed texts in the textbook” and “teachers and students’ praxis” were left out. Too often in those discussions, a teacher in a classroom was the one who does exactly what the curriculum document and textbook says; her willingness, capacity, and her students in the classroom were omitted from such thinking. This could be a problem in terms of policymaking: By over-evaluating the capacity of official curriculum document, there will be always huge error in the policy outcome. In other words, such policy based on unrealistic assumptions will fail.

Third, the MOE, the Reform Committee, and many other individuals started, participated, and emphasized the curriculum deliberation process because they agree, both explicitly and implicitly, that NC should reflect social change in timely manner. For example, the rationale for adding computer programing, Common Social Studies and Science, and safety education was based on the present and future social change. However, most people at the deliberation sphere also viewed that what is in the curriculum right now is important and should not be removed. As a result, more deliberation causes more things to be added to the curriculum document. This is also related to the over evaluation of the capacity of the curriculum document that I previously mentioned. Whether a curriculum should reflect societal change, if so how much and how timely, is one of the important curriculum deliberation topics that also needs to be addressed. Different from local standards, the national curriculum is a nation’s roadmap of public schooling. Therefore, it is rooted in the fundamental tensions between different values and beliefs of the purpose of public schooling. With complex pluralities in a contemporary society, the issue of values will be more intensive in the curriculum deliberation sphere, and it cannot be solved by “adding” more and more.

Fourth, many critical arguments and justifications were made by borrowing authority from abroad. The Korean students’ lack of confidence and interests were argued based on the

PISA and the TIMSS data. Competency-based approach was rationalized by stating that “the advance countries are already doing it.” Similarly, “big ideas,” “NGSS,” and “cross-cutting concepts,” the concepts frequently used by the Reform Committee and the MOE, even without Korean translation, were all imported from the US without adjustment to the Korean context. “A person with creativity and interdisciplinary abilities” was argued based on the success of the Apple and Steve Jobs, and Mark Zuckerberg. In a global community, learning from each other’s experiences is not a bad idea; however, in this study, it was obvious that things from “advanced countries” naturally gained legitimacy and authority in curriculum deliberation process, which is a serious problem. In the case of the 2015 NCR, the advanced countries, often represented by the US, meant economically more affluent than South Korea. In this framing, education is nothing more than a tool for nation’s economic advancement; therefore, neoliberal and capitalistic values can be easily justified.

Fifth, the 2015 NCR is an interesting case in that one of the main themes circulated throughout the deliberation process was “students’ academic stress.” As often presidential slogan captures the national mood, President Park’s “Happy Education” can be considered as evidence that the Korean students are unhappy (or at least they think that they are unhappy). During the deliberation process, the cause of students’ unhappiness was redefined by the Reform Committee and the MOE; it was because of the way they have to learn and if the way curriculum and textbook contents are organized is changed, they can be “happy.” While students’ happiness was actively discussed by different adult groups and used for their political intentions, not much attention was given to the real causes of their stress. Unfortunately, throughout the deliberation, what got most attention was what students should *know*; no one was interested in how they should *be*. Their various needs and rights were not the topic of curriculum deliberation, which is more important than “preparing the future

workforce,” “restructuring curriculum documents,” or “echoing the President’s policy slogan.”

Finally, the decision to initiate another national curriculum reform was made prior to citizen deliberation and there was no room for citizens to influence or reverse the decision. While the MOE and curriculum policy elites claimed to support deliberative democratic decision-making, many citizen deliberators who attended public hearings raised suspicion that decision-makers ignored the citizen deliberations. Scholars have pointed out that a dominant political communication form in the policy arena in South Korea is public attention (Ha, 2010). Since public deliberation often takes place after a policy formulation stage, the crucial part of political communication is *persuasion* to draw broader public support for the already drafted policy. In this one-way communication, citizens can only choose to support or to oppose the policy. In other words, because they are *locked out* from the earlier planning stage, citizens lose the chance to foster a sense of ownership about formulating policy and are merely forced to take a side. When policy deliberation shrinks to public persuasion, the model of curriculum deliberation becomes a mere tool for attaining political legitimacy.

Conclusion

In democratic systems, reform movements consistently emerge. National-level curriculum policy making in most democratic and pluralist political systems is usually a battle, and there is usually nothing ideologically neutral in its formation (Rosenau, 1993). Curriculum deliberation is a political project by nature, which is one of the main reasons it is so riddled with conflict and difficult to analyze. In this sense, curriculum deliberation resembles more traditional policymaking broadly defined (Kraft & Furlong, 2015). Like in other areas of public policy, policy frames can reduce the problem complexity of curriculum reform by several orders of magnitude; define actors’ respective stakes in the issue; and demarcate a decision’s scope and applicability. By identifying a problem, solution, causal

story, and coalition, it allows a clear vision of the complex deliberation process.

This paper examined the case of 2015 NCR in South Korea, particularly its public deliberation process. Problem definition approach allowed me to ask following questions regarding the 2015 NCR: How did framing affect curriculum policy dynamics? When did it matter? What were the mechanisms at play? How were interests formed and organized during the deliberation? How did the values and beliefs of different actors influence the framing process? How did the use of language relate to the justification? I used a policy framing approach to gain analytical perspective which yielded interesting insights into the process of national-level curriculum deliberation.

Curriculum decision-making is complex. Thus it requires creative and integrated approach and reasoning. Curriculum decisions are ultimately political choices because they are the outcomes of dynamic, political, collective, and justificatory interactions among different curriculum entities. Simultaneously, they are moral and ethical enterprises because they should be responsible and justifiable acts for students. In this regard, in-depth inspection of the values, beliefs, moral intuitions, and hidden assumptions within the curriculum deliberation in public sphere becomes vital.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

List of Documents

1. Saenuri Party, 18th Presidential Election Pledge, 2012
2. MOE, Curriculum and character education research report, September 2012
3. MOE, College Admission Development Plan, August 2013
4. “Sympathize with the rationale but many dilemma” (*KBS*, 8-27-2013)
5. “Common *Suneung* (CSAT) depended on next government” (*Yonhap News*, 9-30-2013)
6. MOE, 2017 College Admission Plan press release(10-25-2013)
7. Editorial, “Don’t even dare to start history textbook regulation debate” (*Kyunghang*, 12-10-2013)
8. Interview, Minister Seo about history textbook modification order (12-10-2013)
9. Democratic Party briefing, Standardization of history textbook challenges democracy (12-11-2013)
10. KICE workshop material, Curriculum policy reports and curriculum reform preparation (12-11-2013)
11. Report, National curriculum forum, Korean Society for Curriculum Studies, December, 2013
12. “Minister Seo, government-issued history textbook in new curriculum” (*The Hankyoreh*, 1-14-2014)
13. Reform Committee workshop material, Subject curriculum draft directions (5-15-2014)
14. Column, Su-Il Choi, “Let’s make curriculum without a math failure” (6-11-2014)
15. Public discussion, Surveying national and societal needs for curriculum reform, hosted by National Assembly member *Kang Eun Hee* (6-17-2014)
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58. Column, Kim Chang Hwan, "New curriculum is right but should not hustle" (9-25-2014)

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93. Public discussion, “2015 NCR, What is the problem?” hosted by National Assembly members (8-1-2015)
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109. MOE press release, 2015 NC announcement summary (9-23-2015)
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CHAPTER 3: “WE ALL ARE MATH FAILURE”: POLICY ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND PUBLIC MOBILIZATION IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Introduction

Policy scholars have given their attention to the role of policy entrepreneurs in policymaking (Kingdon, 1984/1995; Mintrom & Vergari, 1996; Mintrom, 2000; Mintrom & Norman, 2009; Weissert, 1991). Policy entrepreneurs are “[h]ighly motivated individuals or small teams that can do much to draw attention to policy problems, present innovative policy solutions, build coalitions of supporters, and secure legislative action” (Mintrom & Norman, 2009, p. 649). They often define or redefine policy problems to manipulate problem perceptions in order to promote their preferred policy interventions (Kingdon, 1984/2003; Gamson, 1992; Iyengar, 1991; Terkildsen & Schnell, 1997). This particular entrepreneurial practice, policy framing, serves as the “central organizing idea or story that provides meaning” to a series of unfolding events (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987, p. 145). It helps to disseminate policy entrepreneurs’ “shared set of normative and principled beliefs” (Haas, 1991, p. 3). Policy framing can impact people’s perception of gains and losses (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981).

