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Peer-reviewed Papers
A systemic functional linguistic description of Theme in Korean

Mira Kim
The University of New South Wales

Abstract
On the basis of Kim’s (2007) analysis of 537 clauses from a corpus that consists of 17 Korean texts, this paper challenges the widely accepted proposition that un/nun is the Theme or topic marker in Korean (cf. Li & Thomson 1976, Lim 1972, Shin 1975). Drawing on Halliday’s systemic functional linguistic (SFL) theory, Kim (2007) shows that there are different ways of orientating the reader in terms of how a text unfolds in Korean and argues that un/nun certainly plays a major role in that regard but it is not the only resource in realizing Theme in Korean. Based on the corpus evidence, this paper suggests a model for a system of THEME in Korean and describes the choices of Theme in the language that is yet to be studied comprehensively from a SFL perspective.

1 Introduction

It seems to be widely accepted that un/nun is the Theme or topic marker in Korean (cf. Li & Thomson 1976, Lim 1972, Shin 1975). That is, what the clause is going to be about is indicated by the element marked by the postposition un/nun. This proposition is useful in understanding one aspect of the postposition un/nun but it is certainly limited in explaining how Theme is realized in Korean simply because there are other elements that appear to function as Theme based on evidence from discourse but are not marked by un/nun. The present paper investigates these other elements that function as Theme and how they are different from the elements marked by un/nun. The investigation is based on a manual analysis of a corpus of 537 clauses from 17 Korean written texts spanning three text types, expounding, reporting and recreating, drawing on Halliday’s systemic functional linguistic theory (SFL). The results of the analysis unearth certain patterns, which will be presented in the paper through the system network of THEME in Korean.

The approach taken in the study is trinocular: from above, from around and from below (cf. Halliday & Matthiessen 2004). That is, firstly, SFL theory has provided general linguistic principles that can be applied in describing any language (from above); secondly, rigorous reference has been made to a range of systemic functional descriptions of other languages and also to earlier studies of un/nun and i/ka in Korean (from around); and lastly, but most importantly, this study is based on the quantitative analysis of the corpus, which consists of a number of authentic Korean texts. A detailed description of the data is provided in Kim (2011) along with an introduction of the theoretical framework, a discussion of the methodological issues that were considered in the data analysis process and a critical review of existing studies of Theme in Korean from the theoretical perspective of SFL. The purpose of this paper is to describe a range

1 Following SFL conventions, the names of systems and sub-systems are capitalized.

*Thank you to Nick Bisley, Daniel Bray and Colum Graham for their assistance with this project.
of Theme choices available in Korean in a paradigmatic system network. A few examples will be provided to show how the choices are made within discourse but more examples can be found with a lengthy discussion in Kim (2007, Chapter 4).

2 The system of THEME in Korean

The system network of THEME in Korean presented in Figure 1\(^2\) includes three sub-systems of THEME in declarative clauses in Korean, INTERPERSONAL, TEXTUAL and TOPICAL. Firstly, INTERPERSONAL THEME and TEXTUAL THEME simply offer options for expressing such Themes at the beginning of the clause. In other words, the clause in Korean may have an interpersonal Theme and/or a textual Theme in addition to a topical Theme as in English.

![Diagram of the system network of THEME in Korean](image)

*Figure 1: The system network of THEM in Korean*

TOPICAL THEME consists of two kinds of Themes depending on whether or not the Theme has any experiential function. The clause-functional Theme has an experiential function but the absolute Theme does not have any experiential function but serves just as Theme\(^3\). When the Theme has an experiential function, it is a marked or unmarked Theme depending on what experiential function it has. The unmarked Theme is the most typical type of topical Theme that functions as a Participant and is conflated with the Subject. The unmarked Theme is prototypically marked by *un/nun* but is marked by *i/ka* when the status of information assigned to the Theme is noteworthy. The prototypical unmarked Theme tends to be elided when it is recoverable either because it has been introduced in the preceding discourse or is obvious within the context. The noteworthy unmarked Theme can be also elided under a similar circumstance in spoken

\(^2\) It is a revised version of the model proposed in Kim (2007).

\(^3\) Chinese has the same phenomenon of absolute Theme as briefly explained in Section 2.3. For details, see Halliday and McDonald (2004).
The marked Theme is the Theme of which experiential function is a Circumstance or Participant that is conflated with the Complement. When a circumstantial marked Theme is marked by un/nun, the Theme stands out and indicates a shift of focus. When it is not marked by un/nun, it still has a thematic status but it is less prominent than one marked by un/nun. Thus in this case, the Theme should be extended to the Subject of the clause. When a Complement functions as Theme, it may or may not be marked by un/nun. Each kind of Theme is explained below in detail.

2.1 Textual Theme

The textual Theme orients the reader to the relationship of the clause with the preceding discourse or indicates continuity with the previous discourse. The former function is realized through a conjunction or conjunctive Adjunct (e.g. however, in other words, furthermore) and the latter through a continuative element (e.g. well, yes, oh) (Matthiessen 1995:538). When a conjunction or conjunctive Adjunct such as 그리고 (kuliko) and and 그러나 (kulena) but or a continuative element such as 글쎄요 (kulseoyo) well comes before the Subject at the beginning of the clause, it functions as a textual Theme in Korean. However, Korean has the predominant feature of clause chaining, which is also found in Japanese (Thomson 2005). That is, Korean clause-chain final suffixes, which function as structural conjunctions such as -고 (-ko) and and -만 (-man) but, come at the end of the clause in Korean, in contrast with the placement of structural conjunctions in English. Thus while English aligns the logical (structural conjunctions) with the textual (cohesive conjunctions) at the beginning of the clause, Korean aligns the logical with the interpersonal within the verbal group serving as Predicator as does Japanese.

2.2 Interpersonal Theme

The interpersonal Theme orients the speaker’s evaluation and attitude toward the proposition realized by the clause. It is realized by a Vocative element (e.g. Sir, Mr Smith), modal comment Adjunct (e.g. foolishly, fortunately) or Finite verb in English (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). In Korean, however, Finite verbs are not related to interpersonal Theme as the verbal group comes at the end of the clause and does not play any role in the realization of contrasts in mood — such contrasts being realized by verbal suffixes. However, a Vocative element or a modal comment Adjunct such as 다행히도 (tahaynghito) fortunately can be placed before the Subject and when it is, it functions as an interpersonal Theme.

2.3 Topical Theme: absolute

Most topical Themes have an experiential function of Process, Participant or Circumstance. These represent what is happening (Process) and who is participating in it (Participant) under what circumstances (Circumstance). However, there is another type of Theme that only serves as topical Theme without assuming any experiential
The clause construction with such an absolute Theme was used as a clear instance of thematic construction in Korean by Li & Thompson (1976: 468) and is hardly found in any “pure subject-prominent” languages (Sohn 1980: 4).

Interestingly, this phenomenon has been observed in Chinese as well. One of the examples provided in Halliday and McDonald (2004:321) is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ tóu</td>
<td>téng.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I head</td>
<td>ache</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I have a headache (as for me, the head aches).”

They explain that “not uncommonly, the Theme is “absolute”, standing outside the experiential structure of the clause altogether” and that “such clauses are often analyzed as having two layers of thematic structure (Tsao 1979; Zhang 1997), an outer layer with wǒ ‘I’ as Theme and the rest as Rheme and additional inner layer with tóu ’head’ as Theme” (ibid: 321). The analysis is based on the principle that “thematic prominence” is highest at the beginning of the clause and then diminishes gradually (Halliday 1979: 206). English has such a double layer construction of Theme but it is less common and constrained (Matthiessen 1995: 552-554 & 584-585). English usually has the Theme with the highest thematic prominence at the beginning of the clause.

2.4 Topical Theme: clause-functional: unmarked

As in a number of languages, the topical Theme is typically conflated with the Subject of the clause. In Korean, however, it can be marked by un/nun or i/ka. The comparison between the Theme marked by un/nun and the Theme marked by i/ka within discourse clearly shows that the Theme marked by un/nun has a strong tendency to have the status of known or given information, while the Theme marked by i/ka tends to have the status of new or noteworthy information (For detailed discussion and examples see Kim 2007: 105-115). This observation is compatible with claims made by Sohn (1980) and Choi (1986). Sohn argues that “in contrast to what many traditional, structural, and generative grammarian claim, the so-called subject particle ka/i is also relevant to and functional in thematic constructions with its own semantic content” (ibid: 2) and that it has “a meaning of ‘exclusiveness’..., whether it is simply a neutral description or focused as the only new (or activated) information in the sentence” (ibid: 13). Choi maintains that i/ka has the function of “marked (specific) topic marker” in some sentence construction (Choi 1986: 365). There are examples to support the arguments and observation. For instance, Example 1 is the first paragraph of an expounding text about the dog. As it is an expounding text entitled The Dog, the text is supposed to be about the dog but not about anything else. In that sense, the dog is known information. Therefore, it is natural that the most frequent choice of Theme is ‘the dog’ in the text and it appears with un/nun.

---

4 This type of clause construction has been often regarded as having double or multiple subjects and it is “extremely pervasive in Korean” Sohn (1980: 4).
Example 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text No.</th>
<th>Cl. No.</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1        | 1       | 개는Kay-nun
The dog | 사람과 가장 가까운 동물입니다.
salamkwa kacang kakkawun
tongmulipnita. is the animal most closely related to humans. |
| 1        | 2       | 사람들은Salamtul-un
People | 면 옛날부터 개를 길렀습니다.
men yeysnalpwute kaylul killessupnita. have kept dogs from long ago. |
| 1        | 3.1     | 원래, 개는wenlay kay-nun
Originally, the dog | 이리처럼 사나운 짐승이었는데,
ilichelem sanawun cimsungiessnuntey,
was a wild animal like the wolf but |
| 1        | 3.2     | as (the dog) | 사람과 가까이 살면서
salamkwa kakkai salmyense
lived close to humans |
| 1        | 3.3     | (the dog) | 온순하게 길들여졌다고 합니다.
onswunhake kiltulyecyesstako hapnita.
is said to have been tamed to be docile. |
| 1        | 4       | 개의 생김새는kayuy sayngkimsay-nun
The dog’s shapes and sizes | 여러 가지입니다.
yele kaciipnita. vary. |

The observation that a Theme marked by i/ka tends to introduce a new piece of information is further supported by Example 2 from a recreating text in the corpus:

Example 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text No.</th>
<th>Cl. No.</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 15       | 13.2    | 동생의 병은tongsaynguy pyeng-un
Tongsayng’s illness | 좀처럼 낫지 않았다.
comchelem nasi angassta.
was hardly cured. |
| 15       | 14      | [육십킬로그램이었던]
[(ywusip kilokulaymiessten]]
mommwukey-ka
(His) weight that used to be 63 Kg | 오심 일 킬로그램으로 줄었다.
osip il kiloklaymulo cwulessta.
had reduced to 51 Kg. |
| 15       | 15      | 신애의 남편이sinaewu namphyen-i
Sinae’s husband | 동생을 정신과 의사에게 데리고 갔다.
tongsangul cengsinkwa uysaeykey teyliko
kassta. took Tongsayng to a psychiatrist. |
The Themes in all three consecutive clauses 15, 16 and 17 have i/ka and Sinae’s husband, the doctors and one of the doctors are introduced for the first time in the story.

However, the information status assigned to a Theme is not necessarily determined by the fact that it is a piece of new information in the particular text but it can be determined by an expectation given in the situation or assigned by the writer or speaker. For instance, both Examples 3 and 4 are the beginning of a TV news program. Therefore, it might be reasonable to expect new information to be introduced at the beginning. Interestingly, however, Example 3 starts with a Theme with un/nun and Example 4, with a Theme with i/ka as shown below:

Example 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text No.</th>
<th>Cl. No.</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>동생을 본 의사들이 The doctors who examined Tongsayng</td>
<td>입원할 것을 권했다. recommended that he go into hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>다행히 의사 한 사람이 Fortunately one of the doctors</td>
<td>동생의 대학 동기였다. was a university mate of Tongsayng.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text No.</th>
<th>Cl. No.</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>앵커: 노무현 대통령은 President Roh Moo-hyun</td>
<td>오늘 [[라이스 미 국무장관을 만난]] 자리에서 [[영내 장애물이 극복되어 동북아 평화가 가능하다]]는 말로 최근 일본의 움직임에 대한 우리측 입장을 전달했습니다. today in the place where [[(he) met US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice]] expressed our position in relation to the recent moves of Japan with a remark [[that when regional disputes are solved, peace in Northeast Asia is possible.]]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text No.</th>
<th>Cl. No.</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>앵커: 라이스 미 국무장관이 Anchor: US Secretary of State Rice</td>
<td>외교 수장으로는 처음으로 북한을 주권 국가로 인정했습니다 oykyos wucangulonun cheumulo pwukhanul cwukwenkwukkalo incenghayssupnita. for the first time as the top diplomat, acknowledged North Korea as a sovereign country.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reason for the first clausal Theme of Example 3, President Rho Moo-hyun, being marked by un/nun is that the news program always reports the president’s activities as a routine news item. In other words, people who watch the program usually expect news about the president. On the other hand, the news about US Secretary of State Rice is an occasional item and therefore the Theme comes with i/ka and is highlighted as a newsworthy item.

2.5 Topical Theme: clause-functional: marked Theme

2.5.1 Circumstantial

When a Circumstance comes before the Subject in clause initial position, it tends to function as marked Theme. However, there seems to be a difference between Circumstances marked by un/nun and Circumstances not marked by un/nun. A closer examination of how they function within discourse reveals that when a Circumstance is marked by un/nun, the Circumstance is not just circumstantial information of the clause but it is topicalized and/or it is contrastive. When it is topicalized, the rest of the clause is new information about the topicalized Circumstance. For instance, Clauses 18 and 19 of Example 5 have sewuley-nun, sewuleyse-nun (in Seoul) as circumstantial Theme but it is not just circumstantial information but it is Seoul itself that the rest of the clause is about.

Example 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text No.</th>
<th>Cl. No.</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>서울에는 Sewuley-nun In Seoul</td>
<td>[[다양한 상품만큼]] 다양한 상인들이 활동하였다. [[tayanghan sangpwummankum]] tayanghan sangiltuli hwaltonghayessta. a variety of merchandisers [as various as products]did business.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is interesting to observe here is that Subject/Participants in the Rheme position of Clauses 18 and 19 of Example 5 are marked by i/ka, and not un/nun, the latter being rarely used when a Circumstance in the same clause is marked by un/nun. It also serves as evidence that supports that Subject/Participant followed by i/ka has the status of new information.

Meanwhile, a circumstantial Theme without un/nun certainly functions to provide an orientation for the unfolding clause but it is not itself a topic. Therefore, thematic prominence continues up to the Subject or the elliptical Subject that follows it. For instance, the circumstantial Theme in Clause 18 of Example 6 provides further orienting information. However, it is not about the year but about King Sejong that the rest of the clause is concerned with. The position of such a Circumstance does not seem to be due to a deliberate choice related to Theme made by the writer, but rather a typical order of arranging information in Korean. Such an order is very similar to the unmarked order in clause complexes, namely hypotactically dependent clauses typically come before the main clause, providing orientation for the main clause. In other words, unlike in English, positioning a dependent clause before the main clause is a default choice.

Example 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text No.</th>
<th>Cl. No.</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>원래 서울에서는</td>
<td>공인된 상인, 즉 시전상인만이 영업을 할 수 있었다.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>wenlay sewuleyse-nun</td>
<td>kongintoyn sangin, cuk sicensanginmani yengepul hal swu issessta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Originally in Seoul</td>
<td>only authorized merchandisers, namely Sicyeon Sangin, were allowed to do business.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text No.</th>
<th>Cl. No.</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>서기 1450 년, 세종 대왕은</td>
<td>winneysuy nailo sayngaylul macheyssta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>seki 1450 nyen, secong taywang-un</td>
<td>passed away at the age of fifty four.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In 1450, King Sejong</td>
<td>swinneysuy nailo sayngaylul macheyssta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>[[오로지 나라와 백성을 위해 몸 바쳐 일한]] 세종 대왕은</td>
<td>enceyna wulituluy kasum sokey conkyengbatnun wiinulo calicabko issul kesita.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[[oloci nalawa bayksengul wihay mom batcye ilhan ]] secong taywang-un</td>
<td>will be always remembered as a respected great figure in our hearts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>King Sejong [[who devoted his entire life for the country and people]]</td>
<td>enceyna wulituluy kasum sokey conkyengbatnun wiinulo calicabko issul kesita.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.5.2 Affirming

A nominal group that functions as a Participant experientially and a Complement interpersonally can also be chosen as Theme. It is much less usual than the Theme conflated with Subject/Participant. Two types of occasion were observed in the corpus analysis. Firstly, when the Subject is elliptical and simply refers to non-specific people who can be translated as “you” in a general sense, it appears to be used as a way of avoiding the passive construction of the clause. In such cases, it does not seem to carry thematic significance. For instance, the elliptical Subject that corresponds to 합니다 (hapnita) (people) say in Clauses 13 and 15.3 of Example 7 is we, you or people and it does not seem to function as Theme because the object that makes a sound is what the text is about.

Example 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text No.</th>
<th>Cl. No.</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>[[소리를 일으키는]] 물체를 [soli-ka ilukhinun] mwulchey-lul the object [[that makes a sound]]</td>
<td>발음체라고 합니다. palumchelako hapnita.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>즉 물체를 cuk mwulchey-lul Namely if (an object)</td>
<td>두드리거나 twutulikena hamyen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>(the object)</td>
<td>비비거나 하면 pipikena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>소리가 soli-ka a sound</td>
<td>날니다. napnita. makes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>이와 같이 물체에 iwa kathi mwulchey-ey Like this when on an object</td>
<td>힘을 주어서 himul cwuese (we) put pressure and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>소리가 soli-ka a sound</td>
<td>일어날 때 ilenal ttay is made when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>그 물체를 ku mwulchelul the object</td>
<td>발음체라고 합니다. palumcheylako hapnita. (we) call a sounding body.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As such, when an elliptical Subject simply refers to non-specific people, the Complement that is positioned clause-initially may be textually more important than the elliptical Subject. It is interesting to observe the same kind of affirming Theme but marked by un/nun (Kim 2007: 119-120). Although it is equally natural to express it with ul/lul, it has a stronger sense of focus when it is marked by un/nun.
The other occasion when a Complement serves as Theme is when the Theme is in contrast with other immediately following or preceding Themes. The text in Example 8 is a short story about a mean and greedy doctor. After explaining how he has established his hospital in the preceding clauses before Clause 35.1, the last two clauses are constructed with two contrastive Themes, the management of (each department of the hospital) and the directorship of the hospital to emphasize that the mean doctor would never let anyone take the directorship.

Example 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text No.</th>
<th>Cl. No.</th>
<th>Theme(s)</th>
<th>Rheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>그러나 이제는</td>
<td>[별소리 오십만 환을 호가하는]] 도심지에 타이루를 바른 이층 양옥을 소유하게 되었다.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kulena icey-nun</td>
<td>[pyeogtang osipman hwaull hokahanun ]tosimciey thailwulul palun ichung yangokul sowuhakey toyessta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>However now</td>
<td>(he) owns a two-story tiled house in the heart of the city [[where one pyong of land is worth five hundred thousand hwan]].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>그는</td>
<td>자기 전문의 외과, 내과, 소아과, 산부인과 등 개인 병원을 집결시켰다.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ku-nun</td>
<td>caki cenmwunuy oykwa, naykwa, soawak, sanpwooinkwa tung kayin pyengwenul cipkyelsikyessta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>He</td>
<td>added other departments such as internal medicine, pediatrics, and obstetrics to his own professional surgery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>운영은</td>
<td>각자의 호주머니 샘속이었지만</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>wunyeng-un The management</td>
<td>kakcauy hocwumeni seymsokiesciman was up to individual doctors but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>종합 병원의 원장 자리는</td>
<td>의것이 자기가 차지하고 있었다.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>conghap pyengwenuy wencang cali-nun the directorship of the comprehensive hospital</td>
<td>uycesi cakika chachikako issessta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>he took over himself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown above, the Complement tends to serve as Theme in a clause where a) the elliptical Theme refers to non-specific people or b) the Complement is in contrast with the preceding or following Theme. It may be marked by the postposition marking a nominal group serving as Complement or by un/nun.

3 Conclusion

This paper has described the options that can be chosen as a Theme that orients the reader to the discourse that is to unfold at the clause level in Korean. First of all, it is
possible to have a single topical Theme or multiple Themes with a textual and/or interpersonal Theme in Korean. The topical Theme may or may not have an experiential function. When it does not, it serves only as Theme. When it does, it is further divided into marked and unmarked Theme depending on the experiential role it takes. The postposition un/nun is indeed observed in a range of different kinds of topical Theme. However, the element marked un/nun functions as Theme only when it is placed at the beginning of the clause and the Theme can be marked by i/ka or elliptical.

The discussion is based on the present author’s study (Kim 2007) that reported the quantitative results of Theme analysis of a corpus consisting of 537 declarative clauses from 17 texts as well as the qualitative findings of thematic progress both at clause and text levels. The study can be viewed as a significant initiative as it is the first attempt to describe Korean from an SFL perspective and it used a corpus of authentic texts rather than artificially constructed sentences. However, the corpus is small-scaled and therefore it is necessary to verify its findings with a larger corpus. In any attempt to verify or apply the findings, however, one needs to remember that it is not always straightforward to analyze clausal Themes in Korean due to the predominant feature of ellipsis. Therefore it is highly important to consider the thematic progression at the text level if the description provided in this paper is to be applied to other relevant fields such as translation studies and discourse analysis. Perhaps findings from such applied fields may broaden our understanding about how Theme works in Korean at the levels of clause and text. It is hoped that the present paper serves as a stepping-stone for such constructive discussions in the future.

4 References


Differing Identity Constructions of Second and 1.5 generation Korean Canadians and Their Heritage Language Learning

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Abstract
Focusing on the socialization patterns of four Korean heritage language learners who immigrated to Canada at different ages, this study explores how these Korean heritage language learners are marginalized as ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities in Canada, and examines the ways in which self-Orientalism (Yan and Santos, 2009) and Intraethnic Othering (Pyke and Dang, 2003) are embedded in second generation participants' hyphenated identities. The data for this study was collected from classroom observations, the participants' written journals, and in-depth interviews. This study shows differing constructions of hyphenated identities; ethnic and racial exclusion in a White dominant society was more salient in second generation identities whereas 1.5 generation (ilc osey) participants tended to maintain a stronger identity as Korean. My finding is that beneath these second generations' hyphenated identities there exists a discursive performance of self-Orientalism through which they constantly internalize images of Koreans that have been developed by Western colonial authority. Moreover, they tend to distance themselves from ‘FOBs’ (fresh off the boat) who exhibit distinct stereotypical Asian characteristics. My finding suggests that these second generations' self-orientalising and intraethnic Othering exacerbate the White racist structure where they already experience marginality. This study enables us to better understand what the Korean heritage language learners are, and helps them construct healthier hyphenated identities.

Introduction
Focusing on the lived experiences of four Korean Canadian heritage language learners who moved to an adopted country at different ages, this study explores the ways in which these heritage language learners construct their hyphenated identities where both ethnicity and race play salient roles. Furthermore, this study shows how second generation Korean heritage language learners contribute to the White racist structure where they feel that they have been marginalized. To date, much research has suggested a clear connection between heritage language and ethnic and cultural identity: those who develop their heritage language have strong ethnic and cultural identities, are more successful in their interactions with heritage language speakers and are more proficient in cross cultural communication (Cho, 2000; Cho, Cho & Tse, 1997; Lee, 2002; You, 2005). In addition, maintenance of the heritage language has proved beneficial in promoting biculturalism and bilingualism (Lee, 2002).

While these studies have provided useful implications about the importance of learning/maintaining heritage language, the conception of heritage language learners’ identity is rather limited in that it utilizes the essentialist definition limited by geo-spatial boundaries. This study, therefore, adopts a poststructuralist perspective to identity (e.g. Norton, 1995 and Weedon, 1987) as fluid, changing and constantly shifting and aims to depict the ways in which Korean heritage language learners construct their hyphenated identities and how they are positioned as Korean Canadians in their adopted country. To this end, this study enables a better understanding of what heritage
language learners are and why their hyphenated identities are important in their heritage language education.

I first provide a definition of heritage language, and explain why identity is important as a research topic in the context of heritage language learning. Then, I illustrate how Korean hyphenated identities have been researched in a North American context with particular attention to race and ethnicity. Next, I describe the methodology and participants of this study, and discuss differing identity constructions of Korean heritage language learners. Finally I attempt to contextualize the construction of heritage language learners’ hyphenated identities within the heritage language classroom, and discuss the implications of the study.

**Heritage Language and Identity**

The term heritage language has been used to refer to an immigrant, indigenous, or ancestral language with which a speaker has a personal relevance and desire to (re)connect (Wiley, 2005). For pedagogical purposes, Valdés (2001) defines a heritage language speaker as "someone who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken and who speaks or at least understands the language and is to some degree bilingual in the home language and in English" (p. 38). The participants in this study are therefore referred to as having a connection to the Korean language through immigrant parents, and possess various levels of proficiency in Korean. However, Valdés’ definition of heritage language learners is primarily based on their language proficiency and their affiliation with learners’ parents’ home country, thereby overlooking learners’ identities and past trajectories that shape their language learning.

The critical approach to language learning, which has gained a steady currency in the field of Second Language Education (SLE), has helped researchers and practitioners become aware of the importance of conceiving of language learning as a social practice (Canagarajah, 1993, 1999; Cummins, 2000; Giampapa, 2004; Goldstein, 2003; Ibrahim, 1999; Kubota, 2001; Norton, 1995; Shin, 2009, 2012). From the critical perspective, language learning is not merely an act of exchanging knowledge and information, but a process of a constant negotiation of language learners’ identities and of a continuous journey of self-(re)positionings within the broader society. Adopting this critical perspective, I argue that heritage language learning is not only a linguistically and cognitively oriented process, but also a highly complex social and cultural process that heritage learners have to constantly negotiate as part of their identity construction.

This notion of identities in flux situates the negotiation of identities as part of a process that calls forth past, present and future, within the notion of “being and becoming” (Giampapa, 2004; Ibrahim, 1999). Ibrahim (1999) explains this as follows:

The former is an accumulative memory, an experience, and a conception upon which individuals interact with the world around them, whereas the latter is the process of building this conception (p.354).

Thus, identity is not merely about where we come from, or a “recovery of the past” but rather “who we might become”; the presentation of whom we are bears upon how we represent ourselves (Hall & du Gay, 1996). This notion of “being and becoming” as a dialogical relationship between one’s past, present and future in the negotiation of identities is aptly expressed in Giampapa’s study (2004) that explores the process
of "being and becoming" Italian Canadians. By examining ways in which three Italian Canadian youths negotiate their multiple identities from the "periphery" of their multiple worlds, Giampapa shows that the participants constantly challenge the undesirable imposed identities based on ethnicity, religion, language, and sexual orientation, and attempt to reconfigure what is valued and what is legitimate.

Korean Hyphenated Identities in North America

In a North American context, much of scholarly work on the subject of Korean hyphenated identities shows that subsequent Korean generations have difficulty in being accepted by a mainstream society while also being marginalized by their own immigrant communities (Danico, 2004; Kibria, 2002; Lew, 2006; Quach, O and Urrieta, 2009). Kibria (2002), for example, recounts Chinese and Korean American's experiences and suggests that their minority ethnic and racial status is a central point of tension and conflict between Asian Americans and the dominant group. More recently, Quach, O and Urrieta (2009) explore Asian students' educational experiences in North Carolina, and reveal how racialized experiences contribute to and shape Asian students' linguistic, cultural and racial identities, thereby suggesting that their language and identity development is influenced by the implicit and explicit assimilationist messages received in predominantly White schools. Shared knowledge in these previous studies is that race has been and continues to be central to the Korean hyphenated identities.

While these previous studies have paid attention to social structural inequality and assimilation pressures that Koreans experience as a minority in North America, Pyke (2010) argues that sustained attention has not been devoted to the acculturative mechanisms by which newcomers inculcate ideologies of White superiority and racial oppression, nor has adequate attention been paid to the consequences for immigrants of color who arrive having already absorbed an ideology of White (Western) superiority dispensed through military, economic religious, and cultural colonialism and imperialism. Kim’s (2006) study, in this regard, is interesting in that she explores how marginal groups respond to Western racial ideology based on state and cultural influences. By conducting a comparative study of South Koreans and Korean American immigrants, she finds that both South Koreans and Korean Americans similarly adopt and resist White racial hegemony, but that their responses differ by way of state and cultural ideologies and practices.

3. The Methodology

The data for this study was collected from classroom observation for the school year 2006-7, using in-depth interviews with and written journals from four Korean heritage language participants. All four participants were taking the intermediate Korean language course that I was teaching at the time of the data collection at a post-secondary institute in Canada. Because I took dual roles as a teacher and a researcher, I had a research assistant, Lucy, video-tape the two hour classes. The videotapes were manually transcribed into English using a Word program.

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5 I used a work-study student who I hired to assist my course as a research assistant. This student was a mature fourth year undergraduate student, and Lucy is her pseudonym.
The in-depth interviews were conducted twice with each participant, and each interview lasted approximately one hour (see Appendix for detailed interview questions). I encouraged my participants to use the language of their preference during the interview. Most interviews were carried out in English, but 1.5 generation Korean participants mainly used Korean throughout the interviews.

Written journals were collected bi-weekly as part of students’ course assignments. In the journals, the students were asked to write any new observations that they made about Korea, Koreans, Korean culture and society in general, and any changes that they experience regarding themselves or their linguistic or sociolinguistic proficiency in Korean language.

While the teacher/researcher role did create certain tensions, it was not always detrimental to producing insightful and valuable findings. I argue that my dual roles as a teacher and a researcher offered numerous advantages in terms of my teaching and researching practices. Having been my participants’ teacher for one or two years, I had gotten to know them very well in terms of their personality, family, ethnic, racial backgrounds, their school lives, etc. Moreover, as a teacher, I had access to data about my participants’ daily work, activities and entertainment without making them feel that they are intruded upon. Canagarajah (1999) talks about the advantage of teacher research as “participant observation enables closer involvement in the processes of schooling and community life, providing deeper insights into the participants’ orientations” (p. 53).

Participants

This study includes two 1.5 generation and two second generation participants. The label between 1.5 generation and second generation is commonly drawn from the citizenship status acquired at birth (Danico, 2004). In this paper, however, I distinguish second generation from 1.5 generation based on my participants’ formal schooling experience in Korea. Thus, Sohee and Jinwoo⁶ are considered as 1.5 generation as they immigrated during their formative years⁷, but after preschool age (Cho, 2000; Danico, 2004), and refer to Daniel and Dennis as second generation.

1. Daniel

Daniel was born in London, Ontario, Canada and grew up in the town of Glencoe, Ontario. His father is an engineer but currently semi-retired. His mother works for a school board for grade 8 to 10. Daniel has two older sisters, and is 22 years old. He is in his 2nd year.

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⁶ Please note that participants’ names used here are all pseudonyms.

⁷ While emphasizing that minimum age is unimportant in defining 1.5 generation relative to determinant factors such as an immediate surroundings and support system, Danico (2004) indicates the maximum age of 1.5 generation as 13 years old.
2. Dennis

Dennis was born in Seoul, Korea, but moved to Toronto, Canada when he was four years old. His parents are running a convenience store. Dennis has one younger brother. He is 20 years old and is a first year student.

3. Sohee

Sohee was born in Seoul, Korea but moved to Paraguay at age 7. In Paraguay her father ran a jewelry business with other Koreans, and her mother was a homemaker. Sohee moved to Vancouver, Canada in grade ten, and her family moved to Canada a couple of years later. Her parents are now running a Korean restaurant. Sohee has one younger sister, and is a fourth year student. She is 26 years old.

4. Jinwoo

Jinwoo was born in Youngju, Kyung Sang province, Korea, and went to school in Seoul before moving to Toronto, Canada at age 10. His family are landed immigrants in Canada, but his parents are in Korea now because of Jinwoo’s father’s dentistry business. Jinwoo’s mother is a homemaker. He has one older sister, and is a second year student. He is 20 years old.

**Identity Constructions of 1.5ers**

My data shows that my 1.5 generation participants construct their hyphenated identity by meeting other ‘1.5ers’, sharing their experiences growing up in an immigrant family, and identifying with having been an “FOB” (“fresh off the boat”) when they first moved to Canada by not understanding English or the local culture. Sohee and Jinwoo remember what it was like to be “FOB” at school. Jinwoo writes in his journal as follows:

> When I was younger, I was insecure about my surroundings as well as my English. I remember during lunch hours eating by myself in the school cafeteria and running to my sister’s classroom at every break --- One day, I wore this T-shirt saying something in Konglish, I don't remember what it said exactly, but I remember I was mortified when the kids in my class pointed at the words and giggled at each other [Written journal on January 23, 2007]

In this journal, Jinwoo expresses the feelings of insecurity and embarrassment that he felt because of his lack of English and his “FOBBY” dress when he first started studying at the Canadian elementary school. In Korea in the 80’s and 90’s, a fairly homogenized nation with very few racial varieties, Jinwoo had always been in an unmarked category as a Korean with black hair, eating Kimchi for breakfast, and speaking Korean wherever he goes. When moving to Canada, his ethnicity as a Korean suddenly became a marked category, thereby entailing another dimension of his identity. Moreover, he had to embrace his status as an ESL speaker. This transition period was crucial in constructing my 1.5ers’ hyphenated identity, and offered a lens through which to perceive what it takes to become a 1.5 generation Korean Canadian.

The ethnic club where 1.5 generation students meet with other 1.5 generation students and socialize with them also became a site where my 1.5 generation Korean
students shape and reshape their hyphenated identities. The Korean Students’ Association (KSA), one of the ethnic club organizations on university campus, of which Jinwoo and Sohee are members, is a good example of this. Sohee explains her experiences in KSA as follows:

J: KSAenun kyenghem-i ettaysseyo? [How was your experience in KSA?]


[There was a funny thing going on. If second generation is elected as a president, all the executive positions are occupied by second generations. If 1.5er becomes a president, all the executive positions go to 1.5ers. When I was an executive, the president was a 1.5er. He/she was a very close friend. I had a lot of fun by working with him/her. It’s like a type of bond that you get to feel during your Korean university lives. I went to MT (membership training) and did all these preparations for events. I had lots of fun].

[Interview, May 10, 2007]

In this interview, while talking about her positive experience at the KSA in terms of sharing experiences and perspectives with other 1.5 generation Korean university students in Canada, Sohee also expresses a sense of there being certain gaps and rifts between 1.5 and second generation Koreans within the club. As mentioned earlier, disparities and discord between foreign born 1.5ers and adopted-country born second generations have been depicted by much of the academic literature in terms of their experiences, a level of bilingualism, perspectives, or values (Danico, 2004; Kibria, 2002; Lee, 2005). The general interpretation is that 1.5ers who strive to be ‘good kids’ by achieving academic success in the mainstream are perceived as less than cool kids by second generation students due to their foreign mindset, values and behaviors. For this reason, many second generation participants dissociate from 1.5ers in their attempts to negate their own presumed foreignness as well as for fear that the 1.5ers’ foreignness might reinforce, in the eyes of others, their own (Kibria, 2002).

Further investigation of socialization patterns of my 1.5ers and second generation participants supports this reasoning. My 1.5 generation participants exclusively socialized with Asian students including Koreans who recently arrived in Canada. Jinwoo describes his socialization pattern as follows:

J: hakkyo tanilttay nwuku-hako chinhakey cinaysseyo? [When you were in school, who were your friends?]

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8This paper follows Yale Romanization System (See Sohn (1994) for details)
Jinwoo: mayn cheum-eyun hankwuk aytul-hako koyngcanghi chinhataka ku taum second hakkyu-lo cenhak kassulttay cwungkwuk aytul-ilang com manhi sakwiko... isanghakey Canadian-ilangun manhi an sakwiesseyo. [I was very close to several Koreans at first, and when I moved to another school, I hung out with Chinese... Strangely, I didn’t hang out with Canadians].

J: koken wayin kes kathayo? [Why do you think this is the case?].

Jinwoo: kyayneytul-un kathi nolmyen hockey kathun wuntong-ulo manhi sakwicanhaho. kuntey cenun ice skate hanato halcwal moloku kyayneytul-un kkilikkili nolko cwungkwukay-ka pisushan naittay omyen yenge-to cal moshacanhayo. yenge kaluchye cwumyense selo mak chinhayciko... [They make friends by playing sports like hockey, but I don’t even know how to skate. They always hung out with themselves. But I could make a lot of Chinese friends because when they first arrived, they couldn’t speak English. We became very good friends while I am teaching them English].

[Interview, April 20, 2007]

As Jinwoo explains in the interview, he exclusively befriended Koreans or Chinese who were in a similar position as he was as a recent immigrant, and an ESL speaker. To Jinwoo, Canadian kids’ socialization mainly builds on participating in sports such as ice-hockey. Having come from the Korean education system that does not value sports in its school curriculum, he chooses not to participate in a Canadian athletic circle, but to remain on the periphery by largely befriending 1.5 Koreans or Chinese who have a similar immigrant experience, and also have physical similarities.

Jinwoo’s intentional socializations with other Asians in school show that he is neither trying to be integrated into the mainstream Canadian circle, nor does he attempt to continuously compare his position to that of Canadians; he simply accepts who he is as a kid who was born in Korea, but grew up in Canada receiving Canadian schooling. Jinwoo is fully aware that he cannot completely erase his Asian racial identity, not to mention his Korean ethnic identity. Rather, to Jinwoo, being accepted as Canadian is understood to be part of a process of upward socioeconomic mobility, as witnessed in other studies on immigrant children (Kibria, 2002; Lee, 2005; Lew, 2006). A similar kind of acceptance about their identity as a Korean Canadian was also observed in the interview with Sohee. She states as follows:

J: seykaci speech communities-eyse sengcang hayssnuntey casin-uy Identity-ey tayhay ettekey sayngkak haseyyo? [You grew up in three different speech communities and what you do you think about your identities?].

Sohee: cenun kulenkey pyello epsesseyo. Identity crisis kathun kes // kunyaig nammi-ey sal tayto ppwuli-nun hankwukin intey kyopho nikka kunyaig oykwuk-eyse sanun hankwukin. kuntey com te Westernized toyn kulen hankwukin? Canada-ey waseto selyusang-uronun Canadian-iciman Korean Canadian icanhayo. kulayse kunyaig kulehkey pata tulikey toyketunyo. ceyka Canadian-ilang ttokekhatko sayngkak-ul hakey toymen enu swunkan-eyun kulun struggle-ul macul swu issul ke kathayo. nwukwunka nalul hankwukin-ulo tayhal swu isscanhayo. nanun Canadian-ulo sayngkak hanuntey, kulel swu to issnuntey nanun nemwuto tangyenhakey Korean Canadian –ilako sayngkak-ul hay pelinikka cenhye mwe // [I didn't really have an identity crisis. When I lived in South America, I identified myself as having a Korean root but living overseas, but maybe a little more
Westernized Korean? Even when I moved to Canada, I thought of myself as Korean Canadian although I am a Canadian citizen. I just accept the fact as it is. If I thought that I was like Canadian, then I could have had struggles because of my identity concerns. Somebody might treat me as a Korean when I think that I am Canadian. But I naturally think that I am Korean Canadian, and have not really had a hard time with regard to my identity.

[Interview, April 11, 2007]

This interview shows Sohee's straightforward acceptance of her Korean ethnicity, of her not being Canadian, and of her hyphenated Korean Canadian identity. She tends to accept her race, ethnicity or hyphenated identity without evaluating them from the perspective of the dominant group. Both Jinwoo and Sohee accept their ethnicity, race, and hyphenated identities as a matter of fact, and neither of them tries to shift their innate Korean frames of reference to those of native-born Canadian's. In other words, they remain Korean in many respects, and are aware that being, thinking or acting more like Canadians does not help them to integrate into mainstream society. Rather, they recognize that integration into mainstream society can be achieved by social mobility or socioeconomic status that they achieve through education.

Identity Construction of Second Generations

Daniel has mainly socialized with White friends, while Dennis, who moved to Canada at the age of four, socializes with both recent immigrants and White Canadians. What they experienced while socializing with their White friends is a sense of racialized exclusion from established conceptions of being Canadian. Both Daniel and Dennis experienced a sense of alienation by being not one of them. Dennis expressed a sense of racialized exclusion as follows:

Dennis: ---'cause I was a pretty bad kid when I was younger. I used to always get suspended from school and stuff. I've always gotten racist comments and stuff, you know what I mean? You're going to get racist comments if you're not White. And then I used to get into fights all the time in school. My dad, he never got mad at me for fighting for a specific reason like that. If I got into fight for a dumb reason then he'd be mad. But for something like that, he would never yell at me for that / In my school, there was like // the White people hung out with White people, and immigrants hung out with the immigrants. There was all like // especially in cafeteria, we walk in and White people are on this side and minorities are on this side.

J: How did you like to belong to minority group?
Dennis: I didn't really care, to be honest. I didn't care if I mix with another crowd or not. 'Cause no matter what, I am not going to be Canadian. I am always going to have black hair. I am always going to look like a Korean. I am not going to turn into Caucasian style.

[Interview, April 29, 2007]

As Kibria (2002) pointed out, second generation Koreans began to become aware of their Asian racial identity and the difficulties of being Canadian during their childhoods. The interview cited above shows that Dennis is no exception, as suggested by his reserving the term “Canadian” for Whites, Dennis has rather deterministic racialized views about what it takes to be Canadians: being racially White and having fair hair. Although he speaks English as a first language and understands its mainstream culture,
he does not consider himself as a Canadian simply because he is not White and does not have yellow hair. To Dennis, whiteness invisibly defines what “Canadian” is. Likewise, Daniel expresses a sense of racial exclusion that he experienced as follows:

J: Earlier, you mentioned that you don’t belong to either of the cultures (Korean or Canadian).
Daniel: Yeah. Not fully ‘cause of the way that they joke like that. They joke about it. That means they are hinting at it. If they hint at it, that’s how they see it a little bit. That means I can’t be in it. In New York, we were walking out, me and an Indian guy, Black guy and White guy. The waitress goes when we’re leaving what you’ve got UN or something? You know. Things like that. I don’t see it because I don’t see myself. And I don’t see it in other people, I don’t think, because I see more mixed than all other people. But when you hear that, oh, I am not.

J: So when you think of yourself, what do you think you are?
Daniel: Depends on where I am. Some of my friends they think it’s a joke. Oh, he is like a Chinese guy in the group or an Asian guy in the group but I don’t really feel like being pointed it out. They are like joking about it and accentuating it. When I am with Koreans, I don’t feel great at all.

[Interview, May 1, 2007]

Like Dennis, Daniel has been influenced by the culture of whiteness, internalizing the belief that only Whites can be “authentic” members in the mainstream society. When Daniel and Dennis spoke about “Canadians” and “Canadian culture”, they typically described what they saw valued on TV as well as at the schools they have attended. As Daniel was born and raised in Canada, and has been educated in a Canadian school system, emulating the White middle class norms and values has been a natural practice for him. Most of the time, he did not have much trouble positioning himself in relation to White middle class norms and values, and yet in hearing the racial jokes unconsciously and randomly made by people, he feels that he cannot be one of the legitimate members in the mainstream White society due to his race. In other words, he has realized that in the eyes of others he is not Canadian but a foreigner, identified as “Asian” or “Chinese” or, in Tuan’s (1998) term, “forever foreigners”. This awareness made Daniel conscious of the significance of race, specifically of the privileges of “whiteness”, in Canadian society, as well as of the gaps between himself and many of his White school peers.

On the other hand, Daniel and Dennis’s conceptions about legitimate Canadians as Whites can also be analyzed as a form of “internalized Whiteness” or “internalized racism”, which Pyke (2010) perceives as the individual inculcation of the racist stereotypes, values, images, and ideologies perpetuated by the White dominant society. According to Pyke, the dominant group controls the construction of reality through the production of ideologies that circulate throughout society where they inform social norms or organizational practices. Such an ideological hegemony has been used to understand the process by which the ruling race attains the consensus of subordinated groups, and is further evident when the subjugated inculcate stereotypes and ideologies disseminated as taken-for-granted knowledge. According to Pyke’s logical groundings of an ideological hegemony and of “internalized Whiteness”, Dennis and Daniel end up succumbing to norms and values taken for granted in a White dominant society by internalizing the conceptions of legitimate Canadians as Whites, thereby further subsidizing the White racist structure where they have felt marginalized and illegitimate.
As articulated by Edward Said (1978), Orientalism refers to a colonial era system of knowledge that defined East and West as fundamentally opposite, with the East perpetually inferior and exotic. When Asians reinterpret, produce, and consume the same kinds of essentialized images of what is presumed to be their own heritage, they would appear to be remaking themselves to match Western ideas of the Oriental Other. They are, thus, engaging in self-orientalising (Yan and Santos, 2009). Dennis’s and Daniel’s narratives show that they are not exceptions and that they unconsciously self-Orientalize their own Korean-ness. Their interview data shows that both Daniel and Dennis internalize the model minority rhetoric which has been used to serve the interest of the White dominant group, where they perceive Koreans as having a good work ethic, and ethical whereas Canadians as the opposite. The interview excerpt below demonstrates that Dennis constructs his identity, based on his Korean ethnicity and pride, while positioning Canadians as “others”:

J: Some Korean Canadians seem to have a hard time building a membership in Korea or Canada due to the gaps in values or thoughts.
Dennis: There are different types of Canadians. There’s always going to be bad and good kids. If you pick moral kids, they’re a lot like Koreans. They have respect for their parents. It’s not like they are a lot different, they still have morals. So it’s not that hard to chill with them.
[Interview, April 28, 2007]

By positioning Koreans as good and moral, and Canadians as ambivalent, Dennis is subscribing to the model minority rhetoric. By identifying himself with Koreans, Dennis clearly disassociates himself from Canadians, and self-orientalises his Korean-ness. Dennis is unconsciously engaged in a self-Orientalizing discourse by subscribing to idealized Asian images that were developed by the West colonial authority, while simultaneously dichotomizing Koreans and Canadians.