This study examines the case of 2015 National Curriculum Reform (NCR) in South Korea with a particular focus on the relationship between the role of policy entrepreneurship and curriculum deliberation in social media. A policy shapes politics around it (Mettler & SoRelle, 2014). Similarly, the rhetoric a policy entrepreneur produces as a part of policy formation process has its own consequences. Particularly in the case of 2015 NCR, a specific word, used as a part of policy entrepreneurship, to describe the experience of learning math in school was ‘failure’ (Jang, 2016). This makes 2015 NCR a case worth paying attention to

because creating a collective ‘failing⁵’ identity does not only mobilize crowds to advance policy formation but also has its own consequences in the everyday realm.

Within the case of 2015 NCR, this study asks two questions: Who were the key policy entrepreneurs in the production and dissemination of ‘a math failure’ discourse in social media? And how was the discourse of ‘a math failure’ produced and circulated in social media? I begin by situating this study within the literatures of policy entrepreneurship in agenda setting and policy formation stages and policy deliberation in social media. I then explain my approach to discourse along with the method of analysis. Based on the analysis of the postings and tweets over the two years of agenda setting and policy formation period, I describe how ‘a math failure’ framing was circulated in an online deliberative sphere. Since the language people use every day actively constructs their reality (Potter, 1992), it is important to pay attention to the discourses that were produced and circulated in the public sphere as a part of curriculum deliberation. I conclude by discussing the potential of social media as a curriculum deliberation space.

Related Literatures

Policy Entrepreneurship in Agenda Setting and Policy Formation Stages

Policy entrepreneurs invest their resources—time, energy, reputation, money—to promote their policy goals when windows of opportunity are open (Kingdon, 1984/2003). According to Kingdon’s (1984/2003) streams theory, there are three streams (problems, policies, and politics) and these streams are linked by the strategic work of policy entrepreneurs (87). Policy windows are the moments when these streams are joined and

⁵ ‘a math failure (수포자; *supoza*)’ is an acronym of ‘수학 포기자,’ which literally translates as ‘someone who has given up in studying math.’ The first appearance of this term in Internet is in Naver (www.naver.com) in 2006, a high school student’s anecdote to describe his/her unprepared feeling for an exam.

advocates have opportunities to push their solutions. Policy entrepreneurs persistently invest large quantities of their resources to promote their policy preference. They develop and prepare policy resources before policy windows open, and with a good sense of timing, they can perceive and take advantage of opportunities.

Policy entrepreneurs recognize the significance of problem definitions in promoting their policy ideas (Mintrom & Norman, 2009). They are politically capable to *bend* events or structures to their purposes to some degree (Kingdon, 1984/2003, p. 225). Specifically, they attempt to couple “solution to problems, problems to political forces, and political forces to proposals” (Kingdon, 1984/2003, p. 205). Skillful policy entrepreneurs strategically frame their policy preference as both politically and culturally acceptable and desirable.

Policy entrepreneurs often use symbols to attract attention. Symbols help persuade people and attract supporters (Stone, 1988/2012). Symbols may add clarity to messages but simultaneously oversimplify them (Elder & Cobb, 1983). Symbols evoke strong emotions and arouse and fix attention. Symbols can reduce policy entrepreneurs’ efforts to explain what exactly their proposal is about because emotional arousal often facilitates the adoption of confrontational policy (Zahariadis, 2005). The ambiguity of symbolism facilitates collective action because it allows policy entrepreneurs to imbue their behavior with different meanings (Stone, 1988/2012).

Skillful policy entrepreneurs try hard to get press coverage and influence the public’s attention (Kingdon, 1984/2003). Thus those policy entrepreneurs with restricted access to formal policymaking arenas are likely to go to the media instead. The media not only informs but also mobilizes citizens. The media can magnify a preexisting movement, pick up ideas in policy discourse, and advance them (Kingdon, 1984/2003). The news that citizens encounter via the media are often framed by policy entrepreneurs, including government officials,

interest group leaders, academic experts, and grassroots activists (Lawrence et al., 2010).

Media frames become powerful when they resonate with the public's strongly held perceptions, beliefs, or ideologies (Nisbet, 2010). A successful issue often associates two concepts, issues, or things and provides a plausible link between them (Scheufele & Twombsbury, 2007). A frame may attain influence because it resonates with popular culture, conventional wisdom, personal experience, or collective sentiment (Nisbet, 2010). For example, because of the intensely competitive academic environment in South Korea, the majority of citizens could relate to a frame linking academic stress and a national mood of defeatism. Ideological frames "appear typically in the public pronouncements of policy-makers and their aides, such as sound bites, campaign speeches, press releases, and other very public statements designed to muster public support for policy proposals" (Campbell, 1998, p. 394).

Social Media as the Space for Agenda Setting

With the emergence of social media, particularly among younger generations, there are studies inquiring into social media as a space for political mobilization, citizen participation, and public communication. These studies have focused on social media's multiple utilities including: collection and dissemination of information (Loader et al., 2014; Zúñiga, 2012; Bekkers et al., 2011; Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2011), community building (Bekkers, 2004; Wattal et al., 2010), and mobilization for action (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012; Enjolras et al., 2012; Bekkers et al., 2011). Particularly due to its speed and linking potentials, social media can create snowball effects in political mobilization, which then may influence agenda setting and policy formation processes (Bekkers et al., 2011).

In order for social media to function as political sphere, certain preconditions need to

be fulfilled. For example, the active involvement of the youth population, largely due to their familiarity with technologies based on internet, was visible in the Arab uprising (Lim, 2012; Tufekci & Wilson, 2012); secondary school students revolt against “1040-hour norm” in Netherland (Bekkers et al., 2011); the Rose Marches in Norway (Enjolras et al., 2012); and the Occupy Camps in the U.S. (Bennett, 2012). Also, some kind of injustices that provoke shared resentment and anger for a collective action is often times necessary (Yang, 2007). In the case of Arab uprising, for example, shared anger among young generations due to tightly restricted political communication under authoritarian regimes (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012), prevalent corruption (Lim, 2012), and unemployment (Lim, 2012) altogether resulted a social movement. As individuals share the same negative emotions under the same injustice social condition, a collective identity and a sense of group identification can develop, and eventually trigger social movements (Lim, 2012).