In the same fashion, Daniel’s interview reveals an idealized Korean vis à vis distanced Canadians. Although he at times faces ongoing challenges to his authenticity as a “true Korean” from Korean community, he takes pride in certain Korean values that he deemed as imparted by his parents. In the following interview excerpt, Daniel’s good work ethic, which he identifies as valued in Korean culture is misunderstood by his Canadian co-workers. He states in the interview:

J: ...but you have no control over the fact that you are Asian either.
Daniel: Even habits something like that. Seem like I actually do more work. When I look at it, like my new job, I mail it in the beginning of the day and end of the day. So at the end of the day, everyone stops at five to four. I am in there and they turn a light off to get me to stop working. I am like why? You guys stand there you don’t do anything for five minutes. Why don’t you just let me work? I am just sorting a mail it’s not like I am doing something hard. But they are like stop. Who are you trying to impress? Do you want to get a raise or something? Obviously I can’t get a raise because it is a summer job. I am like No, I just don’t like to stand around and doing nothing for five minutes.
J: So do you think that you do not belong to either culture.
Daniel: Yeah, but I know both cultures pretty well. I would say I know Western culture better than Korean culture. I don’t really know Korean culture that well. I know a lot of things I see are according to Western views.
Conceptualizing Koreans as hard working and having good work ethics, and Canadians as the opposite, Daniel, like Dennis, subscribes to model minority rhetoric in which Asian Americans are likened to Whites as hard-working and successful, and yet as “model minorities”, Asian Americans do not have the actual privileges associated with “real” whiteness (Lee, 2005). In this sense, the model minority rhetoric has been used to serve the interest of the majority by providing evidence that it is free of racial bias and inequality. Ironically, my second generation participants subscribe to this rhetoric, leading to further contributions to the existing White racist structure.

Daniel and Dennis’s engagement in a colonialist discourse is also shown as “intraethnic Othering” (Pyke, 2010) which involves the distinction between those who are seen to be FOB and those who are seen as overly assimilated into White mainstream culture. In the following classroom excerpt, the class was taking up the reading passage titled “happiness”. To encourage discussion I wrote the word “happiness” on the blackboard and got the class to brainstorm associated words, jotting down their responses. When the class ran out of the associated words to “happiness”, I began to call out individuals’ names to seek more associated words.

Dennis: Jane.
Ray: I didn’t say that. I don’t know // canun ke [to sleep].
Dennis: Going back to China.
Students: (Hissing and booing and laughing)
Dennis: Sorry, I mean //
Shan: // cip [home].
[Classroom Observation, March 8, 2007]

Dennis who always talked loudly and made jokes in class teasingly, and perhaps sarcastically interpreted his fellow students’ sources of happiness. Although Dennis was being impulsive, the message drawn from his blurted comment was powerful; Shan who recently came to Canada, was perceived as “FOB (fresh off the boat)” and should go back to China in order to lead a happy life. Dennis’s comment reflects the work of Goldstein (2003) who shows that in multiethnic and multilingual schools, immigrant status and limited English proficiency are considered states of deficiency and backwardness. At the same time, Dennis’s word for Shan’s happiness invokes a type of colonialist discourse by which people believe that English speaking ability is not only associated with academic success but is also an indication of cognitive maturity and sophistication, and a degree of “Canadianization”. It is interesting that this type of colonialist discourse is sustained and supported by a certain immigrant population, second generation Koreans in this study, that has perceptibly moved toward the center of the adopted speech community. Kibria’s (2002) study suggests how second generation Korean Americans could establish distance from, and even attack an FOB that was perceived to threaten their established ‘American-ness’. For Dennis, Shan acts as a mirror, reflecting an image of how others see him as “Asian” and “foreign” rather than how he sees himself.
Implications on Heritage Language Education

By investigating the hyphenated identities of four Korean heritage language learners, this study engenders useful implications in regard to who the Korean heritage language learners are and the ways in which they have constructed their hyphenated identities while maintaining their heritage language. This study showed the differing ways in which 1.5 and second generation heritage language learners construct their hyphenated identities; ethnic and racial exclusion in a White dominant society was more salient in second generation identities whereas 1.5 generation participants tended to maintain a stronger identity as Korean. However, this study also found that second generation heritage language learners engage in colonialist discourses by internalizing White norms, self-Orientalizing Korean-ness and distancing themselves from deemed FOBs.

However, such a discursive performance of colonial ideologies does not actually free the second generation Korean Canadians from the racial hierarchy in which they are embedded, nor does it free them from marginality. Instead, they run a risk of perpetuating the White racist structure where they succumb to White supremacy ideology. This study, therefore, calls on educators to help these second generation heritage language learners to foster healthier identity constructions. Helping them to be aware of the ways in which White supremacy ideologies are unconsciously inculcated amongst minority populations would be an effective way of developing healthier hyphenated identities. Also, they need to be aware that FOB is not a category to be branded as backwardness and deficiency. Deemed FOBs, after all, have wonderful resources pertaining to Korean language and culture that they can share with second generation heritage language learners. To this end, educators need to foster a heritage language classroom as a locus where 1.5 and second generation heritage language learners can share their resources, capitals, and knowledge across home and adopted countries.

So much of what we read about in heritage language education, or hear in teacher education classes, tends to conceive of classes as closed boxes. I would like to propose an alternative view that recognizes the heritage language learning as a complex social and cultural process where heritage language learners bring their past trajectories and identities (Canagarajah, 1993, 1999; Norton, 1995, Shin, 2009). From this view, not only should we recognize linguistic practices such as methods, competencies, strategies, grammar, tasks or drills when educating heritage language learners, but also the path that the heritage language learners have taken in the past, their positioning in the ethnic community as well as in the dominant society.

Conclusion

This paper showed the differing identity construction of 1.5 and second generation Korean heritage language learners. Ethnic and racial exclusion in a White dominant society was more salient in second generation identities whereas 1.5 generation participants tended to maintain a stronger identity as Korean. It is interesting that beneath these second generations’ hyphenated identities there exists a discursive performance of self-Orientalism and intraethnic Othering, which this study found, serves to perpetuate the White racist structure where the second generations reported they have experienced marginality.
Although this study is limited in that it utilizes a small sample of data, it enables us to better understand what the Korean heritage language learners are and the ways in which they construct their hyphenated identities in the course of maintaining heritage language. Further investigation about heritage language learners’ identities and its relationship to their heritage language learning would shed a useful light into the field of heritage language education.

References


**Appendix**

Questions for Semi-structured Interviews

Family Background

How many members are there in your family?

Where is your father from?

What is your father's occupation?

Where is your mother from?

What is your mother's occupation?

For Korean students:

To what degree do you think that your parents are Korean? (e.g. do they practice Korean customs every day?)

Do your parents encourage you to speak Korean?

When your parents speak Korean to you, do you answer them back in Korean or in English
Geographical Background
Where were you born? If you were not born in Canada, which Canadian city did you grow up in?
Can you describe your hometown?
Did the city where you grew up have Koreans? If yes, did you socialize with other Koreans?
Did the city where you grew up have other minority groups?
When you were growing up, which group of children did you mainly socialize with?

Korean Communities
For Korean students:
When you were growing up, did you attend any kinds of Korean community organization? (e.g. churches)
To what degree, in your opinion, these community organizations are beneficial to Korean communities?
When you were growing up, were the Korean broadcasts or newspapers available?
If you build a community organization for Korean people, what kind of organization would that be?

Education
Which elementary school did you attend?
Which high school did you attend?
What is your major at the University?
Did you ever join any kind of Korean clubs on the campus?
Do your parents encourage you to study a certain subject area?

For Korean students:
Did you attend Korean weekend school?
- How long did you attend the Korean school?
- Who taught your classes? How many students were there?
- What kind of activities did you do?
- Were the classes organized by content?
- What cultural activities concerning Korean culture did you do in class?
- How would you evaluate the Korean school overall?
- What kind of improvement do you think the school needs?

Korean Language
Why do you want to learn Korean?
Do you think that Korean language proficiency is beneficial to you?
How would it be beneficial to you?
What language skills do you think you need to improve most?

Korean Culture
What do you think about Korean culture compared to your native culture?
What do you like about Korean culture?
What do you not like about Korean culture?
Korean People
What do you think about Korean people compared to the people in your country?
What do you like about Koreans?
What do you dislike about Koreans?

Identity
How do feel as a woman or man in the class?
How do feel as a first (second, third, fourth) year student in class?

Korean Identity
For Korean students:
Do you think that you have identity as a Korean?
If yes, where do you think that that Korean identity has been formed?
When do you feel that you are a Korean?
What does it mean to be a Korean in Canada?
Do you think that Korean language proficiency helps one to retain one’s Korean identity?
Describe several important things that one should have to have in order to facilitate that Korean identity?
If you were/are married and have kids, would you teach Korean to your kids?
A Curious Case: North Korea and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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Abstract
This paper argues that North Korea is a willing participant in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, despite its reputation as a belligerent actor in nuclear diplomacy. Because of its vulnerability to climate change impacts, North Korea therefore has strong incentives to participate in the UNFCCC. North Korea represents a fascinating anomaly within the UNFCCC. It is not an active member of any specific negotiating bloc and has been an infrequent attendee at UNFCCC Conference of Parties gatherings. While North Korea may be an outlier in terms of its importance to the negotiating process of the Convention, there are dimensions of its interaction with the international climate change regime that are unique among signatories and worthy of scholarly attention. This study analyses North Korea’s compliance with its commitments under Article 4.1 of the UNFCCC, drawing on information from reporting documents for the UNFCCC and the related United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), along with project reports compiled by international organisations and NGOs working in the DPRK, and official statements released by the North Korean government. The paper concludes that North Korea is complying with its commitments as a Non-Annex I Party to the UNFCCC, because the objectives of the international climate change regime are congruent with the legitimacy and survival imperatives of the Kim government.

Introduction

North Korea is a willing participant in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), despite its reputation as a belligerent actor in nuclear diplomacy. Because of its vulnerability to climate change impacts, North Korea has strong incentives to participate in the UNFCCC. North Korea represents a fascinating anomaly within the UNFCCC. It is not an active member of any specific negotiating bloc and has been an infrequent attendee at UNFCCC Conference of Parties gatherings. While North Korea may be an outlier in terms of its importance to the negotiating process of the Convention, there are dimensions of its interaction with the international climate change regime that are unique among signatories and worthy of scholarly attention.

The UNFCCC is a treaty framework of non-binding soft law commitments and guiding principles aimed at the long-term objective of solidifying national emissions reduction commitments into binding international law. It provides a framework for the development of binding greenhouse gas emission limits and adaptation strategies, while the later Kyoto Protocol contained specific provisions and regulations further codifying
obligations for signatory Parties (Vihma, 2011). The Convention divides signatory countries into three main groups: *Annex I Parties*, which include the industrialized countries that were members of the OECD in 1992, plus countries of the former Soviet Union designated as ‘economies in transition’; *Annex II Parties*, comprising the OECD members of Annex I, but not the economies-in-transition countries; and *Non-Annex I Parties*, inclusive of developing countries or countries recognized as especially vulnerable to climate change impacts. North Korea is a Non-Annex I Party to the UNFCCC (Yamin and Depledge, 2004).

This study analyses North Korea’s compliance with its commitments under Article 4.1 of the UNFCCC, drawing on information from reporting documents for the UNFCCC and the related *United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity* (UNCBD) and the *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification* (UNCCD), along with project reports compiled by international organisations and NGOs working in the DPRK, and official statements released by the North Korean government. It aims to document the DPRK’s compliance with its obligations as a Non-Annex I Party under UNFCCC as enunciated in Articles 4.1 of the Convention. It begins with a précis of academic scholarship on climate change and the environment in the North Korean context, establishing the link between climate change and state survival. It identifies North Korea’s obligations as a Non-Annex I Party to the UNFCCC and explores its compliance with the measures listed under Article 4.1. The paper concludes that North Korea is complying with its commitments as a Non-Annex I Party to the UNFCCC, because the objectives of the international climate change regime are congruent with the legitimacy and survival imperatives of the Kim government.

While North Korea may be peripheral to the negotiating process of the Convention, there are dimensions of its interaction with the international climate change regime that are unique and worthy of scholarly attention. Climate-related policy-making in Pyongyang is a product of the distinctive political, economic and ideological system centred on the Kim family dictatorship, which preferentially resources the military under the Songun politics model (Ri 2012) and bases policy on the ever-malleable philosophy of *Juche* (Yang 1994; McEachern 2010). Domestic governance is highly vertically stratified, characterised by centralised decision-making, ideological incentives and pervasive social and information controls (Cumings 2004; Lankov 2007). The national economy is hampered by structural inefficiencies, technologically antiquated infrastructure, and resource shortages. Its energy infrastructure is inefficient and heavily coal-dependent, based on aging Cold War-era technology that is desperately in need of upgrading and repairs (von Hippel and Hayes 2011). These capability constraints influence North Korea’s mitigation and adaptation strategies. This paper therefore sheds light on the interplay between domestic governance, UNFCCC treaty obligations and national disaster preparedness.

The disastrous Arduous March period of the mid-1990s provides a gateway for discussion of the climate-environment-governance nexus. Habib (2010) and Woo-Cumings (2002) argued that environmental impacts can have significant socio-economic and political consequences in a country like North Korea where state stability has been an ongoing question for over two decades. Climate change impacts—declining availability of food, water and energy, sea level rise, migration, and extreme weather events—are stress multipliers for countries already at risk from internal instability and
economic weakness (Barnett, 2003; Dupont, 2008). Climate hazards will cause the
greatest harm in combination with existing problems such as over-population,
demographic imbalance, poor governance, endemic poverty and lack of infrastructure.
Weak countries like North Korea, where such problems are endemic, will be the least
able to cope (Campbell and Parthemore, 2008). The main dangers to the DPRK state
from climate change will derive from the erosion of the state itself. The climate-related
issues of energy and food insecurity, which brought the country to its knees during the
Arduous March period, are central to this threat. North Korea therefore has a strong
incentive to mitigate climate change to counteract its potentially destabilising impacts
on Kim dynasty rule.

UNFCCC Compliance

Article 12.1 of UNFCCC requires all Parties to provide “a general description of steps
taken or envisaged” to fulfil the commitments mandated across Article 4.1, in addition to
providing a national greenhouse gas inventory in their national communications. The
other commitments under Article 4.1 relate to national climate change mitigation and
adaptation strategies and the incorporation of climate change into domestic policy-
making processes, along with international cooperation on scientific exchange,
knowledge and technology transfer, and implementation of adaptation responses. The
following sections document North Korean engagement and compliance with these
articles.

We can construct a portrait of North Korea’s UNFCCC interactions by
triangulating available primary documentation and official government
pronouncements with secondary source material. To this end, it will draw on reporting
documents including the DPRK’s First National Communication Under the Framework
Convention on Climate Change and other mandatory reports tabled in compliance with
the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) and the United Nations
Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The UNFCCC, UNCBD and UNCCD are
known as the “Rio Conventions” because they were tabled for signature or negotiated at
the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. North Korea ratified the UNCBD
simultaneously with the UNFCCC in October 1994 but did not become a Party to the
UNCCD until March 2004. UNCBD and UNCCD reports tell us much about North Korea’s
UNFCCC compliance because the three Conventions share many objectives—such as
conservation and protection of ecosystems (Article 4.1d) and protection and
rehabilitation of drought-affected or degraded land areas (Article 4.1e) (Yamin and
Depledge 2004)—and because UN agencies operating in North Korea have pooled their
resources under a single strategic plan (‘Strategic Framework 2011-2015’ 2010) to
address the objectives of the Rio Conventions simultaneously. Reports produced by UN
agencies and other non-government agencies (NGOs) operating within North Korea are
also consulted for data relevant to the international climate regime.
National Communications

Articles 4.1(a) and 4.1(j)

Article 4.1(b) of the UNFCCC and Article 10(b) of the Kyoto Protocol require signatory Parties to “formulate, implement, publish and regularly update” their national greenhouse gas mitigation and climate change adaptation programs. For Non-Annex I Parties, this information is to be included in national communications. North Korea’s Second National Communication to the UNFCCC, when released, will contain the most definitive appraisal of the government’s progress on mitigation and adaptation policy to date. In the meantime, the 2012 Environment and Climate Change Update, reporting mechanisms from the other Rio Conventions and documentation published by UN agencies constitute the best guide to North Korea’s mitigation and adaptation policy development.

North Korea ratified the UNFCCC on 5th March 1995 and submitted its First National Communication Under the Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2000, which provided an inventory of North Korea’s greenhouse gas emissions, along with a summary of the country’s emissions abatement measures and adaptation strategies. North Korea has yet to submit a second national communication, although a second national report has been in production with the assistance of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB National Committee of the DPRK, 2010). In December 2012, the Ministry of Land and Environment Protection published a report entitled Environment and Climate Change Outlook, which includes an updated greenhouse gas inventory for the year 2007 (both the 1990 and 2007 datasets are included in Table 1 below), cited from a 2010 study compiled by the Institute of Thermal Engineering in the State Academy of Sciences. This document serves as a useful proxy in the absence of an updated national communication.

The First National Communication was prepared with the assistance of a grant of US$154,000 from the Asia Least-Cost Greenhouse Gas Abatement Strategy (ALGAS) of the United Nations Development Programme and Global Environment Facility (Global Environment Facility 1997). The inventory of greenhouse gases by sources and sinks included in the First National Communication was compiled according to Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) guidelines and takes the year 1990 as its baseline for greenhouse gas measurements (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2004). As Table 1 indicates, North Korea’s total greenhouse gas emissions budget for 1990 was 186,515 Gg of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO$_2$e). This figure is comparable in order of magnitude and size to other Asian states such as Thailand (185,700 Gg), Pakistan (144,400 Gg) and Taiwan (134,000 Gg) at 1990 levels (World Resources Institute, 2013). This comparison with countries of populations three and seven times the size of the DPRK respectively illuminates the relative carbon intensity of the North Korean economy in 1990 as one of the larger greenhouse gas polluters in the region. Conversely, the 2007 figure of 93,912.97 Gg CO$_2$e is comparable to very small countries such as Kuwait (68,410 Gg), Israel (67,250 Gg) and Finland (65,160 Gg), illustrating a significant drop in emissions intensity in the North Korean economy between 1990 and 2007 (World Resources Institute, 2013). Given the inextricable
linkage between economic activity and greenhouse gas emissions in economies powered by fossil fuels, it is unsurprising that North Korea’s greenhouse gas emissions output followed the downward trajectory of its economy between 1990 and 2007.


Policy Response

Articles 4.1(b)

Article 4.1(b) of the UNFCCC and Article 10(b) of the Kyoto Protocol require signatory Parties to “formulate, implement, publish and regularly update” their national greenhouse gas mitigation and climate change adaptation programs. For Non-Annex I Parties, this information is to be included in national communications. North Korea’s Second National Communication to the UNFCCC, when released, will contain the most definitive appraisal of the government’s progress on mitigation and adaptation policy to date. In the meantime, the 2012 Environment and Climate Change Update, reporting mechanisms from the other Rio Conventions and documentation published by UN

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9Greenhouse gases featured in Non-CO₂ Emissions statistic include methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), nitrogen oxide (NOₓ), carbon monoxide (CO), and non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC).
agencies constitute the best guide to North Korea’s mitigation and adaptation policy development.

North Korea’s domestic energy security problem is well documented and can be divided into four distinct challenges: energy supply, electricity generation, electric power transmission, and secondary energy usage (Calder, 2004). The end of liquid fuel subsidies from Moscow after the Soviet collapse after 1991 created an energy shortfall in North Korea that undermined its command economy and contributed substantially to the Arduous March-period economic collapse. Given that the energy sector accounts for ninety percent of North Korea’s greenhouse gas emissions footprint (see Table 1), capacity-building in this area not only addresses North Korea’s emissions abatement and climate adaptation commitments under the UNFCCC but also attends to a major weakness in the political economy of the DPRK state.

The First National Communication makes a number of recommendations for greenhouse gas abatement in the energy sector. First, it recommends investment in improving the efficiency of electricity infrastructure, citing problems in generation and transmission as potential low-hanging fruit for carbon savings. Upgrading of physical plant at older power generation facilities would create efficiency gains, along with harnessing the cogeneration potential of industrial boilers and kilns (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2004; Calder, 2004). The country’s unreliable and wasteful electricity transmission infrastructure is also in desperate need of rehabilitation (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2004) (UNICEF, 2010; Calder, 2004). The UN DPRK Country Team’s 2005 National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment predicts that energy conservation measures alone could reduce energy demand by between twenty-five to thirty-five percent (UNDP, 2005).

Second, the National Communication recommends the adoption of “clean coal technologies” to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Coal mining is one of the few non-illicit sectors where North Korea has a comparative advantage. Chinese state-owned companies began growing investment in North Korea’s mining and resource sector from 2005, accelerating rapidly from 2008 (Gearin, 2010). According to Bank of Korea data for 2011, the mining sector grew by 0.9 percent, along with the construction (3.9 percent) and services (0.3 percent) sectors (Park, 2012). Because of its importance for domestic electricity generation and its export income value to Pyongyang’s current accounts, coal is likely to remain an important component of North Korea’s energy profile for some time to come.

Third, the National Communication and further subsequent official publications have called for the embrace of renewable energy technologies such as solar, wind, hydropower and biomass (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2004; National Coordinating Committee for Environment, 2011). According to the National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment (UNDP, 2005), the North Korean government has a long-term national development plan for its energy sector that aims to increase the share of locally-generated renewable energy sources into the primary energy supply. Indeed renewable energy systems may be the most appropriate vehicle for increasing energy capacity because unlike large centralised fossil-fuel power generation, renewables can be scaled locally which reduces their up-front cost (Yi, et al., 2011).
Most significantly, renewables offer North Korea considerable scope for technology transfer, infrastructure upgrades and incomes streams through the vehicle of the Kyoto Protocol’s Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Enshrined under Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol, the CDM was designed to assist Annex I Parties comply with their emission reduction commitments and assist Non-Annex I Parties in achieving sustainable development. CDM projects create certified emission credits that project participants can sell to Annex I Parties which count toward their emission reduction targets. They also provide complementary benefits to Non-Annex I participants, including technology transfer, rural energy provision, pollution reduction, and economic development (UNFCCC Secretariat, 2012). The Clean Development Mechanism could therefore present clear tangible benefits to the North Korean government in a key sector of the North Korean economy where redevelopment is sorely needed.

North Korea currently hosts six verified CDM projects in partnership with Czech company Topič Energo SRO, at hydropower stations including Hamhung Power Plant No. 1 in South Hamgyong Province (China Environmental United Certification Center, 2012a), Paekdu Songun Youth 14 MW Hydropower Project No. 2 in Ryanggang Province (China Environmental United Certification Center, 2012c), Kumya Hydropower Plant in South Hamgyong Province (China Environmental United Certification Center, 2012b), along with Ryesonggang Hydropower Plant No. 4 (Det Norske Veritas, 2011b), Ryesonggang Hydropower Plant No. 5 (Det Norske Veritas, 2011c) and Ryesonggang Hydropower Plant No. 3 (Det Norske Veritas, 2011a) in North Hwanghae Province. Together, they account for an estimated annual reduction in CO₂ emissions of 193,475 metric tons (193.475 Gg, equating to 0.002% of North Korea’s total emissions budget).

Several other CDM projects involving methane capture await verification at the time of writing. These include a national methane reduction program in partnership with Czech firm ET Biogas to harness biogas from animal waste to produce electricity in place of coal-powered electricity from the over-stretched national grid (Clean Development Mechanism Executive Board, 2011b). A venture at a textiles factory in Sinuiju aims to capture methane released from waste water that is stored in open ponds before being discharged into the Amnok River (Clean Development Mechanism Executive Board, 2012b). At the Kogonwon coal mine near the Tumen River frontier with China in North Hamgyong Province, methane generated underground during the coal mining process that would otherwise be vented into the atmosphere will be captured and flared (Clean Development Mechanism Executive Board, 2011a). There is also significant potential for expansion of CDM projects across the DPRK in hydroelectricity, reforestation and energy efficiency, where considerable low-hanging fruit for greenhouse gas abatement remains. The “CFL Lighting Scheme” in South Hamgyong Province, for example, aims to increase domestic household energy efficiency through the replacement of incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps (Clean Development Mechanism Executive Board, 2012a).
Incorporating Climate Adaptation into Policy

Article 4.1(f)

Article 4.1(f) of the UNFCCC vaguely invites signatories to "take climate change considerations into account" and embed climate mitigation and adaptation strategies into policy-making processes. North Korea's Rio Convention reporting documents describe a three-tiered institutional structure pertinent to environmental decision-making in the DPRK government. As North Korea's highest legislative organ, the Supreme People's Assembly is charged with approving laws related to environmental protection, which are then delegated to the Cabinet for implementation (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2012; Németh, et al., 2008). The Cabinet has typically been the predominant institutional actor in economic policy and been the conduit through which the government leadership has engaged with the international community. It enjoys relatively significant autonomy in how it chooses to implement government policy and is known for its greater propensity for utilising specialist expertise than either the Workers' Party of Korea or the Korean People’s Army (McEachern, 2010). For these reasons the Cabinet has been the driver of North Korea's cooperation with the UNFCCC and an advocate for the capacity-building potential of these interactions.

Pyongyang's environmental policy coordination and liaison with international environmental regimes takes place through the National Coordinating Committee for Environment (NCCE), a non-standing organ within the Cabinet of the North Korean government, acting as a hub for collaboration on environmental policies between sixteen government Ministries and bureaus including the Ministry of Land and Environment Protection (MLEP), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the State Academy of Sciences (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2004). The NCCE is also the central liaison point between the North Korean government and international environmental regimes, institutions and non-government organisations (UNDP, 2005). As a floating organ of the Cabinet the NCCE is not responsible for environmental policy, with final decision-making resting with the Cabinet and ultimately the national leader via chain of command. Implementation of environmental policy takes place through People’s Committees, located at the provincial, municipal and county levels (National Coordinating Committee for Environment, 2007).

The institutional framework for environmental protection is scaffolded by a series of key environment-related laws and ideological pronouncements. Environmental laws in the DPRK were developed in response to the ineffectiveness of ideological statements from the leadership in ameliorating the destructive tendencies of North Korea's heavy industrial development model (Nam, 2003). These laws theoretically provide legal protection against environmental degradation. For example, the Environment Protection Law (1986) stipulates twenty-seven principles for protection of the natural environment and control of pollution (Articles 10-37); the Land Development Planning Law (2002) defines procedures for strategic management of land and environmental resources; the Forest Law (1992) classifies rules for the protection and development of forest resources; and the Law on Agriculture (1998) details provisions for agricultural development, irrigation management and natural disaster mitigation for arable lands (UNCCD, 2006). These laws exist within a lineage of leader’s
statements which provide the legal context for the implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies takes place.

In this context, ideological statements and instructions from the leadership constitute the normative foundation for behaviour, more so than the legal system *per se*. The North Korean legal system exists to legitimise political decisions already made by the leadership, as encapsulated in its ideological pronouncements (Zook, 2012). Laws in North Korea do not necessarily perform the same deterrence/compliance function as they do in other countries with more clearly articulated legal systems. The *Environment Protection Law* (1986)," for example, is vague and open to interpretation, containing little detailed legal codification pertaining to rules, oversight or penalties for transgression (Articles 38-50 on the “Guidance and Control of Environmental Protection” are particularly pertinent here). Instead, North Korean legal instruments like the *Environment Protection Law* facilitate “after-the-fact legitimization” of government directives that do not necessarily provide the legal parameters of legitimate behaviour (Zook, 2012). North Korea’s continuing compliance with the UNFCCC treaty and with its obligations more broadly under the Rio Conventions suggests a level of congruence between those obligations and the core interests of the DPRK state, of which official ideology is a reflection.

**Transfer and Cooperation**

*Articles 4.1(c), 4.1(e), 4.1(g) and 4.1(h)*

North Korea has signalled an increasing interest in flagging its legitimacy as a constructive participant in the international climate regime. Although there are several avenues open for inter-state cooperation within the UNFCCC, North Korea’s interactions with the regime are largely funnelled through its relationship with the resident United Nations Country Team. The operations of United Nations agencies in action within the DPRK were centralised under the supervision of the UN Resident Coordinator (UNDP, 2013). Resident agency representatives meet weekly in Pyongyang to coordinate their activities. Each agency is paired with a liaison from the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs (United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office, 2012). Coordination of project activities under the UN Country Team and the dedicated liaison channels with the North Korean bureaucracy fashions more predictable interactions between the UN agencies and the North Korean government. Bureaucratic centralisation of foreign agency activities makes sense from a practical perspective. Operations to fulfil the UN Strategic Framework for the four-year period to 2015 were budgeted at US$288.3 million, excluding World Food Programme projects (United Nations Country Team, 2010), however the available funding pool for in-country projects is limited and prone to variability according to the fluctuations of regional nuclear proliferation diplomacy (UNICEF, 2010). Converging capacity-building priorities across agencies are also conducive to coordinated planning and resource sharing (United Nations Population Fund, 2010).

Information exchange is an important aspect of the obligations outlined in Article 4.1 of the UNFCCC, and of any international institution for that matter, because the “full, open and prompt” information exchange between Parties mandated in Article 4.1(h) of the Convention helps to reduce the uncertainty surrounding the actions of fellow
signatories and thereby reduces risk of cooperative interaction (Keohane, 1989). Articles 4.1(c) relates to the sharing of greenhouse gas abatement strategies among Convention signatories, however as a Non-Annex I Party, the DPRK is more a consumer than developer of greenhouse gas mitigation measures. Article 4.1(e) addresses cooperation in preparation for adaptation to climate change impacts across shared coastal and water resources. Article 4.1(g) calls for cooperation in research, observation and data collection related to global climate systems and the socio-economic consequences different greenhouse gas abatement measures, while Article 4.1(h) calls for cooperation in the dissemination of this information.

The DPRK generally makes information available through the reporting mechanisms of the Rio Conventions and other related environmental regimes such as the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) and the East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN). North Korea’s National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for the UNCBD (National Coordinating Committee for Environment, 2007) calls for further promotion of multilateral scientific “exchange and cooperation” and the strengthening of biodiversity conservation collaboration between the DPRK and other developing countries. Collaborative scientific exchange usually takes place through workshops with international agencies and key local stakeholders in Pyongyang, such as those conducted in the development of Rio Convention compliance reports, or less often by North Korean delegate participation at international conferences (UNCCD, 2006). The First National Communication (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2004) emphasises the value of cooperation with international agencies, stating “the government will increase the support to environmental NGOs which plays a positive role in public environment-related activities.”

While positive statements about these workshops also appear in North Korean English language media (Cha, 2011; Pak, 2011), international agencies are more guarded in their appraisal of collaborative ventures though generally careful to emphasise the opportunity for confidence-building and mutual trust that these events provide. It should be noted that North Korea’s participation in UNFCCC Conference of Parties meetings has been sporadic and unobtrusive. Although it has traditionally been a member of the Group of 77 (G77) coalition in the United Nations, it is not an active member of any specific negotiating bloc within the UNFCCC (Yamin and Depledge, 2004). It has only sent delegates to three Conference of Parties since 1995—COP9 in Milan, COP15 in Copenhagen and COP17 in Durban—and when in attendance, its delegates have tabled no data or official statements to the proceedings. The Milan delegation featured two officials from the National Coordinating Committee for Environment and a secretary from the North Korean embassy to Italy (UNFCCC Secretariat, 2003). At Copenhagen the DPRK was represented by Ri Chol Hui, Ambassador to Denmark, and another consular official (UNFCCC Secretariat, 2009) and at Durban by a senior researcher from the State Academy of Sciences (UNFCCC Secretariat, 2011). With the exception of Ambassador Ri, none of the delegates representing the DPRK at Milan, Copenhagen or Durban were of sufficient bureaucratic rank to signal a strong commitment to the negotiating process.
Land Management

Article 4.1(d)

Degradation of the land base is another critical problem for the North Korean government, as both a symptom of the country’s energy shortages and a multiplier of its food security problems. As a visitor to the DPRK one is struck by the sight of mountains and hillsides completely denuded of vegetation, much of which has been logged for fuel or cleared for hillside cultivation to address the shortage of arable land (National Coordinating Committee for Environment 2007; United Nations Development Programme, 2005). Approximately 18 percent of agricultural cultivation across the country takes place on slopes with a gradient steeper than fifteen degrees (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2012). Strategies to address the country’s arable land shortage have deep, ideological and historic roots stretching back to Kim Il Sung’s enormous land reclamation campaign to bring the country into agricultural self-sufficiency. Mountainsides were terraced, land reclaimed from the sea, and over forty thousand kilometres of irrigation canals were cut to increase the stock of arable land for farming. These grand agricultural schemes came at a cost that would come back to haunt the government.

Deforestation of mountains for cultivation and firewood has reduced the water catchment capacity of mountain slopes because top soils are often washed away in the absence of any anchoring vegetation, leading to increasingly intense flooding events in the valleys below during heavy monsoon rains (World Food Program, 2006). When flooding occurs, crops sown in the valleys are destroyed, valuable soils washed away, roads are cut and rivers clogged with silt. Mounds of silt and rubble remaining from past flooding events are still evident in many of the river beds encountered by foreign observers. North Korea is susceptible to torrential rain and flooding, typhoons, drought, and acute cold weather. Since 1991, large-scale flooding events have occurred in 1995, 1996, 2001-02, 2004-07 and 2012, punctuated by drought years in 1997 and 2000 (Nanto and Chanlett-Avery, 2008). Although the North has increased its resilience against extreme weather events, crop damage from repeated and sustained natural disasters reduces the amount of produce available for distribution via the state ration and forces up the price of food sold on the black market (Yoo and Park, 2012; Food and Agriculture Organization, 2012).

The creation and maintenance of carbon sinks mandated in Article 4.1(d) of the UNFCCC directly addresses North Korea’s land restoration needs and offers the greatest convergence between the compliance requirements of the other two Rio Conventions. Ecosystems maintained as carbon sinks satisfy the biodiversity conservation objective of the UNCBD and the prevention of land degradation central to the UNCCD (Yamin and Depledge, 2004) and as an adaptive measure, reforestation helps to reduce the impact of heavy precipitation events. To this end, North Korea’s First National Communication (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2004) recommends selective breeding of forest flora and improved human management of existing forest resources as key adaptation measures. The National Report on UNCCD Implementation (UNCCD, 2006) identifies the development of an integrated national database of land use to for monitoring and assessment to augment greater regulation of land use patterns as strategic priorities in combating land degradation. North Korea has a solid record of
establishing nature reserves, including UNESCO-listed international biosphere reserves at Paektusan, Kuwolsan and Myohangsan (UNESCO, 2011), part of a larger network of nature reserves totalling 879,275.2 hectares area (National Coordinating Committee for Environment, 2007). These important conservation initiatives are necessary because of the conglomeration of pressures that have driven widespread deforestation across the DPRK.

Every spring and autumn, North Korean citizens are mobilised in land management campaigns that include major tree-planting initiatives (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea: Environment and Climate Change Outlook, Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2012, “DPRK’s Effort for Increasing Forest Resources,” Korean Central News Agency, 2011). According to the Fourth National Report to the CBD, the North Korean government has created 800,000 hectares of plantation forest for firewood and strengthened forest management to curb illegal tree-felling (National Coordinating Committee for Environment, 2011). The Ministry of Land and Environment has also overseen agro-forestry management projects for sloping land, in conjunction with foreign agencies (National Coordinating Committee for Environment, 2011; Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, 2010). North Korea’s National Action Plan for the UNCCD (UNCCD, 2006) identifies the establishment of timber and fruit tree plantations and livestock rearing as part of an integrated reforestation strategy to improve land management in mountainous areas.

Mitigation and adaptation recommendations for the agricultural sector similarly centre on capacity-building initiatives to improve crop fertility and productive output. The First National Communication outlines five capacity-building priorities: First, it recommends developing procedures to accelerate the crop transplanting process (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2004). Productivity gains can be realised by minimising the time it takes to transplant greenhouse-reared seedlings into the fields where they will grow to maturity and developing improved post-harvest grain handling practices at cooperative farms across the country (UNDP, 2011). The second priority is a commitment to build soil fertility (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2004), either through maximisation of chemical-based fertiliser use or through the emergent practice of composting farm waste to produce organic fertiliser (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2012; National Coordinating Committee for Environment, 2011). The proportion of cultivated land in North Korea is estimated at 17-18 percent of the total land area, much of which was poorly productive due to inferior soil fertility (FAO / WFP, 2008).

Third, the UNFCCC National Communication recommends water security measures such as the installation of improved irrigation systems to reduce soil moisture loss through evapo-transpiration (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2004). Fourth, the National Communication advocates for improvement in seed propagation to selectively develop crop varieties more hardened to the changing climate regime across the country (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2004). The Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the UNDP has established four certified seed farms to develop seed stock that meets international fertility standards (UNDP, 2011). Finally, the National Communication calls for greater crop rotation to improve productivity and crop vulnerability to climatic stress, in addition to a double cropping cultivating
schedule to maximise yield from the available arable land base across the growing season (Ministry of Land and Environment Protection, 2004).

**Education**

*Article 4.1(i)*

Nowhere is this tension clearer than in Pyongyang’s environmental education efforts. Education, training and public awareness are identified as key components of national climate mitigation and adaptation capacity building in Article 4.1(i) of the Convention and Article 10(e) of the Kyoto Protocol. North Korea’s Rio Convention reporting documents point to government-sponsored climate change awareness-raising in the education system and across the wider population via citizen organisations, official media and public workshops.

The government provides for eleven years of compulsory education for North Korean children. Literacy rates are high across the country because nearly all North Korean youth graduate from secondary school, although teaching methods and resources remain rudimentary by world standards (United Nations Country Team, 2010). Children begin undertaking environmental learning activities at the kindergarten level and continue through primary school with “nature observation” subjects. At secondary school, students take subjects in biology and geography that incorporate units on biodiversity conservation. Specialist programs in biodiversity and the environment are available at the university level for students who go on to tertiary study (UNCBD, 2011). Conservation activities are also included in the extracurricular activity program of primary and secondary school students, who are organised into “Care for the Homeland Teams” which maintain public cleanliness in local areas. These groups are particularly active during the biannual reforestation drives during spring and autumn (UNCBD, 2007). It is not possible however to assess how environmental conservation learning in the North Korean education system compares with other countries in the absence of access to detailed curriculum documents.

Outside of the education system, climate change awareness is communicated through a number of other channels. The Korean Natural Conservation Union within the State Academy of Sciences is the primary outlet for environmental communication with the public, although other people’s organisations are also active in disseminating information (UNCBD, 2007). It is mandatory for North Koreans to be members of political organisation of one form or another, as these are the conduits for ideological education from the national leadership (Lankov 2007). Public education is fostered through television and radio, which broadcast documentary programs with environmental themes such as “Eco-environment and Human Life” and “Global Warming”, and print media sources such as Rodong Sinmun, Rodong Chongnyon, Pyongyang Sinmun and Minju Jonson which periodically publish editorial content with environmental themes (UNCBD, 2011). Often special days such as “World Environment Day,” “World Meteorology Day” and “Earth Day” become the focus of environmental awareness messaging.
Conclusion

The North Korean government is participating within the UNFCCC through numerous climate mitigation and adaptation capacity-building programs in collaboration with several non-government and international agencies, supporting the assertion that the DPRK has been a constructive signatory to international environmental regimes (Na, 2012). However, Pyongyang’s commitment to the global climate mitigation project through collective international management of the atmospheric commons is less certain. The relationship between official ideology, state survival and the natural world in North Korea creates multiple lines of tension that complicate the implementation of commitments outlined in Article 4.1 of the Convention. Nonetheless, North Korea is complying with its commitments as a Non-Annex I Party to the UNFCCC. However its mitigation and adaptation strategies are hampered by a convergence of technical capacity constraints, lingering ideological rigidity in decision-making processes and the political imperatives of a society in permanent state of revolutionary mobilisation. The fact that UNFCCC compliance has persisted and evolved over time suggests that the objectives of the international climate change regime coalesce with core legitimacy and survival imperatives of the Kim government and the DPRK state. North Korea therefore practices an instrumental commitment to the international climate change regime for capacity-building purposes without whole-hearted engagement with the over-arching goals of the UNFCCC.

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'Opp ... Oppan Gangnam Style':
Psy's Popularity and its Social Significance in Contemporary Korea

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Abstract
Psy's music video Gangnam Style has gone viral since its release in July 2012, attracting more than a billion hits on YouTube by December 2012. The music video has become the most popular in the entire history of the video streaming website. On 31 December 2012, Psy performed in a globally televised New Year's Eve celebration in front of over a million live audiences in Times Square, New York. Gangnam Style has been played and enjoyed even by households in North Korea, which strictly controls its inflows of capitalist popular media and culture. This paper looks for key factors that brought about the popularity of Psy and his Gangnam Style music video in terms of his personal attributes and the national and transnational contexts, with reference to the intersections between agency and structure. The paper also seeks to analyse popular media accounts on Psy's success from South Korea, and explore the socio-cultural functions and meanings that are varyingly attached to the popularity of Gangnam Style. Some South Koreans have proudly declared that Psy has opened a new chapter in the history of popular music. Psy's global popularity has been a significant point of encouragement for many South Koreans struggling to stay on top of their financial challenges, since they identify with his ordinariness and envy his success. Interestingly, Psy satirises the snobbish Gangnam culture, while his creative performance and the audio-visual of the music video are representative of Gangnam culture itself. Thus South Korean audiences find themselves simultaneously admiring and 'ridiculing' Psy. Fun and enjoyment seem to be central to the music video's attraction for South Korean and global audiences looking for personal time and space in the entertainment-oriented neo-liberal context.

Introduction
Psy is a Korean singer-songwriter born in the Gangnam district of Seoul, which is a socio-economically and culturally rich part of the capital. Psy became a household name throughout the world in the second half of 2012. Psy's popularity was not limited to the boundaries of cultural affinity with Confucian East Asia, but extended beyond the Asian continental boundary and indeed across the globe. Psy's music even penetrated the North Korean border which has been tightly controlling the flow of capitalist cultures for the last half-century. Psy's music video for his single Gangnam Style has not only attracted more than 1.5 billion hits on YouTube, but he and his music have now travelled around the world. Psy performed for an audience over a million-strong as part of New York's 2013 New Year's Eve celebrations in Times Square. Psy has become the centre of many commercial advertising campaigns including for pistachios at the 2013 Super Bowl professional football event in the United States. Being a sought-after celebrity for such advertising, which has been earning him about US$4 million for the 30 seconds advertisement on the Super Bowl occasion, the manner of Psy's wealth acquisition might have well surpassed that of the nouveau riches for whom Gangnam is renowned. South Korean media commentators proudly claim that Psy has opened a new chapter in the history of popular music.
Scholars of popular media in South Korea (Korea hereafter) and internationally have been seeking to understand the secrets to Psy's success. Together with the continuing rise of the Korean Wave, Psy's Gangnam Style music video has attracted academic as well as popular commentary through the media. In his interview with Channel Seven's breakfast television program Sunrise during his visit to Australia, Psy was asked, ‘You don't look like Justin Bieber, what's made you so popular?’ The answer to this very question has been sought through examination of Psy's personal talent; the well-orchestrated promotion of the music video, particularly through the use of YouTube and social media; and the socio-contextual milieu in which music consumers reside. The Korean media has provided representations of how people have attempted to make sense of Psy's unprecedented success, looking for social meaning in the phenomenon and reflecting upon it. As there have been numerous viewpoints put forth on these questions, it is worth systematically sorting and analysing the news representations on (1) the media accounts for Psy's success and (2) the socio-cultural meanings that are varyingly attached to the popularity of Gangnam Style. These two questions are closely related to each other because Psy's success says much about contemporary Korean society, and vice versa.

Theoretical Considerations

Studies of celebrity note that celebrity has the functions of closely linking the ideologies of individualism, consumerism and democratic capitalism, enabling people to pursue whatever they want. Similarly, celebrity is engendered in the contexts of individualism, consumerism and democratic capitalism (Marshall, 1997; Turner, 2004). That is, there is mutual influence between celebrated individuals and political, cultural and economic contexts. It goes without saying that a certain degree of individualism, consumerism and democratic capitalism might be a precondition for the promotion of celebrity culture in both the East and the West. It is this context of neo-liberal and consumerist capitalism in which Psy's performance and his music video are situated and analysed in this paper.

Understanding the intertwined and interactive relationship between agency and structure is a most significant debate within social sciences. Psy and his audiences make up individual agents who make the best out of given socio-economic and cultural structure or context. Agents are not only enabled but restrained by given structure as they manoeuvre their life chances. In this respect, one of the most relevant social scientific theories is critical realism which embraces both a realist ontology and social constructionist epistemology. That is, critical realism holds that there exists a reality independent of our thoughts and perceptions, and that 'knowledge is communicatively constructed, that our concepts and beliefs are historically generated and conditioned' (Wikgren, 2005, p.14). The explanatory theory obtained through realist analysis is open to challenge and fallible on theoretical and empirical basis. In this respect, realism differs from empiricism that knowledge can be formed on the basis of our experiences of the world, and from idealism that knowledge cannot go beyond human thoughts and language (Wikgren, 2005, p.12). Social reality has ontologically stratified depth and there are three conceptually different domains within ontological depth of a social phenomenon, i.e., the real, actual and empirical. The real domain represents causally operative structures or systems. Causal laws or mechanisms are in operation at this level of depth. Causal laws or operative structures encompass certain properties or
powers or tendencies which engender socio-economic phenomena including a celebrity in particular ways. The continuing and enduring operation of these powers or tendencies generates, and is independent of, the occurrences of the events in the society. The actual domain represents the events that the causal laws or mechanisms (i.e., the real domain) generate. Of those events that have actually taken place, the level of human observation that may be empirically or relatively easily achieved is to a limited degree. In fact, the numbers of events that are empirically observed are extremely small. Those empirically observed events make up the empirical domain (Mingers, 2004).

With reference to the present study, causally operative structures or systems refer to the Korean capitalist mode of production which is historically situated in the broader world system of capitalism. Korea as a modern nation state was established, following the end of Japanese colonialism. Since the 1990s, Korean entertainment industries have been particularly well supported by the government as the sources of employment. The industries have continued to develop thanks to individual talents and trainings throughout international institutions. Audiences’ appreciation of Psy and his music video is not only an empirical phenomenon of Psy’s personal process of steering his way through the given context, but is a response of the audiences in the given real socio-economic and cultural context. Thus, how Psy has been able to achieve his popularity is not only a result of personal ability, but a reflection of the given context. In other words, Psy’s success represents much about given historical context, i.e., both Korean society and beyond.

The observable empirical phenomenon of Psy’s popularity is not all that is involved. If the analysis of Psy’s popularity reveals the need to probe further, the researcher could further investigate offline aspects of the contents mediated through the digital media, bearing in mind the real domain of social reality. The researcher may also bear in mind the process of Korean economic development, which is in operation independently of what are represented in the media and provide a comparative perspective between offline and online dimensions of Psy’s popularity, allowing the researcher to understand the empirical and the real.

Critical realism argues that a researcher’s task is to progressively uncover real structures and mechanisms which generate the events in the society (Dobson, 2001, p.201), e.g., Psy’s popularity. The research process endeavours to unearth the mechanisms that engender the rise of celebrities like Psy as well as stimulate the Korean public’s desire and expression towards their needs for media entertainment in particular ways. This can be done not only through media analysis of individual agents’ (e.g., Psy) attributes in the contexts of the broader Korean society, but also through the revelation of possible underlying factors and relations which are expressed through the members of the Korean society. These underlying factors and relations are not readily and richly observable in the media, but can be unveiled through theory and abstraction (Wikgren, 2005, p.12). A superior scientific approach should not only be able to identify and analyse what may be empirically observable, but also discover hidden structures and relations that do have influences to bring about effects (Bhaskar, 1989). Critical realism also seeks to provide a relational perspective between individual, group and society, in which society is ‘an ensemble of structures, practices and conventions that individuals reproduce or transform’ (Bhaskar, 1991, p.76; Dobson, 2001, p.203).
In seeking the relational perspective between structural, agential, socio-cultural and economic factors, critical realists deploy analytical dualism which approaches agency and structure separately, i.e., analysing them separately, ‘with a focus on their logical relations and the conditions and possibilities that these allow’ (Archer, 1995, Ch.5; Wikgren, 2005, p.15). The intersections between agency (e.g., Psy’s personal attributes) and structure (the Korean societal context) particularly reveal the popularity of Psy and his music video. Past studies (Marshall, 1997, p.x; Turner, 2004, p.24) indicate that there is a close intersection between celebrity and culture on the one hand and consumer capitalism, democracy and individualism on the other. These contexts of the intersection have been closely emulated beyond the West, including Korea and this has nurtured the rise and continuing popularity of celebrities in Korean society as well (see Figure 1).

The global popularity of Psy has hugely encouraged Koreans as they face various economic challenges including the lingering wake of the financial crisis (Foster & McChesney, 2012) following the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997. Psy’s popularity seems significant in the lives of ordinary Koreans who are superficially or statistically part of the national economic miracle, but who as individuals continue to strive just to sustain their personal wealth and achievements, but also for the nation to join the membership of the few elite economies of OECD nations. Koreans have been able to identify themselves with the nuances entailed in Psy’s performances, and he provides Koreans with confidence or a ‘can-do’ spirit.

There are subtle similarities between Princess Diana and Psy in terms of their ordinariness, and it is worthwhile considering Psy’s different kind of ordinariness in explaining the popularity of Psy and his music video. Diana was not an ordinary person, nor is Psy, but there are some ‘ordinary’ aspects in both of them. Princess Diana provides an insightful example of how a personally ordinary background can attract global interest through a process of mediated celebritisation, triggered, in Princess Diana’s case, by her marriage into the British royal family. Of particular interest is how the media continued to engender and stimulate public interest in and around her. It seems that her ‘ordinary’ personality and ability to relate to ordinary people were constantly engendered through the media. It appears that there are broadly two camps in respect of understandings of the phenomenon of celebrity in terms of production and consumption. One of the most scrutinised cases is the global mourning of Princess Diana. Structural and especially left-leaning scholars were surprised by the public’s susceptibility. From this viewpoint, the profuse expression of sorrow over the death of Diana was largely founded in an illusory sense of personal attachment to her, and a state of mass delusion appeared to have been achieved through means of media manipulation (cited in Turner, 2004, p.97). Others such as Beatrix Campbell (1998) have provided a much more subtle and nuanced perspective on the global mourning of Diana, arguing that the mourning phenomenon is not only media-orchestrated, but also involves individual mourners’ expression of their personal political concerns. Turner (2004) elaborates on the phenomenon as follows. Diana was a person from an ordinary background, but entered into a fairy tale-like marriage to a prince. Living as an ordinary person as well as a newly adopted member of the royal family was a challenge and apparently inflicted a series of problems and concerns, which then developed to other complex problems lasting until her point of death.
Methods

Soon after the uploading of the *Gangnam Style* music video to *YouTube*, the video's popularity soared and this popularity itself generated further popularity. The Korean media started reporting Psy's success. Using the *Korean Integrated Newspapers Database System* (KINDS), I have conducted a search using the Korean language terms for, 'Gangnam Style (*gangnam seutail*)' and 'success (*seonggong*)'. The inquiry returned 2,287 news items as of 15 February 2012. KINDS has the function of sorting results according to 'relevance' and I have chosen the most relevant fifty news items to constitute a sample for analysis. In addition, I have separately sampled KINDS for all newspaper editorials that contain both the words, 'Gangnam Style' and 'success'. There were seven newspaper editorials. This paper's findings are based on the analysis of those 57 news items, covering newspapers and television.

The 57 news items were thematically coded and analysed according to the principles of grounded theory method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and utilising the computer software program *NVivo9* to technologically support the process of qualitative data analysis. The steps involved in analysing the news representations included identifying and analysing words, phrases, sentences leading to the identification of concepts, events and incidents: grouping these to form a category(ies); and making connections between a category and its sub-categories; selecting the core category and systematically relating it or integrating it to other categories.

Findings: Why Is Psy So Popular and What Is Its Socio-Cultural Significance?

Media Accounts for Popularity

*Psy's personal attributes: Ordinary, and in revolt against the popular trend*

Psy has successfully presented himself as a ‘scumbag’ as much as possible in his music video. Projecting oneself as an ordinary person is known to be unwise, even risky and almost against the Korean and even the international move at times. Korea’s large

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population and limited natural resources have made its society highly competitive. Distinguishing one's skills from those of others is a means of putting one's life chances ahead of others. This is in line with the broader practices of the advanced Western nations. Psy has put his whole performances on line for audiences to judge. Audiences have seen Psy's ordinariness and embraced his characteristics with enthusiasm. Although Psy is labelled an 'exemplary' success story, he vehemently rejects the idea of himself being an example to others. In fact, he has stated that the phrase 'being exemplary' is one he is most loath to describe him.\textsuperscript{11} The media has reported that Psy's bodily presentation is far from the posh Gangnam district style or the common features of international celebrities. He looks unlike typical popular singers. Going against the common trend of projecting one's strengths, Psy has capitalised on his own ordinariness, and thus has fashioned his own way of distinguishing himself from others. Psy stands out in the sense that he knows what he is and how ordinary he is. It does not seem as though he foresaw any extent how his strengths and weaknesses would play to viral success. He could only have tried his best, utilising his assets to the best of his ability, although this is rarely acknowledged in the media. Psy has been a singer-songwriter for 12 years with little success and he has nearly given up the profession at times.\textsuperscript{12} Yet, his particular love and passion for his work are well known. Psy's strong will to translate his self-determination into action is also well recognised.

Psy's music video is titled \textit{Gangnam Style}, but what he displays is not the real style of Gangnam district, but rather 'Psy style', that is, unbelievably cheap B-level sub-culture, bluff and kitsch.\textsuperscript{13} What Psy displays in his music video are rather ordinary places such as the subway, an underground car park, the racecourse, a traffic intersection, and community parks. The lyrics are about flirting with a woman for the singer's own sexual gratification.\textsuperscript{14} In fact, this brilliant contrast between the title of the song and what Psy displays in the music video is what he exploits cleverly and his reduction of the sophisticated Gangnam aesthetic to an ordinary style has led to popularity and sparked the production of numerous parodies.

\textbf{The music video: Aspiration and ridiculing with horse dancing, incorporating a simple beat, comic and sexy codes}

The most outstanding aspect of Psy's music video is its orientation towards fun and enjoyment. The smiles and laughter constitute universally communicable language. The video touches people's mind with its humour. David Bell of the Department of Marketing, Wharton School, contends that rap music generally has an aggressive element in its performers' movements, but Psy’s movements incorporate humorous

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elements. Moreover, Psy has focused on delivering images rather than messages.\(^{15}\) It is also easy for Psy's audiences to dance along his relatively simple dance moves. This easily emulated nature of Psy's movements is comparable to the Spanish duo Los Del Río's *Macarena*, which garnered world-wide popularity in the late 1990s. In fact, Psy noted himself that 'it is my mission to entertain the masses'.\(^{16}\) Psy also said: 'it is awkward to say that I am funny in the music video, but that is the key reason that I have become popular and successful' (Seoul Sinmun 26 Sept 2012).\(^{17}\)

Gang Il-Seon\(^{18}\) notes that in times of economic difficulty (which will be discussed further later), people look for humour rather than for serious or highly artistic products. The human search of fun and enjoyment seems to be a way to cope with or stand against adversity: 'Symbol, scene, play, pleasure and text: these are the central psychical and aesthetic forms in and through which the society of revolt is produced' (Elliott & Turner, 2012: p.124; Kristeva, 2000). The comic deployment of sexuality is also notable. The singer designates himself to be a proponent of the 'Gangnam Style' and on this basis attempts to sexually appeal to a woman, with comic effect.

Psy's horse dancing that incorporates 'the addictive music beat, comic and sexy scenes' has been key to the music video's popularity.\(^{19}\) The American *Forbes* magazine published an article, 'How *Gangnam Style* Has Britney Spears (And Everyone Else) Dancing With PSY From Korea'.\(^{20}\) *Forbes* points out four elements for Psy's popularity: (1) Psy born to be a star; (2) the video is witty and attractive; (3) rhythmic; and (4) horse dancing. Korean MBC television\(^{21}\) cited the weekly *TIME* magazine, pointing out that as is the case with most K-Pop tracks, *Gangnam Style* capitalises on its music video in order to attract audience attention.

Audiences are aspiring and ridiculing Psy simultaneously. *Gangnam Style* is far from Gangnam district style proper, which is an epitome of mainstream upper-middle society and its culture. Psy's *Gangnam Style* aspires to as well as ridicules the privileged.\(^{22}\) The Editorial of *Kyounghyang Sinmun* goes on to argue that it is such brilliant composition and performance that perfected an ironic aspiration with simple music and body movements. It highly commended *Gangnam Style* for its depiction of the culture of the Gangnam district in a creative and refreshing manner. Many Korean audiences might experience catharsis as they watch the hypocrisy of the local upper middle class culture being ridiculed. Korean audiences might also find it exquisite to see

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\(^{15}\) Herald Kyeongje, 2012. 'Gangnam Seutail hyanghan segye hakgye bunseok hwalhal (Academic communities actively researching Gangnam Style: YouTube and non-copyright)', 10 October.

\(^{16}\) Segye Ilbo, 2012. 'Ssaei seonggongui bigyeol ... geuneun mweoljom aneunnom (Psy'secret for success ... he knows something', 21 September, p.20.

\(^{17}\) Seoul Sinmun, 2012. 26 September.

\(^{18}\) Painaesyeol Nyuseu. 2012. 'Gangnam Seutail Mi daejungeumak-ui jangbyeok neomeungeoseun keun-umi (Gangnam Style: meaningful to launch into the US market)', 28 September.

\(^{19}\) Donga Ilbo, 2012. 'Saseol: segyeui nungwa gwi moeuneun Korianui ggi (Editorial: Korean ability to play, attracting the world's eyes and ears)', 16 August, p.31.

\(^{20}\) Painaesyeol Nyuseu. 2012. 'Mi eollon, hangukeo ddaemune Gangnam seutail seonggong (The American media: Korean language is the key for the success of Gangnam Style)', 24 September.

\(^{21}\) MBC, 2012, 'Mi Taim, Ssai Gangnam Seutail seonggong bigyeol bunseok (TIME, analysing the secret for Psy's Gangnam Stylesuccess', 10 September.

\(^{22}\) Kyounghyang Sinmun, 2012. 'Saseol: Gangnam seureopji aneun Gangnamseutailui yuqwaehan jilju (Editorial: Gangnam style that is unlike Gangnam style is sailing through)', 24 September, p.31.
the courteous lady during the day turning out to be naughty at night. Lee June-Hee puts forward an equally convincing, yet contrasting viewpoint that Psy's *Gangnam Style* is not about ridiculing the upper-middle class culture in the Gangnam district *per se*, but about ridiculing the ordinary people who envy and imitate its lifestyles. Park Jin-Soo has a similar but much more robust interpretation of Psy's *Gangnam Style* as follows. The Gangnam district has been understood to be ‘a capitalist furnace of greed’ or ‘the place of class inheritance’. Gangnam’s mammonism is known to result in many cases from the *nouveau riches* who saw the value of their land skyrocket in the face of development of what had always been fields for agriculture. Psy’s *Gangnam Style* does not aspire to lifestyles of Gangnam’s wealth, nor to ridicule them intentionally. Psy is simply an ordinary looking and ordinary person, horse dancing and anticipating a night to spend with ‘a sexy lady’. The singer contends that he has the ‘Gangnam district style’, but visually presents as an unattractive ‘B-league’ Seoulite who is not suitable to be at the centre of a commercial music video. Psy neither drives an expensive motor vehicle nor displays expensive adornments for show. Those who cannot afford to live in Gangnam are led to understand that ‘actually, there is nothing special about Gangnam residents’, which encourages the ordinary person to ridicule a certain group of Gangnam residents and experience catharsis. Psy has managed to King-hit the *nouveau riche* Gangnam district, which has an effect to console Korean have-nots to overcome their sorrows and discard all the sufferings they have experienced due to relative poverty.

I have found that the notion of ‘aspiration and ridiculing’ provides an insightful perspective for understanding the tension between the haves and have-nots in Korean society. This thesis may also provide reasons as to why Psy’s *Gangnam Style* has become a hit in Korean society. However, these reasons are unlikely to be the same reasons why it has become popular among international audiences. International audiences may be rather attracted to the ‘fun and enjoyment’ of the music video than to the class tensions it depicts (Jenkins, 2006).

In light of the above-discussed tensions between haves and have-nots, most Korean audiences might find Psy’s performance amusing and even ‘reflective’ or cathartic from their own viewpoints. Psy’s mediated performances allow audiences to try out different identities, class and status as they please, all of which are diverse ways of leading social life (Elliott & Turner, 2012; Turkle, 1995). This is essentially an act of political expression for the audiences or passively consuming politics (if not acting out political concerns) to use the words of Elliott and Turner (2012: 164), irrespective of whether they aspire Gangnam cultures or not, or both.

**The intersection between Psy and his audiences**

Outstanding aspects of Psy’s *Gangnam Style* are (1) its creative production and (2) a complete neglect of copyright to the music video. The production process was particularly creative, tapping into crowdsourcing (Brabham, 2012; Howe, 2008). Crowdsourcing is a technique of outsourcing creative production to ‘crowds’, with the implication that the end product is likely to enjoy the support of a significant portion of the masses. This is expected because crowds themselves have participated in the creative process. In the case of *Gangnam Style*, this saw the effective creation of intimate

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24 *Busan Ilbo*, 2012. 19 October.
and sustained links between Psy and his audiences. For example, horse dancing was
designed through public submissions and contributions by choreographers.25 Psy’s
choreographer Lee Ju-Seon has recalled that Psy’s horse dancing was designed in
the way that audiences could easily copy.26 Psy notes that his music video did not actually
target the international market, but the Korean market only.27

Moreover, the music video has happened to exploit a synergy between the mass
psyche and their perception of lingering financial crisis in Korean society following the
Asian Financial Crisis in 1997. This economic struggle partly reflects the so-called
endless crisis (Foster & McChesney, 2012) and is real. The struggle is also an outcry
from the Korean masses who continually suffer relative deprivation. Indeed, well-
educated Korean youth are particularly concerned about their employment
opportunities,28 of which the rate was about 60% in 2012.29 University students often
delay graduation for want of surer employment prospects and this has been a source of
serious concern for a large proportion of Korean families. A subtle and skilful reading of
the mind of the Korean masses, incorporating people’s basic sexual instincts, has led to
the production of this popular music video.30

Psy’s deliberate ‘refusal’ to claim copyright has turned out to be another factor in
the music video’s popularity. It is rather appropriate to say that Psy has rather fully
‘exploited’ copyright regulation by giving up his copyright or returning the product back
to the crowd from whom he sourced it in the first place. Psy's strategy has been to
encourage the production of numerous parodies and other forms of partial replication,
which then exponentially accelerated the popularity of the music video. Psy has not seen
such parodies as ‘opportunities’ for law suits,31 but rather as a chance for the masses to
have more fun. Very few cultural products have displayed such a skilful reading of the
mind of the consumer.32

The social context

There are broad social contextual factors as discussed, and the Korean government’s
groundwork in supporting the promotion of Korean media products overseas has been
a catalyst for Psy’s popularity. Korean media reports have specifically mentioned the
lingering Korean economic downturn as a relevant element. As noted earlier, during
financially difficult times, the masses readily respond to the humorous rather than the

25 Maeil Kyoungje, 2012. ‘Gangnam seutail seonggong yoineun igeot (This is the secret for the success of
Gangnam Style)’, 13 September.
gyohun (Contribution: Gangnam Style’s success and its lessons for the youth)’, 3 October.
27 Hanguk Kyeongje. 2012. ‘Geullobeol seuta ssai: nareul chulse sikingeon CNN gamsa’ (Global star Psy
thanks CNN: CNN made me a star)’, 20 September.
28 Busan Ilbo, 2012, 19 October.
0.htm&ver=v002
30 Hankook Ilbo, 2012. ‘KT Kyoungje Kyoungyeong Yeonguso bogoseo ... ‘Gangnam Seutail seonggong
bunseok/ Ssai seonggongeun keullauedeu ssosinggwa jeojakgweon bangim deokbun (KT Economics and
Mangement Research Institute Report: Analysing the success of Gangnam Style ... due to cloud sourcing
and non-copyright)’, 13 September, p.13.
artistic product.\textsuperscript{33} According to KT Economics and Management Research Institute’s report on Psy’s popularity,\textsuperscript{34} Gangnam Style has successfully and intimately resonated with the mass population’s anxieties grounded in financial insecurities. It is fair to say that it is not only Korean society that is going through perceived as well as real economic downturn, but also the rest of the world, and across all generations. As a result, Psy attained viral popularity across different generations, cultures, classes and statuses. It has been pointed out that Gangnam Style entails a universally acceptable cultural code and thus appealed to audiences beyond Korean borders.\textsuperscript{35}

The Korean government’s proactive approach towards media flows has been a notable catalyst. By supporting the import and export of media products (Goldsmith, Lee, & Yecies, 2011), the government established the broader foundation on which Psy has built his reputation. In 1998, then President Kim Dae-Jung lifted the long-standing ban on Japanese cultural products.\textsuperscript{36} The lift became a stimulus for the Korean cultural industry to build its competitive capacity in the international market. Since then, the ‘Korean Wave’ has become a recognised phenomenon and a good number of Korean cultural artists such as BoA, Se7en, and Wonder Girls have catapulted the Korean brand into the international market.\textsuperscript{37} Psy has been able to capitalise on the established foundation and reputation of the Korean Wave.\textsuperscript{38} The Korean government continues its strategies of promoting the Korean Wave, recently announcing, for example, its plan to build a theatre to stage Korean cultural performances.\textsuperscript{39}

\textit{Media factors for media products – a YouTube phenomenon}

The popularity of Gangnam Style has largely consisted in and measured by the music video’s number of views on YouTube. The production of Gangnam Style appears to have been strategically designed to attract as many audiences as possible. However, whether its production was more carefully thought through than for Psy’s other products or other artists’ music video products is doubtful. At any rate, the music video’s distribution through YouTube allowed it to travel across geographical borders. The popularity of the YouTube-based music video was established well before the release of a professionally produced physical record.\textsuperscript{40} The number of views on the YouTube video surpassed one billion within fifty days of its uploading.\textsuperscript{41} Thus, it can be concluded that the Internet, particularly YouTube, has been essential for Psy’s popularity.

Once the popularity of Gangnam Style had become a media phenomenon, American television channel CNN reported about Psy on 2 August 2012: ‘There were 11

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Painaensyeol Nyuseu}. 2012. 28 September.
\item \textit{Maeil Kyoungje}, 2012. 13 Sept.
\item \textit{Kyounghyang Sinmun}, 2012, 24 September.
\item \textit{Seoul Sinmun}, 2012. 6 September.
\item \textit{Seoul Sinmun}. 2012. 6 September.
\item \textit{Hanguk Kyeongje}. 2012. 20 September.
\end{itemize}
million clicks on Psy’s *Gangnam Style* within two weeks of uploading the video*. Psy acknowledges that this particular CNN report further accelerated the popularisation of the music video. Faced with the video’s viral popularity, Psy’s management adopted a much more comprehensive and strategic approach to their marketing of the video, notably through the use of social networking sites such as Twitter and blogs. YG Entertainment is the company that has been employed for Psy’s internet marketing in particular. While *YouTube* constituted the point of contact between Psy and his audiences, social networking platforms have played a central role in directing online ‘traffic’ to this point of contact. As the music video became popular and provided a basic platform for Psy, it was swiftly followed by numerous parodies, which in turn accelerated the popularisation of Psy’s *Gangnam Style*. It is right to note that Psy is a *YouTube* star who was not initially designed for global popularity but rather attained significant popularity after the reactive deployment of comprehensive and strategic marketing.

**Social meanings and reflections**

*Celebrating the achievement and exerting nationalistic sentiment*

The Korean media has displayed enthusiasm about Psy’s foray into the international market, including his work in the American market in particular and his striking of a production contract with Universal Music. SB Project, who manages Jennifer Lopez and Justin Bieber, signed a contract to manage Psy’s performing team. The American ABC’s invitation to Psy to a 2012 farewell show together with Lady Gaga and Justin Bieber was proudly reported by the Korean media. They particularly noted Psy’s breaking through the ‘American barrier’ that many other Korean artists have faced, and his occupying number one position on a few famous charts such as iTunes music video and Billboard charts.

At the height of Psy’s international popularity, a few Korean movies did extremely well at the box office – e.g., *Dodukdeul* (*The Thieves*) and *Yeon-ga-si* (*Deranged*). The Korean media argued that those movies have now ‘flattened the nose’ of the Hollywood Blockbuster movies, demonstrating Korean superiority, and that apart from India, Korea is the only nation capable of challenging Hollywood movies. Indeed, Korean films which have long struggled to compete with Hollywood movies even at the local box office, now outperform them frequently. I argue that some of these reports are hasty and nationalistic in their sentiments. Koreans have generally viewed the US as a dream nation for the last many decades – insofar as they have seen it as a place to settle in or to learn much from. Koreans have envied and continue to admire slavishly

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43 *Seoul Sinmun*. 2012. 6 September.
44 *Maeil Kyoungje*, 2012. ‘Seonggongui mobeom dapan anddaratdeon Gangnam Seutail (Gangnam Style who didn’t follow the success routine)’, 14 December.
45 *Munhwa Ilbo*, 2012. ‘Gangnam Seutail seonggongeun keuraudeu sosing deokbun (The success of Gangnam Style is due to cloud sourcing)’, 12 September.
47 *Seoul Sinmun*, 2012. 6 September.
50 *Donga Ilbo*, 2012. 16 August.
the achievements of the US on one hand, while on the other, the country has also seen
the rapid development of anti-American sentiment. The latter has been apparent
especially in the 21st century as Korea now reaps the benefit of previous generation’s
hardworking and maintaining a large number of well-educated workers. Incidentally,
this development is exactly what Psy has appealed to through his music video, which
helps explain its popularity, particularly among Korean audiences.

The Korean Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Yoo Jinryong has expressed
a nationalistic sentiment in interpreting the international popularity of Gangnam Style
so as to imply that international audiences are now willing to embrace aspects of Korean
life, including the Korean language.\(^{51}\) International audiences might be curious enough
about Korean culture to enjoy Psy’s music video, but this may have little to do with
embracing the Korean language. Gu Ja-Yun has provided a few reports in observation of
Koreans’ reactions to O’Reilly Factor’s underestimation of Psy’s success on 27 November
2012. O’Reilly argued that ‘Psy’s horse dancing is no different from Chubby Checker’s
pony dancing, and ... Elvis Presley had a great voice and his songs were meaningful, but
Psy’s performance is about a fat guy jumping up and down’. Korean online opinions
noted that O’Reilly Factor must be a program of no value, and that O’Reilly might be a
racist.\(^{52}\) Gu reported that the American underestimation of Psy caused controversy in
Korea. Korean audiences consider Korean cultural products to be superior to American
products, but may be less than willing to accept any critique from the US that they
admire so much.

Although the Hanguk Kyeongje’s short news article is unclear, it is fair to say that
the American education is praised whereas the Korean education under ‘self-criticism’
for decades is under attack. The admiration of practice-oriented education motto of
Berklee College of Music, where Psy studied for a period, even leads to a self-critique of
Korean education: ‘A creative and practice-based education was behind Psy’s success
with Gangnam Style’.\(^{53}\) Moreover, it was reported that ‘Berklee College of Music is one of
the world’s best practice-based educational institutes. Roger Brown, President of the
College, was invited to present how the College trains its students and how they plan
their future professional life. We hope to hear the secrets of Psy’s success which
has surprised the world’.\(^{54}\) It is appropriate to be open to the advanced science and
education of the US, but one wonders about how the Korean society can exercise its own
sovereignty in a more proactive fashion than it might have been for the last few decades.

Building brighter future of Korea on Psy’s success – nationally and individually
The financial benefits and flow-on effects of culture industries are well acknowledged.
There is general agreement that Korea was not a popular tourist destination until the
start of the 21st century. However, the birth of Korean Wave has created a new
perception of Korea for many parts of the world, especially in East Asia, and this has

\(^{51}\) Maeil Kyoungje. 2012. ‘Hallyu, K-pap, K-ateu neomeo K-seutail (Hallyu, going beyond K-pop, K-art and
forming K-style)’, 17 September.

\(^{52}\) Painaensyeol Nyuseu, 2012. ‘Mi, yumyeong aengkeo, Gangnam seutail seonggong pyeomha nollan (A
well-known American anchor, underestimating the success of Gangnam Style is controversial)’, 2
December.

changjojeok silyonggyoyuk isseotda (Forum on human resources: a creative and practical education
behind the success of Gangnam Style)’, 3 September.

\(^{54}\) Hankook Kyoungje, 2012. 3 September.
significantly boosted Korean tourism to unexpected heights. *Hallyu*-related tourism brings foreigners to Korean plays, drama filming locations, and Korean restaurants. Psy has been praised as his music video has written Seoul’s Gangnam district into the history books, marking it as a significant curiosity that is worth visiting. This achievement is something that has eluded the Korean Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism over the last many decades.55 As Tim Soutphommasane has written in *The Age*,56 *Gangnam Style* might flag the beginning of a new chapter of even greater popularity for *Hallyu.*57 Indeed, *Gangnam Style* may have significantly piqued interest in K-Pop and Korean culture.58 William Freeman, CEO of the Korea Real Estate Development, has contended that as far as the advertising of Korea to the rest of the world is concerned, Psy has identified his own niche market and achieved something that no Korean leader or government in history has ever achieved.59

While these analyses paint a brighter future for Korea as a state, others attempt to kindle the national psyche, with comments such as ‘This August Full Moon festival, we are impoverished and depressed with sluggish economy, which is moving from bad to worse. However, Psy has given us the best festival present possible’.60 Others have taken the chance to encourage young people, who lack employment opportunities. One letter to the editor argues that ‘life is about making the best out of what we have’ and that young people could turn their personal asset to the core of their personal strength’.61 In the context of the letter, ‘personal asset’ was compared to Psy’s ordinariness. Psy noted in his presentation to 300 students at Oxford University that ‘My look is far from what the international audiences would expect, but I overcame my [ordinary] look by being irrelevant and ridiculous’.62 63 Young people in Korea are looking for much more ‘ordinary’ employment opportunities than what Psy could mean by ‘ordinary’. Kang Su-Yeong, a human resources development specialist, aptly argues that recent university graduates should be specific in exploring their potential areas of employment, try to build their required knowledge and skills, and explore their niche job market, so that they can find ‘a job of their own style’.64 Yet, the number of job seekers far outnumbers the number of jobs on offer. Kang’s well-intended advice may be an over-stretched attempt to practically apply the lessons of Psy’s success and makes an empty promise for a bright future, contributing to a mere reproducing the given social inequality. Time will tell whether Korean youth can overcome what seem to be lingering economic inefficiencies in the immediate future.

56 Herald Kyounjje, 2012. 10 October.
57 Cited in Herald Kyounjje, 2012. 10 October.
59 Maeil Kyounjje, 2012. ‘CEO teukgang, Willieom Peurimeon AIG budongsan sajang idea gangyeon (CEO Lectures, William Freeman AIG real estate boss to lecture at Yihwa Women’s University’), 24 September.
61 Kyounghnam Domir Ilbo, 2012. 2 October.
62 Seoul Sinmun, 2012. ‘Ssai useuukwang seureoweojiryeo haetdeon noryeok-I tonghaetda (My effort to be a scumbag worked)’, 9 November, p.29.
64 Jemin Ilbo, 2012. ‘Jemin yeollin gwangjang: nanumi seutaillo chwieop seonggong hagi (Jeju people’s open forum: A way to be successful with my own style)’, Kang Su-Yeong Jeju yeoseong illyeok gaebal senteo gwanjang, 4 September.
Discussion and Concluding Remarks

One month after the release of Gangnam Style, a Donga Ilbo editorial (16 Aug 2012) opened by stating that ‘the singer, Psy, has written, composed and choreographed the music video and the world is attracted to and mesmerised by it.’ The editorial went on to say that the secrets to its success were the instantly addictive music beat and the horse dance containing ‘comic and sexy codes (scenes)’. The look of Psy is not as splendid as the style of Gangnam, but he nonetheless bravely approaches a girl, which is amusing to the audience. Psy also satirises the snobbish Gangnam culture, and his performance and the contents of the music video are cynically representative of the very Gangnam culture. In a nutshell, fun and enjoyment seem to be key to the attraction of the music video. Psy might have been an idol to be admired and an inspiration in the eyes of ordinary people. Yet, he has been at the centre of a reproduction of individualism, consumerism and democratic capitalism, which have come about through the demise of communitarianism and the rise of neo-liberalism. Here, it is Psy, a particular ‘Oppa’, who tries to break the boundary between individualism and communitarianism. In the context of neo-liberalism, the community becomes elastic rather than cohesive. In an elastic community, individual creativity is highly encouraged and often accompanied by self-tabloidisation (Elliott & Turner, 2012; Jones & Holmes, 2011). Similarly, the erosion of direct social relations brings life to celebrity so that we enjoy watching and admiring celebrities in the comfort of our own time and space (Rojek, 2001, p.52).

Psy’s success at a time of economic downturn ‘massaged’ the Korean national psyche of insecure middle power since Koreans always look for celebrities who can ‘boost’ the national confidence. For example, good World Cup results provide a tremendous boost to individuals’ pride and consequently to national pride. Celebrity also provides Koreans with pseudo-religious effects. During the period of industrialisation and urbanisation in the 70s and 80s, a significant proportion of the Korean population relied on their religion as a source of encouragement and to overcome any concerns based in the here and now. However, in the era of the decline of religious faith in Korea, or the post-religious era, Koreans often turn to celebrities as a way of maintaining their drive ‘to be successful’.

As theories of celebrity have noted, celebrity culture can be a window through which the given status of a particular society and its contemporary experiences can be understood. The lifestyle of Gangnam is an object of both ridicule and envy. The Gangnam district was built on paddocks. Many of its residents are ridiculed as nouveau riches with little cultural sophistication or literacy. Yet, it is the nation’s wealthiest district, and home to numerous government offices, the most successful business offices, competitive high schools, state-of-the-art hospitals, arts centres, and entertainment industry entities. Psy’s ‘Oppan Gangnam Style’ music and dance articulate and reconcile this paradoxical nature of the Gangnam district. This is much like Chaney’s point that celebrities present reconciling contradictory features of the society, for example, ‘personal identity with social identity, and individualism with conformity’ (Chaney, 1993, p.145); (Turner, 2004, p.25).
References


“Humanitarian Aid” Reconsidered: 
The Politics of Transnational Welfare Citizenship among Older Sakhalin Koreans

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Abstract
Sakhalin Koreans are those Koreans (and their descendants) who were mobilized and moved to southern part of Sakhalin Island (Russia), which was annexed to Japan after the Russo-Japan war (1905), under the Japan's colonial rule (1910-1945). After the Asia Pacific War (1945), “Japanese Nationals” were repatriated to their home country whereas Koreans were left. With the Korean War in the 1950s, political tensions in Northeast Asia prevented Sakhalin Koreans from returning to their “homeland.” Since 1990 when “door was open,” more than 4,000 Sakhalin Koreans have migrated to South Korea. This repatriation is facilitated by the Japanese and South Korean governments in the name of “humanitarian aid,” and is symbolically understood as “the end” of the past political upheavals. Nevertheless, I propose that repatriation produces new social problems such as inequality, exclusion, and moral dilemmas among Sakhalin Koreans. Based on ethnographic research, this paper examines how “humanitarian aid” ironically enables the elderly subjects to evaluate their decisions and lives as “nonhuman.” Considering the older Sakhalin Koreans as transnational welfare citizens who actively reflecting on their relationships to the states, I suggest that the return migration is a form of transnational governing which remakes the Sakhalin Koreans’ moral and political subjectivities through welfare and "humanity." Finally, I conclude that the ways the Sakhalin Koreans are remade as transnational welfare subjects both transgress and reproduce state hegemony within multiple nation-states, in the era of multiple “posts.”

Introduction

Since 1990, more than 4,000 ethnic Koreans from Sakhalin Island (the Russian Far East) have migrated to their so-called homeland, South Korea. This repatriation has been facilitated by the Japanese and South Korean governments in the name of “humanitarian aid,” and is symbolically understood as “the end” of the two political upheavals, colonialism and the Cold War—which had prevented Sakhalin Koreans’ return after the war. Nevertheless, I propose that repatriation produces new social problems such as inequality, exclusion, and moral dilemmas among Sakhalin Koreans. Based on ethnographic research conducted in 2010 both on Sakhalin and in South Korea, this paper examines the complex consequences of return migration, including expectations and desires older Sakhalin Koreans have for the repatriation. How “humanitarian aid” ironically enables the elderly subjects to evaluate their decisions and lives as “nonhuman,” and how Sakhalin Koreans are faced with new inequalities. Considering the older Sakhalin Koreans as transnational welfare citizens who actively reflecting on their new relationships to the state, I suggest that the return migration is a form of transnational governing which remakes the Sakhalin Koreans’ subjectivities through welfare and "humanity." This point of departure also allows me to examine how Sakhalin Koreans become (and struggle to become) transnational welfare citizens. Finally, I conclude that the ways the Sakhalin Koreans are remade as transnational welfare
subjects both transgress and reproduce state hegemony within multiple nation-states, in the era of multiple “posts.”

The boundary of “humanity”

The Sakhalin Korean’s repatriation became “real” within various socio-political changes and by collective and individual efforts. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and South Korea first provided a crucial foundation for their return migration across state borders. Political changes under the post-military regime made South Korea the destination of return. Moreover, the previous grassroots activities by Japanese assembly members, attorneys, and Sakhalin Koreans living in Japan made the repatriation project possible. Finally, in 1994, the year before the 50th anniversary of the end of the Asia Pacific War, Japan’s prime minister and the head of the Socialist Party, Murayama Tomiichi issued a statement officially encouraging the Japanese government’s direct involvement in the return project: “This issue cries out for our attention particularly from a humanitarian perspective and the government intends to decide upon the support policies as soon as possible” (Murayama 1994). The Japanese government also officially claims the project is fulfilling its “moral responsibility.” “Humanitarian aid” and “moral responsibility” were thus symbolically committed to the Red Cross of the three nation-states (Russia, South Korea, and Japan), and this official standpoint has not changed.

While some Sakhalin Koreans started to move to South Korea after 1990, mass migration became possible in 1999 and 2000 when a material environment for migrants was erected by both the Japanese and South Korean governments. Two residential spaces were constructed in suburban areas of South Korea: an apartment Complex called “Home Village,” housing about 800 residents, and the Sakhalin Koreans’ Welfare Center, housing about 80 residents. The Japanese government sponsored the construction fee while the South Korean government provided the land. Moreover, due to the growing number of migration applicants, the migrants after 2007 are allocated to other public housing all over South Korea. The inter-national division of aid is a crucial channel through which elderly and middle-aged Sakhalin Koreans re-configure their relationship with the nation-states.

Didier Fassin defines humanitarianism as, “a moral discourse based on responsibility toward victims, and a political resource serving interests to justify action considered to be in favor of others exposed to a vital danger, action taken in the name of a shared humanity” (2010: 239). This definition also indicates its dual aspects:

1 Throughout the 1960s-70s, the civil movement for Sakhalin Koreans’ repatriation was carried out in Japan, in particular among Sakhalin Koreans in Japan. Those were Koreans having “Japanese” spouses on Sakhalin after the war and they gained the entitlement to migrate to Japan in 1956 when the diplomatic tie was established between the USSR and Japan. These Sakhalin Korean immigrants initiated the civil activities for return of their friends and kin to South Korea, as well as helped exchanging letters among kin between on Sakhalin and in South Korea. More detailed history of the civil actions within the international context, see Takagi (1990) and Park (1990).

2 The early 1990s, the Russian Red Cross coordinated the repatriation, but currently organized only by the Japanese and South Korean Red Cross.

3 Before 1999 and 2000, there were two welfare facilities for Sakhalin Koreans administrated by the municipal and Christian organization in South Korea. But this paper focuses on mass migration among Sakhalin Koreans based on my ethnographic research conducted in 2009-2010.
“indivisible” but “its implementation is situated” (2010: 239). Humanitarianism is thus moral and political. Sakhalin Koreans’ case shows this. In the name of “humanitarian aid,” the Japanese government justifies its involvement in the project. The opportunity is, however, given to limited “victims”: those who were born before August 15, 1945 and those who had already lived on Sakhalin on August 15, 1945. Further, the moral discourses surrounding the aid do not clarify why the Japanese government has the “moral responsibility,” and why Sakhalin Koreans became “victims.” In this sense, the repatriation project is a de-politicized moral project but it is political.

In this paper, I do not judge this project as a success or failure, nor do I offer the ideal form of repatriation. I propose that the Sakhalin Koreans’ return is not “the end”; it is ongoing, which implies that there is some space for improvement. Thus, for a better understanding and seeking a possibility to improve this humanitarian aid, how Sakhalin Koreans experience, evaluate, and make sense of this aid needs to be considered.

Everyday social security among older populations in the post-Soviet Sakhalin

When I conducted fieldwork among Sakhalin Koreans on Sakhalin and in South Korea in 2010, return migration had already been the key topic of every day conversations among the middle-aged and elderly populations. As scholars studying diaspora have demonstrated, contemporary diaspora’s return is not motivated by nostalgia for home but by more practical issues (Markowitz and Stefansson 2004). I found that Sakhalin Koreans articulated return migration with everyday economic security, material life, care, and health. Their concerns are situated in the local socio-economic change on Sakhalin with impacts of globalization and post-socialist transformations.

On Sakhalin, many people told me that “Koreans live well.” Indeed, Sakhalin Koreans are “successful,” in that they are engaged in various economic activities, not only fishing which is the major industry on Sakhalin, but also in service sectors such as trading or selling clothing and food, and managing private enterprises, including restaurants and hotels. Moreover, many adult- and grand-children of my informants have some experiences working for the local oil- and LNG-related corporations---as seasonal and contract workers. Rather than having nostalgia for the socialist past, I saw positive reactions to these new economic possibilities among older Sakhalin Koreans.

These changes, however, do not indicate that all the residents on Sakhalin experience economic benefits equally. Similar to other rural regions in Russia, Sakhalin has faced rapid aging and out-migration since 1990. In small towns and villages, people lost stable jobs and other social benefits as factories and public institutions disappeared. Thus, those living in rural areas consider migrating to Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, the administrative center of Sakhalin oblast, to the Russian mainland, and to other countries.

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4I frequently heard this account from Sakhalin Koreans, but it does not simply reflect the fact that “Koreans are economically successful.” This statement also serves as an offending reaction expressed within the context of their encounters with “South Koreans” or “Japanese.” Since many Sakhalin Koreans perceive that they were prejudged as “poor” in socialist country by those others. Thus, it contains the double meanings.

5The ways Sakhalin Koreans celebrate the perestroika is relevant to their historical processes of being integrated into the Soviet society from the politically, economically, and geographically marginal position during the late Soviet period (the 1960s-80s).
In this context, the social position of the older people is ambiguous. On the one hand, they maintain material and social resources including housing and pension to which they were entitled during the late Soviet era. These resources to some extent make it possible to maintain a semblance of economic security. On the other hand, older peoples are confronted with difficulties. I frequently witnessed middle-aged and elderly Sakhalin Koreans' anxiety about managing daily subsistence needs on meager pensions. Whereas the prices of daily necessities such as oil, flower, sugar, and tea are higher and unstable, the value of pension is too low. Elders' lives are also not always stable because they are affected by economic conditions of younger generations. Pensions are spent to support younger generations. Thus, they seek to continue working after retirement age. In addition, like other cities in Russia where multi-generational households are often growing since young generations cannot afford to manage housing (Afontsev et al., 2008), in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk as well, I witnessed similar cases in which grandmothers and grandfathers express frustration and discomfort about sharing a bed-room with their grand- and adult-children due to lack of space.

Elders' roles are also changing. In particular, small children's care is often entrusted to grandmothers in post-Soviet Russia (Utrata 2010). On Sakhalin, the lack of kindergartens since the perestroika and decreased vacation times of working adult-parents encourage elderly women to spend much more time in looking after grandchildren. Despite the social expectation that care for children is “normal” and women's duty, childcare and support for younger generations are not always easy and “happy” work for middle-aged and elderly women, as they face aging and realize they are also in need of care. Within these socio-economic circumstances surrounding elderly populations on post-Soviet Sakhalin, return migration to South Korea is interpreted as an attractive welfare provision, as suggested in the following narratives.

**Possibility for "living"**

Katya and Sergei were allocated an apartment complex in South Korea. Sakhalin Koreans who migrated after 2007 reside in public rental housing that the South Korean government promotes for low- to mid-income families. The buildings are brand-new and have elevators with a surveillance camera. Each door also has an intercom with a camera so that residents can see visitors. While this is a standard item for a new building in South Korea, it stands in contrast to apartment buildings on Sakhalin. Each housing space is about 46 m² (495sq.ft.) with two rooms, a washroom, living space and kitchen. The balcony has double window doors in order to protect the interior space from cold wind. The Japanese government provides furniture whereas the South Korean government provides everyday necessities. These items are extensive and include beds, linen, a refrigerator, a gas range, a vacuum, a telephone, an iron, a table, chairs, shelves, etc.

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6 Housing was entitled during the Soviet era, and many (now middle-aged generations) also purchased after the perestroika.

7 The retirement age on Sakhalin is 55 (male) and 50 (female), which are five-year younger than that of the western regions in Russia.

8 All the names appearing in this paper are pseudonyms. Middle-aged Sakhalin Koreans have official Korean names, but Russian nicknames are used in daily life. By contrast, their parents’ generations use Korean or Japanese names.

9 Among more than sixteen apartment complexes where Sakhalin Koreans live, I looked at five. The housing and environments are quite similar to each other.
twenty kilograms of rice, a table service of ten pieces, more than ten kinds of seasonings, soap, toothbrushes, shampoo, detergent, and toilet paper.

Near the apartment building, there is a big park with a large lake. The ground is made of soft asphalt which is easy to walk on, and the park contains a variety of exercise equipment. In her flat, Katya said to me, "I live in a sanitarium!" She also told me about her new life: she did not buy toilet paper or rice for a year, there had been no power failures or water suspension, the climate was warm, and it is safe to walk at night.

I also accompanied Katya to the local hospital with some other Sakhalin Korean residents in the flat. The local municipal officer drove them to the hospital. After Katya quickly saw a doctor, she showed her insurance card at the reception desk. She then paid only $1.\(^\text{10}\) In the drug store next to the hospital, we waited for the prescribed medicine and drank free “service” coffee. Katya paid 50¢ for the medicine. Katya's friend, Svet, showed the medicine and said, “it is ridiculous to pay 2,000 rubles (about $60) for these medicines on Sakhalin! Here, they are almost free.”

As such, Sakhalin Koreans’ experience of return migration in 2010 is shaped not by nostalgia and sentiment for home, but by state-sponsored welfare provisions. In addition, the life of returnees does continue; they go back and forth between Sakhalin (Russia) and South Korea. One of the main reasons is to receive their pension in Russia. Since they (in particular middle-aged people) do not renounce Russian citizenship, they maintain their entitlement to a pension and other citizenship rights. Regardless of their status — as “returnees,” “migrant applicants,” or “non-entitled ones”—the phrase that I heard most from older Sakhalin Koreans was, “I (want to) move to South Korea because I can receive pension here and there.” Some returnees also receive medical treatments on Sakhalin, which are still “public” services. Within the transnational context, Sakhalin Koreans become, what I call, “transnational welfare citizens.”

I would like to point out that the older Sakhalin Koreans do not believe that their economic conditions will dramatically change or that they will become “wealthy” in South Korea. Instead, I suggest that the return migration allows space for middle-aged and elderly Sakhalin Koreans to seek a possibility for a “better” life as well as space where the imagined “better” life becomes “real.” However, Sakhalin Koreans do not simply celebrate their life in South Korea. They find themselves with mixed feelings and emotions, which will be discussed in the following section.