Although it is open for all individuals, not every social media user participates in political activities to the same degree. In the blogosphere, particularly, there are a number of actors who are considered being more influential in opinion making processes than most other users (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2012). Studies have found that politicians belong to the minority party (Lassen & Brwon, 2011), and elites seeking for a new communication channel (Larsson & Moe, 2011) tend to be more active in Twitter. For the majority of users, on the other hand, information flow is one way; they take part in disseminating political contents but not participating in political dialog (Larson & Moe, 2011). In the existing literatures, the relationship between the fact that young generation is “always on” social media and their off-line political engagement are still unclear (Ekström et al., 2014) and superficial (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2012).

About the Case: The 2015 NCR

The 2015 NCR presents an interesting case to study the work of policy entrepreneurs in centralized education governance systems for three reasons. First, the national curriculum reform demonstrated well the elements and processes of centralized policymaking. The Ministry of Education (MOE) was in charge of managing the reform, including forming committees, drafting teams, and validating teams; setting general directions and goals; pacing time; announcing progress; publishing reports and final documents; and providing protocols for teacher training. Second, the political dynamics of the 2015 NCR were greatly influenced by the advocacy work of a leftwing parents' organization called the World without the Worry about Shadow Education⁶ (WWSE). Throughout the drafting process, this group played the role of citizen watchdog, raising public attention and producing evidence to support its preferred policy proposals concerning the math curriculum. Third, the WWSE had access to official deliberation spheres during the reform process because the MOE appointed its representatives as panelists in most public hearings. This group was able to show their entrepreneurial flare inside and outside of the policy process, which makes this case unique. The WWSE relied heavily on populist rhetoric to legitimize their proposed changes.

The WWSE argued that 99% of Korean students were suffering from their math courses because the curriculum covered too many advanced topics. This was explained as the fault of the malicious elitism of math academics who are indifferent to students' life. On the other hand, the WWSE often emphasized that their work was to advocate for parents and students. In addition, the WWSE explained their advocacy as a form of citizen participation fulfilling the ideals of democracy. For example, on the day of the first review of the math curriculum draft, which was on May 1, 2015, the WWSE protested inside the conference

⁶ Private supplementary tutoring offered outside the mainstream school system.

room by holding picket signs said, “Math professors are the ones who made my child a failure!” As one of many solutions, the WWSE suggested to remove differential and integral calculus from the high school curriculum and let colleges cover those topics; which, math academics were furious about.

As means of their policy entrepreneurship, the WWSE initiated many research, national-level surveys, and conferences by themselves, producing and disseminating their policy reports to the public and the press. The WWSE used the mass media as its channel to deliver its message. The WWSE’s framing of *supoza* and math pain was repeated in the media, including conservative and liberal newspapers (Jang, 2016). They also made a couple of brochures and small books informing public about their policy entrepreneurial works. In these processes, the WWSE closely worked with two members of the National Assembly from liberal party and other citizen organizations.

Methods and Data

In order to investigate the production and circulation of ‘a math failure’ phrase in social media, certain aspects from two different approaches to discourses were selected. First is text mining, a set of automated computer techniques applied to extract meaningful information from unstructured textual data (He et al., 2013). As an automated technique, text mining can be used to “efficiently and systematically identify, extract, manage, integrate, and exploit knowledge from texts” (Ananiadou, 2008). Text mining used in this study focuses on identifying hidden patterns between occurrences of ‘a math failure’ phrase and certain policy actors. Second is critical discourse analysis (CDA), which focuses on what discourses are *doing* particularly how they produce and reproduce power structures. CDA views that language both constructs and is constructed by contexts (Rogers, 2003). In this study, I focus on James Gee (2011)’s “seven building tasks of language” in order to analyze how ‘a math

failure' phrase construct reality.

Text Mining

Data collection. Quantitative data—number of postings, comments, shares, and likes per month, frequency of positing—was manually collected from Facebook, Twitter, and Naver (blog) sites. Naver (www.naver.com) is one of the most popular social media platforms in South Korea, which is commonly used in big data research in Korean language (Park & Jeong, 2016; Lee & Yi, 2016). I applied *NVivo 11 Pro* software to collect posts as a large data set and/or capture webpage as PDF files (NCapture). The 2015 NCR officially started October 2013 and ended September 2015; this study extended data collection to six months prior and after the curriculum reform. I used the posts that include a phrase 'a math failure (*supoza*)' from February 2013 to March 2016 in order to discover meaningful patterns and to acquire a deeper understanding of how 'a math failure' phrase circulated in social media.

Procedures. First, I started with text-preprocessing, which was to transform raw data into a usable format by cleaning and assigning attributes. Second, I applied various text mining techniques to examine the data sets in order to gain insights about the production and the dissemination of 'a math failure' phrase. *NVivo 11's* was mainly used to conduct various query searches including analysis of frequencies and thematic cluster analysis to find patterns in the activities of policy entrepreneurs.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Text selection. In order to understand policy entrepreneurship through posting messages in each social media channels, exemplary messages were selected from Facebook, Naver, and Twitter separately. Based on the patterns of messages found through text mining, a Facebook wall post, a Naver blog entry, and ten tweets were examined to analyze the political

use of ‘*supoza*’ in the agenda setting process.

Procedures. The basic assumption of James Gee’s model is that language in use always performs actions in the world (Gee, 2011). His seven areas of reality framework (Gee, 2011) provide a set of questions to examine targeted texts’ hidden assumptions and what they are doing. Table 3.1 is a summary of seven areas of reality and analyzing questions.

Table 3.1: Seven Areas of Reality (Gee, 2011, pp. 30-35)

Area	Questions
1. Significance	How is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways?
2. Activities (practices)	What practice (activity) or practices (activities) is this piece of language being used to enact?
3. Identities	What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact? What identity or identities is this piece of language attributing to others, and how does this help the speaker or writer enact or own identity?
4. Relationships	What sort of relationship or relationships is this piece of language seeking to enact with others?
5. Politics (the distribution of social goods)	What perspective on social goods is this piece of language communicating?
6. Connections	How does this piece of language connect or disconnect things? How does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another?
7. Sign systems and knowledge	How does this piece of language privilege or disprivilege specific sign systems, or ways of knowing?

Once texts were chosen, I read them a couple times and tried to answer the above questions through multiple times. Particularly, I focused on word use, grammar structure, and tone. Through those processes, I tried to answer what policy entrepreneurs were doing through the posting of the message in social media both intentionally and unintentionally.

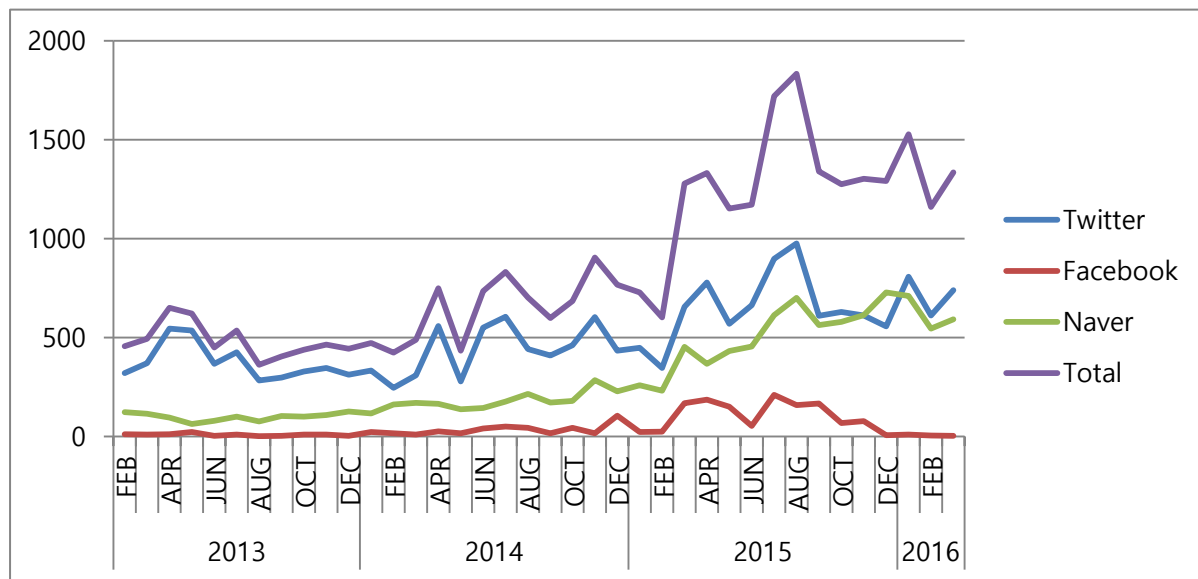
Findings

Trends in Tweets, Wall Posts, and Blog Entries Contain “a Math Failure”

From February 2013 to March 2016, the number of messages that contain “a math failure” extensively expanded online (Figure 3.1). In Naver, unlike Twitter and Facebook, the increase did not stop even after the official release of the 2015 NC in September 2015. However the number of wall postings visibly dropped in Facebook after the 2015 NC was released. As illustrated in the figure, the peak time of the number of postings in Facebook, Twitter, and Naver occurred at the same time, which was in the summer of 2015. The 2015 NC passed and mandated in September 2015. The number of messages sharply dropped after the formation of the 2015 NC was once completed.

“A math failure” discourse expanded particularly during the drafting period (from December 2014 to August 2015). During this period, there were two public hearings and one public forum arranged by the MOE around the developing math curriculum (May 1, July 31, and August 31). Also, the WWSE initiated a national-level campaign (“University Admission without Creating *supoza*”) on March 25, 2015 and collected 35,000 signatures from citizens to support removing advanced differential and integral calculus from the high school curriculum. The WWSE also hosted an academic conference titled “International comparisons of math curriculum: Six country cases” in May 28. Those offline events were reflected in the online messages.

Figure 3.1: Postings Contain ‘supza’ through the Policy Formation Process



The Purpose of Messages by Actors

To get a comprehensive understanding of the collected data, five emerged categories were used to identify the purpose of messages. 39% of messages posted on the three SNS channels were the original posting or the sharing of information produced by actors fall into five categories: Mass media, government agencies (i.e., the MOE), citizen organizations (i.e., the WWSE), education institutions, and shadow education businesses (including publishing companies). On the other hand, 61% of messages were posted by individual users mainly to share their feelings and emotions about a math subject and/or the term ‘a math failure.’

Facebook Results: Policy Entrepreneurship

Three SNS channels were distinguished in terms of the composition of messages. 31% of the Facebook Wall posts were either produced by the members of the WWSE or their supporters while their presence in the Naver and the Twitter was less than one percent (Figure 2, 4, and 6). The WWSE posted to inform readers about the math curriculum formation process, to report about their policy entrepreneurship, to advertise their offline events, to

emphasize their presence in mass media, and to draw attention to the math curriculum policy issue. Some representative posts are listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Examples Related to Citizen Organization (the WWSE)

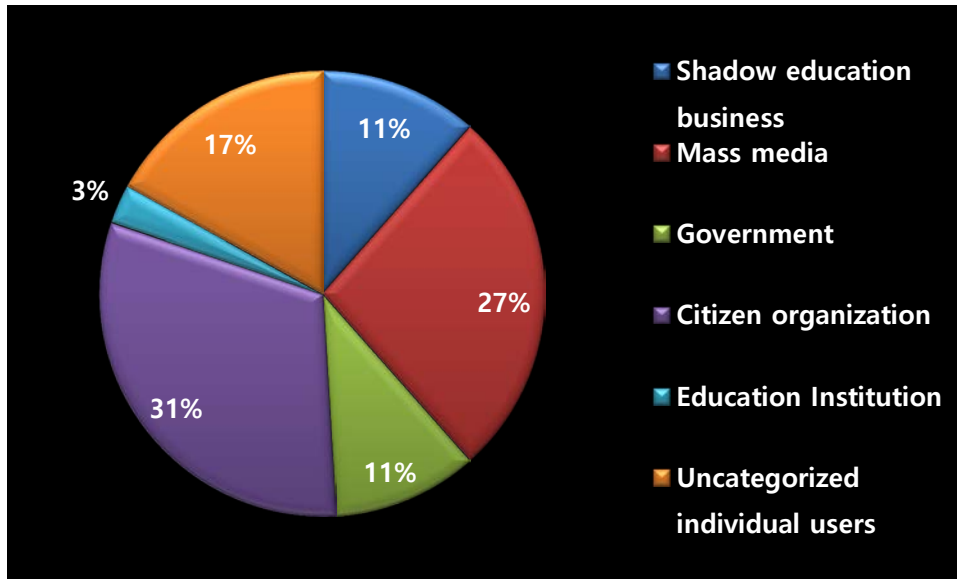
Topics	Examples
To inform readers about the math curriculum formation process	<p>Public hearing reporting the results of math curriculum reduction. In fact, while presenting results in nothing reduced and invited a great [number of] of math academics, and told us only five people can come. Not a presenter. It's just an ordinary public hearing. Why limit numbers? Pathetic.</p> <p>수학 내용 줄이는 연구 결과 발표 공청회. 사실은 줄인 것이 없는 연구 결과를 발표하면서 수학학계 사람들은 대거 초청하고, 우리는 달랑 5명만 공청회에 오라고 말했다. 토론자도 아니고, 일반 공청회인데 왜 숫자를 제한하는가. 한심하다.</p>
To report about their policy entrepreneurship	<p>[Noworry News] Reporting first outcome of ‘College Admission without creating a <i>Supoza</i>’ campaign. Because of many people who have participated in the campaign which started last March 25th, math curriculum is reduced. Of course, not that all tasks for ‘College Admission without creating a <i>supoza</i>’ is completed but we think we could make a successful resolution because of citizens’ voice. We report details about this.</p> <p>[노위리 통신] ‘수포자 없는 입시 플랜 운동’ 1차 성과를 보고합니다. 지난 3월 25일부터 시작한 ‘수포자 없는 입시 플랜’에 참여해주신 많은 분들 덕분에 수학 교육과정의 축소가 되었습니다. 물론 수포자 없는 입시플랜을 위한 모든 과제가 해결된 것은 아니지만, 시민들의 목소리 덕분에 좋은 결과를 낼 수 있었다고 생각합니다. 이에 대한 자세한 내용을 전 해드립니다.</p>
To advertise their offline events	<p>[Join signature!] Right now, at the backside of Seoul city hall, ‘College Admission without Creating a <i>Supoza</i>’ signature campaign is going on. Please participate to support our children can learn math that makes them think not memorize.</p> <p>[서명에 동참해주세요!] 지금 서울 시청 뒤편에서 <수포자 없는 입시 플랜> 서명운동이 전개되고 있습니다. 암기하는 수학이 아닌 생각하는 수학을 우리 아이들이 배울 수 있도록 여러분의 많은 관심과 참여 바랍니다.</p>
To emphasize their presence in mass media	<p>EBS reported our project on ‘Alternative Math Textbook’ five year plan last July 19th. We share that news.</p> <p>7월 19일에 있었던 ‘수학 대안 교과서’ 5개년 제작 착수 발표회를 EBS에서 보도했습니다. 그 뉴스를 공유합니다.</p>