**Moral dilemma: Reconsidering what it is to be human**

Repatriation among older Sakhalin Koreans’ is unique compared with two contemporary social transformations that elderly populations often experience in the era of transnationalism and globalization. First, elderly populations are becoming involved in globalization through labor migration of their adult-children. While working-aged parents work in different countries, grandparents (mostly women) are left home taking care of small children (Parreñas 2005; King and Vullnetari 2006, 2008). Second,

\(^{10}\) Based on the Medical Care Assistance Act in South Korea, the Sakhalin Korean returnees, as special welfare recipients, pay only $1 to $2 for regular outpatient care, 50¢ for prescribed drugs, and nothing for hospitalization. (They pay their own expenses, however, when MRI and/or other costly treatments are necessary.)
like young people, elderly people become transnational migrants and move to “developed” countries following white collar adult-children (Lamb 2009). By contrast, older Sakhalin Koreans take part in transnationalism by crossing state borders as transnational agents, moving without adult-children but with state support. What does this particular movement bring to Sakhalin Koreans both at the individual and collective level?

Working with older Sakhalin Koreans in South Korea and on Sakhalin, I found older Sakhalin Koreans struggling with three types of moral dilemmas. In order to show why and how “humanitarian aid” leads to moral dilemmas among Sakhalin Koreans, I will first examine the ways women re-configure their senses of self as mothers. Second, I will explore the ways older Sakhalin Koreans understand the social life of a welfare subject. Finally, I will elucidate how they negotiate everyday intimacy and gender relations. In the processes of narrating, talking, imagining, and expressing thoughts and emotions, individual Sakhalin Koreans make sense of what they themselves do as being affected by what others do and say. These inter-subjective processes enable us to consider the ways Sakhalin Koreans negotiate what it means to be a human being.

1) Abandoned or being abandoned?: mother as being needed

When talking about and considering return migration, the major concern among elderly Sakhalin Koreans is separation from their children. Since the migration entitlement is given to only older populations, adult- and grand-children are not allowed to move together. On both Sakhalin and South Korea, women are faced with “separation” from adult- and grand-children, and they express moral dilemmas.

In interviews with elderly grandmothers, I often saw that they blamed themselves as mothers who abandon children. They represent their “inhumane” behavior by comparing it with those of animals and insects. One elderly woman, who lived in South Korea for more than ten years, told me, “I was sitting one day and saw ants walking in a line. Even ants take care of and remain with their children. I left my children and came here alone.” Another woman asked me, “Do you know which creatures are most cruel in the world?” I answered, “No.” She then told me, “A human being. Look, we left children whom we raised. How cruel it is.” For these women, they conceive that mothers who abandon children are “inhumane,” and a sense of guilt further makes their “union” with adult-children difficult.

Discourses of abandonment also appear in relation to this movement in a different way. For example, one elderly woman in her early 80s, in the Welfare Center spoke to me in whispers:

“I do not tell anybody, but to tell the truth, I will go back to Russia someday. I did not plan to stay here for a long time. Is this a human's life? Flying like a bird, I came here alone. The grandmothers here are poor people. I know they came to South Korea because their children do not take care of them. I have a son who is doing big business in Moscow, so I do not worry.”

On Sakhalin as well, the elderly and middle-aged women (both those who did not “choose” to migrate and those who are not entitled) recognize that the life in South
Korea would be “better,” but at the same time, ponder how poor those returnees are because, they guess, children do not want to be with those elders.

As the moral discourse around abandonment circulates, the women also produce the meaning of their migration as---not to be a burden on children. Most of the returnee women explained to me they had decided to move to reduce the burden on adult-children. Ira, a middle-aged woman who lived in South Korea for two years, said, “I came to South Korea because being with us, elders, makes children ’kosan’.” They are busy and have their own family to take care of.” The interesting point to be noted is that the narrative of burden is produced among “stayees” in a similar way. Myong-Ja, in her late 60s, recounts, “If I go to South Korea and something happens, that will be kosan (her emphasis) for my children. They have to take a holiday, airfare is expensive, and they have to find accommodation in South Korea. For elders to avoid being a burden to children, it is best to stay (her emphasis).” Both of them make sense of their decision and behaviors in terms of negotiating expectations for themselves.

As such, older Sakhalin Korean women negotiate the meaning of mothers’ migration without children, participating in producing and reacting to the moral discourse of abandonment. In this context, they also openly say that their role as mother in raising children is finished, and symbolic detachment from children is justified. Nevertheless, the women continue to perform transnational mothering through giving gifts, calling, and visiting children on Sakhalin. Considering that “neededness” is articulated with humanness in the Russian context (Höjdestrand 2009), the older Sakhalin Korean women make effort to be needed by children and do something for them, and thus feel like human beings.

2) Life without “stress”

Another key moral dilemma among older Sakhalin Koreans around return migration is how the life without stress in South Korea is “not normal.” Soon after moving to South Korea, returnees often find that life is “boring” and have “nothing to do.” Sakhalin Koreans, both on Sakhalin and in South Korea, conceived of life in South Korea lacking “stress.” Stress in this context refers not to a psychological pressure that has a negative impact on body and mind, but to a stimulus and to tasks which enable living everyday life, byt. When I had casual conversations with returnees in South Korea, one elderly woman spoke as follows:

“I don’t know exactly what kind of medicine I am prescribed. But probably it helps my brain work properly. After migrating, I frequently forgot what I did and what I have to say. It is because I have nothing to do here, and probably we need stress. Without stress, a brain does not work.”

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11 Kosan literally means hardship in Korean, and it is the most solid idiom in narratives on peoples’ suffering, hardship, and anxiety among older Sakhalin Koreans.
12 It is commonly seen that it was hard for Sakhalin Korean returnees to understand what kinds of drugs doctors prescribed because of the language difference.
13 They use a Russian word, стресс (stress).
Although I cannot clarify which medicine she was prescribed and how the migration affects physical changes, older Sakhalin Koreans sense a difference from “normal” life through the body.

On Sakhalin, those who (decided to) stay behind and those who are not entitled to migrate imagine and judge how “normal” life in South Korea is. They question what the returnees really do and how they spend time in South Korea. Lila, a widow in her mid-50s, lives with her grandson. She intensely wants to migrate to South Korea, but she emphasizes she would not go without her grandson. Lila’s flat is fully decorated with flowers, fancy dolls, and crafts that she has gathered in Russia and overseas. She also served all hand-made foods, such as bread, jam, kimchi, and dumplings. She drives a car and goes everywhere. After speaking of her eagerness to live in South Korea, she added:

“But I always wonder what they (returnees) do every day? On Sakhalin, we are busy—going to the dacha and the ocean, visiting friends, and caring for grandchildren. They don’t live like this there. I think humans need some stress. That’s healthy. They (the returnees) don’t have stress, so they may get old faster.”

This discourse of life with (and without) stress is also emphasized within the context where the stayees on Sakhalin criticize returnees’ position as welfare recipient in South Korea. One elderly man in his late 80s had moved to Sakhalin as a migrant laborer during the Japanese colonial period and kept working in a coal mine during the Soviet era. When talking about why he decided not to migrate to South Korea, he openly criticizes returnees: “they (returnees) are like pigs! I don’t want to just eat and take whatever they are given.” A metaphor of pig is often used in moral judgements of “unhuman-like” behaviors of laziness, dirtiness, and greed and in evaluating returnees’ position as welfare subjects in South Korea. Living as a welfare subject in South Korea encourages Sakhalin Koreans to confront becoming a passive being, which indicates not a “normal” human life as a social being.

3) Negotiating intimacy: living with “strange” friends or “strange” marriage partner?

Finally, a dominant moral dilemma that Sakhalin Koreans are faced appears when return migration encourages them to negotiate gender relations and intimacy. Repatriation policy allocates single elders who have physical difficulties to the Welfare Center. But others are allocated to flats with a companion, usually a spouse. However, this policy does not take into account the quantity of single elders especially in the Russian context, where male life expectancy is much shorter than women and the divorce rate is high.

Due to the housing arrangement, even though single peoples are entitled to migrate, they are required to find a companion to live with in South Korea. Although finding a companion is not complicated and not easy, two patterns emerge. One is that elderly women move with elderly female friends. Although the migration policy allows male-male companionship, few were seen when I conducted fieldwork in South Korea. The important point is that every Sakhalin Koreans on Sakhalin and in South Korea whom I met did not imagine about the male-male companionship. When I asked about it, they laughed and answered, “Man cannot live alone,” and “men need women.” It shows the dominant gender norm that a house (and family) is a gendered space where women manage a domestic life and everyday care activities.

14 The other pattern is that women or
men (re)marry with opposite sex partners. In this context, older Sakhalin Koreans discuss and imagine whether living with “strange” friends or with a “strange” marriage partner would be morally (un)acceptable. I found that these symbolic unions had become a source of moral conflicts among older Sakhalin Koreans. Rumor, gossip, and stories around the symbolic union (and also separation) emerged and circulated within the transnational space.

I do not discuss how the union between single people really work here; instead, I focus on the ways Sakhalin Koreans engaged in moral discourses on marriage, gender, sexuality, and intimacy. For example, I attend to stories about “women’s strategies” to migrate to South Korea through (re)marriage with much older men who have the migration entitlement\(^\text{15}\). Older Sakhalin Koreans (mostly stayees) are emotionally agitated by this coupling, wondering how “unfamiliar” men and women who were suddenly acquainted in their old age could manage marriage and sexual life. By contrast, others show a feeling of rejection about female-female companions since sharing one flat, and specifically one kitchen space with a “strange” woman would cause trouble. Moral judgements on being a companion and living with “strangers” for the sole purpose of living in South Korea are contested.

This section has briefly shown the various moral dilemmas in how older Sakhalin Koreans evaluate return migration. It also highlights the paradoxical outcomes of “humanitarian aid” as the age-based entitlement and housing arrangement of the return migration policy allow older Sakhalin Koreans to imagine, talk, think, experience, and judge their own and others’ behaviors as “not normal” and “nonhuman.” Simultaneously, it implies that they negotiate what it means “to be human.” In these processes, their inter-subjectivities are re-configured within the transnational field.

**Contested Welfare Citizenship**

While dealing with such moral dilemmas, Sakhalin Korean returnees make efforts to live as they do best in South Korea. Their efforts and practices in South Korea show how they themselves become transnational welfare citizens. Rather than viewing citizenship as a top-down given structure or set of legal rights, anthropological study on citizenship examines processes of self-making and claim-making (Ong 1996, 2003). In post-socialist contexts, welfare serves as a crucial domain where citizenship is practiced in the ways newly marginalized populations claim membership, entitlements, and protection, based on biological injuries (Petryna 2002), on a social role of mother-worker (Haney 2002), and on disabled bodies (Philips 2011). These processes allow them to re-configure relations with states. In addition, it is pointed out that populations also negotiate rights and protection with other “state-like” institutions such as NGOs, religious groups, and trans-bordered humanitarian organizations, all of which replace the state’s governing works (Gupta and Ferguson 2002). Drawing on these discussions, I highlight Sakhalin Koreans’ subject-making and claim-making practices, and will show their distinctive ways of becoming and struggling to become transnational welfare citizens.

\(^{15}\) Since 2007, the entitled one’s spouse has also been allowed to migrate to South Korea. It means as long as one of the companions was born before 1945, the other companion’s age does not matter.
1) Socialist welfare provisions in neoliberal South Korea?

The technology to remake Sakhalin Korean returnees into welfare subjects is found in the repatriation policy. According to the policy, the returnees are not allowed to own property like houses or cars, or have disposable income. Liuba, a woman in her early 60s, spoke about her husband, saying, “How much he likes cars. Once he sees cars, he gets excited and can’t sit still. But here, we don’t have a car.” I also heard from other returnees’ comment that their houses will not be inherited by children because the (South Korean) state owns the houses. Sakhalin Koreans acknowledge that they are “welfare subjects” who have limitations on ownership and wealth. If they possess properties, the welfare assistance is cut.

When I visited Katya, she told me a story. One day, she accidently found cash in the flat. At that moment, Katya forgot that she had hidden the money herself. She interpreted this as a “lucky” incident, but days later, she realized what she had done. Recollecting the experience, she laughed. I asked, “Why didn’t you deposit the cash in your bank account?” Katya’s face suddenly changed serious and she whispered, “We can’t keep much money in a bank account. We have to take it out just after it is transferred.” To my question of “why?” she simply said, “I don’t know, but that’s no good.” I do not suggest that Katya does not understand why she is not able to maintain much money. She disciplines and behaves as a welfare subject.

These practices reminded me of elderly Sakhalin Koreans’ narrative of the past. Elderly Koreans remember that they hid cash (in the garden) that they earned through “private” enterprises, being afraid of being reported and punished during the Khrushchev era. Considering their experiences in the late Soviet period where possession of too much wealth and private ownership was restricted, it seems it is ironic that older Sakhalin Korean returnees are now living in a neoliberal South Korean space where they become an ideal form of Soviet subject—a recipient of universal welfare provisions who is once again prohibited from amassing too much wealth. This perspective, however, is wrong. Sakhalin Koreans feel and understand their position in different ways.

The Sakhalin Korean returnees feel uneasy about their reciprocal relations with the South Korean and Japanese governments. They perceive that they receive too many “gifts” from the governments. The reality of socially isolated South Korean elders further makes the Sakhalin Koreans feel guilty of having “privileged” status. Watching documentary programs on TV, which relate the lives of other South Korean elders working in their 80s, living in a tiny space (not a house) without heating, and managing

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16 In South Korea, employment is permitted, and depends on their incomes, tax payment is imposed as a “citizen’s obligation.” Some middle-aged populations have seasonal and part-time jobs on construction sites, farms, and restaurants.

17 Financial assistance is transferred every month.

18 Selling products made by a “personal” means was considered a legal during the Soviet era. After Sakhalin was annexed to the USSR, Sakhalin Koreans’ major income source was these “private” enterprises. Indeed, many Korean elders are proud that their income was higher than public workers, and one man jokingly said, “we were capitalists.” During research, I found older Sakhalin Koreans’ economically marginal experiences affect their positive reaction on the transition to capitalism.

19 I do not say that the “universal” welfare was practiced in socialist countries, and instead emphasize the “ideal” form of welfare provision.
livelihoods without pensions, one returnee told me, “I was so surprised to see there are many poor elders in South Korea. I have never seen such poor people on Sakhalin (and Russia).” Some people reflect that their lives on Sakhalin seem much better than those of South Koreans. Moreover, it is striking that after the 3.11 earthquake on Japan, Sakhalin Koreans both on Sakhalin and South Korea refrained from claim-making because, borrowing Dima’s words, “the state always first cares about its own people. So it is no good (to make claims) in such a situation.” Their understanding of their position in relation to the South Korean and Japanese governments tempers their claim-making practice. In spite of their new demands, such as wanting their children to be permitted live in South Korea and an increase in financial support, they hesitate to assert their claims openly due to their political and moral position ---“gift-receiver” as well as “non-Japanese” and “non-South Koreans.” Their moral sentiments and practices enable me to argue that citizenship is not always practiced by claiming but by being “unvoiced,” and it is related to the subject's specific position and relation with states.

2) Negotiating Victimhood: who suffered most?

As Sakhalin Koreans confront contested welfare citizenship, those who stay behind on Sakhalin (by choice and by non-entitlement) try to express that they deserve to be welfare citizens. I would like to stress that although they use a political language of “rights” in their performance of claim-making, individual Sakhalin Koreans in fact demand social rights. Rather than political and civil rights that “South Korean citizens” maintain, they insist on the equal social rights that Sakhalin Koreans returnees make claim to.20 Those who are excluded strive to identify themselves as politically and morally legitimated bodies to be protected and cared for by the two governments (cf. Ticktin 2011).

The birth-year based entitlement has produced a new border between old Sakhalin Koreans. More precisely speaking, by creating the border among siblings, cousins, and the same cohort friends, it changes a sense of fairness in such intimate domains. For those who are not entitled due to their age this inequality does not make sense. For example, Roma said to me, “why can my older sister go to South Korea while I cannot? I am a child of my father and mother as she is.” They are engaged in an emotional appeal based on the past bodily experiences of living as “stateless” in the past. In front of the South Korean government officials, one middle-aged woman called them out and said while crying:

“I would like you to understand how much we, younger generations, also kosaeng (suffered) in the past due to our parents. They knew nothing here (Russia)--how to write and speak--and stateless people. And we could not move freely even within Sakhalin.21 So that we also did not go to good schools and work in the mainland.”

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20 I use Marshall’s citizenship typology (1950) for the purpose of showing the ways Sakhalin Koreans claim a specific right although I do not follow its development scheme.

21 During the Soviet period, space mobility was highly constrained among Sakhalin Koreans who had “stateless” status, and it affected various domains. They had an identification document, called bez grazhdanstvo (means “without nationality” in Russian). Others had North Korean nationality, which also institutionalized
Individual and collective experiences of restriction on the movement of Koreans and memory of suffering serve as the source of their victimhood, and it encourages their claim to the right to live in South Korea in return for their suffering.

Demanding recognition as “victims” also entails differentiating between those from “North Korea” and “South Korea.” For example, there are some middle-aged people whose fathers moved to Sakhalin from southern part of Korea as forced migrant laborers during the 1930s - 40s, but they are excluded from the entitlement. They complain about unfairness, saying “why do North Koreans move to South Korea? They did not suffer at all. They are the children of contract laborers.” My father was forced to migrate and work.” Even in South Korea, I heard similarly critical voices toward “North Koreans.” Referring to one elderly woman who moved to Sakhalin from northern part of Korea during the colonial period, an elderly man who was from southern part of Korea said, “That people came to South Korea even though she is a North Korean.” It is perceived that Sakhalin Koreans from southern part of the colonial Korea are politically legitimated bodies --“South Koreans.” Although the migration policy does not distinguish Sakhalin Koreans into “North” and “South,” the political distinction between North and South is emphasized among Sakhalin Koreans in the context of their claims to political legitimacy in the post-Cold War era.

For the excluded Sakhalin Koreans, the past suffering, a spatio-temporal experience, was the only source of claim to their social rights that enabled them to obtain membership in the “state homeland”--a political community. Nevertheless, this process is contested since there is little space to negotiate with the two governments (in particular with the Japanese). Those who are excluded from citizenship then reluctantly interpret that they are again victimized by the states as they were played with by the international and domestic politics of the multiple nation-states in the past and feel a fragmented sense of self.

Conclusion

My aim in this paper is to reveal the ways older Sakhalin Koreans become transnational welfare citizens and to highlight the ways nation-states play crucial roles in providing the sources of their practices. On the one hand, the “humanitarian project” offers an alternative space for Sakhalin Koreans to live independently from their children and to receive welfare support from three nation-states, and this transgresses gender and kinship norms as well as territorialized state sovereignty. On the other hand, their moral dilemmas and practices that they experience in intimate and public domains indicate that the repatriation is a process of governing through “humanity” (Feldman and Ticktin 2009) in which Sakhalin Koreans re-make themselves--a fragmented self within the power relations of the states. In this sense, Sakhalin Koreans subjectivities are contextualized in the processes of multiple “posts” (cf. Chari and Verdery 2009), in which their colonial relation with Japan is re-configured with the market and the political transitions in Russia and South Korea after 1990. Analyzing Sakhalin Koreans’

22 The migration entitlement is given to those who are from the northern part of Korea (it does not mean North Korea/DPRK).
23 After 1946, contract workers from North Korea moved to Sakhalin, and some remain on the island.
24 The states that affected Sakhalin Koreans’ lives in the past include the USSR, North Korea, South Korea, and Japan.
subjectivities within this framework will contribute to a better understanding of the continued effects of past political conflicts among populations in Korean peninsula and Korean diasporas in Northeast Asia. I hope that it will also help to understand “humanitarian projects” and their role in subject making in the 21st century.

References


Unreviewed Papers
“Still Quite Fun To Read:”
An Introduction to North Korean Children’s Literature

Christopher Richardson
The University of Sydney

“We shall persuade mothers and nurses to tell our chosen stories to their children, and by means of them to mould their minds and characters which are more important than their bodies...” Plato, Republic

Introduction

In her groundbreaking analysis of Soviet children’s culture, Felicity Ann O’Dell assessed the foundational role of children’s literature in the construction of state and social identity in the Soviet Union, and more recently, Catriona Kelly has completed an exhaustive study of Russian children’s culture from 1890 to 1991. They are part of a small but growing movement in cultural studies that takes seriously the role of children’s literature and culture in shaping the political and civic environment in which young people are educated and raised, and the societies they inherit. Such a comprehensive assessment of North Korean children’s culture is yet to be undertaken, although Dafna Zur has made notable inroads in the field. In terms of North Korean literature more generally, Tatiana Gabroussenko’s Soldiers On the Cultural Front remains essential. Although she concludes North Korean literature is “a field of exceptional uniformity,” she notes that “a researcher who is interested in the shifts and twists of North Korea’s propaganda, hidden modifications of the Party line, North Korea’s cultural stereotypes, or the officially endorsed self-portrait of the North Korean people and image of the world around them, will find this literature an invaluable source of information.” Or as David-West writes succinctly, “North Korean literature is a continuation of politics by other means.” As we shall see, the production of children’s literature in North Korea likewise remains a state-controlled enterprise, fostering the intergenerational construction of revolutionary consciousness, national cohesion, ideological purity, and reverence for Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un. In this paper, I will provide a brief overview of the role of literature in modern North Korean children’s culture, and a close reading of two representative texts. Attention will be paid to recurring images and themes, noting the process of socialisation into political norms, such as juche, militarism, nationalism, anti-Americanism and adulation of the Kim dynasty.

27 For the German example, see Michael H. Kater, Hitler Youth (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004) and Anna Saunders, Honecker’s Children (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).
On Juche Literature

In his treatise On Juche Literature, Kim Jong Il addresses the central importance of children’s books to the North Korean state, in a bloviating yet revealing sub-chapter entitled, “Children’s Literature Must Be Created In A Way Best Suited To Children’s Psychological Features.” In it, Kim extolls the virtues of North Korean childhood, celebrating the fact that:

The level of ideological awareness of our children is very high ... our children's feeling of loyalty and filial devotion to the leader and the Party is incomparably higher, deeper and warmer than that of the children of any other country in the world ... our children have a strong sense of organization, discipline and collectivism. Though young, they are deeply aware of their political integrity ... their consciousness of being successors to the revolutionary cause is high.31

Yet implicit in such praise is a warning, Kim cautioning that this exalted status is fragile, writers of children’s literature standing at the frontline of a battle for the future of the revolution. Thus, Kim exhorts his writers to, “develop children's literature into our style of literature that conforms with our Party's policy and our children’s characteristics. Only our style of children's literature can contribute to bringing up our children into pillars of Korean revolution armed with the juche idea.”32 Moreover, Kim warns that exposure to foreign children’s literature risks “making them incompetent beings for the times and revolution and prisoners of reactionary fatalism.”33 The stakes, therefore, could not be higher. One fascinating result of this, as we shall see, is that both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il have themselves authored books for children, legislating narrative examples for emulation.

“Still Quite Fun To Read?”

Despite such pressure to present and preserve the ideology of revolution, North Korean children’s literature is, in fact, surprisingly diverse. As Gabroussenko opines, “the literary form has traditionally served as a sweet coating for the bitter or dull medicine of North Korean propaganda,”34 and this is perhaps most colourfully true of literature for children. To outsiders, the most visible genre of North Korean literature concerns the lives and exploits of its leaders, especially Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, although increasingly Kim Jong Un also. Even when written for children, tracts and treatises such as Genius of Revolution, about Kim Jong Il, are written in the awed tone of religious hagiography, and indeed their strength derives from the reverent consistency of their voice and style.35 Yet a second field of literature – and the focus of this paper – is far more diverse, embracing a variety of genres, tones and styles. These range from exhilarating Boys' Own adventure graphic novels, depicting valiant soldiers of the Korean People’s Army defending the nation against foreign aggressors, to simple

32 Ibid, 224.
33 Ibid, 221.
34 Tatiana Gabroussenko, “Calls For Self-Sacrifice In North Korean Creative Writing in the Late 1900s to 2000s,” The Journal of Korean Studies 13, No. 1 (Fall 2008): 35.
parables and fables in Aesopian style, such as *The Story of a Hedgehog*.\textsuperscript{36} Yet even the simplest fables parallel North Korea’s geopolitical predicament. In *On Juche Literature*, Kim Jong Il asserts that, “personification is advantageous for satirizing the enemy’s life and for showing the present life of our people figuratively and in an interesting way.”\textsuperscript{37} A trite zoological morality play, *Butterfly and Cock* thus depicts a large “bad-tempered” rooster, bullying its neighbours, yet outwitted by a small virtuous butterfly, in an unsubtle analogy for the DPRK’s existential struggle with the United States of America.\textsuperscript{38}

Although parables and fables are common, so too are historical fiction, in documentary style. Anti-Americanism inevitably centres on the Korean War, in stories both real and invented. *Dean Captured*,\textsuperscript{39} for example, celebrates the North Korean seizure of Major General William F. Dean in 1950, whilst others feature implausible feats of daring, often by children. Reflecting the long nature of historical and political memory in the North, Choe Hong Sik’s illustrated novella *Sherman: The US Pirate Ship*\textsuperscript{40} describes that earlier encounter between the United States of America and Korea in 1866, foreshadowing later confrontations, and re-enforcing a vision of the Yankee as eternal foe. As another principal legitimizing myth of the North Korean revolution, the anti-Japanese guerilla struggle also remains a key subject, luridly depicted in books with titles such as *Take This Rifle, Comrades*\textsuperscript{41}, *Unending Confrontation*\textsuperscript{42} and *The Japs Punished*.\textsuperscript{43} Less blood curdling, other genres celebrate and explore the ancient and medieval history of Korea, such as Kim Il Sung’s *A Tale of Two Generals*.\textsuperscript{44} Science fiction is also common. In Kim Sang Bok’s *The Secret of Subsonic Waves*, for example, American agents wreak global havoc with futuristic technology.\textsuperscript{45} Matching such varied content, the illustrative style of North Korean children’s literature ranges from black and white manga-style comic book art to coloured illustrations, either in a pseudo-classical Korean style, or a contemporary cartoon style not far estranged from Disney.

Despite this variety of genres and styles there endures a unity of intent. Whether graphic novel, animal fable, or tale from classical mythology, all North Korea’s children’s literature ultimately extols the virtues of the race and revolution, whilst condemning the vices of the enemy: imperialism, capitalism, racial and cultural impurity and reaction. Emerging from a small number of publishing houses in Pyongyang, there can be no divergence from what Brian Myers terms “the Text.”\textsuperscript{46} Nevertheless, whilst North Korea incarnates this pedagogical model of children’s literature in distinctive ways, Pihl rightly places it within a wider tradition of Korean literature, describing “an inclination toward didacticism which has been expressed in differing forms under various social conditions

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{36} Son Chang Hak, *The Story of a Hedgehog* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1984).
  \item \textsuperscript{37} Kim Jong Il, *On Juche Literature*, 219.
  \item \textsuperscript{38} Kim Yong Sam, *Butterfly & Cock* (Kum Song Youth Publishing House, 2003).
  \item \textsuperscript{39} Choe Hong Sik, *Dean Captured* (Pyongyang: Art & Literature Publishing House, 2004).
  \item \textsuperscript{41} Kim Sang Bok, *Take This Rifle, Comrades* (Pyongyang: Kum Song Youth Publishing House, 2005).
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  \item \textsuperscript{43} Kim Sang Bok, *The Japs Punished* (Pyongyang: Kum Song Youth Publishing House, 2005).
  \item \textsuperscript{44} Kim Il Sung, *A Tale of Two Generals* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1989).
  \item \textsuperscript{45} Kim Sang Bok, *The Secret of Subsonic Waves* (Pyongyang: Pyongyang: Kum Song Youth Publishing House, 1994).
\end{itemize}
throughout the history of Korean writing,” both prior to, and under, Japanese occupation. Such continuities may help explain the receptivity of the DPRK’s readers to a type of literature renounced elsewhere. Yet it is to the credit of North Korea’s writers and artists that their books succeed as more than mere propaganda. Or in the words of one young defector, “those books were actually still quite fun to read. Some might say we were being brainwashed, but at least it was done entertainingly.”

**Leader as Teacher, Leader as Scribe**

It has lately proved fashionable for state leaders to turn their hand to children’s literature. In 2010, US President Barack Obama penned an illustrated children’s book entitled, *Of Thee I Sing: A Letter To My Daughters*. Aiming to capture the spirit of the nation, Obama presented an inspirational survey of influential Americans, from George Washington to Helen Keller and Martin Luther King, Jr. Rather less ambitiously, the then Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd released his own children’s picture book in 2010. Entitled *Jasper and Abbey and the Great Australia Day Kerfuffle*, it explored the lives of the Prime Ministerial pets. Yet it is unlikely either Obama or Rudd were aware of the company they were keeping when they joined the ranks of world leaders who had penned picture books for their child constituencies, including both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. It is to a close reading of two of these texts this paper now turns.

Re-released in multiple translations in 1989, *A Winged Horse* is introduced as “an illustrated book of a fairytale told by the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung.” Set in a mythologized medieval Korean past, it tells the story of the coastal village of Drum. Like many North Korean children’s books, it is a story of invasion and resistance, of the victory of the weak over the ostensibly invincible forces of the strong. The first thing we learn of Drum, apart from its natural beauty, is that “foreign invaders over the sea were greedy for our country, and this village would always be the first place they invaded.”

Korea’s long and bitter history of colonisation, whether at the hands of the Chinese, Japanese, or Western powers, resounds strongly through such imagery. More specifically, the image of a village as the symbol of the Korean nation is a recurring theme in North Korean literature, reflecting its role as a constituent element in the North Korean revolution, both before and after the Korean War.

Intriguingly, the identity of the invaders is never stated. Rather, they are simply described as “brutes,” a “bestial enemy” prepared even to attack unarmed old men. The illustrations provide the rest. Indeed, the enemy may remain unnamed, and therefore symbolic of any old, or potential, threat to the Korean people, yet the invaders are clearly of Japanese origin. As drawn, their medieval armour suggest Hideyoshi’s Imjin War of 1592-1598, a series of invasions still cited by North Korea as a source of

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50 Ibid, 8.
51 Ibid, 7.
grievance against the modern Japanese state. Despite the deceptively cartoonish qualities of the illustrations, they exude violence, juxtaposing the purity of the luminous, softly drawn Korean characters against the distorted features of the monstrous Japanese invaders. Characteristically for North Korean children’s literature, as for North Korean arts in general, there is an unapologetic racialism to the depiction of the samurai invaders, with their unkempt facial hair, cruel lips, and phallic red noses. The invaders are depicted committing violence with ease, even glee, evincing pleasure in the task of assailing the village of Drum.

Yet paradoxically, even as the book attempts to instill the reader with a terror of the Japanese invader, it seeks to diminish the status of the enemy as a force to be reckoned with. Despite his legendary martial prowess, the splendour of a samurai in full martial attire is reduced to a contemptible joke, a buffoonish bow-legged parody in fancy dress, compared to the simple honest attire of the Korean peasant. When the unnamed child hero of the story finally comes to the rescue of the village, astride the eponymous Winged Horse, or chollima, the Japanese are depicted screaming or gibbering in terror, blocking their ears. As the text relates, “the enemy fled, screaming with fright … the villagers cut down the fleeing enemy with arrows and spears.” The final stage of battle are illustrated graphically, the Japanese mown down as they retreat, buck-teethed and cross-eyed, ceremonial helmets flying from their heads as their lifeless bodies crash to the ground.

What, then, of the heroic Koreans in A Winged Horse? The protagonists of the tale include an old drummer – entrusted with a magic drum, inspiring the village to rise against foreign invaders – and his three young sons. Whereas the invaders are grotesque and dysmorphic, the three sons are beatific, round-faced, rose-cheeked and neatly groomed, especially the youngest. Almost feminine, he has wide liquid eyes, like a cherub. Their bodies incarnate Korean simplicity and virtue. As Gabroussenko terms it, North Korean literature ritually presents, “a gathering of angelic heroes.” So it is here.

We learn that the eldest son is the strongest in the village, and the second its finest horseman. And yet, when faced with the challenge of harnessing the winged-horse to deliver the village from its oppressors, it is neither virtue that grants victory to the people of Drum. To his horror, the eldest son learns that “the strength and courage I have cultivated for the country have become useless,” and the second son’s horsemanship falters on the raging banks of the Kuryong River. We read that, “a coward he was, for he gave up … at the thought that he might drown,” self-preservation trumping self-sacrifice. Instead, it is the selfless, almost blind courage of the third son that delivers victory to the village. When the boy encounters a ravening tiger, he does not flee, but rides it, turning danger into opportunity. When he rides the horse to the raging Kuryong River, the steed finally unfurls its wings, primed by the boy’s determination to cross the water, whatever the risk. Despite this moment of grace, victory is still delayed, the boy knocked unconscious for a time on a rock in the middle of

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52 KCNA, "History Society Discloses Samurais' Invasion of Korea & Their Mass Killings and Plunder," KCNA (Pyongyang), 19 May 2012.
53 Kim Il Sung, A Winged Horse, 6-7.
54 Ibid, 56-57.
55 Tatiana Gabroussenko, "Calls For Self-Sacrifice In North Korean Creative Writing in the Late 1900s to 2000s," 40.
56 Kim Il Sung, A Winged Horse, 23.
57 Ibid, 33.
the river, where in a moment of existential crisis he dreams of the people who will perish if he fails to return to the village. Despite his vulnerability, the boy's true colours shine, and we see the difference between he and his elders, why the winged-horse favoured this young child. Unlike the others, who preferred to spare their own lives fearing failure and death, our child hero declares: "My dear horse, I am not afraid of that violent storm if you can get through it. Please understand that I am determined to risk my life to save the village."58 A declaration of self-sacrifice and faith, there could be no clearer statement of the creed of the revolution.

This version of A Winged Horse was published as the Eastern bloc edged towards terminal decline, the final years North Korea's propagandists held full mastery of their information environment before the catastrophic famine shattered this monopoly. Whether or not Kim Il Sung actually composed this fairy tale, its use of the chollima, or thousand-ri horse, as central image exploits the nostalgia of North Koreans for the Chollima Movement, a halcyon period of economic and industrial growth launched in December 1956 at the Kangson Steel Mill. During this era, as Dae-sook Suh writes, "persons who surpassed their quotas were decorated with the banner of the Chollima and were called Chollima riders."59 Implicitly, Kim's fable concedes that the revolution is vulnerable, and requires a restoration of chollima values for its salvation. In the heroic child salvation is found. His bravery and devotion transcend the storm, mastering nature itself in a display of supernatural power, as "the horse spread its wings to the full and flew bravely across the river. He could see a beautiful scene. The violent storm abated and the columns of water broke up and became millions of colourful flowers."60 The image could not be clearer, as the chollima delivers the village from the clutches of defeat, guided by the valiant patriotism of an innocent child. Correct thinking and ideology trump circumstances. Charles Armstrong has argued that this is a key ideational element of the North Korean revolution, writing that, "in the area of ideology ... one of the most distinctively Korean elements of communism in North Korea was its emphasis on ideas over material conditions. Koreans shared this Marxist heresy with their counterparts in China and Vietnam, but this humanistic and voluntaristic emphasis was even more pronounced in Korea than in the other two East Asian communist revolutions."61 Indeed, the almost miraculous power invested in the ideologically pure child hero of The Winged Horse would be out of place in Soviet children's literature, emerging instead from the vestigial folkloric traditions of the peninsula, and reflecting the heretical centrality of piety of thought and intention to the North Korean revolution. As of 2012, Kim Il Sung's fairytale gained a newfound resonance. Now that Kim Jong Un, youngest of Kim Jong Il's three sons, has risen to power above his older siblings, one wonders whether the legend of The Winged Horse might not have a special place in his imagination.

Also published in 1989, Boys Wipe Out Bandits is a children's book allegedly by Kim Jong II, adapted from a story the Dear Leader "one day" dreamed up as a child himself, implying that, amongst his other talents, Kim Jong II was capable of

58 Ibid, 49.
60 Kim Il Sung, A Winged Horse, 50.
extemporizing a classic children’s story on a whim. Revealing the moral of the story before it has even begun, the editor explains that, “the Dear Leader told his friends about a clever boy who wiped out a group of bandits that had attacked his village. So, he taught them a truth that one can defeat any enemy if one works one’s wit and musters up courage even when very young.” Of course, this is precisely the lesson of A Winged Horse, released in the same year, suggesting either a dearth of original ideas among Pyongyang’s leaders – proving the old adage that there actually are not that many stories to tell, only variations on old themes – or, more likely, that this moral remains of central importance to the state. A vulnerable village once again becomes a metaphor for the North Korean state, surrounded by marauding enemies. This time, however, the villains are bandits lurking in the mountains. Like the samurai in A Winged Horse, the bandits are “monster-like creatures.” One is snaggletoothed, with pendulous ears, another has a distended chin and bulging eyes, and a third is obese with a thick bottom lip and a projecting nose. Their captain is ogre-like, with distinctive wens on his shoulder that emit noxious gas when pierced. Once again, they are contrasted with the citizens of an idyllic village, this time named as Hyangchon, beautifully attired and softly drawn. There is no suggestion that the enemies of the village are foreigners in this instance, but rather exhibit the violent appetites and carnalities associated in propaganda with reactionaries and capitalists. The bandits exist outside the bucolic village idyll, predating on the collective instead of contributing to it, their beastly captain a landlord with his own private fiefdom. Morally degenerate, the bandits eat gluttonously and become “drunk as a fish,” their leader at one point “snoring the hours away,” in contrast to the austere, unsleeping leadership of the village, and, by implication, the North Korean state. Virulently materialistic, the captain “untied a bundle of jewels and greedily grasped a handful of them in his hand,” and the bandits even deceive and steal from one another. As in A Winged Horse, it is down to the pluck and resolve of children to defeat the enemy, this time led by the inimitable Ye Dong, “a brave and clever boy,” and his friends. When Ye Dong identifies the ideological weaknesses of his enemies, noting that the bandits are “fighting with each other for property now,” he resolves to exploit it. Leveraging his pluck against the brutality of his foe, Ye Dong pretends to hide a gold nugget inside a tree. When the greedy bandit Quick Ear climbs into the tree to claim the nugget for himself, “bees pounced upon him without mercy.” There can be no stronger image in nature of the social collective than the bumblebee, small size no obstacle when they swarm to unleash their vengeance. Without mercy, Ye Dong sends the wounded bandit over a waterfall to his doom. There is a similar lack of mercy for the other bandits, and the villagers make no attempt to reform or redeem their wayward foe. Instead, they are punished with merciless violence at the hands of the children. One bandit “was blown high up in the air and fell down on to the ground … his waist was broken.” Another is hit with daggers and arrows and “collapsed, giving a

63 Ibid, 5.
64 Ibid, 18.
65 Ibid, 30.
68 Ibid, 4.
69 Ibid, 24.
70 Ibid, 27.
71 Ibid, 32.

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Ye Dong bursts the cysts on the shoulders of the bandit captain with knives and arrows, as the villagers, inspired by the children's bravery, complete the liberation of their home from the bandits. As the sun rises, a triumphant Ye Dong restates the moral of the story, the wisdom of a child declaring that, “no matter how formidable they are, we can defeat the enemy when we pool our strength and wisdom and have courage. Let’s build up our village to be an earthly paradise.” Like so many children’s stories in North Korea, Boys Wipe Out Bandits is an ode to the redemptive power of ultra-violence, as cultural impurities, capitalist degeneracy, and rampant individualism, are defeated by the pure virtue of the collective.

Foreign Waves

Whilst much of the content of North Korean children’s literature has remained consistent across time, the context in which it is read has dramatically evolved. North Korea is experiencing a boom in the supply and distribution of foreign media. Although the state has sought to resist this trend, with rhetorical broadsides in state media against alien culture, and periodic crackdowns on DVDs, USBs, and foreign literature, this appears to be a losing battle. Indeed, the population's ability to acquire these materials, and its increasing receptivity towards them, reflect a failure of the state to control the ideological narrative since the late-1990s, a collapse precipitated by the breakdown of material control over a largely porous Sino-Korean border, the failure of the Public Distribution System, and increasing availability of communications technology connecting North Koreans with the outside world. In this changing environment, how is today’s North Korean child likely to read new books, published in 2012, yet burdened with antiquated titles such as Illustrated Reminiscences by the Anti-Japanese Guerrillas: We Are Not To Stop Our Struggle Any Time and Anywhere?

One means by which the state has sought to ameliorate the damage of this process has been to permit certain degrees of cultural openness, in the hope its influence can be controlled. However, its efficacy is dubious. For example, although the vast majority of children’s literature available in North Korea is state-manufactured, a small selection of imported stories is available to borrow from libraries. As defector Jae Young relates, “some of the best children’s books were imported from foreign countries – I especially enjoyed Daddy Long Legs and Cinderella. The stories and pictures in these books fascinated us because they came from the mindset of another world, although to us it was just fantasy anyway, so I guess they were deemed politically safe. You’d need dedication to get hold of these books, however. I would always queue in long lines, and join long waiting lists to borrow books from the local library.” It is ironic that the same

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72 Ibid, 36.
73 Ibid, 40.
75 For an introduction to the implications of access to foreign media on perceptions of the North Korean state, see: Stephan Haggard & Marcus Noland, Witness To Transformation (Washington DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2011), 112-117.
76 Jung Song Kim, Illustrated Reminiscences by the Anti-Japanese Guerrillas: We Are Not To Stop Our Struggle Any Time and Anywhere (Pyongyang: Kum Song Youth Publishing House, 2012).
state which expended such time and energy devising ideologically sound fantasy literature for its young citizens would fail to perceive that the very fascination of foreign children’s literature, if only for the fact it “came from the mindset of another world,” might further erode its ideational hegemony. Yet from Jae Young’s testimony it is clear that it was the very foreignness of these stories that made them so appealing.

One alternative is to Koreanise foreign materials, rather than risk introducing completely original literature into the system. Reflecting an experimental liberalization of youth culture during the first years of Kim Jong Un’s leadership, state media publicly acknowledged the appeal of foreign children’s literature, promoting a collection of illustrated books entitled Collection of World’s Famous Tales for Children. Translated into Korean, this collection of 60 tales was described as, “famous tales for children which have been told in the East and the West to teach the truth and lessons of life.”78 In state media, a librarian from the Schoolchildren’s Library in Pyongyang was quoted admitting these are indeed the most popular books in the library. Her explanation for this was anthropological, rather than related to sheer love of story, noting that these books prove, “helpful to enriching common knowledge about folk traditions, literature and arts of different countries and nations.” The state editorial likewise emphasized the didactic value of these stories, noting that, “the collection draws attention of many children as it helps them discern good and evil, right and wrong, beauty and ugly, cultivate enterprise and boldness and harbor hope and ambition.” Although the emphasis upon the moral utility of these stories is typically North Korean, it is notable such foreign literature is perceived to contain virtues valued by the state. They are not studied as examples of foreign perversion. Even more remarkably, one of the stories promoted was Gulliver’s Travels, perhaps the most famous satirical novel in the English language. Closer inspection reveals that these foreign stories are not actually translations of original versions, but heavily bowdlerized local editions. In fact, they are small, illustrated versions, containing only summaries of the original tales. To return, therefore, to Jae Young’s testimony, what ultimately gives these texts their power is their provenance as foreign stories. After all, great stories are indeed universal, children responding at an instinctive level to great myths and fables. The KCNA described a young boy, who could be from any state or culture, recalling his personal response to one of these tales, noting that, “Nam Ye Ryong, a pupil of Kim Song Ju Primary School, said: ‘I am reading [the] book Swan Lake. I hate the wizard in the book!’”

Conclusions

There is a paradox at the core of North Korea’s literary philosophy, a tension between nature and nurture that Kim Jong Il’s tortured dialectic struggles to resolve. Does the artist create, or merely represent? Or perhaps, in representing, create? On the one hand, Kim insists North Korean children’s literature must reflect “our children’s characteristics,” and present “artistic images in conformity with this high level of the mentality of our children.” Yet, on the other hand, in his scathing attack on foreign children’s culture, Kim is forced to concede that the revolutionary mentality of the North Korean child is, in fact, manufactured, not innate. In a striking passage, he writes that:

Prevalent in the current world children’s literature is a tendency to sing the praises of a supraclass ‘pure disposition,’ trying to find the children’s characters in something inborn. To neglect acquired nature and to regard inborn nature as being absolute in representing children’s characters is the way to building a barrier between the rising generation and society, and making them incompetent beings for the times and revolution and prisoners of reactionary fatalism.  

Of course, this no concession at all, rather a semantic obfuscation, intended to occlude the dilemma at the core of revolutionary literature. Struggling to resolve the tension between nature and nurture, Kim merely redefines the debate, distinguishing instead between two types of nature, “acquired nature” and “inborn nature.” Yet the implication is clear, the role of North Korean children’s literature is not to reflect “something inborn” in the Korean race, but to create and project a new nature, one authored by the state. The onus then falls on artists and writers to adequately enforce this re-engineered vision of “nature”, and for the child to adequately respond. In the contemporary DPRK, with proliferating foreign media in the hands of adults and children, this is likely to prove an impossible task. Ultimately, the state might be forced to permit the distribution of foreign children’s culture, or attempt to suppress it altogether. In the meantime, the writers and illustrators of North Korea will continue to strive to reconcile their twin demands, creating texts that foster revolutionary consciousness, national cohesion, ideological purity, and reverence for the Kims in the minds of their young readers, whilst also being “still quite fun to read.”

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79 Kim Jong II, On Juche Literature, 221.
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**Miscellaneous**

Exhibiting Juche: The Unfolding of Juche in North Korean Museum Displays

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Abstract
The Juche idea is the monolithic guiding ideology of North Korea. In addition to requiring an unshakable commitment to self-reliance and anti-imperialism (particularly against Japan and the US), Juche demands unwavering loyalty to the leader and the State, as well as the portrayal of North Korean military superiority and invincibility. On account of its monolithic status, North Korean culture and cultural production, including the arts, is required by the State to be Juche-based; to both reflect and extol the core principles of the Juche idea. Working to demonstrate the extent to which Juche manifests in (and drives) North Korean nationalism and culture, this paper discusses how the Jucheist principles of leadership veneration, North Korean military superiority and anti-Americanism, unfold in the exhibitions of two North Korean museums: The Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum and the Sinchon Museum.