Table 3.2 (cont'd)

To draw attention to the math curriculum policy issue	<p>Regard of <i>Supoza</i> state, first national school survey results came out. “O My God!” We had some guesses but the result is honestly shocking. Join signature:</p> <p>http://happymath.or.kr/?page_id=174</p> <p>수포자 실태와 관련해선 최초로 전국 학교 조사 결과가 나왔습니다. “세상에!” 짐작은 하고 있었지만, 그 결과는 실로 충격적이었습니다. 서명하기: http://happymath.or.kr/?page_id=174</p>
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From February 2013 to March 2016, major newspapers and TV channels have produced several contents on the issues of ‘a math failure’ which then circulated in social media. Many messages (27% of the Facebook Wall Posts and 8% of the Naver Blog entries) were simply sharing those media contents. In most of those media contents, the WWSE was the main informant. For example, “No Fun but Ton: The ‘*supoza*’s Wonderland,” the newspaper article by *Hangure*, a left-leaning mainstream newspaper, on March 20th 2015 was shared 14 times by different users in the Facebook in the same month. This article was shared twice in the next month and one time a year later. The article addressed three reasons explaining why many Korean students fail in their math class: First, the linearly structured math curriculum makes it impossible to catch up once a student falls behind; second, math is taught through overly drilled memorization; and last, the university entrance exam requires unnecessarily advanced math knowledge (<http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/SERIES/397/683286.html>). This framing exactly aligns with the WWSE’s position on the issue (e.g., March 16th, <http://cafe.daum.net/no-worry/1QDs/819>). The article had three direct quotes and two of them were from the WWSE.

Figure 3.2: Facebook Postings by Producers



The messages related to the WWSE, including media content citing the organization, make nearly 60% of total Facebook wall posts. Figure 3.3.1 to Figure 3.3.8 are one of the WWSE's wall posts selected for more in-depth critical discourse analysis in this study. It was posted in April 30 2015, a day before the first public hearing on the working-math curriculum. It was selected because it captures the WWSE's policy entrepreneur activities in and outside of social media. The selected posting was analyzed according to James Gee's (2011) seven criteria to understand how it builds or destroys reality.

Figure 3.3.1: The WWSE Facebook Wall Post, Slide #1

(translation)

Math Professors are Stopping Us!
May 1st, 2015, We need students and parents' participation in order to make college entrance without 'supoza' possible!
The WWSE

Figure. 3.3.2: The WWSE Facebook Wall Post, Slide #2


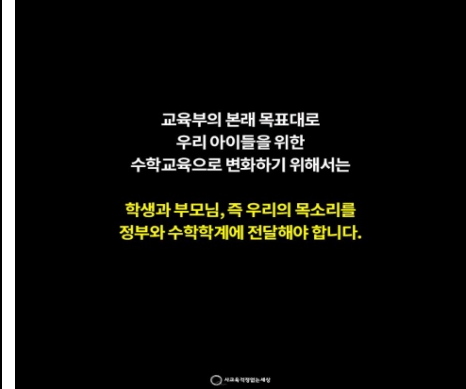
 <p>‘쉽고 재미있는 수학,’ ‘수학 학습량 20% 경감’ 등의 교육부의 목표가 무색한 2015 수학교육과정 개편 연구 결과.</p> <p>학생들의 고통은 보지 않고 수학학계의 이해관계를 지키려는 내용만 가득합니다.</p> <p><small>수학학계연대</small></p>	<p>(translation)</p> <p>‘Easy and fun math,’ ‘Reducing 20% math content,’ The MOE’s goal but Embarrassing 2015 math curriculum reform results. Ignoring students’ pain Keeping math academia stakeholders’ interests only. The WWSE</p>
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Figure 3.3.3: The WWSE Facebook Wall Post, Slide #3

 <p>교육부의 본래 목표대로 우리 아이들을 위한 수학교육으로 변화하기 위해서는</p> <p>학생과 부모님, 즉 우리의 목소리를 정부와 수학학계에 전달해야 합니다.</p> <p><small>수학학계연대</small></p>	<p>(translation)</p> <p>To achieve the MOE’s original goal To change math education for our children Students and parents, in other words, our voice Should be heard in government and math academia. The WWSE</p>
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The wall posts and the WWSE try to persuade readers: (1) to pay attention to the issue of math curriculum making, (2) to participate their activities on the following day, and (3) to believe that math academics are stopping math being “easy and fun” (slide #3). The wall posts frame the *supoza* issue as the problem of “our children” (slide #3) and it is important to make “our voice heard” (slide #4 to 7) in order to fix the problem. It is clear from the first image that math professors are the villain. They are presented as a faceless, suited, and masculine image and heartlessly “ignoring students’ pain” because they are busy seeking their own “interests” (slide #2). Whereas the WWSE are presented as real people as in the slide #4 to 7 who work hard “to change math education for our children” (slide #3). By

locating themselves at the opposite side of heartless and selfish math academics, the WWSE establishes high moral ground. Moreover, unlike the MOE, who had a good and right “original goal” (slide #2 and 3) but “embarrassingly” incapable of pursuing it, the WWSE has effective plans.

Figure 3.3.4: The WWSE Facebook Wall Post, Slide #4



(translation)

To make our voice heard
Join the signature campaign!

May 1, 2015, Children’s Grand Park main gate
(Kwangjin-gu)
11 am – 1 pm
The WWSE


우리의 목소리를 전달하기 위해서

1. 서명운동에 동참해주세요!

2015년 5월 1일, 어린이대공원 정문(광진구)
오전 11시 ~ 오후 1시

시교육청·시민단체·학부모

Figure 3.3.5: The WWSE Facebook Wall Post, Slide #5



(translation)

To make our voice heard
Join the march!

May 1, 2015, Children’s Grand Park to
Konkook University
1 pm – 2 pm
The WWSE


우리의 목소리를 전달하기 위해서

2. 행진에 동참해주세요!

2015년 5월 1일, 어린이대공원에서 건국대 일대
오후 1시 ~ 오후 2시

시교육청·시민단체·학부모


Figure 3.3.6: The WWSE Facebook Wall Post, Slide #6



우리의 목소리를 전달하기 위해서
3. 기자회견에 동참해주세요!
 2015년 5월 1일, 건국대 교문(상허문) 앞
 오후 2시 ~ 오후 2시 30분

(translation)
 To make our voice heard
 Join the press conference!
 May 1, 2015, Konkook University gate
 (Sanghu-gate)
 2 pm – 2:30 pm
 The WWSE


Figure 3.3.7: The WWSE Facebook Wall Post, Slide #7



우리의 목소리를 전달하기 위해서
4. 공개토론회에 참여해주세요!
 2015년 5월 1일, 건국대 법학관 국제회의실
 오후 3시 ~ 오후 5시

(translation)
 To make our voice heard
 Join the public hearing!
 May 1, 2015, Konkook University Law
 Building, Conference room, 3 pm – 5 pm
 The WWSE

Figure 3.3.8: The WWSE Facebook Wall Post, Slide #8



여러분의 관심과 공유가
 ‘수포자 없는 입시’를
 만드는 원동력이 될 것입니다.
 많은 참여 바랍니다.

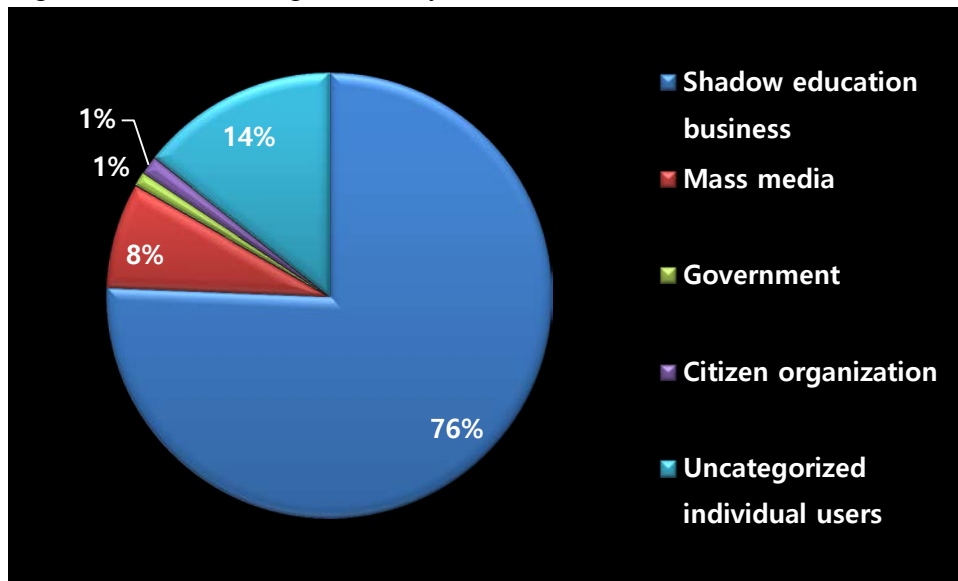
(translation)
 Your interests and sharing will
 Produce ‘college and university admission
 without creating suppoza.’
 Please join us.
 The WWSE

As the selected wall post shows, the WWSE used their Facebook page as a tool for their policy entrepreneurship. Particularly, Facebook was effective in putting the WWSE's framing out there. Since anything can be posted at any time and can be publicly viewed by anyone who visits the wall post, Facebook allows the WWSE access to the public. It also guarantees that members who follow the WWSE Facebook page or friends with the WWSE individuals are exposed to the message that the WWSE posts. For example, In-soo Song, co-representative of the WWSE, posted a message specifically asking his Facebook friends to help search for people who would be interested in working in the WWSE's *supoza* project (April 27 2015). In-soo Song has more than 5,000 followers and the WWSE Facebook is subscribed by more than 20,000 users. Along with their official web page (<http://cafe.daum.net/no-worry>), Facebook served as one of their main strategies to reach out to the public.

Naver Results: Shadow Education Marketing

The majority (around 76%) of messages in the Naver blog were dominated by shadow education business actors (Figure 5). As their marketing strategy, shadow education business actors posted messages about math curriculum policy trends for parents eventually advertising their programs and teaching staffs. Three themes emerged among the messages posted by shadow education business actors and a number of query searches were initiated based on each theme to examine the characteristics of the messages.

Figure 3.4: Naver Blog Entries by Producers



Instructors and Programs. A major theme I found is related to the advertisement of math instructors and the courses they teach in online or offline (around 52%). Shadow education business actors vary in size, school level, and location (including online programs), posted about how their teaching staffs or courses can help students becoming or getting out of being a ‘*supoza*.’ The posts show that shadow education business actors differentiate their targeted students and programs. Examples are: an online program specifically for second year high school students in the Humanities track who think they are ‘*supoza*,’ a vacation intensive course for students who failed in their university entrance exam because of math, etc. These posts mostly used the term ‘*supoza*’ only to get customers attention for their marketing. Some representative posts are listed in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Examples Related to Shadow Education Programs

Topics	Examples
Advertising an instructor	<p>Hello Everyone! For students who have given up in studying math=<i>supoza</i>, there is an online course where you can review all middle school math! Math for <i>supoza</i> is Sevenedu Cha, Gil-Young's finishing middle school math in one punch! Two thumbs up!</p> <p>여러분 안녕하세요? 수학포기자=수포자를 위한 중학수학을 총정리 할 수 있는 인강이 있다고해서 추천드리려고 합니다! 수포자 수학은 세븐에듀 차길영의 중학수학 한방에 끝내기 강추!</p>
Advertising a shadow education institution	<p>As a new year begins, there's good information for students who're already studying the new grade's material. [Shadow education institution decides your grade! –A ray of light for <i>supoza</i>!] From Monday to Friday, 5 to 7 p.m. including half an hour break, 2 hours (4hours) classes, from 2-5 times per week, a course that fits a student's schedule is now available^^</p> <p>2016년을 새로이 맞이하여 올해 해우게 될 새 학년의 학습을 미리 선행하고 있는 학생 여러분들에게 오늘 좋은 정보 한 가지 알려드리려고 하는데요! [학원이 성적을 결정한다! -수포자들의 한 줄기 구원의 빛!... 월요일부터 금요일까지 오후 5시부터 7시까지 휴식시간 30분을 포함하여 2시간 (4시간) 수업을 진행하는데, 주 2-5회까지 학생의 스케줄에 맞춘 선택적인 학원수업 진행이 가능합니다^^</p>
Social commerce	<p>WeMakePrice X Sevenedu M <i>supoza</i> revival package is open! Sevenedu, an online math courses website, just finished a renewal, prepared a great project with WeMakePrice. That is WeMakePrice and Sevenedu m's a new semester revival package for <i>supoza</i>. '<i>Supoza</i> Revival Project' A perfect lecture for <i>supoza</i>! All Korean <i>supoza</i>'s revival, WeMakePrice and Sevenedu M will take care! Sign up right now!!</p> <p>위메프 X 세븐에듀 M 수포자부활패키지 open! 얼마 전에 리뉴얼 오픈을한 초등, 중등, 수학인강전문사이트 세븐에듀 m 이 위메프와 엄청난 프로젝트를 준비했다고 합니다. 바로바로 위메프와 세븐에듀 m 의 수학포기자를 위한 신학기 부활 프로젝트 "수포자 부활 프로젝트" 수포자를 위한 완벽한 개념강의! 대한민국 모든 수포자 탈출 위메프와 세븐에듀 M 이 책임지겠습니다. 지금 바로 신청하세요!!!</p>

Customer Reviews. Some messages (around 5%) were customer reviews about certain shadow education programs including online or offline courses, books, and private tutoring organizations. Generally, the messages were written by bloggers who got the shadow education service free for posting customer reviews in their blogs. An example is that “Hello! I’m *** in *** high school who got admitted to Korea University... With Mr. Jung’s clear instruction, I, who once was a ‘*supoza*,’ was able to easily master math concepts.”

Policy Interpretation. I found that not every message posted by shadow education business actors was advertisement. Some shadow education business actors also occasionally blog about current education policy trends for parents and students (around 7%), which informs and attracts the visitors. In other words, shadow education business actors were bridging education policy and parents community by briefly mentioning policy highlights and what that policy change means for students preparing for college or university.