Due to strict State control and censorship mechanisms relating to artistic production, featuring artworks are approached as representative of the official State position, rather than the personal views of individual artists. In this vein, recognised as heavily Juche-centric, the North Korean museum exhibition is presented as an instrument of ideological (Juche) indoctrination, which (at least by intention) functions broadly to bolster both the personality cults of the Kims, and the overall legitimacy of the North Korean regime. In a more general context, the North Korean museum exhibition is offered as a tangible product showcasing the nexus between policy (as ideology) and culture (as artefact).

In the North Korean context, literature and art must be “based thoroughly on the line and policy of the Party” (Missuri, 1978: 199). That is, it must be “Juche-based . . . national in form and socialist in content” (I. S. Kim, 1975: 36), exemplifying and aligning with the teachings of North Korea’s guiding ideology: the Juche idea. This paper thus explores the degree to which the tenets of Juche are embodied in, and exemplified by, the themes and content of North Korean museum exhibitions. In particular, two of North Korea’s museums, the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum and the Sinchon Museum, are analysed for the extent to which they uphold and advance the principles of Juche.

While a full explanation of Juche is beyond the scope of this paper, a creative and distinctly North Korean appropriation of Marxism-Leninism (J. I. Kim, 1982: 7-9; Shin, 2006: 89-90), Juche is an ideological platform demanding complete independence and self-reliance (J. I. Kim, 1982). Its self-reliance stance, in turn, has seen the ideology come to embody an anti-imperialist struggle against foreign infiltration and the United States in particular (J. I. Kim, 1982: 40). Though, in addition to this, Juche also necessitates “infinite devotion” to the Party and the Kim Dynasty (J. I. Kim, 1982: 64), whereby one is expected to demonstrate unabated loyalty to the cause and a common commitment to the will of the State.
This common commitment, manifesting in the form of “single-hearted unity” (J. I. Kim, 1995: 238), is preached to give North Koreans an “essential superiority” (J. I. Kim, 1982: 69) and ultimate invincibility against all foes. Connected to this promise of ‘invincibility’ through unity, is the Juche-orientated view that the masses share a “common destiny” (J. I. Kim, 1995: 204), which is “inseparably linked” to the leader (J. I. Kim, 1995: 194). This notion is both due to and supported by, a series of historical ‘revisions,’ aimed at facilitating the development of personality cults around North Korea’s leaders. The specifics of these ‘revisions’ and embellishments’ of fact, are explained below. Nonetheless, they and Juche in general, claim that North Korea’s freedom and good-fortune is tied to its leadership, dependent on and guaranteed under Kim Jong Un’s (as Kim Jong Il’s and Il Sung’s before him), watchful guidance.

In light of the above, in assessing the Jucheist nature of North Korean museums, discussion is centred on how the Juche-centric principles of leadership veneration, united loyalty, North Korean military superiority and anti-Americanism, manifest in featuring exhibitions. On the subject of leadership veneration, Kim Jong Un’s status as North Korea’s current maximum leader and rising personality cult, notwithstanding, focus is given to the idolisation of North Korea’s ‘Great’ and ‘Dear’ leaders, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. Moreover, due to strict state censorship mechanisms and the general anonymity of artists, featuring artworks are approached as representative of the official State position, rather than the personal views of individual artists.

Before exploring what these museums ‘depict,’ however, it is important to note that the histories of both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il have been substantially revised so as to paint them in a more virtuous light. These ‘revised’ histories have, in turn, become embedded in North Korean cultural artefacts and practices, including museum exhibitions. To begin with Kim Il Sung, according to the North Korean version of history, he is a “a legendary anti-Japanese fighter and pioneer of independence” (Harrison, 2002: 13-14), who singlehandedly guided a “Korean rebel army equipped with tanks” (Becker, 2005: 49) to victory against the Japanese. In the same vein, presumably to ‘prove’ North Korea’s self-reliant capacity and legitimise its Juche-inspired independence, the ‘revolutionary’ exploits of Kim Il Sung during the Korean War, have also been greatly exaggerated. As Jasper Becker (2005: 49) documents, “the role of the Americans, the Soviets, the atomic bombs, the Chinese Communist and Nationalist Parties, and virtually every other historical fact vanishes from the record.” In the North Korean “imagined” rendition of history, the North Korean leadership is afforded sole credit for having won a war that is, in effect, still ongoing.

In reality, this portrayal of North Korea’s first leader was, and remains, a case of deliberate mistaken identity. Upon his arrival in North Korea in 1945 at the age of thirty-three (Becker, 2005: 45; Harrison, 2002: 332), Kim Il Sung, then Kim Song Ju (Downs, 1999: 19), was a relatively unknown figure, who, after leaving Korea for China with his parents some twenty-five years earlier, could barely speak Korean (Becker, 2005: 44-45). While it is true that Kim Il Sung participated in the struggle against the Japanese, his commitment to the cause of Korean liberation has been “progressively embellished” (Harrison, 2002: 13-14). In actuality, Kim Il Sung was a member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) who fought to protect Chinese interests in Manchuria, not to free Korea from Japanese colonial rule (Becker, 2005: 46). Yet, in the interest of advancing his standing among the North Korean populace and solidifying his leadership
he, Kim Song Ju, would take on the name of a renowned figure of the anti-Japanese resistance (Becker, 2005: 44; Harrison, 2002: 12). The “legendary feats” (Becker, 2005: 51) of this Korean hero would later be elaborated, expanded and disseminated so extensively, as to see a once ‘ordinary’ man elevated to the position of deity (Lynn, 2007: 100).

The life of Kim Jong Il has also been subjected to a vigorous historical rewrite. Despite the fact that all evidence points to him being born in a Soviet army camp in Siberia, official North Korean records insist that Kim Jong Il was born on Mount Paektu (Lim, 2009: 10-11). Mount Paektu holds mythological significance for Koreans as the mythical birthplace of Korea (French, 2007: 57). Crucially, the North Korean narrative of Kim Jong Il’s birth is equally mythical. As Paul French (2007: 57) recounts, it is said that:

As he came into the world a new star appeared in the sky, a double rainbow appeared, an iceberg on a nearby lake cracked, strange lights filled the sky and a swallow passed by overhead to pass on to the world the news of his birth.

Importantly, this allegorical description of Kim Jong Il portrays him as a ‘great being,’ thus working to sustain his personality cult. While French (2007: 58) argues that the mythological character of Kim Jong Il’s birth is likely understood in allegorical terms by most “ordinary” North Koreans, he does concede that the grandiosity of the account also “serves to raise the stature of Kim Jong-il and perpetuate the personality cult that surrounds him.”

Likewise, Kim Jong Il’s death is also shrouded in mysticism, with even nature said to have marked and mourned his passing (Korean Central News Agency [KCNA], 21 December 2011). At the time of writing, the personality cult of his successor and son Kim Jong Un is being established with revisions of his history and accomplishments pending. Though it is unclear exactly what form these revisions will take, in accordance with Juche, they are likely to be equally (and mythically) elevating.

Notably, the full extent to which the histories of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il have been either ‘bent’ or invented cannot be rendered here. Nonetheless, understanding that the reverence attributed to the pair is owed to a series of “colossal untruths” (Becker, 2005: 44) is important in that the essential basic function of North Korean museums is, in many ways, to ‘keep up’ the pretence and legitimise the lie. This includes North Korea’s ‘victory’ against the Japanese, as well as over the US in the Fatherland Liberation War (Korean War).

As the forthcoming discussion elaborates, no matter the museum, in Pyongyang or elsewhere in North Korea, the story and message is remarkably similar. If the Great and Dear Leader are not being hailed for their contributions to the Korean (Juche) revolution or North Korean struggle for independence, they are being praised with grateful acknowledgement for the doting attentiveness they are professed to have given their subjects and their cause. In light of this tendency, as Kim Jong Un further asserts his place within the Kim dynasty, North Korea’s museums will likely continue to evolve to similarly praise him. With this background, I now turn to analyse the first of two North Korean museums: The Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum.
Covering an area of 52,000 square metres, comprised of eighty display rooms (Burdick, 2010: 267; Victorious Fatherland, 1979: 3) and over thirty exhibition halls (Pang, 1987: 212), the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum is perhaps the most elaborate of North Korean museums. Remembering that ‘the Fatherland Liberation War’ is the title by which North Korea refers to the Korean War, as its name suggests, the museum is focused around telling the ‘story’ of the Korean War from the North Korean perspective. It does, however, also deal with Korea’s ‘history’ of imperialism within a broader frame, with many displays relating to Japan’s colonisation of Korea (Victorious Fatherland, 1979: 3).

As has already been remarked, North Korea’s founding and ‘eternal’ president, Kim Il Sung, is credited with singlehandedly driving Japanese imperialism out of Korea and leading a ‘courageous’ Korean People’s (North Korean) Army (KPA) to definitive victory against the US, in the Fatherland Liberation War. In terms of agenda and purpose, as articulated in the museum’s guidebook, the museum is thus intended as “a grand monumental edifice,” showcasing the “Juche-oriented brilliant strategy and tactics” of Kim Il Sung and “their invincible vitality” (Victorious Fatherland, 1979: 3).

In this vein, the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum is an instrument of cultural and ideological (Juche) indoctrination, directed toward the achievement of three ends: (1) the deification of North Korea’s leaders, (2) the celebration of North Korea’s struggle (and ultimate ‘victory’) against imperialism, and (3) the showcasing of the strength (and invincibility) of the North Korean nation and people. In other words, it is designed to illustrate “the greatness of President Kim Il Sung,” immortalise his “imperishable feats” and present him (and in turn, Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Un), as “an ever-victorious iron-willed brilliant commander” (KCNA, 27 July 2010), protecting an ever-safe North Korean people under his wise and courageous leadership.

Having reportedly attracted, in excess of 29,650,000 visitors since opening in 1953 (KCNA, 27 July 2010), the museum is undoubtedly a central site for Juche indoctrination. According to the KCNA (27 July 2010), this figure, includes “servicepersons, schoolchildren, overseas Koreans and foreigners.” Though, with a limited number of foreigners visiting North Korea annually, this number provides insight into how significant a role the museum plays as a site of (domestic) cultural inculcation and indoctrination.

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80 Kim Il Sung remains the ‘president’ of North Korea. Following three years of national mourning, after his death in 1994, changes to the North Korean constitution in 1998 saw Kim Il Sung become the country’s ‘eternal president’ (Lynn, 2007: 104).
One only need inspect reproductions of the impressive mural of Kim Il Sung that hangs at the entrance to the museum’s main hall, for the indoctrination potential of the site to become clear. Occupying the whole expanse of the wall, due to its size, the mural cannot be reproduced in its entirety here (at least not without compromising the quality and intricacy of the image). In the interest of paying attention to its detail rather than scale, two sections believed to convey the ‘core’ and ‘essence’ of its meaning have been selected and included above (images 1 and 2).

Essentially, the mural shows a seemingly triumphant Kim Il Sung leading his citizens (the North Korean populace) in celebration. In the context of Juche, mindful of North Korea’s reshaping of history, the scenes can be interpreted as signifying North Korea’s victory against imperialism. Image 1, which is an enlarged rendering of the left section of the mural, depicts two women approaching the position of (eternal) President Kim Il Sung, an elaborate arrangement of flowers, decorated with red ribbon, in hand. Three children can be seen following closely behind, carrying smaller bunches of flowers. Kim Il Sung is the obvious recipient, the reason equally apparent: in honour and gratitude of his leadership and guidance to victory of an independent, sovereign Korea. Adding to the commemorative atmosphere of the mural, balloons, North Korean flags, a celebratory banner and scores of followers, make up the background. The artillery visible in the distance is also suggestive of North Korea’s strong ‘invincible’ military capability.

Image 2, a close up of the mural’s centre, features a waving Kim Il Sung in the foreground. On either side of him are a young North Korean boy and girl. The boy follows closely behind him as he leads the young girl, who is clutching a set of three balloons, by hand. Behind them is an assembly of army, navy and air force officers, all marching, glancing and smiling in the direction of their ‘Great Leader;’ appreciation and admiration clear on their faces. On the horizon, members of the KPA can be seen raising their arms and rifles in celebration of their ‘victory’ over their enemy(ies). For clarity,
the right of the mural, not pictured herein, conveys a similar scene to that of Image 1, already described. The remainder of the mural simply reinforces the strength and scale of the KPA, with numbers stretching as far as the eye can see. More victory celebrations akin to those seen in Image 2 also stretch along the horizon of the full-length mural.

In terms of its overall message, the mural extols the Juche idea in that it is intended to exemplify the invincibility of the North Korean people, united around its leader. In this way, Image 1 and Image 2 achieve more than the simple reinforcement of Kim Il Sung’s leadership and the personality cult surrounding him. Indeed, the air of myth and divinity attached to him, strengthened by stories of extraordinary and patriotic deeds, also reinforces the Juche principle of self-reliance. It does so in that the aura of invincibility surrounding the North Korean leadership instils a sense of confidence and security in the North Korean populace, fostering an image of a North Korea, which in the eyes of its people is a strong and, in many ways, superior State. Arguably, this succeeds not only in consolidating the power base and control of the ruling elite, but in evoking the imaginations and nationalistic sensibilities of the North Korean populace, or at least such is the intention.

Aside from its obvious ‘strength in unity’ theme, it is plain that this unity is a unity forged in a common cause against imperialism, and the US and Japan in particular. In this vein, the mural explicitly mirrors the anti-imperialist stance and substance of Juche. That is, by depicting a history in which North Korea’s independence and sovereignty was at stake in the first place, due to the alleged ‘imperialist’ manoeuvrings of Japan and the US, it invokes a core teaching of Juche in that it paints not only these nation-states, but foreign powers in general, in an imperialist light.

Crucially however, as the following demonstrates, this mural is not the only display housed in the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum, to reflect a staunch anti-imperialism. After all, it is at the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum that North Koreans (and any foreign visitors) are told, as per the North Korean version of history, that it was, in fact, the US who ignited the Korean War, not North Korea. The museum is filled to the brim with ‘evidence’ to support the ‘fact,’ not only that the US started the war, but that North Korea won the “heroic fight . . . to inflict an ignominious defeat on the U.S. imperialist aggressors” (KCNA, 27 July 2010). Purported as ‘evidence’ are numerous documents, photographs, relics, murals and a myriad of other artistic creations. The museum even boasts a basement full of captured US weaponry, housing everything from “pieces of tanks and jeeps and half tracks” to a seized helicopter (Burdick, 2010: 269-270).

This revisionist view of Korean history explains North Korea’s labelling of the Korean War as the ‘Fatherland Liberation War,’ and its defining and portrayal of the US as ‘the enemy.’ Eddie Burdick (2010: 267) writes of this ‘enemy’ portrayal in his book Three Days in the Hermit Kingdom: An American Visits North Korea, in which he details a trip to Pyongyang. Specifically, he recalls being almost immediately ushered over to a wall covered with black and white photographs, where he and others were promptly ‘informed’ of a number of alleged US atrocities. According to Burdick’s (2010: 267) account, a museum guide stood by the supposed “damning documents” before proceeding, pointer in hand, to reveal North Korea’s retaliatory and necessary part in the war. In line with North Korea’s official version of history, she is said to have notified...
Burdick and accompanying visitors of how US troops occupied South Korea and killed 149,000 South Koreans, prior to launching a surprise attack on the North on 25 June 1950 (Burdick, 2010: 267). North Korea’s actions were therefore, as Burdick remembers being dutifully ‘enlightened,’ necessary in that North Korea had both a moral responsibility to avenge these deaths and an obligation to defend North Korean territory from an advancing US attack.

In line with the portrayal of the US as ‘aggressors,’ many of the exhibits focus on the ‘brutal’ tactics employed by the US, including the North Korean charge that the US used biological weapons against the North, despite US denials and no conclusive evidence (Weathersby, 2004: 83-84). Pyongyang continues to maintain that the US dropped disease-laden insects from planes whilst flying over North Korean territory, infecting civilians with a range of diseases, including plague and cholera (Kleiner, 2001: 89). While displays relating to these claims undoubtedly fuel anti-Americanism, in the interest of scope, the following discussion is limited to representations of ‘victory.’ That is, to those displays that depict North Korea as militarily superior to the US or are indicative of US defeat, thus painting North Korea in a victorious light. North Korean allegations of US brutality are addressed in greater detail in the forthcoming examination of North Korea’s Sinchon Museum.

There is a recurring trend relating to the way North Korea and the US are represented in the artistic displays on view at the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum. On the one hand, the KPA, that is North Korea, is consistently presented in a heroic, noble and in many ways, glorified light. Conversely, at the opposite end of the spectrum, US soldiers are portrayed, not unexpectedly, as weak, confused, inept and easily overwhelmed, yet brutal. Many displays, such as those pictured in Image 3 and Image 4 for example, focus on the so-called US ‘surrender.’

Though, perhaps the best example and illustration of this comparative tendency is the museum’s cyclorama of the Battle of Taejon (Daejeon in South Korea). Measuring 132 metres in circumference, the North describes the cyclorama as the “world’s largest
“360° panorama” (as cited in Burdick, 2010: 271). To provide a brief history, the Battle of Taejon was a battle fought between US infantry forces and North Korea, in the early stages of the Korean War in mid-July 1950 (Springer, 2003: 130). Importantly, it was a battle from which the US was forced to withdraw, and from which the North did emerge victorious. It is often cited as being the most comprehensive defeat suffered by the US over the entire course of the war.

North Korea has capitalised on this victory, embellishing and sensationalising some facts so as to serve its propaganda purposes. Writing of his cyclorama experience, Burdick (2010: 271) explains of how the museum-goer, standing on a rotating cylindrical platform, is treated to a re-enactment of the battle seen from the North Korean point of view. As the platform rotates, the viewer observes countless scenes wherein US troops are depicted as scrambling cowards; their acts of apparent cowardice juxtaposed with the virtuous “courage and gallantry” of the Korean people’s (North Korean) Army (Burdick, 2010: 271).

Image 5 and Image 6, each featuring in the 360° panorama, exemplify the negative portrayal of US troops not only in the cyclorama itself, but in the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum more generally. In Image 5, two members of the US army cower and tremble as a US flag lies in ruins, trampled under the foot of a North Korean soldier. Beyond the borders of this image, is a devastated US battalion in retreat.
Equally, *Image 6* shows another US army serviceman raising his hands in surrender; his back still turned presented as 'proof' of his cowardice. All in all a faithful account of the North Korean version of history, the cyclorama tells of how “an immaculately clean and beautifully disciplined” North Korean Army drove “chaotic defeated American troops limping south as quickly as they could limp” (Burdick, 2010: 271), thus securing the freedom of Taejon and its people.

Indeed, as no display is complete without paying homage to the Great Leader, Kim Il Sung, the museum’s cyclorama attributes North Korea’s victory against the US in the Battle of Taejon, to him. Amid all of the commotion of war captured by the panorama, is conceivably its most blatant propagandist message of all. As pictured in Image 7, a small section of the diorama shows a group of local citizens gathered around a framed portrait of the North Korean leader, which has presumably been gifted them by a member of the ‘liberating’ North Korean army. Members of the local citizenry would not have been in the possession of any of these portraits as Taejon (Daejeon) was and remains a city in South Korea.

When one considers that a portrait of Kim Il Sung hangs in the house of every North Korean citizen, as issued and required by the State (Portal, 2005: 87), this scene carries a powerful resonance. Specifically, as with all of the examples drawn on so far, it adds further legitimacy to the cause of Juche by strengthening the personality cult of Kim Il Sung and thus underlining the importance of loyalty to the Party and the leader, each of which is a basic criterion and mandate of the Juche idea.

In view of the above, as argued, each display at the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum reflects and advertises the Juche idea in some (or several) ways. It is, however, not alone in its cause. In fact, I would argue that every museum, (together with every monument and public space) in North Korea, exists to ‘tow’ the party line in one way or another. In the interest of substantiating this claim and those already made, I turn now to an examination of North Korea’s Sinchon Museum.

As its name indicates, the Sinchon Museum is located in the North Korean town of Sinchon, south of Pyongyang. Importantly, since the end of the Korean War in 1953, Sinchon has been identified and made known as a site of alleged atrocity and massacre (perpetrated by South Korean and US troops) against North Koreans. As cited by the KCNA (26 November 2008), according to the official North Korean account, “the U.S. imperialist aggressors” (no mention of the South is made) “cruelly killed 35,383 innocent people,” or what it claims to be “a quarter” of the county's population “in 52 days.” Underscoring the alleged indiscriminate nature of US the killings, 16,234 of those victims are said to have been women, children and the elderly (Ho, Kang, & Pak, 1993: 202). Thus, the Sinchon Museum, opened in 1958 (KCNA, 27 March 2008), depicts the events that took place over those days, as seen from the North Korean perspective.

It must be understood that the intention is not to offer a judgement as to the authenticity of these claims, but merely to scrutinise the North Korean point of view, as conveyed through museum exhibitions, for how it is illustrative and corroborative of the Juche idea. I argue and seek to demonstrate that the Sinchon museum exists, (irrespective of whether it is representative of truth, falsity, expediency or sensationalism), to forward the Juche-based image of the US as ‘imperialist’ and further bolster general anti-US sentiment in the North. In analysing the Sinchon museum, the intended aim is therefore simply to highlight the essentially political or Jucheist nature of North Korean exhibitions, and cultural artefacts at large.

Housing a range of artistic and pictorial representations, a number of victims’ personal effects and numerous other related relics, salvaged from alleged massacre and burial sites (KCNA, 26 November 2008; Sinchon Museum, 2009), the Sinchon Museum is
claimed to evidence the US troops’ “bestial, vicious and cruel” treatment of North Korean civilians during the Korean War (KCNA, 27 March 2008). Interestingly, as with the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum, images of so-called US brutality are constantly juxtaposed with those showcasing heroic acts of patriotism on the part of North Koreans (Sinchon Museum, 2009: 36-37, 48-49).

That the purpose of the Sinchon Museum is to breed a steadfast anti-Americanism throughout North Korea is clear. The following presents some of the pieces on show in the museum, positing not only that they are Juche-like in theme, but that they are intended to incite a nationalistic fervour in North Korean visitors, uniting them in its anti-American cause.

To set the scene of supposed US indiscriminate killing of young and old in Sinchon, upon their arrival, visitors to the museum are guided to a display entitled ‘Harrison’s Order.’ As Museum Vice Chairman Im Kyon Sun explains in a newspaper interview, ‘Harrison’ refers to D. Madden Harrison, the mysterious US “intelligence unit commander” North Korea claims sanctioned the Sinchon killings (Wilhelm, 1989: para. 19, 21).

The painting, as seen in Image 8, shows a US army officer (Harrison) with four US troops and one South Korean. According to the accompanying text, the painting is meant to depict Harrison issuing his soldiers with the order to kill the inhabitants of Sinchon.

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81 To offer an idea of scale, in 1998 the KCNA (3 July 1998) put the number of exhibits at the Sinchon Museum at “6,465 items” and “some 450 pictures,” all evidencing the alleged atrocity. Among the relics are cases filled with “swatches of black hair,” purported to have belonged to women drowned, “some still braided and caked with mud” (Wilhelm, 1989: para. 7). On show are also a gasoline canister (labelled with the letters USA), with which US troops are said to have started a massacre fire, and a dagger allegedly used by US soldiers to remove the eyeballs of North Korean civilians (Wilhelm, 1989).
Specifically, the North alleges that, on 17 October 1950, Harrison instructed his platoon to “[d]estroy all red bandits . . . hunt and kill all the communist party members and servants and their families,” including all sympathisers. Then, on 3 December 1950, he is meant to have followed this up with an order that all captured persons be disposed of, and “all capped heads and shaved heads, all their bitches and their bastards” be rounded up and killed. While this exhibit does not itself feature as an illustration of the acts Harrison supposedly authorised, it unequivocally presents US intent as malicious, a charge on which the Juche idea is founded.


To move to more vivid portrayals of said US brutality, *Image 9* is an artistic rendering of a suspected incidence of mass killing, purportedly carried out by US troops on Sinchon’s Soktang Bridge against North Korean civilians. A North Korean statement describes the scene as one of repeated carnage, where US troops arrested and killed all who tried to cross the bridge by drowning them, “cutting off [their] heads with swords, striking them down with [their] rifle butts or shooting them” *(Sinchon Museum, 2009: 31)*. In fact, the North asserts that by the time of US withdrawal from the region, “thousands of patriots” had been killed, with the Soktang Bridge featuring as the site of more than 2,000 US perpetrated killings *(Sinchon Museum, 2009: 30-31)*.
The perception of the US as enemy and ‘predatory hegemon’ is further enforced by the confronting nature of Image 10, in which US troops are targeting and murdering unarmed, defenceless women and children. To the right, a young girl can be seen being dragged away from her mother by a US soldier, as several already separated children crowd in the doorway, reaching out for their mothers. Another US soldier is pictured pinning a baby to the floor, face down, with the weight of his boot. The baby has its arms outstretched in the direction of a woman, presumably its mother, who appears to have already been killed by US troops. To the centre and left of the image, a third US Army serviceman is pictured driving a bayonet into a woman’s forehead with one hand, while dangling a baby in the air, at arm’s length, with the other. To her left, is a woman crouching, babe in arms, as those around her are grabbed and slain in front of her. To this day, North Korea maintains that, as a result of US action, “the hills and air of Sinchon reverberated with the babies’ cries for their mothers and the screams of the mothers calling their darlings” (Ho et al., 1993: 202).
The Sinchon Museum does not concentrate solely on instances of mass-murder, however. In line with the North Korean version of events, it also tells of the torturous murder of individuals. *Image 11* and *Image 12* are two of the many paintings on display at the museum, focused around US torture of North Korean civilians. Importantly, they are also apt examples of the earlier cited juxtaposition of US brutality with North Korean defiance and resistance. While attention is given to the depiction of US brutality in the interest of demonstrating the role of North Korean museums as purveyors of anti-Americanism, this juxtaposition is notable in that it reinforces North Korea’s (perceived) collective invincibility. As an exhibited poem composed by “patriotic poet” Kang Sung Hwan before his alleged death at the hands of the US explains:

> We will die vexatiously. But we know our death will not be in vain. . . . We ask you to continue to sing our song. In the day when the enemy will be wiped out in this land . . . we will return to life here. And sing and sing (Sinchon Museum, 2009: 37).

As such, as well as inciting a nationalist fervour to carry on the anti-US State struggle, the resistance exhibited is also evocative of the *jucheist* belief that united in ideology and organisation, the North Korean people are “invincible” (I. S. Kim, 1987: 38); they may give their lives individually for the struggle, but defiantly united against the brutality of the US around the revolutionary principles of *juche*, they will ultimately be triumphant. The resistance and defiance expressed in *Image 11* and *Image 12* should thus be seen as reinforcing *juche* in this way.
Image 11 shows a US soldier cutting off a North Korean woman’s left breast with a knife, as another grips her around the throat to hold her into place; blood pouring from her wound while she looks on defiantly. In a similar demonstration of US depravity, Image 12 depicts a US soldier (identified by his brown combat boots and olive-green army fatigues), crushing the windpipe of, and suffocating, a North Korean boy. Explicitly, the soldier is pictured standing on, thus applying all of his weight to, a plank of wood positioned across the boy’s outstretched arms and throat. Blood can be seen dripping from the boy’s mouth, down the left side of his face and onto the floor as he stares upward, with equal defiance.

Arguably, as well as demonstrating the abovementioned resistance, these paintings and others like them, are exhibited in an effort to support the North Korean propagandist claim that US “methods of murder were so cruel to make even beasts turn away” (Ho et al., 1993: 202). North Korean sanctioned literature reports of how US troops killed the innocent “after dragging them with their noses and ears run through with wire;” or once having resorted to other “horrible brutal” forms of torture, including “scooping out their eyeballs,” “cutting off [their] nipples,” “dismembering their limbs” and even “rolling tanks over them” (Ho et al., 1993: 204). In the context of these allegations, it can be contended that the above artistic renderings are showcased for one primary purpose. Ultimately, as epitomised by the look of exhilaration and sneering enjoyment on the face of the US soldier, featured in Image 11, they serve to further solidify the North Korean assertion that, “[t]o the US cutthroats, human-slaughter was an amusement and kind of hunting” (Ho et al., 1993: 203).

While these images on their own convey a deeply entrenched anti-Americanism, the museum-goer is exposed to more than mere artistic and visual representations of the alleged Sinchon atrocities. In view of the fact that all visitors to the Sinchon museum must be accompanied by a guide, the stories told, together with the narration given, are also likely to (re)induce the perception of the US as ‘imperialist aggressor.’

Bruce Cumings (1992) and Hugh Deane (1999) retell some of the stories they were told during separate visits to the museum. Referencing his 1987 visit with North Korean Kim Myong Ja, (purported to be one of the sole survivors of the Sinchon massacre), Cumings (1992: 221) writes of how Kim recalled being “herded” along with some four-hundred others into a storehouse and tunnel. Now a part of the museum, Kim stood at the location of the alleged atrocity, telling of how she and others had been made to go without food or drink for days, as US troops attempted to force them to reveal the whereabouts of their husbands and sons. As Cumings (1992: 221) recounts:

According to Mrs Kim, when they begged for water for the children a big American threw buckets of shit on them. After a few days they were doused with gasoline and burned to death, save Kim Myong Ja and a couple of other kids, who found themselves at the top of the heap, near a ventilation hole, when it was all over.

She is said to have concluded her story by “vowing her thousand-fold revenge against the Americans.”
Hugh Deane (1999: 102) reveals being told similar stories by his guide during a 1997 visit to the Sinchon Museum. Among the stories relayed, he was told of how women and children complaining of thirst were given gasoline to drink, which, mistaking it for water, they drank; and of how farmers were machine-gunned by American pilots as they worked in fields. For a North Korean people, whose lives are already awash with anti-US rhetoric and sentiment, the commentary given by guides at the Sinchon museum, would undoubtedly have a corroborative effect on the question of US guilt.

Vitally, all of the accusations levelled against the US by way of the Sinchon Museum, be they through exhibitions, stories or imagery, are regular pronouncements of the North Korean propaganda machine (they recur in Ho et al.’s (1993) *The U.S. Imperialists Started the Korean War*, for example). In this vein, with the incidents referenced, presented as “extremely fragmentary examples of the bestial atrocities committed by US imperialism” (Ho et al., 1993: 202), the Sinchon museum exists as a medium through which the North Korean government can perpetuate the view of US troops as ‘imperialist aggressors,’ or as Ho et al (1993: 201) argue, as ‘imperialist aggressors,’ “thoroughly trained in fascist misanthropy.”

Given the above, I argue that the primary purpose of North Korean exhibitions is to embody and promulgate the teachings of the Juche idea. The North Korean ‘museum exhibition’ can indeed, in this way, be seen as a cultural artefact showcasing the ways and extent to which, *Juche* manifests in practice. Moreover, in facilitating the widespread dissemination and acceptance of *Juche*, the museum exhibition serves not simply as an artefact that extols the ideology, but perhaps more pivotally, as one which ensures its very longevity.

**References**


The Role and Limits of Civil Society on North Korea: A Case Study of Multi-dimensional Approaches toward North Korean Defectors

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Abstract
This paper re-examines the role and limits of civil society organizations such as NGOs, religious organizations, and local civil associations that deal with North Korean issues through the presentations of case studies of North Koreans living in Japan, South Korea and Australia. Since the mid 1990s, North Korea has faced serious complex emergencies caused by both natural and man-made disasters, and as a result, the international community has been taking various actions from humanitarian assistance to advocacy on human rights issues. The case of North Korean defectors is one of these matters, in which together with state actors and international agencies, civil society plays a pivotal role. The North Korean defector issue is often treated as a political one, requiring defectors to be labelled as refugees, migrants, or illegal cross-borderers according to the interests of stakeholders. However, I would like to point out that this issue should be understood within broader perspectives and multi-dimensional approaches. We should bear in mind that the North Korean defector issue cannot be solved if it is dealt with only as a political concern. Adding to the above findings, the papers discussed how civil society actors, especially religious organizations and NGOs, should be concerned with the risks faced by defectors when collaborating with brokers, because using brokers may cause other serious related problems, such as the risk of human trafficking for example. Also, civil society should keep in mind that their activities may endanger the security of defectors.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to re-examine the role and limits of representatives of civil society such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), voluntary agencies, social movements and religious organizations on North Korea. Within this article, the North Korean defector issue is presented as a case study through which the role and limits of South Korean civil society concerning North Korea will be examined, with a view that emphasizes the significance of an International Relations perspective. In so doing, I would like to raise the following questions and hypotheses.

Question 1) can civil society organizations play a particular role on North Korea issues?
Hypothesis 1) civil society organizations cannot play enough roles in authoritarian regimes, so that the role of civil society is limited or subject to the nation-states.

Question 2) how do civil society organizations maximize their efficiency or overcome political obstacles in pursuing their goals?
Hypothesis 2) transnational NGO networks formed by various agencies/sectors are key functions to overcome the difficulties of civil society organizations.

1 This paper is originally written in Japanese, and full paper is published in the journal of Kokusai Seiji (International Relations), vol. 169, 2012.
In International Relations (IRs), the impact of NGOs on the nation-state system is a major factor to be examined. These factors are often measured by transnational NGO networks or inter-organizational relations between and amongst NGOs, sovereign states and Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs). State-centric academics argue that civil societies without sovereignties can only play a role under the protection of the nation-state. On the contrary, researchers in civil society studies criticize this view, arguing that contemporary globalization and the collapse of the Cold War system have brought more space to the non-state actors. In applying this transnational assumption, however, a certain level of democracy must be present as a basic condition, thus there remains skepticism that civil society seldom plays a role in authoritarian regimes or complex political emergencies.

To examine these assumptions, this article consists of the following sections; in the first section, I provide an overview detailing the attitude of concerned parties on this issue. In the second section, an overview of the situation of North Korean defectors is presented. In section three and four, cases both in the field and in advocacy are analyzed; in the final part, I will lay out my findings and concerns for further research.

1. Diverse approaches on North Korea issues
1-1. What are North Korea issues?

On 19 December 2011, a special report on North Korea's KCTV announced the death of Kim Jong-II. Soon after his death, his third son, Kim Jong-Un, was announced as his father’s successor. It was made clear in the months that followed that the younger Kim would continue the military first policies of his father. Through the success of North Korea’s third nuclear test and the ensuing crisis that gripped Northeast Asia as North Korea, South Korea and the United States went tit-for-tat in a game of one-upmanship, Kim Jong-Un seems to have consolidated his power.

While Pyongyang sticks to military first politics, the North Korean people continue to face severe food shortages and chronic malnutrition, a crisis that has been ongoing since the mid 1990s. In reaction to these crises, to date hundreds of thousands of people have crossed the Sino-North Korean border and over 24,000 North Koreans have arrived in South Korea seeking a better life. The influx of persons into South Korea decreased in 2012, this I will discuss later; Many North Koreans have been quick to take the opportunity to cross into China seeking basic human needs. If they are caught by North Korean border guards or the Chinese police, however, they are repatriated to North Korea and imprisoned to forced labor camps. The international community is now acutely aware of flagrant human rights violations taking place in North Korea, not only from the testimonies of North Korean refugees but also from transnational advocacy campaigns carried out by NGOs, transnational social movements and human rights agencies.

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3 http://www.kcna.co.jp/index-k.htm (accessed on 21 May 2013)
North Korean defectors or *talbukin* in Korean; what are they? Should they be understood as refugees or migrants? What role can civil society play in North Korea? Does humanitarian aid really help North Korean people or is it just a means for maintaining military first politics? Put differently, Sanctions or engagements, which functions best in North Korea? Many questions and doubts are part and parcel of this dilemma and answers are not found easily.

1-2. Carrots or sticks?

The international community adopts contradictory approaches oscillating between sanctions and engagements as forms of external pressures. In the case of South Korea, Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Mu-Hyun’s ‘Sunshine Policies’ were reviewed after Lee Myung-Bak took presidential power. Five years later, although President Park Geun-Hye has attempted to distance herself from Lee Myung-Bak’s approach, Park’s administration has yet failed to show demonstrable differences from the previous administration’s approach to North-South relations..

In South Korean politics, the progressives argue that hard-line politics resulted in armed clashes on the Yellow sea in 2009 and in the *Yonpyong* island attack in 2010. Conservatives on the other hand, charge that ‘Sunshine Policies” changed nothing and contributed to propping up a flagging North Korean government. The United States also alternates between various kinds of carrots and sticks; and, perhaps somewhat surprisingly given the client-patron relationship that exists between China and North Korea, China has now cut ties with a key North Korean bank. As seen in this political controversy, finding a solution to North Korea issues is akin to being lost at sea on a dark and stormy night. Perhaps, that is the reality of power politics wherever we find them.

In the meantime, NGOs, religious organizations and other civil society actors are likely to continue in their original missions, pursuing values such as human rights, humanitarianism, development and peace-building. The fact is, however, that different corners of civil society are, on occasion, at odds with each other. Each of the values/norms is equally important, but diverging priorities cause tension in seeking one’s own goal. The North Korean defector issue is no exception. When humanitarian NGOs implement their food aid programs toward North Korea on one hand, human rights groups criticize them and call for an embargo on such actions.

According to the more hard-line elements of civil society, North Korean defectors are by-products of human rights violations and authoritarianism, thus, the collapse of the Kim dynasty is a crucial way to end the problem. In this context, they regard defectors as asylum-seekers or refugees, and use these charges to condemn North Korea.

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8 *Asahi Shimbun*, 19 Jan 2012.
9 *The Japan Times*, 8 May 2013
Meanwhile, soft-liners have rather different views. An internal change by North Koreans themselves is the most appropriate way to solve complex issues. Abrupt political transition may endanger the peace and security in Northeast Asia. Social integration based upon multiculturalism and migration policies is a much more realistic and applicable method for this group.\footnote{Chung Byung-ho, et al., Welcome to Korea - Pukchosun Saramdre Namhansari, Hanyang University Press, 2008. (정병호외 『웰컴투코리아-북조선사람들의 남한살이』 한양대학교출판부, 2008 년.)}

As I will demonstrate in the next section, the milieu surrounding North Korean defectors today is changing drastically, so that an urgent and proper response is required. Particularly in South Korea, the North Korean defector issue has become an unavoidable social matter as over 24,000 people have already settled South of the 38th parallel\footnote{http://www.unikorea.go.kr (accessed on 20 May 2013.)}. In Western Europe and North America, it is regarded as a human rights issue to be solved. Currently, North Korean defectors have crossed into South Korea via China, Mongolia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, and other South East Asian countries. Among these, new arrivals some attempt to on-migrate to third countries, regardless of the legal issues associated with such movement. About 2,000 people or more have already migrated to North America, Europe and other regions including Australia and Japan.\footnote{http://tongil.snu.ac.kr Song Young-hoon, “Haewetalbuk Nanmingua Kukjesafeui Deung” SNU, 2011. (송영훈 「해외탈북난민과 국제사회의 대응」서울대학교평화통일연구원, 2011 년 10 월 24 일.)}

In Japan, the North Korean defector issue was brought to light, together with other North Korea issues, when the food shortage started to take a grip on the North. Public interest was stoked by shocking media coverage and reports on the situation of Kotjebi, a term originating from кочевник in Russian, referring to the young homeless seen begging for food on the streets. Equally shocking to the Japanese public were vivid reports of “planned exiles”, involving escape through foreign embassies in China. In the current global-political climate, however, this issue is once again overshadowed by national security concerns such as nuclear tests, missile launchings and Japanese abduction issues.

2. The reality of North Korean defectors
2-1. The change of circumstances
2-1-1. Short history of North Korean defectors

The origin of North Koreans in South Korea can be traced to the first exiles before and during the Korean War in the 1950s. These individuals are often referred to as Шиллямин in Korean, meaning ‘Ones who lost their hometowns’. Until the 1980s, North Koreans who arrived in South Korea were often regarded as heroes and received full support from the South Korean government. For the South Korean government they were useful symbols, used for anti-communism policies. Since the post-Cold War era, elites such as overseas students, businesspersons, diplomats in the former USSR and Eastern European countries were known to defect to South Korea. This constitutes the, albeit brief, pre-history of North Korean exiles before the 1990s.
North Korean defectors whom we see today are a product of the food shortage that occurred in the mid-1990s. During this period, people who lived near the border areas crossed into China, leaving behind their families to seek food and money. Among these initial border transgressors, some continued on to South Korea with the help of South Korean missionaries and NGOs. As the influx gradually grew, the South Korean government proclaimed a related act of government known as the North Korean Defector Settlement Protection Act (talbukja jongchak bohopub), designed to prepare for the massive influx of North Koreans into the South.

It is difficult to survey the exact number and situation of the growing number of North Korean exiles. The South Korean media has reported that there were about 100,000 North Koreans in China, while the US Department of State, in a 2005 report estimated the number to be between 30,000 to 50,000. A South Korean NGO, ‘Good Friends’, estimated a similar number using original survey data conducted in June and July of 2005.

2-1-2. the motives of the border crossing

The motives of North Koreans for leaving their country vary with each situation, but can be broadly categorized into two major reasons. One is for a survival, seeking food and money, and the other is for migration seeking a better life. According to a survey interview conducted by Refugee International, only two interviewees out of sixty five responded that the border crossing was made for political reasons. Moreover, most interviewees preferred to remain in China if they could have obtained a legal permit to stay. It is fair to say that North Koreans would like to maintain their ties with people remaining in North Korea while living in a similar culture and social milieu.

2-1-3. Escaping routes

How do North Korean defectors locate the escape routes and who helps facilitate their dangerous escapes? Below are the three major routes used by North Korean defectors to move from North Korea to the South.

The main route is via China. Many or most North Koreans who escape are protected by ethnic Koreans in Northeast China, near the border areas. In these areas, they are able to keep a low profile from the Chinese police due to language and cultural similarities with many residents of this area. However, in the last ten years, the situation

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surrounding North Korean defectors in China is changing. The Chinese police have enforced a crackdown on undocumented migrants, moreover, the image of North Koreans among Chinese-Koreans in Northeast China has worsened. This has meant that there are no longer any safe areas to be found for North Koreans to stay on their way out of the country. The Chinese government regards North Koreans as illegal border-transgressors, and the movement of these individuals into and through China as a “planned exile.” On average, it takes about two years or more to leave China, even after refuge is gained in foreign embassies, the planned exile approach is rarely attempted anymore. Yomiuri Shimbun, one of the leading Japanese newspapers, reported that the Japanese government agreed with the Chinese government not to offer asylum to North Koreans in its facilities in China, while another of Japan’s top newspapers, the Asahi Shimbun, reported that more than one hundred former zainichi Koreans who crossed into North Korea have since returned to Japan.

Due to the aforementioned reasons, North Korean defectors are seeking protection outside Chinese territory. Mongolia has admitted North Korean defectors in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar, this has played an important role in providing refugees with an area of asylum until they resettle in a third country. The principle of non-refoulement triggered a rise in the number of North Koreans fleeing to Mongolia. Today, however, more North Korean defectors are arriving in Seoul via South East Asian countries.

South East Asian routes were explored in about 2003 as a safer alternative route to asylum than China or Mongolia. Spearheading efforts to develop an improved route for North Koreans were NGOs and religious missionaries. The route through China, into Southeast Asia takes longer to traverse Chinese territory, but the climate is more convivial than that of the Mongolian route, particularly in winter. The Thai route is the most preferred since cooperation between the Thai and Korean governments reached an agreement for cooperation on this issue. Although Thailand is not a member of the 1951 UNHCR Refugee Convention, it has vast experiences with refugee issues. Currently the Thai government fines North Koreans who are discovered in their territory; however the fine is only about two thousand to three thousand THB and tends to be levied prior to deportation to South Korea, the United States or Western Europe. On 20th November 2010, South Korean media quoted Radio Free Asia, stating that the number of North Koreans arriving in Thailand was, at that time, over three thousand people.

2-2. The peculiarities of the border crossing

Recent data show some of the changes and point to a new trend with regards to North Korean defectors.

22 Yomiuri Shimbun, 8 February 2011.
23 Asahi Shimbun, 8 July 2010.
27 http://www.nkchosun.com (accessed on 10 February 2012)
Since the beginning of the 21st century, even after the serious food shortage loosened its grip on North Korea, many North Koreans have been crossing into South Korea, amounting to approximately two thousand people every year, although the number sharply decreased in the year 2012.

Secondly, routes taken are subject to change according to the changing political climate. The China route is unavoidable, but it is not the final destination due to the aforementioned repatriation policies of the Chinese government. NGOs and religious organizations are developing new routes for safety and, as mentioned above, Southeast Asian routes are becoming the exit of choice. A “planned exile”, through an embassy, was no longer preferred as it inevitably created diplomatic tensions with the Chinese government. In July 2011, a South Korean lawmaker, Shin Nak-gyeun publicized that there had been 378 North Korean defectors protected in overseas governmental establishments28.

Thirdly, one can find that economic reasons precede political reasons. Moreover, as many North Koreans experience difficulties in their everyday life in South Korea, some try to re-migrate to third countries in an effort to find a stable life. So called developed countries such as EU countries, North America, Japan, Australia and so on are their new preferred destinations29.

Lastly, the pattern of escape is changing from an individual type to a family type. Through a process of chain migration family members will pool resources to bring others out of North Korea using brokers. This expenditure is managed by a settlement subsidy from the South Korean government. As this black market/industry grows, however, we are beginning to see the darker side of relying on brokers for the movement of undocumented North Koreans.

3. Advocacy of civil society actors
3-1. NGO-led international networks

NGOs often launch information networks, seminars, and international conferences to collaborate with other civil society actors, governmental agencies, and international agencies. These information networks do not require a formal membership, meaning anyone can freely participate. Within these organizations only a certain level of information control is necessary for security reasons30.

With regards to North Korea issues, there have been two major international NGOs formed. One is the international NGO networks on humanitarian aid to North Korea, and the other is the international NGO networks on human rights and refugee issues. The former is implemental and field oriented while the latter focuses more on policy issues and advocacy in terms of democracy and human rights.