Different from Facebook, in Naver, many messages were posted by ‘mom bloggers’ related to the topic of childrearing and early child math education (around 3%). Some of these bloggers have nearly 5,000 regular readers (e.g., <http://blog.naver.com/zooc8005>) and the topics of their posts vary from their own experiences of practicing math with their own children to the reviews of new math teaching materials. A lot of these mom bloggers and their readers have a high interest in parents-teaching math education with no or minimum consultation of external shadow education. I also found that in many of these messages, mothers share their negative emotions such as distrust of math education in public schools (“I study math to supervise *** by myself, but I’m so angry. Schools make children hate math”), their own unsuccessful experiences with math subject (e.g., “I confess, I was a bad ‘*supoza*’), and fear of competitive and hostile education environment (e.g., “I heard that many students become ‘*supoza*’ in fifth grade. Scary!”).

Figure 3.5.1. and 3.5.2. are one of the blog entries posted by a shadow education business actor which selected for critical discourse analysis because the message interestingly referenced the WWSE. The WWSE (사교육걱정없는세상; literally translates the world without worry about shadow education) is the organization found to support public schools by limiting the shadow education market. Interestingly, the blogger, who runs a shadow education institution in *Yongdengpo*, Seoul, wrote about the WWSE’s position and work on the issue of *supoza* with a degree of accuracy and detail. Ironically, a shadow education

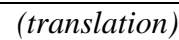
business blog is carrying the message about the work of the WWSE. Thus, students and parents, who might not know about the work of the WWSE straight from their web page or Facebook page, still can be informed through a shadow education business blog.

Figure 3.5.1: Example of Shadow Education Business Blog (Cover Page)

	<p>(translation) Special Daiji Hakwon Best quality All subjects in one place, systematic and efficient. If you want absolute GPA and SAT management, we have our own professional knowledge and system. Consult) 2642-8677</p>
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The cover page introduces the institution as “All subjects in one place, systematic and efficient. If you want absolute GPA and SAT management, we have our own professional knowledge and system.” The blogger tries to make the readers believe that the institution has an effective and comprehensive solution for university admission (image 1). In the body text, there are three images that capture students’ stress: (1) a student pulling her hair looking at math equations (image 3), (2) a student pulling her hair while studying (image 4), and (3) two high school students singing with the lyric “can’t solve a math problem (image 5).” In the first half of the body text, it briefly summarizes the WWSE’s policy entrepreneurial work with math curriculum; and the other half is about the blogger’s wish for the WWSE to succeed so that math can be fun and engaging for “*supoza* friends.” The overall tone is very gentle and tries to build empathy with students under stress from math courses by using words like “friends” and “our students.” The blogger locates herself as a friend, helper, and

Figure 3.5.2: Example of Shadow Education Business Blog (Body Text)



Hello, this is Dangsang Daji academy. Did you have a good day? ... A citizen organization, the WWSE started, 'A college admission without creating *supoza*' and said that they will solve existing CSAT, college exams, and school curriculum that makes students failure...

Images:

- A bunny walking in wind
- A student pulling her hair facing blackboard with math equations
- A student pulling her hair
- Two students shout

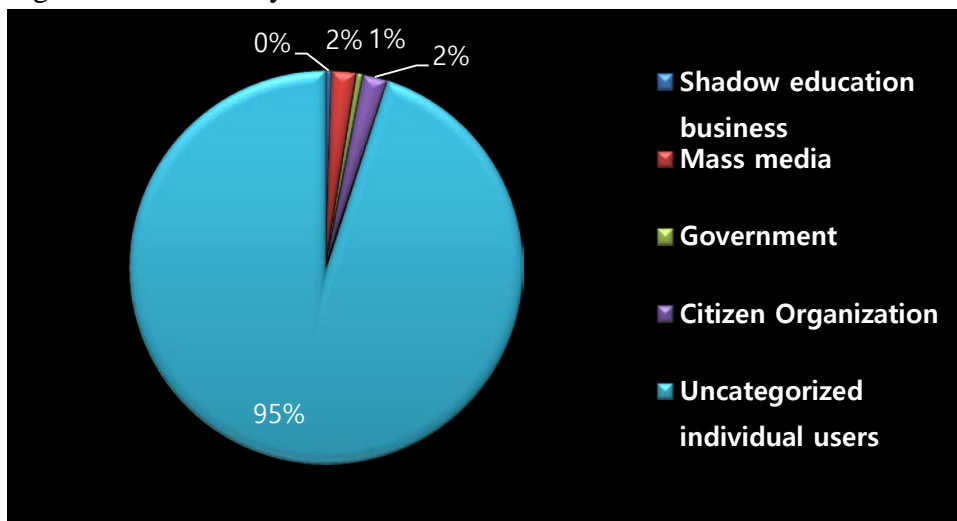
91

agenda but they contributed in ‘going public’ process.

Twitter Results: Empathy Building in Failure

Almost 95 % of tweets (18,302; including retweets) were posted by uncategorized individuals. The majority of those uncategorized tweets were anecdotes produced by students sharing their personal experiences, emotions, and opinions about math subject (e.g., “Yes, here’s a *supoza*,” “What can I do? Should I drop math? A life of ‘*supoza*’,” “It’s a factorization problem. Can anyone help me? Please help *supoza*”). In most of those messages, individuals were very active identifying themselves as a math failure. There were very few tweets reporting positive emotions and successes.

Figure 3.6: Tweets by Producers



The word frequency analysis result shows that the messages that uncategorized individuals posted using the term *supoza* are often related to: I’m (나는), the science track (이과), test/exam (시험), English/a English failure (영포자), high school (고등학교), differential and integral calculus (미적분), teacher (선생님), mom (엄마), homework (숙제), doom (망하다), etc. Some exemplary posts are in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: Exemplary Tweets Uncategorized Individual Users

Topic/word	Examples
I'm (나는)	(message 1) I'm stupid in calculation... yes I was <i>supoza</i> . (<i>laugh</i>) 난 계산 바보인가보다..... 그래 나는 수포자였던 것이달ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ
The science track (이과)	(message 2) I won't solve any descriptive problem. I'm a trash. Hahaha. Math sucks. Hello everyone, I'm a <i>supoza</i> in science track. 서술형 하나도 못 풀거야 난 쓰레기다 하하하 수학은 똥이야 여러분 안녕하세요 이과 수포자입니다
Test/exam (시험)	(message 3) Tomorrow is a test but I've been studying only English. (<i>laugh</i>). I'm <i>supoza</i> anyway. 넌 시험보는데 영어만 보고있었달ㅋㅋ어짜피 난 수포자인걸.
English/a English failure (영어)	(message 4) I'm <i>supoza</i> and <i>youngpoza</i> (an English failure). I wanted to catch up during the vacation but I got zero pages done in English and only 30 pages in math (<i>laugh</i>) in two months.. Oh my god. Amazing thing is that I still don't want to do them. (<i>cry</i>) 난 수포자 영포자다. 방학동안 포기한거 부여잡으려 문제집 샀는데 영어0p.수학 30p. 풀음ㅋㅋㅋㅋ2달 동안ㅋㅋ세상에나...놀라운건 지금도 하기사러 으앙
High school (고등학교)	(message 5) <i>Supoza</i> ? Shit, if I go to a high school, I'll give up in math right away. 수포자요? 시바난고등학교가면 바로수학을포기할거다
Differential and integral calculus (미적분)	(message 6) You ask a <i>supoza</i> to solve differential and integral calculus? Differential and integral calculus are annoying. 수포자한테 미적분을 풀으라뇨..... 미적분 짜증난다;;;
Teacher (선생님)	(message 7) (<i>laughing</i>) I was a super <i>supoza</i> .. (<i>laugh</i>) no matter how hard the teacher tried to wake me up, I kept sleeping. (<i>laugh</i>) ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ난 파워 수포자였곡ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ 아무리 선생님이 깨워도 안일어 났찍ㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋㅋ
Mom (엄마)	(message 8) I'm already a half <i>supoza</i> ... but mom wants me to continue. She knows a <i>supoza</i> doesn't have any hope... why is she doing this? I'm hopeless. 난 이미 반수포잔데...엄마는 계속 하라고 하네....수포자한테 이미 가망이 없다는 걸 알면서...왜그러는거야..?어차피 난 해도 안될거라고...
Homework (숙제)	(message 9) I forgot about homework that I got a week ago from my after school program until now.... And it's math homework!!! And it's a lot too!!! I'm <i>supoza</i> !!! (<i>scream</i>) 1주일전에 받은 학원숙제를 지금까지 깜빡하고 있었는데 하필 수학숙제!!! 양도 쩡 많아!!!! 난 수포자인데!!!!!! 으아아아아ㅏㅏㅏㅏㅏㅏㅏㅏ