Humanitarian and development NGOs face difficulties of fund raising as mid-term and long-term rehabilitation and development programs require a long time and a huge

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28 [http://news.moneta.co.kr](http://news.moneta.co.kr) (accessed on 19 September 2011)
29 Song Young-hoon, *Loc. Cit.*
amount of capital. It is also necessary that they can coordinate among themselves when implementing projects in the field. So the major agenda for NGO networks is more or less focused on technical issues.

As the Lee Myung-Bak administration pursued its hard-line approach toward North Korea, NGOs active during the Roh Mu-hyung and Kim Dae-jung administrations began to stagnate. The situation of NGOs in Europe, North America and Japan is very similar, so that the overall international NGO networks have lost much of the dynamism with which they started. Since 2009, a Korean NGO known as ‘Korean Sharing Movement’ has organized an annual international conference. The 2012 International NGO conference was held in Bangkok and aimed to invite North Korean representatives and foreign expatriates residing in Pyongyang. Unfortunately, the North Korean government again did not participate in the conference.

In the meantime, international conferences on human rights and refugee networks are held worldwide almost every year; Tokyo, Prague, Warsaw, Bergen, London, Melbourne, Toronto and Geneva have hosted some of the most notable of such international events, with the first one held in Seoul in 1996. Today, these conferences have contributed towards developing into multi-sector networks, offering pertinent information even to IGOs and governmental agencies.

3-2. Campaign and lobbying

Human rights and refugee focused NGOs have been undertaking advocacy and campaigning so as to raise public awareness and improve the impact of policy in these areas. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are two leading NGOs in this field and have initiated several campaigns and advocacy actions in coordination with other NGOs and social movements.

As a result, in 2004, the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 was signed in the United States. Following this, in 2006, the Kitachousen jinkennsinngai taishohou, act on the human rights violations in North Korea, was created in Japan. These laws became an impetus to issue visas to North Koreans and facilitate a smoother entry of individuals to these countries. Moreover, in 2011, an international NGO network, the International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK), led by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and about 40 NGOs worldwide, was launched with the purpose of actively working on this issue.

4. Field type projects by civil society actors.

4-1. The protection of North Korean defectors

It takes between two to three years for North Koreans to make the journey to South Korea or other third countries after escaping from North Korea via China and neighboring countries. As the Chinese police and North Korean border guards have taken to enforcing their policies of locating and forcibly repatriating what they label as ‘economic migrants’, the risks of such border-crossing have grown concomitantly.

31 http://www.nkchannel.org/conference/home/index.html (accessed on 16 February 2012)
32 http://kor.nkhumanrights.or.kr (二〇一二年二月一六日アクセス。)
The South Korean government has an obligation to look after these people as South Korean law regards them as its nationals. At the same time, however, this is an issue which is tied to diplomatic relations with all concerned parties in the region. Civil society can play a pivotal role in helping people when governments cannot be overtly involved due to political reasons. About ten NGOs and religious groups are involved in the dangerous and covert action of helping North Koreans move through China. The Christian Council of Korea and Good Friends (formerly the Korean Buddhist Sharing Movement) are widely known religious associations involved in this issue, while several church groups and/or missionaries mostly Protestants, are actively involved in actions entailing high risks. For the Protestant churches, helping North Koreans get out of the authoritarian regime while proselytizing with vigor are key missions. At the root of this are memories of the importance that Pyongyang played in expanding Christianity across the Korean peninsula in the last century. Church groups and NGOs protect defectors in safe houses in China, but to avoid detection by the Chinese police, they are unable to enjoy many basic human rights. For example, young defectors are unable to attend school and are often without any form of education for many years while in hiding.

Nothing can be done without a brokers’ help. Unlike NGOs and religious groups, their primary purpose is to make a profit. There is a market value, about eight million to twelve million KRW for trafficking North Koreans to China or third countries. Brokers are unable to guarantee the security of defectors and it is not unknown for some to purposely deceive defectors in order to maximize profit. In this vein, NGOs, religious groups and governments relying on brokers for rescuing North Koreans is a serious moral and actual hazard.

4-2. Support for a resettlement

The South Korean government, based upon the act of 2007, is obliged to offer every defector seeks safety and protection if they ask for it. To each defector, the Hanawon resettlement centre, is the gateway to becoming a South Korean national and learning to live in their new home. Although South Koreans and North Koreans share a common historical background, the divided nations may now have more differences than similarities and support by the South Korean government is limited to a primary level. Thus, civil society organizations’ secondary and continuous support to them is crucial for the resettlement of North Koreans who are not yet accustomed to the capitalist South. South Korean civil society has formed a network association to cooperate with one another on this issue. These civil society organizations are actively working under the supervision of the ministry of unification, South Korea.

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34 Jin Mi-jung et. al, Social networks and social capital of North Korean defectors, Hakji-sa, 2009, p. 113. (진미정외『탈북인의사회관계망과사회적자본』학지사, 2009 년.)
Since the number of North Koreans in South Korea increases every year, the service of civil society has expanded to include long-term support such as peace education and cultural/social re-integration programs between North and South Koreans. Most North Korean defectors in South Korea experience difficulties in their everyday life due to the wide cultural/social differences between the two Koreas. Some civil society organizations have, therefore, been implementing projects from the viewpoint of multiculturalism.

North Korean defectors themselves form voluntary associations to advocate their own rights and to provide mutual support to each other. There are currently about thirty organizations formed as self-help groups, but as some defectors are wary of risking exposure in the South, no organization successfully expresses a collective voice of the silent majority. Some organizations set radical and unrealistic goals of action, such as seeking to create a North Korean government in exile. These groups often collide with the South Korean government and people.

In the meantime, the status of overseas North Koreans is yet unknown. As most North Korean defectors are impeded by a language barrier, they have almost no other choice but to rely on the support of overseas ethnic Korean communities forming part of the South Korean Diaspora.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to critically re-examine the role and limits of civil society from the viewpoints of IRs. To do so, the following questions and hypotheses were raised.

**Question 1) can civil society organizations play a particular role on North Korea issues?**

**Hypothesis 1) civil society organizations cannot play enough roles in authoritarian regimes, so that the role of civil society is limited or subject to the nation-states.**

**Question 2) how do civil society organizations maximize their efficiency or overcome political obstacles in pursuing their goals?**

**Hypothesis 2) transnational NGO networks formed by various agencies/sectors are key functions to overcome the difficulties of civil society organizations.**

In fact, civil society organizations play a pivotal role in helping North Korean defectors in China, South Korea, and other countries so that the classical criticism of civil society from a state-centric perspective cannot apply anymore – even to the case of North Korea. In other words, without any involvement of the civil society sector, no other actors can help North Korean defectors, and the behavior of civil society is more or less independent from governmental policies, as a result, there occurs tensions between governments and civil society organizations. Governments sometimes attempt to apply pressure to restrict the political space of civil society by using legal regulations and

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political pressures in domestic politics. When civil society faces this obstacle, it uses transnational networks to expand political spaces and powers.

Therefore, in terms of power politics relations, civil society actors try to utilize their efficiency using transnational networks to overcome their obstacles, and the structure and mechanism of these networks are key elements in understanding civil society.

However, several limits are also found through this case analysis. Not only governments but also civil society organizations face moral hazards when collaborating with unofficial/illegal brokers to help out North Koreans. Audacious actions such as “planned exile” into foreign embassies, for example, is undoubtedly symbolic and designed to raise public awareness, but one should bear in mind that it may endanger people remaining in China and North Korea. Transnational networks formed by several NGOs affect policy impact in donor countries, but yet it is not functioning to change the attitude of China and North Korea on human rights and human security.

It appears clear that the status of overseas North Koreans should be subject to further study in an effort to sketch out the beginnings of a blueprint with which to tackle this issue.
The Space of Modernity: Based on the Novels of Yi Gwangsu

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Abstract
Yi Gwangsu (1892-1950) is a controversial figure in Korean history, considered both a patriot and a traitor for his activities during the Japanese rule. His prominent place in Korean literature, though, is firmly secured by his introduction of modern literary forms and innovative style of writing.

In his works set against the background of the Korean society of the 1920s and the 1930s, he deals predominantly with the problems of the modernization of Korea, namely its effect on individuals and its clash with the traditional values. An open advocate of change and development through the westernization of the society, he shows no remorse using his prose to promote his ideas and to educate his readers. At the same time, his works exhibit heartfelt compassion for his fellow countrymen who feel confused by the new foreign ways and are unable to adjust to them.

The current study analyzes the function of space in the novels of Yi Gwangsu. Space is shown to have a dominant role in presenting the realms of the traditional and the modern. Spatial settings are built to correspond to the behaviour of the characters and in certain cases are even used as a priming/defying factor for the dynamics of the relationships and for the naturalization of ideas that might be otherwise controversial. In spaces, belonging to the realm of the modern – such as a car, a train, a church, a concert hall, the bustling centre of Seoul, etc. – the characters appear to be to a certain extent freed from the norms of the traditional society. Social spaces, signifying the modern, are utilized to construct the portrait of the newly cultivated, modernized individual and to familiarize the reader with a new set of social relations. The spaces analyzed in detail here are those of the car and the train.

In the novels of Yi Gwangsu certain spaces are used to introduce the reader to the modern novelties in the society, to present crucial changes in the worldview of the characters and to motivate actions that would be unacceptable in the context of the traditional values of the Korean society. In this study, I look closely at the spaces of the car and the train as they appear in the novels The Heartless (1917) and Rebirth (1924). I argue that these particular spaces are significant in presenting the emergence of new social ordering and in familiarizing the reader with it.

Modernity, Space and Identity

Yi Gwangsu is one of the Korean intellectuals from the beginning of the twentieth century who met with enthusiasm the incoming wave of modernization. He made profound efforts to speed up the process by educating Koreans about the new social realities. In his first novel The Heartless, considered by many the first modern novel of Korea, the lengthy digressions into the meaning of Christianity, the concept of romantic love, the rights of women, etc. make obvious his endeavors in that direction. His early editorials (1906-1916) are predominantly concerned with the problems of educating the young people of Joseon. Some of his articles are devoted to the modern type of family and to the issue of developing the Korean villages. It is important to note that central to
his attention is the individual. Yi Gwangsu’s preoccupation with the individual crystallizes later when he publishes his *Minjokkejoron* (Yi Gwangsu, 1922). There he asserts that the way to improve the society is to stop following false virtues and to educate sincere individuals who put the interest of the country above everything else. Space in the novels of Yi Gwangsu is utilized to develop the idea of the evolved modern individual.

Modernity is usually seen as a historical period, mostly defined against the backdrop of previous eras through the differences it shows with them. In Western thought, modernization has been associated with time rather than with space. In many other parts of the world, though, it has also been perceived as a space phenomenon. The modern technological, economic, political and cultural advances were adopted from outside, creating various types of interaction with the local social order. The process of interaction between/among different social spaces has not been well researched. The focus has rather been on the mutual influence of separate elements of the spaces that come into contact with each other.

In the case of Korea, modernization came partly directly from the West and partly through Japan. Koreans met the changes with mixed feelings, as the rapid transformations threatened the long-established order. The social relations that had existed for centuries and the traditional values that had held the society together were undermined by the new ideas and new ways of social organization coming from the West. Two different social and value systems came to compete for the same social space.

In some areas of social life and in certain geographical places, the new ways were adopted faster. Two parallel worlds came to exist. While most of the Koreans were hesitant to abandon the traditions, some of the people had a lifestyle similar to that in the European cities of the time. While many continued living in traditional Korean houses and wore *hanbok*, others lived in new Western-style houses and wore Western clothes. While some had never seen a train, others were regularly riding on it during their travels in the country and abroad.

When the two novels that are in the focus of this study were written, objects, vehicles, spaces pertaining to the Western “ways” were still considered rather exotic. The majority of the population still perceived the modern spaces of the bank, the concert hall, the church as unfamiliar and intimidating.

In relation to traditional spaces, these newly emerged spaces can be viewed as what Foucault calls “heterotopias” (Foucault 1986). Introduced in his lecture *Of Other Spaces*, the concept of heterotopia has been widely used to describe and analyze spaces in different fields of research. Among the various places existing, Foucault is interested in “certain ones that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the sets of relations that they

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1 *Minjokkejoron* – Reforming the Nation.
2 Here and hereafter the terms ‘West’ and ‘Western’ refer to the countries of Western and Central Europe, Australia and North America, which have experienced the modernization of their societies as a process from within. Although, strictly speaking this is only true of Western Europe, the common roots, cultural closeness and the intense exchange with the European countries contributed to the immediate and natural adoption of the new model of social ordering by Australia and North America.
happen to designate, mirror or reflect” (Foucault 1986, 24). He distinguishes between two types of such places: unreal (utopias) and real (heterotopias). Utopias “are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down...” (Foucault 1986, 24) Heterotopias are real places, “counter-sites” outside of other places, but they are in a close relationship of mirroring, reflecting and inverting with those places. Heterotopias not only passively reflect and mirror the rest of the places. The act of mirroring itself produces effect that influences the dynamics of the relationships inside those places. As examples of heterotopias, Foucault takes graveyards, libraries, the place of the honeymoon trip, prisons, etc.

Yi Gwangsu sets his novels mainly in the city, namely in Gyeongseong, today’s Seoul. In his early novels, most of the characters are modern people. They move around the busy streets, travel by tram, train or car, attend concerts, go to church, paint in a studio, do experiments in a laboratory. At times, the author breaks the story to describe at length these modern spaces, often contrasting them with their traditional counterparts and making comments on the changes that have occurred in the social relations.

To illustrate the function of the spaces belonging to the realm of the modern, I will take as an example the beginning of the novel *The Heartless*.

Hyeongsik is on his way to the house of Presbyter Kim who has asked him to teach English to his daughter. He is full of anticipation, but he is also rather nervous as he has not had much experience in interacting with young women.

"How should I greet her? As a man greeting another man? [...] I will be teaching her for a while. She will be my student. Shouldn’t there be some distinction? Shouldn’t she be the first one to extend a greeting? And only then I can answer."

Hyeongsik has been thinking about that since yesterday, when Presbyter Kim asked him to teach his daughter, but he has been unable to imagine the situation.

"Are we going to sit at a table facing each other? Then our breaths will be colliding with each other. At times, will her hair be brushing against my forehead? Maybe our knees will be touching under the table.”

(Yi 1972, Vol. 1, 15)

Presbyter Kim has been to America. He is one of the richest men in the capital and lives in a big house. Hyeongsik is has never been to a place like that before.

He heard the voice of the maid, urging him to come in, and his heart started beating faster. He passed through the inner gate and entered the living room.

In the past, it was unthinkable for a non-member of the family to ever go beyond the inner gate of a house, but the old habits had changed.

The windows in the living room were covered with glass panels. In the middle there was a table covered with a colorful piece of cloth and four or five chairs. In front of the north wall there was a bookcase, about the height of a man, with old and new books piled on the shelves.

(Yi 1972, Vol. 1, 17)

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3 All the translations from the original Korean texts are mine.
As someone who studied abroad and in his capacity of a pastor at of church, Presbyter Kim is a person who has emerged from the realm of the traditional and has been able to transfer to the realm of the modern. Entering the space of his house is a special event for Hyeongsik and even minor details make an impression on him. His perceptions are of a person who is encountering certain objects for the first time and can only see them in the context of his own existing map of reality. The windows are “glass panels”. In traditional houses they are made of paper. There is a tablecloth on the table. Koreans used to leave tables uncovered. The chairs and the tall bookcase are attributes of a Western interior.

The interior of the room is modern, but the way Hyeongsik perceives it, invokes also the image of a traditional room. Presented through Hyeongsik’s eyes, the living room of Presbyter Kim’s house does not exist on its own, but only in an opposition to a room in a Korean house. All the objects and their relations have their counterparts in another space. As that “other” space is part of the traditional social ordering, the opposing relation between the two spaces provides also a time dimension to the room.

Relying on the character’s perceptions to present and interpret the space pertains to the subjectivist approach of analysis. It is important to note that the room is not entirely dependent on the character to acquire its space and time coordinates, that is, its time and space properties do not exist only in Hyeongsik’s mind but are objective reality. Even an objectivist approach would lead to the same results. This is made possible by the presence of the old books. Among the things in the room, the old books have a special meaning as they are the only objects that refer to a past rooted in tradition. They secure the time dimension of the space. They show that the inhabitants of the house have acquired the traditional learning first, and have later moved on to attain Western education. The old and the new books point to a process of transition – from the traditional to the modern, from the past to the future. Without them, the room would have been frozen in the present. It could have belonged to a foreigner. As an objective entity, it would have been foreign to the Korean social environment.

The living room of Presbyter Kim is not an ordinary place. In contrast with the traditional living spaces, it acts as the “other” space. It puts the existing spaces in a new context. The social relations that it symbolizes highlight the old-established social relations and give them a new meaning. As a heterotopia, it mirrors its corresponding places, endows the relations that exist within them with different significance and ultimately contributes to the changing of the social ordering of those places.

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4 Bourdieu explains the two opposing approaches of social science – objectivist and subjectivist. “Speaking in the most general terms, social science, be it anthropology, sociology or history, oscillates between two seemingly incompatible points of view, two apparently irreconcilable perspectives: objectivism and subjectivism or, if you prefer, between physicalism and psychologism (which can take on various colorings, phenomenological, semiological, etc). On the one hand, it can “treat social facts as things”, according to the old Durkheimian precept, and thus leave out everything that they owe to the fact that they are objects of knowledge, of cognitions – or misrecognition – within social existence. On the other hand, it can reduce the social world to the representations that agents have of it, the task of social science consisting then an “account of the accounts” produced by social subjects” (Bourdieu 1989, 14-15).
While Foucault’s concept of heterotopia is instrumental in the analysis of the interaction between different spaces, it only indirectly explains the relations between spaces and individuals.

To shed more light on that problem, I will employ Arnold Van Gennep’s anthropological inquiry into the meaning of the rites of passage (ceremonies on the occasions of coming of age, marriage, death, baptism) (Van Gennep 1977) and Victor Turner’s analysis of the process of those rites (Turner 1969). The rites of passage signify moving from one realm to another and emerging with a different identity. The realms are usually not physical ones but generally the rites of passage include moving through physical space to illustrate the transition that occurs in another dimension. Van Gennep determines that the purpose of these rites is socialization. To acquire new social identity the individual has to go through a certain process. Turner distinguishes three phases of the process of the ritual: separation, transition and reaggregation/reincorporation (Turner 1969, 80-81). During the first stage the individual leaves his social status. In many cases, as for instance the coming of age ritual in many native tribes in North America, the separation is physical and the person goes to a secluded place. In other cases, the severing of the connection with the previous self is symbolic, as the shaving of the hair of Buddhist monks during the initiation ceremony. The second phase is the one where transformation occurs. This stage is between the other two and is characterized with uncertainty and instability of the person’s identity. It often involves testing of the powers of the individual and obstacles to be overcome. It is commonly called liminal stage (limen (Lat.) - threshold) as one can only cross into the other side if he/she succeeds in “stepping over” the symbolic threshold of the ordeal. The liminal stage is the most dynamic of the three. Compared to the other two stages, where the identity is established and belongs to a social system of order, the liminal phase is chaotic, out of control and insecure. Spatially, in relation to the other two stages it is marginal. In the final phase of the ritual, the person is reintegrated into the society with a new identity.

For Hyeongsik, entering the space of the room is equivalent to crossing into a different realm. The inner gate of the house serves as a crossing point. Before stepping inside, he is Hyeongsik, the English teacher, who is intimidated by women and is insecure in modern environment. When he comes out, his identity has changed. He is Hyeongsik, the tutor of the daughter of one of the richest people in town, who has frequent access to the modern space of Presbyter Kim’s house and in that space is treated with respect. He is now one of the people who act in modern spaces, who belong to the realm of the modern.

In this case, the space of the house, during Hyeongsik’s first visit is a liminal space. From Hyeongsik’s perspective it has insecure ordering. The very fact that he is allowed to go beyond the inner gate, tells him that the laws of his familiar spaces do not apply here. He has doubts even about the appropriate way to extend a greeting.

The spatial metaphor of moving not only physically, but also spiritually between different realms is enhanced by the fact that on his way to Presbyter Kim’s house, Hyeongsik meets his friend Shin Useon, a journalist working for a local newspaper. Shin Useon moves freely in the modern circles of the society. He knows important people and is not intimidated by them. Hearing the news that Hyeongsik is on his way to visit the pretty daughter of Presbyter Kim, he jumps directly to the question when their
engagement will be. The role of the journalist, in this case, could be interpreted as that of a messenger from the other realm.

The Spaces of the Car and the Train in *The Heartless* and *Rebirth*

In the novels *The Heartless* and *Rebirth*, the spaces of the car and the train play an important role in advancing the plot and motivating crucial transformations in the value systems of the characters.

The car and the train are spaces that belong to the realm of modernity, but their mobility makes them different from the other modern spaces. There are no objects in the traditional society that correspond to them. They possess the ability to move through space with speed unseen in the past. Their dynamism makes them spaces of intense social processes. On the other hand, their lack of grounding in the tradition and their ability to conquer space endow them, to some extent, with metaphysical properties that are morally charged.

In *Rebirth*, Kim Sunyeong, a smart and talented young girl blinded by luxury and wealth, becomes the mistress of a rich man.

Prior to getting into the car that takes her meet the wealthy gentleman, she is a confident young woman, who broke many suitors’ hearts. However, the interior of the car shakes her value system and by the time she reaches the rich man’s house, all she wants is to be part of the world of the “chosen few”.

The driver confidently jumped out from his seat, looked discreetly at Sunyeong, took off his hat and gestured to her to get in. For a moment, Sunyeong hesitated, but then, as if thinking: “What are you doing”, she quickly assumed the air of a distinguished lady and lifting with one hand her dress, she got in and sat down. From the pressure of her weight, the springs in the seat moved up and down, making her body sway. Sunyeong liked the feeling. She examined the interior of the car, covered with expensive silk. She brushed her fingers against the window made of glass, as thick as a man’s palm and as clear as crystal and the light grey curtain that was half covering it. She slid her white hand into the handle, hanging from the ceiling and looked at the white chrysanthemum tucked behind the wheel. And then, her face started turning red with excitement, and an unknown until this moment desire set her heart in colorful flames.

For a few short moments, she sat in the car waiting for her brother – it really was just like a moment. An extremely short moment, it could have been three short minutes that were enough for her to forget all the moral lessons she had learned from Mrs.P at school during the last ten years. So big was the impression the car made on her.

Of course, this was not the first time Sunyeong had ridden in a car.

[...] But this [particular] car was a symbol of wealth. Among the infinite number of people, only a chosen few have ridden in it, and to her it seemed to be as high and as precious as the throne of a king or a queen. The moment she sat in it, she owned it, it fitted her and for the first time in her life she felt important.

(Yi 1974, 33)

A few years later, Sunyeong gets in a car with Shin Bonggu, a young man who has been in love with her since both of them were young and idealistic. Shin Bonggu has just
come out of prison, where he had been sent for his involvement in the Independence Movement. Bonggu believes that Sunyeong has been faithfully waiting for him and he is excited to go on a trip to a spa resort with her. By Sunyeong’s request, Bonggu runs around in the streets of the city, trying to find a car to take them to the train station. When they finally get in the car, instead of the long-awaited happiness of being together, there is uneasiness and tension between them.

When they got off the car and entered the station, they had the feeling that they had been riding in the car for more than two hours. For a long time, they had not had the opportunity to be together, just the two of them, but even they found themselves unprepared for the complicated emotions that flooded them during the short fifteen minutes of the ride.

(Yi 1974, 19)

In the two novels, cars only appear within the space of the city. As there are many alternative means of transportation – tram, rickshaw, even walking, the car becomes a symbol of wealth, as Yi Gwangsu, himself points out in the quote above.

The car is a small isolated space that moves independently around the city. The people riding in the car feel superior to the ones in the streets. They are empowered by the car’s speed, size and disconnectedness from the society. In Yi Gwangsu’s novels cars are elitist objects.

They are endowed with negative connotations. In both examples above, cars seem to be spaces of moral transgression, temptation, greed and dishonesty. If, in Van Gennep’s terms, they are analyzed as places of passage, it becomes clear that the new identities the characters acquire are judged in the context of the plot as negative ones.

At first, Sunyeong is hesitant and insecure about getting in the car, but then she decides to take on a false identity. Tempted by the power she feels inside the car, she chooses to break her values and to turn her back on everything she knows to be right, in order to be able to remain in that position of power.

Bonggu listens to Sunyeong and follows her wish to get a car to go to the train station, even though he knows that considering the difficulty of finding a car at that time, getting on the tram could be faster. His desire to be with Sunyeong and to make her “his own” leads him to neglect the fact that he had already heard from his mother that Sunyeong is a mistress to a rich man. He does not want to believe that. By getting in the car with her, he also chooses to forego his values.

Both Sunyeong’s life as a rich powerful woman and her relationship with Bonggu do not last long and come to a tragic end. The identities attained in the space of the car do not lead to development.

The car moves around the city in a chaotic manner. There is no single direction, no exact route to where it is going. Time inside it also seems to be in disarray. In the first example, it flows too fast, in the second – too slow. There are no time indications of historicity. Consequently, the processes occurring inside the space of the car have no future.
In *The Heartless*, Yeongche, after being physically assaulted decides to put an end to her life. She heads to Pyeongyang, where she intends to throw herself in the waters of the Tedong river. Crying, Yeongche sticks her head out of the window to feel for the last time the wind, and some charcoal dust from the train gets in to her eyes. A young woman named Byeonguk insists on helping her. Byeonguk is a modern woman who studies music in Tokyo. After getting a clean towel and soap, she accompanies Yeongche to the sink and while “supporting her firmly”, carefully washes the dust out of her eyes. Driven by curiosity, Byeonguk starts asking Yeongche questions and learns the tragic story of her life.

Byeonguk convinces Yeongche that she does need to die and gives her hope for new life.

As a result of the conversation between the two, Yeongche realizes that she does not love Hyeongsik, who she has been looking for during the last seven years and for whom she had been saving her chastity. She had single-mindedly followed a remark made by her father in her childhood that Hyeongsik was to be her husband. Byeonguk remarks that for hundreds of years Confucius’s idea of children having to obey their parents and wives follow their husbands has made countless people miserable. She convinces Yeongche that “women are people, too” and should be able to make their own choices. Yeongche sees an opportunity for new life in front of her.

A few months later, Yeongche and Byeonguk head together to Tokyo. Yeongche has also decided to study music there. On the train, they meet Hyeongsik and Seonhyeong who are going to America to study. Given the conflicting situations among the characters in the past, the encounter is rather delicate. On the way, the train stops because of a sudden flood in the area, they are passing through. The four characters are deeply moved by the suffering of the locals and forgetting all their differences decide to organize a charity concert at the train station to help the people deal with the losses.

The narrator praises them and declares that these young people are the hope and the future of the nation.

The encounters on the train and the processes occurring there seem quite unreal, naïve and utopist.

The function of the train as a space is opposite to that of the car. The train constitutes a space in which many people are moving together in one direction. While the car is a space inhabited by individualists and elitists, the train is a place for people who are united by a common direction. The trajectory of the train is linear. Its movement forward is both in space and time. Consequently, the processes that occur in the space of the train have a future. The positive connotation of the train is in line with Yi Gwangsu’s idea of modern individuals who devote themselves to the nation.

As a place of passage, the train is a space of rebirth. The characters that emerge from the liminal space of the train are reborn for a better new life.

In the case of Yeongche, the ritual of the careful washing of her eyes signifies clearing her from the physical stain of the assault and washing away all the
misconceptions she had about the world and herself. For the four young people, the flood, too, serves a similar purpose.

The spaces of the car and the train are unique as it is hard to find spaces to which they are related as heterotopias. They do not seem to reflect the relations of other physical spaces, but as mentioned above, they do exhibit metaphysical properties. The ordering of the space of the train can be interpreted as reflecting a non-physical space – the space of utopia. In religious terms, it could be seen as symbolizing heaven, while the space of the car with its referenced to temptation and deceit is more reminiscent of hell.

Conclusion

The current analysis of space as it is presented in Yi Gwangsu’s novels The Heartless and Rebirth has shown that in connection to Modernity, space has multiple meanings, with different spaces fulfilling specific functions.

The spaces of Modernity act as heterotopias in relation to corresponding spaces in the traditional society and are thus able to give new meaning to the social processes existing within the traditional realm.

A close connection exists between the described spaces and the development of the characters. The spaces of the car and the train are found to possess qualities that differ from the rest of the modern spaces. On the one hand, their dynamism makes them the setting of crucial turns in the plot and of radical change in the characters. On the other hand, they are found to have metaphysical properties with the car referencing hell and the train – heaven.

The symbolism of space in the two novels is in accordance with Yi Gwangsu’s idea of reforming the society through educating individuals who are willing to put the nation above everything else.

References

Prospects for Resolving the Conflict with North Korea in 2013 and Beyond:
Looking at the Past in order to help Change the Future

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Abstract
Although there is an abundance of literature on North Korea and the Korean War, little attention has been given as to why the conflict with North Korea remains elusive in terms of resolving, violent and protracted. This paper aims to help fill this analytical void by examining the conflict through the lens of Edward Azar’s four clusters of variables as preconditions for protracted social conflict (PSCs): communal content of society, human needs, state’s role and international linkages.

The analysis will examine and integrate Korea’s unique historical and political landscape in light of Azar’s four clusters of variables. As these clusters are explored, they will be further expounded on by introducing other key conflict analysis and resolution (CAR) theories such as basic human needs, structural violence and positioning, which build on Azar’s framework and the greater understanding of this PSC. The analysis will culminate with a new understanding of the roots of this PSC and then turn to what has been done at the international level to help resolve it. After this is done, a series of new foreign policy (FP) and CAR driven recommendations will be introduced. The goal of this paper is to discover and put forth new ways of peacefully dealing with this deadly Cold War legacy conflict in 2013 and beyond.

Many of the conflicts today are intractable and rooted in legacy Colonial divisions, Cold War ideologies, attempts at hegemony, and poor FP decisions. In addition, they are often supported or fought in proxy such as what we see in the Middle East (Amante 2010; Watts 2012). Although there is an abundance of literature on the Korean Peninsula, North Korea and the Korean War, little attention has been given to why this conflict remains elusive to resolve, violent and protracted. This paper’s aims to help fill this analytical void by examining the conflict through the lens of Edward Azar’s four clusters of variables as preconditions for protracted social conflict (PSCs): the communal content of society, human needs, the state’s role and international linkages (1990, 7–12).

As these clusters are explored, they will be further expounded on by introducing other key conflict analysis and resolution (CAR) theories such as basic human needs, structural violence and positioning, which build on Azar’s framework and the greater understanding of this conflict. The analysis will culminate with a new understanding of the roots of this PSC and then turn to what has been done at the international level to help resolve it. After this is done, a series of new foreign policy (FP) and CAR driven recommendations will be introduced. The goal of this paper is to discover and put forth new ways of peacefully dealing with this deadly Cold War legacy conflict in 2013 and beyond.

The purpose of using Azar’s four clusters over other epistemologies, theoretical frameworks is that it provides a CAR lens to examine the historical roots and drivers of this conflict at the communal, state and international levels. Moreover, this framework
has the potential to open up a valuable window into which new ways to resolve this conflict can be introduced by providing a context for critically examining diverse possibilities. Traditional international relations (IR) theories are based largely on realism and neorealism frames, which tend to describe and analyze state relations and conflicts based on specific problems such as leadership, competition, security, the power of states and national interests. While insightful in terms of the dynamics of realpolitik, this level of analysis often excludes the power above or below the logic of the system or state (Mearsheimer 2002; Korab-Karpowicz 2013; Sterling-Folker 2005). In addition, IR often relies on such theories as Game Theory to see how these relations or conflicts will evolve given linear causal relations amongst actors that are assumed to be rational (Brecher and Harvey 2002; Correa 2001). However, Azar’s framework takes a CAR position. Instead of focusing on the event, phenomenon or symptom, it looks at the deep, complex and often multiple roots to state-to-state relations, problems and conflicts. In other words, it is more holistic in its analysis of the conditions that contribute to conflict, which this author feels is better suited at identifying, analyzing and resolving this conflict.

This paper will be broken down into four parts. The first part will provide a brief historical framework and introduction for which the rest of the paper will be based on. The second part will lay the theoretical foundation through the lens of Edward Azar’s four clusters of variables as preconditions for PSCs (1990, 7–12). The third section will describe the need to match the complexity of conflicts with holistic complex efforts to resolve it along with recommendations for new types of FP and CAR initiatives. The fourth and final section will recap what was presented and hopes for future research.

**Background on the Korean Peninsula and North Korea**

The Korean Peninsula has had a turbulent history full of conflicts due to its location within East Asia that provides great land and water access to the continent of Asia along with several deep water ports that could be used by states for trade or war. This key location has been the place of many wars, with Korea suffering from invasions by the Chinese, Japanese, the Manchus, Mongols and Russians (Stueck 1997, 13). The final war of the 1800’s was between Japan and Russia with the winner—Japan gaining power and influence over Korea (Blank 1995). During this time, the U.S. was also trying to forcefully expand its trade and colonial dominance into East Asia. Japan’s victory over Russia allowed for a FP deal to be reached between Washington and Japan, which gave the Japan the ability to freely move onto the Korean Peninsula (Schmid 2000). The signing of the Japan-Korea Protection Treaty in 1905 gave Japan virtual complete control over Korea, and in 1910 the Japanese officially annexed Korea and exploited it until the end of World War II (Lone 1991).

At the end of World War II, in a series of political barters, the Korean Peninsula was divided into two parts with Russia occupying the north and the United States occupying the south (R. T. Johnson 2010; Pritchard 2010). This now official division into two separate countries, greatly exacerbated tension on the Korean Peninsula and pushed it towards the first conflict of the Cold War period. The colonial and political bartering by the U.S. and Cold War division mentioned are important parts that will be discussed further when we analyze Azar’s four cluster PSC model.
Introduction to the Beginning of Korea’s Protracted Social Conflict

In June 1950, the North Koreans, supported by the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and China, launched a surprise attack against the south. The U.S. and UN responded and after a turbulent three years of fierce fighting and over three million people deaths, the war finally ended on 27 July 1953, when an armistice agreement was signed (Matray 2005; Stueck 2002). At that time, there was an understanding that a final peace agreement would soon follow (Wilma 2001). Unfortunately, those that negotiate peace often focus on temporary dispute settlements, resulting in what Johan Galtung referred to as negative peace and the protraction of conflicts (1964). Instead of striving for positive peace, which is the integration of human society, the Cold War powers pushed for an armistice (Hewitt, Wilkenfeld, and Gurr 2010, 1). Thus, the Korean War remains the longest remaining Cold War legacy conflict (Feffer 1999; Hart-Landsberg 1998).

Michael Colaresi and William Thompson describe protracted conflict as something which “embodies intense and violent conflict over important issues persisting for long periods of time” (2002, 168). Conflict Resolution scholar Edward Azar describes protracted social conflict as “a struggle by communal groups for such basic needs as security, recognition and acceptance,” which includes monopolizing power by dominant individuals or groups (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2011, 84–87). These groups can be at the local, state, region or international level. While there are normally recognizable differences in the dynamics of intrastate, interstate, regional and international conflicts, in many cases they are intractable and socially constructed. Although Azar passed away in 1991, this author believes he included space for most types of conflicts in his four clusters of variables as preconditions of PSCs. In the case of North Korea, the conflict has the dynamics of a domestic conflict with its own people; a regional conflict with its neighbors; and international conflict primarily with the U.S. and western values. Thus, if Azar were alive today, he would probably characterized or coin the phrase “hybrid PSC.”

North Korea’s PSC Through the lens of Azar’s Model

Azar proposed four clusters as preconditions which are: the communal content of a society; human needs, the state’s role/governance; and international linkages (Azar 1990, 7; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2011b, 84–87). In the following paragraphs I will slightly rearrange the order of these four clusters and while doing so, provide CAR based theories and examples relevant to the context of North Korean.

Communal Content of Society

Azar described the communal content of society as the “most useful unit” of analysis in PSC and how communal groups [and societies] have been influenced by colonial policies [meddling], rule and divisions (1986, 12-31; 1990, 7; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2011, 83–84). North Korea is no acceptance to this first condition. It was the beginning of colonial expansion in East Asia discussed earlier, which allowed the Korean Peninsula to be forcefully annexed by Japan. It was the end of colonial expansion and the beginning of Cold War rivalries, which divided the peninsula into two parts. This division allowed not only separate ideologies to foster and grow, but also the formation
of groups according to class and social structure. The Korean War and its aftermath did little to change this division and in fact, expeditiously pushed the divisions, ideologies and class structure much further, and allowed for even more influence and positioning by the U.S. FSU and China (Hunter 1999; Oh 2007; Harden 2012).

**The State’s Role**

Normally under Azar’s four clusters, the state’s role would come after human needs (Azar 1990, 7). However, there is a natural progressive linkage between the state’s role and human needs (or lack of), during conflict. Broadly speaking, the role of the state in society is to govern. How or how well they govern depends, of course, on the form of government. Unfortunately, “most states which experience protracted social conflict tend to be characterized by incompetent, parochial, fragile and authoritarian governments that fail to satisfy basic human needs” (Azar and Moon 1986; Azar 1990). North Korea falls directly into Azar’s classification. It is an authoritarian regime, and is also referred to as a dynastic dictatorship or a well-structured “hybrid dictatorship, which blends qualities of personalist, single party and military dictatorship” (Ezrow and Frantz 2011, 265; Geddes 1999; Gandhi 2010, 2-17; Linz 2000). Moreover, the regime uses extreme levels of structural violence to dominate, repress and control the population, which robs the people of their basic human needs (Galtung, 1969; Azar and Farah 1981; Azar 1983; 1979).

**Human Needs**

Human needs are considered by many as universal and include political access, security (which includes nutrition) and acceptance needs (cultural, religious and group expression/acceptance) (Azar, 1990, 7–12; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2011, 86). John Burton states that “deep-rooted conflicts are based on fundamental human needs that are not negotiable” (1969; 1987; Maslow 1943; 1970; Sites 1973). In addition, intractable conflicts tend to threaten the basic human needs of certain groups of people (Deutsch, Coleman, and Marcus 2006; Coleman et al. 2007). For generations, countless numbers of North Koreans have been deprived of their basic human needs and are being physically and psychologically weakened by malnutrition; many times it seems deliberately (Lankov 2011). In the final cluster, we will explore international linkages and understand how they relate to Colonialism and the Cold War we discussed earlier.

**International Linkages**

In Azar’s fourth cluster called “international linkage,” he argues that the state involved in PSC depends on stronger states for political-economic and military support, especially among regional and cross-border partners (Azar 1990, 10-11; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall 2011). It is this linkage that we can now fully tie into the Colonial legacy and Cold War mentioned earlier in this paper. This cluster is one of the most important ones for this particular conflict as it directly affects the protraction more than any other cluster as countries continue to position for control and influence.

Positioning theory can be explained as an attempt to know or define your position in a certain place, space or time, and to establish a balance of parity and power (Harré and Langenhove 1998; Luberda 2006). We can posit that when dealing with
states, positioning theory can be applied in the form of regional or global hegemony. Barrett quotes Antonio Gramsci in stating, "hegemony represents the status of the most powerful country in the international system or the position of a dominant state in a specific region" (1994, 239; Keohane 1991, 11). For the international powers involved with North Korea, we will discuss how they position themselves in this PSC based on self-interests, using their FP decisions, support, actions and interactions.

**China**

For China, the 1961 Sino-North Korean Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance Agreement provides the umbrella for the continued protection and support to North Korea (Vouchiounis 2011). Despite occasional frustrations, China makes a continued strategic choice or "position" to provide enough food, economic and military aid, and investment for North Korea to survive which protracts this conflict and allows the North Korean regime to continue the structural violence (Bajoria 2012; Snyder, 2009). It also tacitly provides some military support while softening or rejecting UN sanctions on North Korea and trying to ensure it has a leadership position in East Asia affairs (Noland 2009).

**Russia**

Until Aug 1991, the Former Soviet Union was generally more influential than China and provided North Korea with even more direct and indirect aid (Trenin 2011). However, after the collapse of the FSU economic aid and subsidies dramatically decreased. Although this economic declined pushed North Korea more into China's camp, Russia has continued to try and maintained its diplomatic support for North Korea and position in East Asia. Also, Russia like China, has provided military support while opposing many of the UN sanctions against North Korea (Finn 2007). Since Putin regained the presidency in Russia, it has also increased its effort to show leadership and strength in the region.

Finally, the United States also has a large role under international linkages. However, for the brevity of space, I will unfortunately have to neglect South Korea, not because its participation in this discussion is not needed or important, but since that country normally follows the overall lead of the U.S. (though at times reluctantly), its voices and actions can be heard through the discussion on the United States.

**United States**

The U.S. has long played a rather heavy hand in positioning. “The past decade has shown how much it [the U.S.] likes being 'number one' and how determined it is to remain in a predominant position. The United States has taken advantage of its current superiority to impose its preferences wherever possible, even at the risk of irritating many of its long-standing allies” (Walt 1998, 5). Unfortunately for the entire Korean Peninsula, this positioning goes back to Colonial times when Admiral Perry and his Black Ships went to Asia and Japan to open markets (Langellier 2012; Schechter 1999, 238). Moreover, due to the U.S.S. General Sherman incident in August 1866 the U.S. eventually forced Korea to sign a treaty opening up Korea to trade and giving free access to Japan (Park 2009, 62).
The international linkages and positioning by all these states briefly discussed here have the greatest effect on the other clusters in Azar's model and many aspects of the conflict including internal issues within North Korea. It is the primary cause for the continued protraction of this conflict and the further tension. If the international linkage could be resolved or used in a more constructive way, it would greatly increase the chances for peace. For the U.S., despite its stated desire for peace on the Korean Peninsula, its efforts towards North Korea have not worked to resolve the conflict—an area that will be discussed next.

Current Initiatives and Interventions: Too Narrow, Too Few and Not Inclusive

The U.S. led efforts to resolve this conflict have primarily consisted of a FP strategy of containment and isolation, based on military led hard power, sanctions and limited conditional incentives (Ascione 2011). There have been few official attempts at direct and sustained dialogue with North Korea. It could be argued that until recently when North Korea started to acquire and improve technology needed for nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles, the country was ignored by the U.S. and others content with keeping that country in isolation. This limited Track I diplomacy has been ineffective at promoting positive change in North Korea, or positively affecting the North Korean people. The FP decisions have been too narrow, too few and have not included CAR and other FP tools such as public diplomacy which have been effective at ending other conflicts and opening up relations.

It is time the West, led by the U.S. shows true international leadership and initiative by considering alternative and multiple ways to defuse tensions, engage North Korea and end this conflict. With this in mind, there are many FP and CAR tools that can be used to interact and engage with, and positively influence North Korea, including the power of public diplomacy, non-governmental led cultural exchanges and peacebuilding approaches. These tools and recommendations will be discussed next in the context of complex interventions and if effectively initiated, can positively affect change in and with North Korea in 2013 and beyond.

Complex Conflicts need Multiplicity in terms of FP and CAR Interventions

North Korea’s PSC, like others, is inherently complex, and interacts and persists on many different levels. In complexity theory, it is widely recognized that to truly transform the dynamics of a conflict, one should simultaneously use multiple diplomatic tracks, non-governmental efforts and CAR based tools (Korppen, Schmelzle, and Wils 2008, 7; Johnson 2009, 72; Deutsch, Coleman, and Marcus 2006, 548). The complexity of international relations and conflicts, especially PSCs, need diverse multifaceted approaches, which have the greatest chance of effecting deep and lasting change (N. Johnson 2009a). Similar to complexity theory, Dynamical Systems Theory offers ideas and methods for addressing the dynamic nature of PSC and the need for multiple interventions linked across all levels (Johnson 2009; Urry 2003; Dynamics of Conflicts 2012). Thus, we must match complexity with complexity in terms of our efforts and institute a multidisciplinary framework of diplomatic and CAR efforts.
Intervention Design

Similarly to the earlier section where I used Azar’s framework to map, understand and analyze the conflict, I will use a framework to help map, inform and guide new FP and CAR driven intervention efforts. For this, I turn to John Paul Lederach’s pyramid model. This model is used to “develop an analytical framework for describing the levels of an affected population” along with interventions that may be appropriate at each level of conflict (Lederach 1998). Although this pyramid model was originally designed to explain conflict dynamics and CAR centered interventions, it also is well suited for showing how many FP tools can be integrated and positively affect both conflicts and international relations.

The three levels in Lederach’s pyramid are: level 1—top leadership, which deals with such stakeholders as major military, political, and religious leaders, and falls under the term Track-One diplomacy (hard power); level 2—middle-range, which deals with such stakeholders as respective sector leaders, businesses, and intellectuals; and level 3—grassroots, which deals with such stakeholders as local leaders, NGO’s, community developers, health officials and local citizens. Both levels 2 and 3 would use a type of Track-Two diplomacy or forms of soft power. An illustration of this model adapted from Lederach for this paper is provided below.

![Diagram of Lederach’s Pyramid Model](image)

As you can see from the above illustration, if the conflict is addressed at each level, it can increase the contact and communication of the various stakeholders directly involved in the conflict, and fosters civil society and a democratic culture (Almond and Verba 1989; Barber 2003; Davies 2004). In the case of North Korea, U.S. diplomatic efforts have been limited to the top level using hard power, and even then, normally only through the auspice of bilateral or multilateral efforts such as the six-party talks, which have been for the most part ineffective at resolving the conflict. Therefore, new and diverse efforts must be implemented.

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1 In the field of CAR, the terms intervention, effort and practice are usually synonymous.
2 Track-Two efforts combined with Track-One efforts at the top level would result in what could be referred to as multi-track diplomacy or intervention.
3 By democratic culture, I am referring more to a participatory form of participation and not institution building as is the Western thought of democracy.
Recommendation Interventions for Sustained Change

In keeping with the theme of multiple and dynamic efforts to help resolve conflict, I will introduce you to several FP and CAR tools that can be used at each level of the conflict. Starting with the top-level, the efforts rely heavily on “smart diplomatic initiatives.”

Sustained Contact

Chris L. Kleinke posits how gaze functions to provide information, regulate interaction, express intimacy, exercise social control, and facilitate service and task goals (Kleinke 1986). This gaze is a necessary function in all healthy relationships including group and international relationships, but can’t be conducted unless there is social interaction or “contact.” In 1954, Gordon Allport advanced the “contact hypothesis,” also known as intergroup contact theory or just contact theory, which asserted that getting individuals of different races or ethnicities together under the right conditions either as individuals or groups would vastly change their perceptions of the other, help remove prejudices, and could lead to the development of positive relations and friendships (1954; 1979).

Over the last sixty years, the U.S. has had little direct contact with North Korea and what contact it has had, was not sustained. This sustained contact is vital to help diminish anxiety and allow North Korea and the U.S. to feel comfortable with each other. As part of this contact, embassies or cultural exchange missions are needed in each country, similar to the ones we had in the FSU and China during the Cold War.

Third Party Participation

Third party participation can be an effective tool in dealing with closed societies such as North Korea. In the past, the U.S. has relied on the UN, its allies in the region and the six-party talk process to contact and assist in limited engagement with North Korea. For the most part, these efforts have been ineffective. However, if the United States were to ask a country neutral to this conflict, such as a former communist state like Bulgaria to approach North Korea and perhaps even offer them such things as public diplomacy and cultural courses, this could dramatically open up new doors and assist in breaking down the walls of division and mistrust. Next, I will introduce you to several tools that can be used at the mid-level of the conflict. These efforts rely on a combination of CAR and public diplomacy initiatives.

Interactive and Reflective Problem-solving Workshops

Interactive and reflective problem-solving workshops are widely used in the CAR field to look at and address protracted and deep rooted conflicts (Burton 1969; Kelman and Cohen 1976; Hill 1982). Problem solving workshops have been effectively used in many protracted conflicts around the world such as: the Kashmir conflict where it helped create the People’s Bus; and Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities where it helped open up new space (Nan, Mampilly, and Bartoli 2011, 68-72; Broome 1997; Kelman 1999). Workshops for North Korea might consist of such diverse subjects as CAR, peacebuilding, agriculture or even environmental issues. This is a vital tool that can

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4 Lederach suggest, "middle-range leaders (who are often the heads of, or closely connected to, extensive networks... can... play an instrumental role in working through the conflicts" (Lederach 1998, 51).
affect change at the mid-level. The next tool to discuss involves educational and cultural exchanges.

**Educational and Cultural Exchanges**

Educational and cultural exchanges are by far, some of the best ways to reach diverse groups of people. Exchanges such as those conducted under the Fulbright Program and by private universities are excellent ways to bring two countries, its cultures and citizens closer together (U.S. Department of State 2013). These exchanges have been used successfully in the past to include at the height of the Cold War with the FSU. It was in the late 1950's when the late Alexander Nikolaevich Yakovlev—known as the godfather of glasnost came to the U.S. on one of the first Fulbright scholarships (Jouzaitis 1991). It normally takes a long time to see the benefits of this type of diplomacy, but the change that can happen is positive and dramatic. This change is even more dramatic when education is used in unison with fine arts and sports exchanges.

**Fine Arts and Sports Diplomacy**

Fine arts and sports diplomacy are excellent tools that have been used successfully to interact with other countries. Such things as music, art and sports transcend hatred and extreme differences as those that participate connect through a universal language. In music, it was the late renowned U.S. pianist Van Cliburn who captured the hearts and minds of Soviet Citizens with his musical diplomacy (McLellan 2013).

Sports, like fine arts can be very effective at breaking down the cultural walls of mistrust. In 1972, it was Ping-Pong diplomacy with China, which helped eventually thaw relations with the United States (DeVoss 2002). Although Dennis Rodman’s trip to North Korea was problematic on multiple fronts, this trip should have served as a wake-up call to the U.S. that it’s not using all the available FP tools (DeHart 2013). However, it wasn’t as the U.S. continues to solely focus its efforts on sending signals to North Korea that it is well capable of defending its allies and interests in the region, which alone, only further increases tensions and the possibility of escalation. There needs to be sustained support for fine arts and sports diplomacy. Next, I will introduce you to several tools that can be used at the grassroots level of the conflict. These efforts consist of: news and information flow, and NGO support.

**News and Information Flow**

There is little doubt that news broadcast can help provide listeners in hard to access countries with a voice from the outside world. Despite the difficulties of pushing broadcasts into North Korea and the harsh penalty for those who listen to these broadcasts, research has shown that about 27% of North Koreans listen to such broadcasts as Voice of American (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA 2011; VOA 2012). These stations offer reports on the North Korean government’s corruption, human rights abuses, health and nutrition crises, and a variety of other issues. This is a powerful tool that needs to be increased and supported.

TV shows and movies with the right context can provide valuable cultural information and a visual of the outside world. Despite regime efforts to keep these
visual aids out of the hands of North Koreans, they are increasingly watching them, especially South Korean dramas, “usually in secret groups” (Telegraph 2012; J. Lee, Ahn, and Jackson-Han 2005). According to a recent report many North Koreans watch smuggled South Korean soap operas and American films like Superman Returns and Titanic. (Cain 2009). Starting in the 1940’s, the U.S. in cooperation with Hollywood made films that were meant to increase domestic support, and provide foreign audiences with a new view of the U.S. (Staff Writer 2012; Lee 2008). Recently though, Hollywood has exacerbated foreign relations by producing movies such as *Olympus Has Fallen*, *Red Dawn* and *Zero Dark Thirty* that paints a ugly picture of the other. The U.S. should engage Hollywood and independent directors to produce more films that can show the best face of America and the west.

**NGO Support**

Non-government organizations play a vital role in helping countries and its citizens all around the world, many times, at great personal risk. In North Korea, there are a number of NGO’s from around the world active in North Korea. These NGO’s offer such things as medical assistance and vaccinations, intellectual training and exchanges, and programs on agriculture, health, water and sanitation, and seed improvement (Taylor and Manyin 2011, 7). Many NGO’s are working at the lowest levels of society and “have sought to increase the quality and quantity of contact... in order to gain a clearer understanding and to communicate their goodwill directly to ‘ordinary North Korean’” (Kim 2009, 212). Some NGO’s launch balloons into North Korea, have radio broadcasts and are attempting to sponsor informal communications between governments (IBID, 10). The grassroots level work along with the attempts to make up for the lack of direct contact between key stakeholders shows the true value of these NGOs, many of which stay anonymous and work with little funding. These are the kinds of initiatives that should be given more funding and support by the government.

An illustration of this new model of FP and CAR driven interventions adapted from Lederach is provided below.
As you can see from the diagram above, these levels should not be targeted in isolation. Each level should be well coordinated, both vertically and horizontally for durable and inclusive solutions to the conflict (Richmond 2001; Kriesberg 1997, 69).

**Challenges to New Interventions of Engagement and Exchange**

While the exact implementation of the recommendations for North Korea is a process that is beyond the scope of this short paper and may seem difficult given the regime’s isolation and the current animosity, there is good precedent for these actions amidst such tension and distance. They have been effective in dealing with many countries such as FSU, China, Cyprus, and India. Even though these efforts will take time and initially be met with distrust, suspicion and rejection on all sides, they are some of the best options for avoiding war, and eventually achieving mutual understanding, positive change and peace. More importantly, the cost of doing nothing greatly outweighs the cost of working towards positive change.

**Conclusion**

This paper examined North Korea’s PSC through the lens of Edward Azar’s four clusters of variables as the preconditions for protracted social conflict (1990, 7–12). After briefly looking at the historical content of Korea and the negative peace that took hold after the Korean War, we integrated appropriate CAR based theories into Azar’s clusters. The paper then focused on how international linkages is such an important part of this conflict, and that U.S. efforts under this cluster has been too narrow, too few and not inclusive enough.

This paper also discussed the complexity of conflicts and the need for well-coordinated multiple levels of intervention. It culminated with dynamic and holistic recommendations that use the strengths of conflict analysis and resolution and foreign policy skills such as public diplomacy. Although it is recognized that much more research and efforts are needed, this author believes that the recommendations provided here are important steps in positively dealing with the North Korea.

In closing, it is recognized that there is no easy solution to this protracted conflict and a strong military presence is indeed necessary to defend freedom, national interests and allies in the region. However, this should not usurp our CAR, FP and outreach efforts. Moreover, with a young relatively inexperienced Kim Jong Un leading North Korea, this is the time that the outside world should be trying to affect and influence his thinking before those in his inner circle guide him to a point beyond the possibility of engagement. The U.S. must show true international leadership and initiative by considering alternative and multiple methods to positively engage North Korea. If this is done, the latter part of 2013 and beyond can be much brighter than the past six decades.

**References**


On the folk custom of forbidding well digging in traditional Korea

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Abstract
Many settlements in Korea are reported to have practiced the custom of forbidding well digging in their settlements. A major reason that was frequently given for avoiding digging wells in Korean settlements (especially villages) was based on the practice of geomancy (pungsu in Korean). In geomancy, local landscapes are personified and named after animate or inanimate objects such as a ‘reclining cow’ or ‘sailing boat’. In a geomantic landscape named ‘sailing boat’, digging wells would be prohibited, because such an action was analogous to making a hole in the bottom of a boat. Using geomantic logic a settlement in such a situation could be expected to experience misfortune. For this reason, residents of the ‘sailing boat’ landscape would be encouraged to fetch water from streams and rivers. It is generally thought that the ‘avoidance of wells’ existed only in the geomantic ‘sailing boat’ landscape. However, I have noticed that a village located within another type of geomantic landscape, ‘a golden hen sitting on eggs,’ also prohibited the digging of wells. A geomantic explanation given for this case was that drawing water from the well may frighten the hen or was analogous to extracting blood from the hen. The analogy of digging wells in the ‘sailing boat’ case is readily understandable, but the case of ‘a golden hen sitting on eggs’ is more difficult to account for. Upon closer analysis, the supposed geomantic reasoning behind the prohibition on building wells on dwelling sites located within a ‘golden hen sitting on eggs’ landscape appears contrived and senseless. Instead, it is most likely that geomantic reasoning was used as a convenient justification to avoid the digging of wells in certain villages. For these reasons, I conjecture that the folk custom of prohibiting wells in some Korean villages was not originally derived from geomancy but was an independent indigenous Korean idea, separate from geomancy.

Key Words: village wells, avoidance of well digging, geomancy, sailing boat landscape, golden hen sitting on egg landscape, settlement, traditional Korea

Introduction
A well known witty and humorous Korean traditional legend of Mr Pong’i Kim Sondal is about tricking a covetous rich merchant from Seoul into buying water from the free flowing Taedong River, because he was fooled to believe that he could sell it to the local citizens who used it for domestic consumption. The background of this story relates to geomantic belief that wells should not be dug in a settlement located in a landscape resembling a sailing boat, because digging a well is analogous to making a hole on the bottom of a sailing boat. As such, sinking the boat due to a hole in its bottom meant the loss of fortune for the settlement. In Korea, it is generally thought that this particular type of geomantic landscape is responsible for the folk custom of forbidding well digging. When people use water from a river or stream, this unfiltered water is not only

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1 This English version paper is based on and developed from my Korean language version paper, “Umuru mot pagehanun minsoke taehayo [On the folk custom of forbidding well digging”, Munhw Yoksa chiri (Journal of Cultural and Historical Geography) vol. 25, no. 1 (2013). This English version paper was presented at Korean Studies Association of Australasia Conference, held at Canberra, Australia on xx June 2013.
not as clean as water from a well, but it can cause serious public health hazards including the risk of being infected with parasites. Koreans often drank fresh water without boiling it because the habit of drinking tea was rare among the commoners in traditional Korean society, unlike Chinese who normally drank tea instead of fresh water. Water from many streams or rivers may not be of drinkable quality, and unless it is treated it may be murky with drags and carry health hazards such as the eggs of parasites.

Although it is generally acknowledged that the custom of forbidding well digging is associated with the geomantic landscape of a sailing boat, this new research reveals that the folk custom may have neither originated from geomantic beliefs nor been restricted to the geomantic ‘sailing boat’ landscape only. The aim of this research is to discuss the relationships between geomantic faith and the custom of forbidding well digging in order to identify the developmental process of this particular folk custom. To achieve this goal, I will first survey briefly the places that practice the custom of forbidding well digging and then discuss the three important attributes of wells in traditional Korean society that may have helped in developing the custom. The last part of this paper is my reflection on the developmental process of the custom of forbidding well digging.

To date no research works have been published on the folk custom of forbidding well digging. However, some papers on different aspects of wells in traditional Korea have been published, although some of the earlier ones represent simplistic discussion of wells as a part of other main topics that they addressed. For instance, some noteworthy research works include Yi Pyongdo’s (1976) paper on “Ancient Koreans’ worship of wells and springs”, Kim Yolkyu’s (1991) “Mythology and water” and Kim Taegon’s (1986) “Proto type religious ritualistic symbols of water”. Much more substantial and comparative research was carried out by Kim Kwangon (2001) in his paper, “Dwelling customs of China, Korea and Japan (V): Springs and Wells”. A recent ethnographic study of sacred ceremonies relating to a well worship case was carried out by Chong Myong chul (2008), who documented in detail his field work using a participant observation approach. The paper informs us that well worship ceremonies are still in practice in some parts of Korea. Ku Mirae (2002) wrote an informative article, “Symbolic meanings and social function of wells,” that reviewed and incorporated different scholars’ research achievement on the topic of wells in traditional societies in Korea and Japan. Although these research works discussed the various social functions and sacredness of wells in Korea, none of them discussed the folk custom of forbidding well digging in traditional societies. As reviewed above, there is no previous literature on wells that seriously discusses the folk custom of forbidding well digging.

Having reviewed international literature, I was not able to find writing on the traditional custom of forbidding well digging elsewhere in the field of indigenous knowledge. No literature has documented the existence of any folk custom, anywhere in the world, on the practice of forbidding well digging in settlements where people are capable of digging one and also require one to secure drinkable water. However, indigenous knowledge regarding geophagy is reported widely, including in academic journals in anthropology and geography (G. Hamilton, 1988; R. Reid, 1992; D. Vermeer, 1966; Vermeer & Frate, 1975). Geophagy is a pre-modern tribal behavior of eating an earthy substance (such as soil or clay) for hunger or believing that it has healing or other.
mystic powers for human health and life in general. It has been widely practiced in the past all over the world across races and cultures. Geophagy is still practised, especially in some rural communities of Africa, the Caribbean Islands and the USA.

A study of the changing modes of people’s water consumption is important for understanding the changing history of human-environment relationships. In the study of humanity’s water consumption, it is important to understand the customs relating to wells and well-digging. Because wells provided quality water for human consumption, well digging and well water management was an important aspect of traditional society. Considering these circumstances, the custom of forbidding well digging is an unexpected phenomenon and a surprise to me as a researcher. This surprising phenomenon must be an interesting research topic for scholars to study. Despite its importance, no research works devoted to this topic have been carried out by scholars. However, I have written a research paper on ‘sailing boat’ geomantic landscapes where I have briefly discussed the folk custom of forbidding well digging as one of the attributes attached to this type of geomantic landscape (Yoon, 2011, 38-43). In this paper I will attempt to expand my previous research on this topic by adding my field interviews and collections of folk narratives from relevant settlements relating to the custom of forbidding well digging.

Examples of geomantic landscapes that practice the folk custom of forbidding well digging

In this paper the settlements that practice the folk custom of forbidding well digging are defined as villages that allowed no wells (complete prohibition of well digging) and which resulted in all residents of the village being forced to fetch unprocessed water for drink directly from a river or a stream, and villages where well digging was limited with the number of wells strictly restricted to a few. To date, our understanding has been that ‘the folk custom of forbidding well digging’ existed mainly in a certain geomantic landscape (風水形局), specifically that of a sailing boat. So far all reported places that have practised the custom of forbidding well digging present geomantic reasons for such behaviour and all of them, if their geomantic types can be identified, are associated with those of ‘a sailing boat’ or ‘a golden hen sitting on eggs’. I categorised them in this paper in order to list all the known places that have ‘the folk custom of forbidding well digging’ according to the geomantic landscapes that they are associated with. The first category is the popular geomantic landscape of a sailing boat, the second category is the geomantic landscape of a golden hen sitting on eggs, and the third one is those where the landscape category is unknown or uncertain. Within each category I have listed the settlements (places) that have completely forbidden well digging, and then listed those that have limited the number of wells to a minimum (less than a few).

1. Geomantic landscape of a sailing boat

The landforms that fall into the category of ‘sailing boat’ geomantic landscapes is supposed to resemble a boat sailing on a nearby watercourse (mainly on a river). In such a landscape it is essential to have a landmark (for example, a hill or a valley) that is worthy of comparing to a boat. However, I have found that some places known as ‘sailing boat’ landscapes are in fact in a mountainous environment without a river (sometimes not even a sizable stream), that cannot possibly remind anyone of a boat. ‘Sailing boat’ landscapes are very popular settlement sites in Korea and are found
nationwide. Behind its popularity stands the geomantic belief that a village in a ‘sailing boat’ landscape would be blessed with wealth and great personalities, as a sailing boat would carry a full load of precious goods and distinguished guests. As such, geomantic reasoning often recommended not to dig a well in such settlements, because this action would be analogous to making a hole in the bottom of a boat. Currently, the villages that practiced the custom of forbidding well digging are most prevalently associated with ‘the geomantic landscape of a sailing boat’, and the following are some examples of this.2

a) Settlements in ‘the geomantic landscape of a sailing boat’ having no wells
i) Pyongyang

Pyongyang is presently the capital of North Korea and was one of the three largest commercial (market) centres of the Choson dynasty (1392-1910). It is a large urbanized settlement, and is probably the largest among all Korean settlements known for being located in a ‘sailing boat’ geomantic landscape.

The residents in Pyongyang during the Choson period thought that because the city landscape resembled a “sailing boat,” they needed to put an anchor in the Taedong River nearby to prevent it from drifting away and thus prevent misfortunes in the township. The people reportedly sunk a gigantic iron anchor in the river and thereafter they experienced no major floods in the city.3 It is reported that the city strictly forbade digging wells and all citizens and government offices in the city relied on unprocessed river water for drinking and other domestic uses. In Taengniji, a geographical classic written during the 18th century by Yi Chunghwan, it was recorded that:4

A traditional saying is that the city of Pyongyang is shaped like a sailing boat and thus the residents are reluctant (dislike) to dig wells. Once, in the past, the digging of wells was allowed. However, at around that time the city experienced frequent fires and so the wells were filled in. (Now) all private residents, as well as government offices, fetch water for drinking from the river and a major shortcoming of this settlement is that firewood is expensive due to the distance residents are required to go to procure it.

Although Taengniji is a popular and respected piece of literature describing the geography of Korea during the Choson dynasty, it is still a book authored by a private citizen. Moreover, it is hard to believe that a major city in Korea during the Choson dynasty did not have water wells and that people in the city had to fetch the water from the nearby Taedong River. I wanted to document more proof of this interesting phenomenon by digging out some official government records from the Choson dynasty. I found that the City of Pyongyang’s geomantic landscape conditions and mention of the avoidance of digging wells in official government diaries, although these official records are a little later then the above quotation from Taengniji, a privately authored book. The Sungjongwon Ilgi (The Diaries of Royal Secretariat) are the official royal court diaries

This collection is based on historical records of well-known settlements in primary historical sources, as well as my field works in Kyongsang Province and some other scholars’ contemporary studies on geomancy in rural districts.

This legend has been circulated widely in Korea and a brief summary of the legend is also seen in Hanguk Chongsin munhwagonyuwon (ed.), Hanguk Minjok munhwateapaikkwa sajon [the Encyclopaedia of Korean Culture]

The above quotation is a translation of modern Korean text from Yi Chung-hwan, Taengniji, Trans. Into modern Korean by Yi Ilsong (Seoul, Ulyu munhwsa, 1990), 250.
that have recorded the Choson dynasty kings’ daily work in great detail, including the
king’s meetings with officers – when, where and what topics of conversations were
mentioned. The Diaries of Royal Secretariat recorded on at least two separate occasions
that the local residents of Pyongyang recognized their city as ‘the geomantic landscape
of a sailing boat’ and practiced the custom of forbidding well digging. The first instance
is from a dialogue between King Chongjo and court officer Che Chegong on 13 June 1789
(the 13th reign of King Chongjo): 5

Mr Che Chegong said, “The City of Pyongyang has traditionally had no water-wells or
springs. Some say that residents are predisposed to the avoidance of digging wells due to
geomantic advice.---” The King asked, “I heard that people refer to the City of Pyongyang
as ‘the geomantic landscape’ of a sailing boat (Haengjuhyong). Is that true or not?” Mr Che
Chegong answered, “That is so, Your Majesty”.

The following record from the diaries of Royal Secretariat more clearly illustrates
that the residents of Pyongyang fetched water from the nearby Taedong River for
domestic consumption. The record is from 28 August 1876 when King Kojong asked the
former Governor of Pyongan Province, Mr. Cho Songha (who was just transferred from
the post) about the land and life of the province: 6

The King asked, “How are the conditions of water and soil in Pyongyang City?” Mr. Cho
Songha answered, “Your Majesty, the water is cool and sweet, but there are no water-wells
within the City of Pyongyang, because the city is located on a geomantic landscape of a
sailing boat. All residents fetch water from the Taedong River for domestic consumption.”

The above government diaries clearly inform us that at least until 1876 the citizens
of Pyongyang refrained from digging wells and fetched water for domestic consumption
from the Taedong River in order not to harm their city’s geomantic landscape of a sailing
boat. It is hard to believe that Pyongyang, a major city of the Choson dynasty and one of
the country’s three major commercial centres did not have wells for drinkable water.
These Korean government records are backed up by a Nineteenth century British
circle, Isabella Bird Bishop’s personal observation of Pyongyang citizens’ fetching
water from Taedong River. She vividly described the scene in her book, Korea and her
Neighbours, that is based on her four trips to Korea between January 1894 and March
1897 (Bishop, xi). Her description of Pyongyang residents’ fetching the river water is as
follows (Bishop, Part II, 112):

It (Pyongyang City) is built on lofty ground rising abruptly from the river, above which
a fine wall climbs picturesquely over irregular, but always ascending, altitudes, till it is lost
among the pines of a hill which overhangs the Tai-dong (River). ----

Crossing the clear flashing waters of the Tai-dong with our ponies in a crowded ferry-
boat, we found ourselves in the slush of the dark Water Gate, at all hours of the day
crowded with water-carriers. There are no wells in the city, the reason assigned for the
deficiency being that the walls enclose a boat-shaped area, and that the digging of wells

5 Sungjungwon Ilgi, http://sjw.history.go.kr/main/main.jsp (the website of Kuksapynthamwiwonhoe -
National Institute of Koran History), accessed on 27 February 2013 and downloaded the originally
recorded wordings in classical Chinese. This English version is my translation of the original Korean
Court record.

6 My translation into English is from the modern version in Sungjungwon Ilgi, 5-7pm on 28 August 1876
(The 13th reign of King Kojong), translated into modern Korean from the original classical Chinese style
would cause the boat to sink! The water is carried almost entirely in American kerosene tins.

Isabella Bird Bishop’s description clearly confirms that Pyongyang City did not have water-wells until at least the end of 1890s and the citizens drew river water, not well water, for domestic consumption. All available historical data such as official government records and oral traditions including legends, and a foreign traveler’s firsthand observation demonstrate that the residents of Pyongyang, a large commercial city of the Choson dynasty, did not dig wells to secure drinkable water, but instead fetched water from the Taedong River, hard to believe though it may be.

The following are some rural settlements that claimed to be located in a geomantic landscape resembling a sailing boat and thus did not dig wells for drinkable water:

b) Mupung village, Muju County, North Cholla Province: An ethnological survey report includes the following quotation from a village elder who spoke in the local dialect: “We were told that the landform of Mupung is the geomantic landscape of a sailing boat. Therefore, digging a well is forbidden here. If a hole is made in the bottom of a boat, wouldn’t it be hazardous?”

c) Tapsun Village, Kumsan-up, South Chungchong Province: “This village is known as a geomantic landscape of a sailing boat. Digging a well in the village is comparable to making a hole in the bottom of a boat. Then, the boat will sink and village will experience misfortune. Therefore, the villagers did not dig a well and fetched water from Kumsanchon stream in front of the village” (abridged and translated from Kwon Sunjong, 317).

d) Makundaemi Village, Chinsan-myon, Kumsan-kun, South Chungchong Province: This village is known as a typically auspicious geomantic site with background hills and water (stream) in front. It is also located in a geomantic landscape of a sailing boat, and thus digging a well was not allowed. The villagers fetched water from the stream in front of the village, instead of digging a well which would have acted as making a hole on the bottom of a boat. It is recommended that a resident who became rich in the village should move to another settlement, because the boat (village) would sink, if it is loaded with heavy cargo (accumulated wealth).

2) Type of geomantic landscape uncertain or unknown

e) Kangjong Village, Koa-up, Kumi-shi, North Kyongsang Province: Traditionally there was a public well in front of the present day village meeting hall. However, a long time ago when leprosy broke out in the village, people thought that consuming well-water caused the disease to occur and so filled the well in. Ever since then the villagers have fetched water from nearby the Nakdong River. The village only stopped drawing river water for domestic consumption once it was joined to the Kumi City water system.

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8 An interview with an elderly villager at the village pavilion on 4 September 2011. At my interview four other village elders were present.
When I was a boy living in Haephyong Village across the river from Kangjong Village, I thought that I heard about Kangjong village being a geomantic landscape of a sailing boat. On 2 May 2009 I went to Kangjong Village to confirm my memory, but I was advised by the village elders who have been living there all their lives that they have never heard of such things from their ancestors. Those then elders of 60 years ago are all passed away and there are no ways to confirm or deny my little boyhood hazy memory. However, the village chief at my visit after long pause slowly recalled his old memory and he whispered to me that he heard when he was a boy that the village is in the geomantic landscape of a round basket (sokuri in the district dialect of the Korean language). That is why there is no rich man in the village, because a basket is a container meant to emptying goods in it, when it is full of fruits gathered in the field. (summary of my interview of the village elders at Kangjong village on 2 May 2009)

The comment that no rich residents in Kangjong village because of its geomantic landscape being ‘a round basket’ shape is similar to the comment in the above “Makundaemi Village” case that argues that anyone who became rich in the village should move to another village, because a boat cannot carry heavy cargo (wealth). However, it seems that the geomantic landscape type of Kangjong village is uncertain and probably not ‘a sailing boat’, as remembered by the village elders.

f) Kangkyong in Nonsan City, South Chungchong Province – Kangkyong was a major market town along with Taegu and Pyongyang during the later part of the Choson dynasty. The type of geomantic landscape assigned to Kangkyong is unknown. I was not able to find any records that classify Kangkyong as a certain type of geomantic landscape. However, the central hill in the settlement is called Okyobong (literally, the Hill of Jade Woman –beautiful woman), a popular geomantic name. Judging from the geomantic name of the central hill of the city, one can assume that the locals might have labeled their city “Geomantic landscape of Jade Woman doing something (such as playing a string instrument)”. It is certain that Kangkyong is not known as a city with a geomantic landscape classified as that of a sailing boat. However, the city did practice the custom of avoiding digging wells, as was clearly described in Taengniji. The description is as follows (Yi Chunghwan, trans. By Yi Iksong, 112-113):

Kangkyong is located in the west of Unjin --- The settlement features big streams on its right and the left. Behind city there is a big river with a mixture of fresh water and tidal sea water. Nevertheless, the water is not very salty. No wells exist in the settlement and every house has big jars buried underground with only the tops visible aboveground where they store water fetched from the river. Keeping water in the big jars for several days means the muddy river water gradually becomes clear as the sediment settles at the bottom of the jar. Thus, water in the jars is kept clear and cool, and remains this way even after a long period of time passes. The older the water in the jar, the cooler it becomes. It is said that a patient who had suffered from Changjil (a type of disease) for several decades would be cured completely, if the person would drink this water for a year. Some say that water from the place where sea water and fresh water mixes so it is half and half is the best for curing tojil (an indigenous disease confined to the local environment); this river water is considered to be superior in quality when it comes to medicinal water.
The author of Taengniji, Yi Chunghwan was born and bred in Kongju City, which is located near Kangkyong City. He must have known the local situation well enough to state that there were no water-wells in Kangkyong City. In Taengniji the author recorded the geomantic landscape of Pyongyang as being that of a sailing boat, but made no comment on the geomantic landscape of Kangkyong. If Kangkyong City was known to have a sailing boat geomantic landscape, Yi Chunghwan would have noted this. I have not been able to find any geomantic texts or records commenting on the type of geomantic landscape assigned to Kangkyong. Considering these circumstances one can assume that the geomantic landscape of Kangkyong is not a ‘sailing boat’ type. In addition to this, the river water was so muddy and murky that the locals had to keep it in big jars sunken to the ground level until the muddy material settled at the bottom. Such actions suggest that the river water was too murky and unclean to drink until its dregs settled at the bottom of the big jars. Despite the poor quality of river water, the locals did not dig wells in the city. Why was that so? Probably for reasons other than its geomantic landscape type, because the city’s geomantic landscape type is unknown. One reason may be the local people’s belief ‘that the river water mixed with tidal sea water was good for health,’ The ‘not very salty river water mixed with tidal sea water’ description may suggest that such water provided minerals from the salt content in sea water that are needed in human body.


This type of geomantic landscape is supposedly a landform resembling a hen sitting on eggs. In this context, if there are landforms nearby shaped like a rooster or extra eggs, the landscape is considered even more auspicious. This type of landscape is known for blessings of material wealth or abundant descendants. It is one of the most popular types of geomantic landscape for settlements and many settlements in Korea are claimed to be located on such a place.9

F) Taksil (Yukokni) of Ponghwa-up, North Kyongsang Province:

This village is the best known auspicious site among all ‘Golden Hen Sitting on Eggs’ geomantic landscapes. It has been the home village of the Kwon family of Andong. The following is a legend that was collected from the village (Sungkyunkwan Taehakyo, 1967, p.109):

This village is called Taksil (literally, the Village of Hen), because it is located in a landscape that resembles a hen sitting on eggs, according to geomantic theory. It is recommended not to dig water-wells here, because drawing water from a well is analogous to extracting blood from a hen.

This legend clearly indicates that local residents perceived their village landscape to be that of a hen sitting on eggs. Furthermore, the residents did not dig a well in order to not harm their landscape because drawing water from a well would resemble extracting blood from the hen that is represented in their village landscape. The origin of their village name is also linked to geomancy and represents the locals’ perception of the village environment.

9 For instance a Korean folk custom survey published in 1931, this type of landscape showed the highest frequency among the all geomantic landscape types listed. See Murayama, Chosen no Fusui, 260-275.
My field work undertaken in 2012 confirms that residents refrained from digging a well because they believed that the village is located in the geomantic landscape of a golden hen sitting on eggs. However, I noted differences among the analogical explanations about drawing water from a well. I was advised by a noted village elder that digging a well and drawing water from it would frighten the hen and crack the eggs that the hen sits on. He told me that that is why, until 30 years ago, the village did not dig a well and instead fetched water from a nearby stream for domestic consumption. Since then the village has drilled wells and now pumps up underground water for domestic consumption.

From the above discussion, it is clear that for geomantic reasons the villagers have not dug wells in their settlement, but that the residents’ geomantic analogies are not consistent: one refers to drawing blood, the other to frightening the hen resulting in cracked eggs. However, the residents are consistent in their treatment of the village landscape as a ‘real’ hen. This geomantic reasoning for not digging wells is not as convincing and logical as the case of the geomantic landscape of a sailing boat. The two different kinds of geomantic analogies in ‘the geomantic landscape of a hen sitting on eggs’ not only are inconsistent but also seem contrived and senseless compared to the case of the ‘sailing boat’. Why would drilling a well and drawing water from it frighten ‘a hen sitting on eggs’, while cooking food using burning firewood or a noisy farmer’s band with drums and metal gongs would not. Why should they ban digging a well, but not ban farmers’ bands or cooking food in every house? This not explained by the villagers or by geomantic ideas. Considering these two cases, I came to postulate that the folk custom of forbidding digging wells had in fact a different origin, not related to geomancy, and was not an intrinsic part of the geomantic belief system. Only at a later stage did the custom of forbidding well digging seemed to have adopted geomantic ideas (piggybacking on geomantic ideas) in order to give the custom religious credibility and magical power so that the people will practice it more seriously. Through such a process the custom eventually settled as a part of the powerful geomantic belief system in people’s minds: At this stage this is my conjecture based on my reading of the geomantic analogies attached to the custom of forbidding well digging.

The conditions and functions of ‘geomantic landscape’ types

The art of geomancy (fengshui in Chinese and pungsu in Korean) is of Chinese origin and was developed as their indigenous technique of choosing an auspicious place for houses and graves. An auspicious site accumulates in it the life engendering force of vital energy that flows through its passages, supposedly comparable to human blood vessels. In geomancy it is believed that the people who occupy this auspicious spot by building a house or making a grave for one’s ancestor can extract the energy that blesses the people to be rich, enjoy long life, or to gain honour. An auspicious site is normally surrounded by hills on three sides with an open front facing southward. The auspicious places are considered autonomous geomantic landscape systems which are often named after animals, plants, various human made artifacts or humans themselves. Some examples of the names of geomantic landscapes are a reclining cow, a plum flower floating on water, a sailing boat or a commanding army general. Once a geomantic

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10 A telephone interview with Mr Kwon Chonghwan, the former chairperson of Ponghwa Munhwawon (Ponghwa Culture Centre) on evening 21 October 2012.
landscape is named it is treated as if it is the object after which it was named: if a geomantic landscape is perceived to be and named as a sailing boat landscape, then the landscape treated as if it was a sailing boat. The purpose of an auspicious site in a geomantic landscape is to achieve the ultimate aim of accumulating vital energy and making it available to the people who occupy it. Having established this, we may discuss the nature of vital energy.

The ultimate source of vital energy (shengqi) is the Yin-Yang energy which initially belches and generates wind; ascends and becomes cloud; descends and becomes rain; flows underground and becomes vital energy. When vital energy slips out of the ground it is scattered and does not remain as vital energy, because this is only one of multiple phases that Yin-Yang energy goes through. Only when Yin-Yang energy remains underground does it become vital energy that can bless people. If the landscape arrangements such as landforms and vegetation are changed and thus the geomantic harmony is disturbed, the site cannot maintain vital energy and thus the site cannot bless the occupant(s). That is why people were very careful in maintaining the harmony of geomantic landscapes.

Treating a geomantic landscape as an animal, plant, human or an artifact assumes that the local people perceive each landscape as a separate functioning system. Each geomantic landscape needs to maintain geomantically favorable conditions in order to keep vital energy in it. For this reason it is utterly important to maintain the geomantic harmony of a landscape and avoid any outside interference that may damage it. For instance, in a reclining cow geomantic landscape, there must be a landform that resembles a reclining cow. In addition, if there is a landscape object that can act as trough or yoke close to the cow, the landscape is considered auspicious and vital energy is available to the occupants from such a place. However, if the harmonized geomantic landscape of reclining cow is interfered with by the construction of a high way or railroad through a spot corresponding to the cow's head or chest, then the cow is dead and the landscape is no longer auspicious (in fact becomes inauspicious). In such a situation, the locals would stand against such an intrusive construction project. One can understand the prohibition of digging a well in the sailing boat geomantic landscape from a similar perspective. Digging a well can be an intrusive action to a harmonized landscape of a sailing boat, because such action is seen as comparable to making a hole in the bottom of a boat. A key point in a geomantic landscape is that a landscape is analogous to a living organism or a functioning inanimate artifact which the local residents treated as an autonomously functioning system. The custom of forbidding well digging meant forbidding the interruption of a harmonized geomantic landscape.

Relationships between the folk custom of forbidding digging wells and the social and religious functions of wells

The custom of forbidding well digging in Korea is closely related to geomancy, especially its idea of ‘geomantic landscapes (pungsu hyongguk)’. Among all the types of geomantic landscape, the folk custom is most closely related to those resembling a sailing boat and

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11 This ancient Chinese explanation of environmental transformation in developmental stages is from Zangshu (Book of Burial) by Guo Pu (276–324) of Eastern Jin dynasty (317–420). Guo Pu in his book seemed to have intended to explain the origin and developmental phases leading to the birth of vital energy. Guo Pu, 1; The above English translation is an edited version from Hong-key Yoon, 2006, p.68.
a golden hen sitting on eggs. In the geomantic landscape of a sailing boat the analogy relating to digging wells as making holes in the bottom of a boat seems logical and natural. However, in the case of the geomantic landscape of a golden hen sitting on eggs, the analogy of ‘extracting blood from the hen’, or ‘frightening the hen and cracking the eggs’ seems too contrived and unnatural. If the custom of forbidding well digging in the geomantic landscape of a golden hen sitting on eggs is justified in this manner, the custom can be justified in any geomantic landscape. Having considered these analogies I postulated that the folk custom of forbidding well digging might not be from geomancy, but instead originated from a separate source. The folk custom of forbidding well digging that was developed from a non-geomantic separate origin gradually adopted the geomantic belief system as a means of enforcing the custom to the people. Here we need to consider the non-geomantic reasons why people might have avoided digging wells in some settlements, while they were able to and wanted to do so. What are the sacred, ecological and social attributes of a well that could have caused the development of the custom of forbidding well digging? The following discussion focuses on the three key characteristics and functions of a well in traditional Korean society that are useful for explaining the custom of forbidding well digging: the intrinsic nature of being sacred, the need for underground water management, and social community forming power of a well.

1. Why a well was treated sacred?

Water is essential resource for maintaining human life. That is why human habitation was limited to the area where water was available. Good quality water for human consumption was always of premium, especially so when it was in the arid zone of the world. In a desert a bottle of water can save the life of a dehydrated person and is indeed acknowledged as having life giving and medicinal (tonic) purposes. Even nowadays in Korea water from certain springs or wells (often from a mountain slope) is known for having special healing power for certain illnesses. A spring or well is sometimes a scared place where people offer prayers for blessings from a particular deity. Koreans of traditional society often believed that a prayer combined with offering clean water to a mountain spirit or deity was effective, and such water was known as yaksu (literally, medicinal water) and the place that produced such a spring or water is known as yaksuto (literally, the site producing medicinal water). Perhaps the most famous sacred water known around the world for having a miraculous healing power is the spring water from Lourdes in the Pyrenees Mountains, a Catholic holy site of a Marian apparition.

In ancient times people might have considered water from a remote mountain spring or from a crack in a boulder more scared than water drawn from a well built by humans on flat land. In traditional society people used to use clean water from springs or streams on a mountain slope for domestic consumption. When such people moved to places where no such water was available, it was thus necessary to secure new clean water for consumption. There might have been two ways to achieve this goal: one was to irrigate clean water from streams or springs on the mountain slope by digging ditches (water channels) to their new homes or villages, and the other was to dig a well by selecting a spot that would reach quality underground water. Sites that can provide clean water are precious. The local people would have looked after it with care and considered it sacred. Researchers have argued that the sacredness of good quality drinkable water is based on and developed from the fact that water supplies energy and
vitality to humans, provides washing and cleansing opportunities and transforms itself mysteriously and awesomely (Ku Mirae, 316). I suggest that the sacred attributes of water can be understood from the following two aspects:

Firstly water is the basic and key resource of supporting human life. Quite simply, humans cannot exist without it. Water not only supplies necessary moisture for the human body in liquid form, but it helps grow food resources for humans. Good quality water from a mountain spring or the crack of a boulder is known as *yaksu*, or medicinal water, in Korea, and the people in traditional society recognized that without water humans could not maintain their life. That is why water was considered sacred and well worship ceremonies and rituals were developed in Korea.

Secondly an important function of water is to cleanse the human body and soul, as well as the surrounding environment. A person who is chosen to conduct the village ritual ceremony is normally a virtuous and honest (clean) person. This person, before leading the ceremony, would stay separate from other villagers and wash his body with clean water. Such actions would be cleansing for his soul as well. There is a Korean folk belief that water can cleanse the body as well as the soul, which is evident in *sikkingut* or a shamanistic cleansing ritual. Water is a sacred substance that can cleanse not just human bodies but also clean the surrounding world. Korean’s regard for water as sacred is perhaps best demonstrated in the folk custom of prayer or a petition ritual, with clean water drawn at dawn before sunrise from a special well or spring.¹²

Water-well is often created by adapting a natural spring, sometimes by slightly modifying its surrounding environment with low lying stone walls. This practice may back up the idea that natural spring water is more sacred than water from an artificial well. A slightly modified natural spring as a form of well in a village retains natural features of a natural spring in many ways and thus the natural sacredness is better retained. The folk custom of forbidding well digging may have developed from people’s attempt to prohibit the proliferation of sacred wells or springs, for when the number of sacred wells increases, their rarity decreases and their sacredness diminishes. The custom of prohibiting well digging seems closely related to the sacred nature of a water-wells and springs.

2. Is the custom of forbidding digging wells related to the protection of the quantity and quality of underground water?

The custom of forbidding well digging may well have developed from attempts to control and protect the quality and quantity of underground water. When another well is drilled, the quality and quantity of water from existing wells may be affected and bring about the disruption of the existing water supply system. Disruption of a drinkable water supply network could mean the development of unhappy disputes between residents within a settlement or between settlements. In order to prevent this ‘foreseen’ problem, the villagers wanted to control and protect the quality and quantity of existing wells and the existing water supply networks. In order to do this, local residents either

¹² Ku Mirae argued that the sacred attributes of water-well are based on the following three symbolisms relating to water: (1) Wells dual identity as a cultural product – sacredness of water and human constructed artefact; (2) a mediator and channel between this world for the present living and the world after death; (3) symbolising the space of birth and rebirth. See Ku Mirae, 320-327.
entirely prohibited the digging of wells, or limited the number of wells to a minimum in
a settlement. This custom of forbidding well digging may well have some rational, wise
or even ‘scientific’ ground for underground water management.

Places that have had well digging forbidden are often those places that have
access to clean stream or river water of drinkable quality. The local residents of such
settlements normally designated a spot on the stream from where they could fetch
water. When I was a little boy I lived in Haeyong village in Sonsan County, North
Kyongsang province there were a few common wells that the villagers shared. However
some villagers, living away from the public wells and nearer to a stream, sometimes
during the dry season (not during the monsoon season) dug out shallow circular pits
that were 30 - 40 cm in depth and 1-2m in diameter in the sand not far from the flowing
stream water. Clean water would seep through the sand and quickly filled the hollow
spot where village women could then safely fetch water for domestic consumption. This
shallow pool was in fact a temporary well that could easily be destroyed or polluted by
children playing nearby or domestic animals passing. We children were told that we
should be careful not to pollute this temporary sand well. I remember that this
temporary well lasted sometimes many weeks until heavy rain demolished the sand
pool by increasing the volume of water that flowed in the stream. When passing cows
returning from the fields or dogs polluted this temporary well, people would abandon it
and simply dig another sand pit for cleaner water. Even this temporary sand hollow,
where cleaner water is drawn, was looked after by the villagers to keep it clean. In the
villages where there were no wells and water was fetched directly from the flowing
stream or river, they kept the area where water was drawn clean.

Daksil Maul (the village of a hen) in Ponghwa County of North Kyongsang
province did not have wells until 30 years ago and until then the whole village fetched
drinkable water from the nearby stream. A village elder who grew up consuming
the stream water advised me that the water was clean and contained no health hazards.
(Interview with Mr Kwon Chonghwan, a village elder, 25 November 2012)

If the quality and quantity of the existing water well was disrupted by digging a
new well, the new well may incite a quarrel or dispute among villagers which is unhappy
and brings misfortune to the village. It is from these unhappy experiences that the
geomantic prophecy relating to digging new wells bringing various kinds of misfortune
to the village originates. The folk custom of forbidding well digging was perhaps closely
related to the management of underground water and the custom was enforced by
riding on the powerful religious idea that geomancy promoted landscape harmony.

3. Is forbidding well digging related to the system of social class control?

A good water well has always been a focus of social life among women in a Korean
village who had to fetch water from common wells for domestic consumption. In order
to maintain the quality and quantity of water in a well, Korean villagers often organized
umulge (a mutual assistance club with membership fees that paid for the maintenance of
the water-well) which consolidated the village’s neighbourhood network. A well was
also a meeting place and socializing site for village women when they went to the well to
draw water or to wash vegetables before cooking for a meal. These aspects of wells in
Korea are plainly known facts to any Korean who lived in a village pre-1960s, in the time
before the country was industrialised. Wells as socializing site for village women is well documented and discussed in the literature.\textsuperscript{13} Therefore, I do not wish to repeat this point in this paper and will instead focus my discussion on a common well as a means of social community formation and social class control in a village. This social function may well explain the existence of the folk custom of forbidding wells in a number of settlements in Korea.

About 60 years ago Haepyong Village, where I lived as a little boy, did not have the custom of forbidding well digging. Only a small number of rich families had private a water-well in their homes, and most villagers fetched water from the village common wells or temporary wells next to the stream in front of the village. I remember seeing that people who did not have wells in their own home sometimes went to fetch water to other houses that did have a private well, if they were blood related relatives or intimate family friends. However, I recall that most families who did not have their own private wells relied on the village common wells for the supply of water. As I reflect on the village situation at that time, having a private well in home was a privilege and acted as social status symbol. Only a few rich and privileged families in the more than 100 households in the village were able to afford to have a well, because the construction of a well required considerable resources and effort in finding (divining) a spot worthy of digging (drilling), in excavating earth 5-10m deep until hitting underground water, and in building the well shaft (vertical tunnel) walls with stones or cement. Having a well at that time was a source of envy for those villagers who did not have wells in their own homes. When we look at the ownership of a well from this angle, the increase of private wells in a village meant the increase of privileged members of the village and the increase of village common wells meant the increase of neighbourhood communities centring on common wells. The addition of more wells could mean destabilising the existing social structure of the village. Thus, the custom of forbidding the proliferation of water-wells might have been practiced as a means of controlling village social structure and social class. I have come to be convinced that a well in traditional Korean villages was an icon of social status and an indicator of social belonging to a certain neighbourhood community.