Table 3.4 (Cont'd)

Doom (망하다)	(message 10) I'm a <i>supoza</i> ... now my life is doomed. A <i>supoza</i> doesn't deserve a life. (<i>laugh</i>) 난 수포자 ^▽^ 이제 인생 망했어 수포자는 인생이랑게 없지 까?
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Those messages capture realities students experience related to a math subject; the same texts construct their realities as well. In order to understand what those tweets do, I initiated critical discourse analysis of the messages in Table 3. In all ten messages, students identify themselves as a *supoza*. There are some differences in degree such as “a super *supoza*,” (message 7) or “a half *supoza*” (message 8); however, all ten users claim that they are failures. In critical discourse analysis, self-claiming identity is essential. Students used the word “stupid (message 1),” “trash (message 2),” and “failure (all messages)” to describe themselves. A *supoza*, a failure, is described as who has difficulty in calculation (message 1), who gave up in trying (message 3 and 8), who sleeps during the math class (message 7), and who does not deserve a life (message 10). Their relationship with their math subject is “annoying (message 6),” hateful (message 4), and “sucks (message 2).” But some students want to “catch up (message 4)” and go to an “after school program (message 9)” maybe because their “mom wants them to continue (message 8)” or their “teacher tries to wake them up (message 7).” But they know the importance of math as failing in math is considered the same as failing in life (message 10).

In Twitter, students are having conversation with their friends. By letting out their miserable feelings, they try to make themselves feel better as well as their followers who are in the same shoe. At the same time, by repeating their stressful and unhappy learning environment, their tweets may contribute them perceiving their reality even more negatively.

The WWSE's presence in Twitter was much smaller than in Facebook. During the

agenda setting period, the WWSE posted 17 tweets about the issue of *supoza* and the message that most re-tweeted was just for four times. In Twitter, the term '*supoza*' was vastly used by students not as a part of policy entrepreneurship. Few major news and media companies (e.g., @joongangilbo, @TheKukminDaily, @SBS8news) tweeted their news about the '2015 Math Curriculum Reform' without using the term *supoza* but even those messages were re-tweeted less than four times total.

Discussion

In today's policy environment, effective policy entrepreneurs cannot ignore social media channels. This case study provides the firsthand evidence of how social media is changing the education policy landscape particularly in terms of agenda setting process and ongoing public strategy.

I found that the WWSE's policy entrepreneurial activities in social media mostly took place during curriculum drafting period. The 2015 NC was mostly drafted in the first eight months in 2015 and it was when a critical policy window was open because it was possible to actually change the math curriculum. The results show that one of the many elements explaining the WWSE's success is that they had a great sense of timing. They focused their policy entrepreneurial efforts from March to August 2015 and used multiple approaches including using mass media, signature campaign, protests, research, to name the few. The WWSE used their social media sites as a means to connect and advertise their multiple venues, repeatedly disseminate their policy narrative and mobilize public attention.

The results reveal that the WWSE's policy entrepreneurship mainly happened in Facebook; however, their activities in traditional media and offline events were posted by shadow education business actors and influential parent bloggers in Naver. What Naver

results tell is that many parents seek and get education policy information from those blogs often by shadow education business actors. Their need of maintaining readership for their business motivates them to frequently post policy information. On the other hand, because of their frequency and relevance, parents continue to rely on shadow education business actors for policy information. In other words, while those shadow business actors continue to compete for maintaining good and comprehensive connections with parents, their customers, Naver blog sites became a deliberative space for parents. Although most of parents readers were ‘consumers’ of information rather than active producers, its accessibility shows potential means to include parents in a deliberation process.

In addition, Twitter results show that regardless of the WWSE’s policy entrepreneurial work, many students were already and continue using the term ‘*supoza*’ to describe their realities. Students use ‘*supoza*’ to share their anxiety, resentment, and frustration due to competitive learning environment. As means to advocate their policy solution, a new and reduced math curriculum, the WWSE bended the issue by attaching a causal story to students’ popular term ‘*supoza*.’ At least in the case of this study, the WWSE’s entrepreneurial work seemed to not associate with students’ discourses in Twitter; students remained outside policy deliberation. In students’ use of the term *supoza*, consciousness of a structural problem that is driving them to feel like a failure is absent. Rather, they blame themselves for failing, taking ‘a failure’ as a part of their identity. Instead of forming a social movement, they sleep during the class, draw cartoon in test sheets, give up trying, and become a *supoza*.

The study demonstrates that social media is one of effective strategies for going public especially for relatively new and minor actors. The math academic interest groups (e.g., Korea Mathematics Society; KMS) have won the legitimacy in the past decades and were the dominant group in offline policy deliberation spheres for the case of the 2015 NCR. However,

the math academics' presence in social media was very small possibly because going public was not their strategy or social media is not familiar way of communication for most of their generations. The mobilization via social media is possible when the younger generation who are familiar with internet based communication and information dissemination are there. In the case of 2015 NCR, the WWSE's targeted groups (parents and students) were relatively younger than the math academics group who were also more interested in staying in tune with the policy change. Many parents were already connected to their sources of information online, which can speed up the process of going public. To some extent, social media can be "a giant word-of-mouth machine, catalyzing and accelerating the distribution of information" (He et al., 2013, pg. 469). Therefore, it becomes necessary for education policy entrepreneurs to actively engage in social media and maintain connections and readership to proactively prepare their going public capacity.

Conclusion

A question to think about then is whether or not going public guarantees a democratic decision-making process. The WWSE persistently named their activities as "democracy," "citizen participation," and "for students." Their populist framing of the policy problem was effective in getting public support, which ultimately was able to challenge the hegemony of the academic elites. However, at the same time, it might be possible that their framing took away an opportunity to address the real issue behind the *supoza*: the competitive and hostile learning environment itself.

This study aimed to explore policy entrepreneurship using social media. One of the many limitations of this study is that I was not able to analyze the relationship between each social media channels. Since the number of messages increased in all three social media outlets at about a similar time, it is very likely to imagine their interactions. Moreover, I was

not able to identify individual users who posted messages across different social media outlets. I will leave this as a future research question.

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