The relationship between the local residents’ social class status and water-well is demonstrated in qanat (also known as kariz or karez), which is a horizontal tunnel well found in Iran, Iraq and other parts of the Middle Eastern dry belt. The qanat system seemed to be a horizontal tunnel well system developed in ancient times from the areas that is presently known as Iran and Iraq, and spreads out into the Middle Eastern dry belt (English, 170-181). In its construction process, the most important thing is the successful construction of a shaft to reach the underground water table that is known as the mother well. People would not remove water from the mother well and carry it to one’s home, as in the Korean well system. Instead, once they have established the mother well and confirmed a constant supply of water, digging would begin from the proposed village site toward the mother well, which ultimately would create a slightly sloping- almost horizontal tunnel through which water flows naturally to the village.

\textsuperscript{13} Ku Mirae in her article, “Umului Sangjingjok umiwa sahwoijok kinung [The symbolic meanings and social functions of water-well]” (pp.327-336) listed the following three aspects the social functions of a well in Korea: (1) a well that sustain the life of village community; (2) the discourse and folk rituals centring around a well; (3)the surrounding location of a well as a meeting and communication site for women.
The construction of this horizontal well is difficult and costly. Nevertheless, once the qanat system was completed, a constant supply of water was guaranteed to the settlement. At the place where water first surfaces after flowing through the underground tunnel, water is clean and plentiful - this area is normally occupied by the head of village and other upper class people. Water at the lower end of the channel was more polluted and lesser in quantity; thus this area was occupied by lower class people (English, 179). In the qanat system the part (upper or lower) of the channel beside which one lived came to suggest the social status of the person (or the household). The spatial organization of different social classes occurs due to the distribution of water through qanat, the horizontal tunnel well system. However, in modern times, as deep drilling technology has enabled the drilling of deep wells in places where residents need them at relatively reasonable cost, lower class people had access to sufficient quantities of clean water as well. The emergence of deep wells disrupted the established relationships between social class and residential areas. Thus it follows that the people who were formerly privileged and from the upper parts of the channel resisted the introduction of the new technique (English 179-180). The resistance is mainly because the lower class people were able to join the former privileged class of people in the consumption of clean water in sufficient quantity.

In the Korean well system, owning a private well seemed to have functioned as a higher social status symbol in a similar manner as the place of residence on or close to the upper qanat water channel in the Middle East. In Korea the users of the common village wells often took part in neighbourhood cooperation activities and the Korean village wells encouraged people of different social statuses to live nearby and close together around a well. Therefore, the Korean well system discouraged, so to speak, the spatial segregation of different social class, where the traditional qanat system of the Middle East encouraged spatial segregation of residents.

Yangdong Village of Kyongju, Korea is a famous village of Yangban or the scholar-nobility class of the Choson dynasty. This settlement has several common village wells and neighbourhood communities were developed around those wells. This water-well-centred community consisted of the homes of the scholar-nobility class, which held hegemonic power, and the homes of the servant class, karamjip. The members of the ruling class’ houses were big and tile roofed, while servant class houses were small with thatched roofs of rice straws. The houses of residents with these two social statuses were not spatially segregated, but lived close together. Although, unlike the kanat system, houses belonging to lower class people were often located near the entrance of the upper class houses (Kang Dongjin, 1997, 121). These mixed class residential areas were formed by the cultural ecological necessity service providers and service receivers living near each other. The people of Karamjip, the servant class households, provided services like fetching water from wells, washing clothes and cleaning houses for the Yangban class. Fetching water from wells for the Yangban households was especially labour intensive. For these reasons, Yangban households and Karam households were located close together and not segregated spatially. If the Korean well system were like the qanat system, the horizontal tunnel wells of the Middle East, and water flowed to the houses through a channel, then perhaps the water channel would have first entered the Yangban residential areas and then flowed on to the lower class areas. Such a system would have segregated the Yangban residential area from the lower class residential areas. Because the Korean well system used wells that were accessible through a vertical
shaft and servants were required to carry water to the households of service receivers, it was necessary for water fetching servants to live near the Yangban houses. Considering this water delivery service relationship, I argue that Korean wells were the agent discouraging spatial segregation of different social classes and functioned as a cementing agent of spatial integration of different classes in traditional Korean society. At least in the Yangdong Village of Kyongju this phenomenon seemed to have developed.

In a village that had no class distinctions or only common folk, every household fetched water for their own homes. In this case, the whole community centres around a village well with an organised umulge (mutual assistance club with membership fees that pay for maintenance of the common water-well), water-well worship ceremony or well-cleaning days. These water-well related activities accelerated the formation of a close community network and mutual assistance relationships within the settlement. Whether it is qanat system of horizontal tunnel wells in Middle East or Korean wells drawing water from a vertical shaft well, the supply method of well water played a key role in developing distinct residential patterns of different social class in traditional societies, because water is a basic resource for human survival.

Did 'the custom of forbidding well digging' develop from geomancy (pungsu)?

To date ‘the custom of forbidding well digging’ has been closely associated with geomantic ideas and is recognized as a part of a geomantic landscape system. Geomancers believe that a geomantic landscape is an autonomously functioning system. This belief is based on the intrinsic characteristics of vital energy and relates to the underground stage that ever changing Yin-Yang energy goes through. The traditional explanations given for the folk custom of forbidding well digging are based in geomancy: digging a well would destroy the harmony of a geomantic landscape and will cause the loss of vital energy from the auspicious site; the settlement would suffer misfortune, because vital energy would no longer be available for the occupants of the site to benefitting from. Such was geomantic logic and reasoning. However, this paper argued that the folk custom of forbidding well digging does not seem to have its origin in geomantic ideas. A prime reason for my argument is that the custom is not limited to a geomantic landscape of ‘a sailing boat’ that justifies the custom with a logical and reasonable analogy of “digging a well is comparable to making a hole on the bottom of a boat”. The folk custom is found in other geomantic landscape types such as ‘a Golden hen sitting on eggs’, with a somewhat not very convincing justification for forbidding well digging: forbidding well digging is necessary in order not to frighten the hen, which is not as natural and logical reasoning as in forbidding well digging in ‘a sailing boat’ landscape. The justification of ‘a Golden hen sitting on eggs’ landscape seemed rather contrived and awkward: if the village elders forbade digging a well because it is analogous to frightening the hen or drawing blood from the golden hen, then why didn’t they forbid noisier actions such as farmer’s band with brass gong or more dangerous actions such as cooking food by burning firewood? There is no geomantic explanation for allowing such actions, which are potentially noisier or more dangerous. In fact, a noisy band could frighten a hen more than the noise from digging a well and cooking with firewood could hurt the hen more than digging a well, because cooking with fire could be analogous to grilling chicken over a fire. Despite these harmful possibilities, I have not been able to find any geomantic justification for allowing such actions in the geomantic landscape of a golden hen sitting on eggs. Considering these situations, the
geomantic justifications of banning water-wells in a settlement such as this seemed more arbitrary and contrived rather than logical and natural.

Applying the above discussion, one can argue that if digging a well is not allowed in the geomantic landscape of a golden hen sitting on eggs in order to conserve geomantic harmony, other geomantic landscapes may also justify not digging a well by saying it is harmful to their landscapes. For instance residents from a geomantic landscape of 'Jade woman playing a string instrument' could argue that digging a well in their landscape is analogous to injuring the body of the woman or breaking her instrument. Therefore, I have become convinced that my previous understanding of the folk custom of forbidding wells as based on and developed from geomantic ideas was incorrect and new explanations have to be found. What has caused the development and practice of the folk custom of forbidding wells in settlements? In searching for the causes I would like to suggest that we should give special attention to the three aspects of the intrinsic attributes of a well or spring for human life: (1) the sacred quality in folk belief and customs of worshipping wells; (2) the wisdom of wisely managing the quality and quantity of underground water; (3) the necessity of controlling social structure and social class.

From ancient times till now water, especially water from particular wells or springs, were considered sacred and to have healing powers for treating certain diseases. This idea is supported by Koreans’ understanding of water from special springs or wells as being ‘yaksu’ or medicinal water. If wells are thought to be sacred, controlling and limiting their number was necessary for the sacredness can be maintained only when their number is limited. As the number increases so too does the sacred quality conversely declines. If the ancient people considered provision of good quality of water from wells to be sacred, it not difficult to understand why they attempted to forbid digging wells or limit its numbers.

Finding a well site that can supply good quality water in sufficient quantities is not an easy task, and the construction of a well requires special knowhow as well as labour and materials. Even after constructing such a well, maintaining it in good condition would have required considerable effort. Korean village folk customs relating to well cleaning events, well worship ceremonies and organizing village-level mutual assistance clubs for wells support this idea. People during this time might have wanted to control the number of these costly and valuable wells: thus the folk custom of forbidding well digging was probably born. The people of traditional Korea may have especially wanted to control the number of wells to conserve the quality and quantity of underground water within a settlement. A new well could have meant a disaster for the existing village social structure and a disaster to the quality and quantity of the water from existing wells. Thus the custom of forbidding well digging was a natural outcome and represents folk wisdom developed from the past experiences of dealing with social and natural problems associated with wells.

As was stated earlier, water is an essential resource for human survival. Competition, conflict and cooperation for acquisition and distribution of water have always existed throughout the history of humanity. The method of procurement of drinkable water strongly influenced the formation and maintenance of social structure and social order. Matters such as “who owns the well” and “who are the users of the
well” signified the social status of people in the traditional community surrounding a well. Having a well in traditional society caused either cooperation or conflict among the residents of a settlement. In traditional settlements digging and maintaining a well was an important community matter to deal with and the custom of forbidding well digging served as a means of controlling the social and natural order associated with drinkable water. As discussed above the Koreans treat some wells as sacred; at the same time they needed to maintain the quality and quantity of drinkable water for sustaining a stable community; Changes in the ownership and the number of wells meant changes in social structure and social class which resulted in a destabilisation of the traditional society. To stabilise society and prevent social conflict the act of controlling a community by controlling the expansion of wells make sense. These aspects must have been important in the formation and development of the custom of forbidding water-well digging. In other words, the origin of ‘the custom of forbidding water-well digging’ is not rooted in geomancy and must have been a separate development. The custom was first developed as a means of managing underground water-wells and the social structure associated with it, and then the custom incorporated geomantic ideas for a more effective implementation of the custom at community level, which resulted in it being identified as a part of geomantic belief system.

If the custom of forbidding well digging was developed separately, apart from geomancy, what was the original state of the custom? This question is hard to answer and the original state of the custom may be lost forever for little evidence has been left behind to trace its origin. Even if we analyse all Korean myths and legends relating to ‘wells and the custom of forbidding well digging’, tracing back to the original state of the custom will be difficult. Clues to the original state of the custom, before it merged with geomancy, may be taken from the contemporary Korean practice of treating so called yaksu (medicinal water) from special wells or springs with reverence. It is not difficult to imagine that the early Koreans must have treated the sources of their drinking water, such as special springs or wells, as sacred and looked after them carefully. As people spread out further away from these natural springs and wells, it is conceivable that no suitable natural springs or wells were located in the new settlements and so artificial wells had to be constructed. These new artificial wells might not have been endowed with the sacred status of natural wells or springs. At the same time residents may have had disputes within the community over the construction of new wells and the use of the water from them. This uneasy social condition may have naturally and gradually developed into the custom of forbidding well digging. This situation might have been somewhat similar to a traditional Middle Eastern village where residents, dependent on the qanat system for a supply of drinkable water, came to have community disputes over the introduction of new deep well drilling technology. The people who controlled or lived nearby natural wells or springs might have objected to the construction of a new artificial well, or any further proliferation of such artificial wells. However, before the custom of forbidding well digging was integrated into the geomantic system it was difficult to persuade village folk to adopt and practice the custom of forbidding well digging because the custom lacked magical and religious justification. The custom came to be adapted into the geomantic system that had enormous magico-religious power over people’s use of the environment and thus the custom of forbidding well digging gained enormous magical and religious power. This development was perhaps pushed forward by elite members of the community who had hegemonic power in traditional
society and who encouraged the proliferation of the idea that if a new well was dug, the village would suffer from various misfortunes.

Conclusion: A reflection on the folk custom of forbidding well digging

The process of my research into the custom of forbidding well digging began with the belief that the custom was an integral part of geomancy and originated from geomantic ideas as an integral part of geomantic landscape system. I understood that the analogy of digging wells to making holes on the bottom of a boat was an original geomantic justification with geomantic origins. I believed that the custom of forbidding well digging was developed to prevent people's damaging interference to the geomantic landscape of a sailing boat. However, I came to focus on the phenomenon of forbidding well digging in the geomantic landscapes of a golden hen sitting on eggs: In this case, the geomantic justification for forbidding well digging seemed rather contrived and was certainly not as natural and logical as in the case of ‘a sailing boat’. At that point I came to conclude that my earlier understanding of the custom may be incorrect and I needed to investigate the possibility that the origin of the custom may not be related to geomantic ideas. At about that time, I realised that settlements that were known to have no specific or identifiable geomantic landscape type were also practicing the custom of forbidding well digging and had no wells in the villages. These cases supported my hypothesis that the custom must have its own separate origin apart from geomancy, and the custom had adopted the magical and religious power of geomancy to empower and enforce the custom to the residents of a settlement. Through my investigation I came to learn that the sacred nature of some special wells and springs, the need for managing the quality and quantity of wells and function of wells as social class control are important factors in explaining the non-geomantic origin of ‘the custom of forbidding well digging’. My research suggests that it is incorrect to view that the custom of forbidding well digging as having geomantic origins and being practiced for geomantic purposes to conserve the harmony of a geomantic landscape. Instead, it must derive from a non-geomantic origin and have become linked to geomancy through the enforcement process of practicing the custom in traditional Korean society.

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The Environmental Movement of Christianity and Buddhism in Contemporary Korea: the Common Efforts and their Limitations

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Abstract
The topic falls within the first of the proposed thematic categories, ‘Influence of religions in the formation of modern Korea.’ Scholars of Korean religions have commonly held the view that Christianity and Buddhism have deliberately tried to exclude each other, as they struggled to win people’s favour during the period of radical socio-economic changes in the last fifty years. While not entirely denying that there have been various impediments to the efforts for religious reconciliation, we argue here that the existing scholarship have grossly exaggerated the extent of religious conflict.

In fact the two religions have been widening a common ground of understanding and forming close alliance. At the core of the positive engagement has been environmental protection movement. For the last twenty years, environmental movement by the two religions, while inspiring civil society groups by setting a model agenda, action plans, and a shared conception of values concerning human happiness, have led them to forming a relationship of coexistence at an unprecedented level.

To show how environmental movement has brought the two together, we examine (i) the way Korean Christians and Buddhists developed ecological debates within their own circles; (ii) the extent to which they managed to devise common strategies to tackle major environmental disasters; and (iii) what obstacles stand in the way for moving towards greater religious harmony. This survey is a part of a larger research project on the theory and practice of ecological movement by five major religions and their impact on modern Korea.

1. Prologue: the significance of the issue

In the case of environmental issues, established religions can play as important a role as political parties and civil society groups. The urgency of the situation calls for participation and cooperation of all members of the earth affected. In particular we often find in their doctrines or beliefs a seed of arguments about where the environmental crises originated and where we can find the solutions. In this way religions, with their systematic body of decision-makings and actions, can play an important role in identifying and solving environmental problems. Their roles are particularly significant in that environmental crises often require voluntary participation on individual initiatives rather than political mobilization by the government.

When the government intervenes to solve environmental problems, it often finds itself torn between the policy options of development and conservation. Given the historical pattern developed in modern Korea wherein the government has led social and economic development, the regulation and management of the central decision-making processes require not only balancing acts by the parties in opposition but also partnership with civil organizations through forging consensus among the general
public. Korean Christianity and Buddhism are the two major institutions which play such a role in the case of environmental problems.¹

Environmental movements are primarily concerned with the preservation of environment and the condition of life, but more fundamentally they represent a body of thoughts and actions pertaining to the problem of human existence itself. In other words they aim to regulate conflicting interests between individual humans or groups of humans. Conflicts emerge from ‘differences’ and ‘gaps’ between members of society, e.g., between generations, nations, different ethnicities, and religious beliefs. One may argue that the ethnic homogeneity of Korean people has facilitated suppression of religious conflicts. Yet the statistics of people’s religious affiliation indicate growing religious pluralism in Korea, hence potentially leading to conflicts between religions.

The lack of a dominant religion in contemporary Korea can be explained from the long historical tradition in which the kings of the Joseon Dynasty suppressed religions in general. Buddhism prides itself on an ancient lineage and yet it failed to keep its line through the 500 years of the Joseon Dynasty. Now it is known to be the most popular religion in Korea. In contrast, introduced during the late Joseon period, Christianity has been around in Korea for a much shorter period.² However it has been exerting greater influence on the psyche and lifestyle of modern Korean people than Buddhism has. In addition to these most popular religions, Korea has seen increasing influence of minor religions such as Won-Buddhism, Chondogyo, and Confucianism.³

The unique way that the relationship between Christianity and Buddhism has evolved in Korean political history has contributed to keeping religious conflict at a surprisingly low level unlike in Britain, France, or Germany where religious conflicts often ravaged the life of common people for several hundred years. Yet there is no evidence that Korea will be free from religious conflicts in the future; it may be the opposite case.

Given the precarious relationship between the two religions and between them and the general public, collaboration over environmental issues has great significance. Although the West has often seen cooperation between different denominations within a religion, it has rarely seen it between different religions, e.g., between Christians and Muslims, or Muslims and Buddhists. In this regard, no matter how substantial it might have been, the collaboration over environmental issues in Korea presents a unique case to religious relationships in the world. In short environmental crises in Korea have offered “opportunities of encounters.” Moreover, by initiating cooperation over issues that have strong social consequences, they are now exhibiting a model of how responsible social institutions should behave publicly; and in this regard, the

¹ The national census on religious affiliation distinguishes Protestants from Catholics in Korea. However in this article the term Christians or Christianity refers to both groups.
² According to the survey done on November 2005 by the Institute of Culture and Religion, Academy of Korean Studies, there were 10,726,463 Buddhists, 8,616,438 Protestants, and 5,146,147 Catholics. See the 2011 Report on Population and Statistics Census (Seoul: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2011), 9.
³ According to the 2005 Agency of Statistics Report, 53% of the whole population identified themselves as religious. See the Report, “Religious Affiliation of People” (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2005), 11.
environmental cooperation has revived the confidence of the general public in established religions as well.

This article intends to shed light on the impact of environmental collaboration on the relationship of the two religions within the framework of Korean religious culture. In the second section, the authors investigate how debates on environmental issues first started within each religion before they gained momentum to evolve into concrete actions, while exploring at the same time other factors that have shaped their positions within and without the national boundary. In the third section, the article will study specific cases of collaboration and identify the elements that affected the outcome of the collaborations. The authors conclude the paper by summarizing the implication of the environmental collaboration for the present and future relationships of the two religions.

2. The origin of environmental debates and their development in Korean Buddhism and Christianity

a. Buddhist environmental movements

The ecological aspects of Buddhist doctrines

Buddhism, a religion with the largest number of followers in Korea, has been actively involved in environmental protection and ecological conservation in recent times. It believes that its scriptures have long expounded ecological values and that the humble and natural way of Buddhist life is intrinsically ecology-friendly. Although not everyone shares such a view, people have been increasingly welcoming the Buddhist doctrine as truly congenial to an eco-friendly way of life. Those doctrines can be summarised as follows.

Firstly, Buddhism teaches non-killing. This is one of the oldest and most important doctrines in Buddhism. The principle of non-killing stems from belief in the sanctity of all life, which can be readily incorporated into the notions of bio-diversity and conservation. Secondly, it believes in the interconnection of all things. Buddhists often resort to this principle when they need to defend their involvement in environmental movement. The principle of interconnection postulates each member of the universe being tied to others in a net of cause and effect. Here hatred and harms done toward others or domination and destruction of the humanity's habitat always come back as a threat to humans. Thirdly, Buddhism regards everything in the world as a manifestation

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4 The Report, "Religious Affiliation of People", 16.
5 For example, Damien Keown, "Buddhism and Ecology" in Critique of Modern Society and Buddhist Ecology, ed. BK21 the Group of Buddhist Cultural Idea Education of Dongguk University (Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 2006), 512.
of Buddhahood. Buddha has myriad forms of incarnation in the body and spirit of the cosmos. Hence Buddhists are obliged to protect every life they encounter during this life just as they look after their own bodies, as well as to treat them as equally sanctified as their own life. Bobjong, a revered Buddhist monk and writer, once explained it in terms of ‘an expanded-self.”

In addition Bobryun, of Eco Buddha, resorts to the concept of ‘I expanded in time and space’ to explain this. In this regard Buddhism shares a view of the world with Christianity. The Christian conception of human being created in the image of God (Gen. 1: 26-27) also helps to justify the dictum that one should love others as one loves himself (Mt. 7:12, Eph. 5:29). In a way the three ‘ecological’ principles in the Buddhist doctrine are not unique to Buddhism. Religions converge on the interconnection of all things and the dignity of each member of the universe.

Buddhism and the challenges of modern times

There has been growing concern over the diminishing popularity of religious institutions in Korea. The membership, particularly among young generations, is rapidly shrinking. The sense of crises has led clergies and monks to conclude that their institutions must find a way to revert this trend. Buddhist leaders now turn their eyes to positive effects of tackling ecological crises on the self-image of Buddhism among young generations. As it has been mentioned above, Buddhism has long cherished an eco-friendly lifestyle, which they are now incorporating into their official teachings.

One may propose a more cautious approach in postulating intrinsic compatibility between Buddhism and ecological concerns, since the ecological crises are a modern phenomenon. One may even question whether environmental movement belongs to the realm of religion. Certainly putting Buddhism on a par with an ecological ideology requires more than a simple collection of apparently congenial passages from its Scriptures. However, what is important is the actual movement that is developing among lay believers who try to translate what they read in their Scriptures into concrete actions when they watch the natural habitat gradually eroded around them. Moreover religions cannot simply remain silent watching the health of the environment being seriously damaged through land projects and industrial activities, since they threaten the quality of life of the religious community as a whole. Environmental movement has thus become a moral responsibility for Buddhists.

Buddhist environmental organizations

The onset of Buddhist environmental movement coincided with the establishment of the Korea Buddhist Institute of Environmental Education in March 1988. It was followed by the formation of ‘the National Campaign for a Clean Land’ by Song Wolju, then the

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8 For example, Wolju Song, “Let’s protect the environment from serious pollutions” [simgakhan konghaerubutő hwan-gyŏng-ŭl pohohaja] in Religion and Environment [Chonggyowa Hwan’gyŏng], ed. by the Korea Conference on Religion and Peace (Seoul:KCRP, 1993), 58-9.
Secretary of the Jogyejong (the Jogye Order), and by the movement of ‘In Purity and With Fragrance’ by Beobjeong in 1994. Yet a proper Buddhist involvement in environmental movement did not take place until when they reopened the existing Korea Buddhist Institute of Environmental Education under a new name, Eco Buddha. Initially Eco Buddha took a left-wing populist position aimed at tackling pollution problems and socio-economic injustice at the same time.\footnote{Daehwa ed., \textit{A Study}, 120.}

In addition the Indramang Life Community, formed in 1999, added force to the Buddhist environmental movement by encouraging its followers to lead a natural way of life centred on an agricultural community moving away from an urban secular life style. This community is presently led by Dobeob, an ordained Buddhist monk. In September 2001 Sugyeong cofounded the Buddhist Environment Alliance to deal with various environmental issues\footnote{Daehwa ed., \textit{A Study}, 132-3.}, and the Jogyejong, the largest Buddhist order in Korea, decided to create the Environmental Committee under the direct supervision of the General Secretary which subsequently initiated the People’s Action for Saving Mt. Jiri. Recently it began to engage with other organizations on the issue of nuclear energy.\footnote{\textit{Pobbo Newspaper}, 2 April 2013.} Generally speaking Korean Buddhism has established a number of environment-related organizations in response to the ecological crises of the time, assigning a different task to each of them.

b. Christianity

The rise of environmental movement

During the 1970s Christian organizations such as Christian Academy or YMCA occasionally met to debate the significance of environmental damages for the life and faith of Christians. Yet it is after 1982 that Christian ecological movement took off in a way that it could have actual impact on government policies and people’s perception of the environment in which they live.

When the Korea Institute of Pollution Research was established in 1982, pro-democracy activists found a venue wherein they could research pollution as a political issue for the time. Since the institute was run not only by Christians but also by non-Christian left-wing activists, it was not running entirely on Christian ethos. Yet at the heart of the operation were a number of Christians such as Shim Sung-hun and Kim Taek-am from the Catholic Church and Kwon Ho-kyeong, Cho Sung-hyeok, and Cho Hwa-soon from the Protestant sector. These Christian activists dominantly led the institution in collaboration with some non-Christian left wing leaders such as Choi Yeol and Jeong Mun-hwa.\footnote{Dongho Shin, "Drive Out Pollution a Way to Anti-Nuclear and Peace" \[Konghae ch’ubang panhaek p’yŏngha-ŭi gil\], in \textit{A Way to Life and Peace: the Thirty Years of Korean Environmental Movement, 1982-2012} [Saengmyŏng P’yŏngha-ŭi Gil: Hangukhwangyŏngundong 30 nyŏn, 1982-2012], ed. Sejung Lee et al. (Seoul: Green Fund, 2012), 138-9.}

The anti-governmental orientation of the environmental movement led by the institute has its origin in the political map of the time involving anti-governmental
democratic movements at the centre. The increasingly bitter protest against the late President Park’s dictatorship, invigorated since the late 1970s, reached its peak in May 1980. Yet as the succeeding government consolidated military dictatorship by around 1983 and brutally crushed civil democratic movements, the party in opposition and democratic activists had to find an alternative strategy of democratic movement. They found it in environmental movement.

The environmental movement at first took the form of anti-pollution protest. Pollution cases put a clear line between the villains and the victims. The villains were the power elite and the entrepreneurs who sought to maximize economic profits under their tutelage. The victims were grassroots who had neither a privileged status nor economic means by which to protect their interests. The parties challenging the status quo treated the anti-pollution movement as a protest by the socially oppressed against the exploitative finance and dictatorial power. In this regard the initial environmental movement went hand in hand with the movement of socio-economic liberation and anti-government pro-democracy.

A turning point: 1992

As the Korea Institute of Pollution Research was renamed as the Korea Church Institute of Environment in 1992, the leftist activists who had been running the former increasingly manifested religious orientation in their activities. Their membership comprised not only Catholics and Protestants but also Buddhists, thus making the new institution a union of multiple religions. But around this time, the Christian environmental movement came to see a paradigmatic change. It shifted its main concern from narrowly defined anti-capitalist and anti-pollution protests to a broad perspective of ecological crises at national and global levels.

Two forces were working behind this change. Pope John Paul II sent a message of ‘a new ecological awakening’ to the entire Catholic churches on the Day of World Peace in 1990.\textsuperscript{16} It was followed by commentaries of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, which urged each local church and every lay believer to seek how to preserve the created order.\textsuperscript{17} The papal message encouraged Catholic believers to pay attention to bigger issues such as air and soil pollution, nuclear energy, and the so-called ‘death-inducing dietary habit’ with great seriousness. Moreover as the Korean Catholic Church started the One Mind and One Body Movement in 1991, various Catholic organizations and monasteries participated actively in the movement to conserve the environment.\textsuperscript{18}

As Korean Catholics became active in domestic environmental movements, the Church became more receptive to the trend in international community. Korean churches, both Catholic and Protestant, dispatched their own representatives as a part of the grand coalition team consisting of government officers, business representatives and NGOs, to the 1992 UNCED (The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, or also known as the Earth Summit) held in Rio de Janeiro. The Catholic Church was represented by the Korea Catholic Council of Justice and Peace, not a specialist team with regards to environmental issues and yet given the important

\textsuperscript{16} Daehwa, \textit{A Study}, 58.
\textsuperscript{17} Daehwa, \textit{A Study}, 59.
\textsuperscript{18} Daehwa, \textit{A Study}, 60-1.
mission to calibrate its position vis-à-vis similar organizations abroad. The Protestant churches also dispatched members of the former Korea Institute of Pollution Research to represent their interest.

Driven by the impetus from abroad, Christian environmentalists in Korea gradually began to see environmental problems not as a local issue requiring merely an anti-pollution protest, but as a crucial factor that could determine the future of the nation and of the globe. Undoubtedly such a shift did not happen without creating schism within the circle. A typical voice of reservation is heard in the 1990 March issue of Survival and Peace, the official magazine of the Korea Institute of Pollution Research. It raised criticism that unlike in a pollution case in which one could draw the line of liability clearly, “the issue of the earth environment has blurred the perceived cause of damages and the responsibility by putting everything in one sweeping package of ‘the earth.’”

Reflecting all these changes in the environmental movement, the Korea Church Institute of Environment reshuffled its organization in 1997 under the new name of the Christian Coalition of Environmental Movement by combining all the environmental organizations operating within the Protestant circle. From that time on, the Christian movement went beyond the old framework of pollution protest to a larger environmental issue concerned with the health of the national and the planetary ecology. The period of twenty years from the early 1990s to 2012 has seen three developments. Firstly, as the pro-democracy movement progressed, Christian environmental activists began to influence government policies. Secondly, they no longer stayed content with the strategy of raising alarms but began to build expertise about environmental issues on which to identify the problems and propose solutions. Thirdly, now the environmental movement shifted its main focus away from the existing government-led, Seoul-centred programs to civil society-led, rural area-centred ones.

Against the backdrop of such changes, particularly since around 2004, Korean Christians concentrated their efforts on the most fundamental problems of environmental issues such as climate change, de-nuclearization, and energy conversion. This suggests that the horizon of the Christian environmental movement has been expanded to cover the fate of the entire globe beyond the border of the Korean peninsula. As a way of fulfilling this broadened goal, Christian activists like Yoo Miho suggested that individuals could help to catch global warming by reducing individual production of CO2, practicing ‘carbon neutral’, and promoting the so-called ‘diet for life.’

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19 Shin, “Drive Out”, 142.
21 Miho Yoo, “The examples of responses by churches to climate change and a proposal for action” [Kihu pyŏnhwa daeung kyo’hwe saryewa shilch’on je-an], in The Age of Collapsing Climate [Kihu punggwe shidae], ed. by the Korea Church Institute of Environment (Seoul: Dongyeon Publishing, 2010), 335-46.
The emergence of collaboration between Buddhism and Christianity

As it was mentioned above, the Buddhist doctrine of interconnection and the moderate and frugal lifestyle emphasized in the Zen tradition has encouraged Buddhists to be interested in ecological problems. In response to various domestic environmental crises, the Protestant Christians in Korea started discussions, as early as in 1960s, on how humans should relate themselves to the created order and conserve it. Particularly the General Assembly of the Fifth World Council of Churches held in 1875 in Nairobi put the ecological crisis on the main agenda.²²

Such developments abroad seriously influenced theological thinkings in Korea. Ever since 1970s when Seo Namdong, a Protestant church theologian, began to expound an ecological theology, Korean Protestant churches tried to explain the threat to the earth ecology within the framework of a failing relationship with God mediated through the abused created order. At the heart of the theology was a thought that God put humans in the world as a steward with responsibility to look after other creatures which suffer the consequences of human greed, and that the church had a duty to stop the destruction of the earth environment.²³ The Christian idea of the dignity of all life and human responsibility to respond to the tormented voice of other creatures was in essence the same as what the Buddhist doctrine of the sanctity and interconnection of all life. This becomes all the more clear if we look at the Papal encyclical by Pope John Paul II in 1987. He declared that all life forms organically belonged to a system in close interdependence. It indicates that the Catholic Church is moving away from the anthropocentric reading of Genesis 1:28 in which man was supposedly commanded to multiply and exploit the world to a more holistic and ecologically tenable position.²⁴

A contact point has been already emerging between Korean Buddhism and Christianity. Both believe in equality of all creatures and in interconnection between them which would be ignored only at the expense of human happiness. The convergence does not mean that one has accepted the entire doctrine of the other religion or shared its salvific vision. Recently Catholic and Protestant theologians in the West have sought to accommodate with each other through various ecumenical forums, but the unique religious culture in Korea has allowed no comparable attempts between Catholics, Protestants, and Buddhism. And yet, we can say that at least at a doctrinal level, there has been some consensus on the sanctity of life and the interconnection of all creatures on the earth.

Some salient cases of pollution and environmental damage witnessed in the midst of an emerging convergence, although limited in scope, have inevitably brought the two camps closer. It is true that the two religions had at first raised the environmental issues for different reasons. As we will see in more detail, Buddhism concerned itself about the environment since some government-driven development projects were to destroy their temples or affect the environment surrounding them. In the case of Christianity, the activists spearheaded the movements since they believed that industrial pollutions aggravated the predicament of farmers and labourers who had

²² Daehwa, A Study, 146.
²³ Daehwa, A Study, 147.
²⁴ For example, Lynn W., Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," Science 155, 1967.
already suffered the socio-economic injustice brought by the government’s developmental plans.

Whatever the motives might have been, the two religions managed to forge common action plans when they faced rapid destruction of lands and rivers. The most decisive of these common efforts was the Conference of Religious People on Environment and Ethics, which was held by six representative religions in May 1993. The conference set off a series of annual meetings in which their delegates discussed various environmental issues from a religious point of view. As a result they were able to take a united front in protesting against the planned Dong-gang Dam, the Saemangeum Seawall Project, and the Mt. Jiri Dam. In May 2001 soon after they formed a tactical alliance in resistance to the Saemangeum Seawall Project, they created the Conference on Religion and Environment, the first ever comprehensive consultative body of the kind involving all major religions in Korea.

3. Areas of collaboration between Christianity and Buddhism

It may be possible to divide cases of environmental collaboration into two categories. The first pertains to those where the two religions managed to achieve specific collaborations revolving around construction projects funded and implemented by the government. The cases belonging to this category can be further divided into (a) protests aiming at habitat conservation where religious organizations worked alongside other civil society groups but without playing an active role; (b) cases where the religious organizations took a leading role both in raising the issue at first and mobilizing other non-religious environmental groups in the process; and (c) cases in which a local issue has become politicized so that it has blown out of size with no room for control left for the participating religious bodies. The second category revolves around the issue of nuclear energy. This is differentiated from the first in that it required convergence at a deeper level of consciousness including shared understanding of the meaning of life and future of the human species as well as treatment of the entire planetary eco-system as a theatre for action.

a. Actions focused on specific incidents at local and national levels

The first sub-category consists of protests against government-driven development projects organized to prevent destruction of lands and rivers. There are many cases of collective actions that drew serious attention from the general public. In these cases the development projects were opposed by a number of groups such as the local government, local environmental action groups, intellectuals, and the affected residents. Christian churches and Buddhist temples also took part in these events, but they usually followed the trend rather than actively shaping the course of the event. The results were mostly successful.

A typical case is the Donggang Dam project. When the Han River was flooded in September 1990, the upper regions of Yeongwol and Danyang were severely affected by the rising waters. The government decided to build a multi-purpose dam in Donggang

25 Daehwa, A Study, 49.
(the Dong River) and designated the area as a site for the construction project in September 1997. This triggered off a massive protest by the local residents. The Kangwon Province Branch of the Taegojong, an influential Buddhist order, denounced the project and actively participated in mass demonstrations with other civil organizations. The National Council of Churches also dispatched a team headed by Jeong Hagyong, the chairman of its Environmental Committee, which held special services for 'Save the Donggang' and carried out protest walks. The dam project over such an ecologically important and scenic route scattered with historical-cultural heritages including the epitaph of the King Danjong, failed to garner support from the general public and in the end President Kim Dae-joong announced on 5 June 2000 that the government would abandon the plan.

The second sub-category is characterised by active leadership taken by religious establishments. The most typical case includes the Saemangeum Project. The government proposed the project as a way of land reclamation in the Man’gyeong Plain by creating a seawall stretching 33 km along the west coast. Completion of the seawall would annihilate the coast mudflats leading to a destruction of bio-diversity at the site and around the adjacent seas. While various environmental groups organized mass rallies at the site and the local residents brought the case to the court, the delegates of the four major religions, i.e., Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, and Won Buddhism, carried out ‘A Three Steps One Bow Walk’ along the entire course of 50 km from Saemangeum to the Presidential Office in Seoul. The walk five days to complete.

The walk brought an enormous symbolic status to the four delegates and the participating religions, particularly the Catholic Mun Kyunhyeon and the Buddhist Sukyung. However it impressed neither the government policy-makers nor the Supreme Court, and construction of the world’s longest seawall was completed in April 2010. The whole course of the protest was met by an equal amount of antipathy on the other side. And the business groups which were behind this project obviously had a stake that no one proved to be able to prevail over.

In the third sub-category, we see issues that originally evolved from clashes between local interests but increasingly came to involve various ideological positions and interests at a national level. In 2007 the ROK Navy announced a plan to build a naval base which was to cover an area of 450,000 m² in Gangjeong Village in Jeju Island. The government justified the plan with the argument that it needed a naval base to check the future expansion of Chinese naval power in the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea. At first the village people, the local government, and environmental organizations focused on the environmental impact on the life of the village and its fishery.

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26 Yonhap News, 8 April 1999.
27 Yonhap News, 22 July 1998; see also Daehwa, A Study, 158.
29 DongA Ilbo, 6 June 2000.
30 On the verdict by the Seoul District High Court, see Seoul Kyeongje, 29 January 2001.
31 DongA Ilbo, 24 March 2003.
33 On the final verdict by the Supreme Court, see Kookmin Ilbo, 16 March 2006.
Christian and Buddhist environmental groups flocked to the site for a systematic protest denying the priority of a military base over ecological conservation. As this was happening, the issue spilt over into party politics adding political dimension to an issue originally raised as an environmental case. The PCRK (Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea) issued a formal statement. The project would not only destroy the natural habitat of the site designated as a bio-conservation area by the UNESCO but also directly contradict Christian pacifism by putting military hegemony ahead of peace and life symbolized by the village. A few months prior to this, on 13 May 2011, the delegates of the five major religions, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Won Buddhism, and Chondogyo had held a press conference. They demanded that the government should immediately abandon the construction project. Although the protest still goes on, the case shows the limitation of the collaboration through which the religious groups have managed to draw wide attention from the general public and yet failed to achieve the desired goal due to heavy politicization of the issue.

b. The nuclear issue: the rise of ‘sanctified life’ and the paradigmatic shift

Korea had not seen any serious anti-nuclear protests until the government designated a small island on the west coast, Anmyeon Island, as a candidate for nuclear waste disposal site in 1990. With other environmental problems, the activists usually had been able to build rapport with local people which they used as a justification for attacking what they blamed as an undemocratic political decision. That was not the case with the issue of nuclear waste disposal. The primary reason is the different stakes that groups of people affected come to have. The government often wooed local people by giving various socio-economic incentives and as a result conflicting positions emerged not only between the environmental activists and the local people but even between the local people themselves.

But insofar as the nuclear issue is concerned, the mainstream environmental activists have consistently held a negative position, and Korean Buddhists and Christians have not deviated much from the norm. Echoing such a trend, Professor An Byeonok, an environmental activist and ecologist, commented that in Europe and elsewhere the anti-nuclear position is so fundamental that concession has never been on the agenda for true green movement. The mainline environmental activists may differ on other issues, but never on the nuclear questions.

In this respect Korean Buddhists and Christians consider the German case to be the most successful example of anti-nuclear movement. For example, Ko Jaegil, a Christian environmental activist, argues that Korean churches ought to follow the model set by German churches and the German government. On 30 May 2011 the German government announced that it would phase out all the nuclear power plants by 2022.

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35 Jeju Today, 13 May 2011 (http://m.ijejutoday.com/articleView.html?idxno=123621&menu=3)
36 Shin, "Drive Out", 138.
Behind the decision was the impact of the Fukushima accident, but according to Ko, the pressure from German churches also played a decisive role.\(^{38}\)

Toeing the line with such development overseas, Korean Buddhists and Christians synchronized anti-nuclear movement demanding at the same time the renovation of individual life style and the search of alternative energy. The voice from the opposite side is still strong: where else could we find the needed energy unless we go back to fossil fuels? The Christian response has been straightforward: ‘Cut down energy consumption by changing the life style.’ For example, Yoo Miho, the head of Policy Committee at the Christian Environment Institute, argued that since 25% of the energy consumed in Korea comes from nuclear sources, by reducing exactly the same amount, people can close the nuclear plants.\(^{39}\) Accordingly she proposed a nationwide campaign to write a daily energy consumption logbook and practice fasting to fight carbon production during the Lent.\(^{40}\)

The recent environmental movement has been shifting its main concern from anti-nuclear protest to de-nuclear protest. Radically departing from the existing action-oriented protest against particular nuclear policies, the Protestant Christians now focus on the broad issue of energy saving and alternative energy sources as a package solution to global warming. Recently the Christian Alliance for a Nuclear-free World and the National Council of Churches have been holding regular ‘De-Nuclear Services’ on Sundays.\(^{41}\) Catholic churches also now function as a single unit devoted to de-nuclear energy movement on both theological and pastoral fronts.\(^{42}\)

In contrast, Buddhism organized no centrally concerted anti-nuclear movement until a few years ago. Any anti-nuclear demonstrations were participated in by individual believers or local Buddhist temples. However with the establishment of the Buddhist Council of Life and Ethics in March 2012, Buddhism began to organize all nuclear-related movements under a central leadership. Bobung, a co-chairman of the Council, publicly denounced the government arguing that “nuclear energy is like a fire which, once ignited, refuses extinction, and that is the true face of nuclear power hiding itself behind the label of clean energy.” Hence, he continues, “the Buddhist lifestyle which encourages ‘being content with a small desire’ (soyokchijok) can offer solution to the nuclear issue by helping to save energy and find alternative energy forms.”\(^{43}\) Beophyeon, a member of the Executive Committee of the Council, also said, “nuclear energy has never been a solution to the energy problem,...from the Buddhist point view, the solution strictly lies in restoring the purity of the mind... [t]he Council will look at the issue very seriously from this day on, and suggest its own way of action.”\(^{44}\)

\(^{38}\) For example, Nikolaus Schneider, the chairman of the Reformed Church Council (EKD) and Friedrich Weber, the EKD Head of Braunschweig State put consistent pressure on the government with warning about the irreversible consequences of nuclear accidents and the mistake of relying upon nuclear energy hence demanding the earliest possible closure of all nuclear power plants. See Ko, “Germany”, 41.

\(^{39}\) Miho Yoo, “Asking for What is Only Needed: Dreaming a World Free of Nuclear Power” [P’iryomank’ŭm Kuhamyŏnsŏ wŏnjŏn ömnŭn sesang-ŭl kkumkkuda], in New Heaven, 50.

\(^{40}\) Yoo, “The Examples”, 327-46.


\(^{42}\) Pressian, 21 May 2013.


\(^{44}\) BTN News, 1 March 2012.
implication is clear. De-nuclear movement will be treated as one of the most crucial issues in the Korean Buddhist environmental movement.

Encouraged by the strong public support for Christian and Buddhist de-nuclear movements, the Conference of Religion and Environment began to forge a united front between the major religions. On 20 -23 August 2012, the delegates of Catholicism, Buddhism, Protestantism, Won Buddhism, and Chondogyo made ritual circle walks around the nuclear power plants at Gori, Wolsong, and Uljin under the banner of ‘a Pan-Religious Coalition Pilgrimage of Life and Peace for a World without Nuclear Power’ and read out ‘the Religious People’s Declaration for the World free of Nuclear.’ Until then the five religions used to participate in protest only individually against the government’s policies on nuclear waste disposal sites. This declaration has historic significance in that for the first time in their history the five religions worked out their positions on the nuclear issue in concert. In this particular occasion, they made it clear with one voice that nuclear energy programs put economic interests ahead of human life and other life forms, and demanded that the planned building of nuclear power plants at Yeongdeok and Samcheok should be abandoned. 45

Before embarking on the circle walks, the Conference criticized the government policies on nuclear energy arguing, “the whole world is looking for a way to abandon nuclear energy after the Fukushima accident, but this government is pursuing the nuclear option with all the greater zeal with attempts to extend the life of the power plants beyond their expiry dates and to secure sites to build new facilities on.” 46 It also argued, “we intend to report about the true face of nuclear industry in the Republic of Korea wherein life is being destroyed and peace is squashed under the feet so that we can awaken the people to this stark reality and suggest a true road to life and peace.” 47 In saying so, the Conference suggested that it would stop the existing non-cooperative local-centred movements and instead develop a pan-national de-nuclear coalition.

The Conference has consistently argued that unless people renounce the luxurious life style and change the habit of excessive energy consumption through moderation and frugality, there can be no way to bring about a world free of nuclear energy. In addition, religion and faith are bound to play the most crucial role, since renunciation of innermost desire for extravaganza and restraining of the thirst for material possession demand fundamental change to the mode of human existence both individually and collectively. This indicates that, given the expected increase of environmental crises and the consequent rising pressure on people to think about the meaning of life and the fate of human civilization itself, religions will play an increasingly important role in future de-nuclear movements.

45 The full Korean text of the Declaration is found at http://www.cbck.or.kr/bbs/bbs_read.asp?board_id=K15000&bid=13009004>.
47 Oh My News, 16 August.
4. The evaluation of Buddhist and Christian collaboration

The concerted actions garnered some support from the general public, which was essential for achieving success in the rallies against polluting industries and development projects by the government. The blocking of the Dong-gang Dam construction is a case in point. The two parties were able to draw massive support from people since the project, if implemented, would destroy a number of scenic attractions and historical heritages scattered along the river. In the case of the Buan nuclear waste disposal site, the obvious danger involved in the plan stirred a considerable level of fear among people, particularly among the local residents who had a direct stake in it. For movements organized by Christian and Buddhist environmentalists, such popular support was essential. In terms of popular support and its relationship to the success rate, we do not see much difference between religious and non-religious organizations.

Yet Christian and Buddhist movements had unique strength that non-religious organizations were lacking: the organizational power and the moral influence of religions in general. Moreover, since the religious organizations have accumulated expertise on environmental issues for a considerable period of time, they could easily create ‘a will to protest’ among citizens and transform it into a successful rally. For example, the Christian Environmental Movement Coalition, Eco Buddha, or the Buddhist Environment Conference have had long experience in representing people’s interest over environmental issues and in collaborating with civil environmental movement groups, so they could easily mobilize people into organized actions.

In addition, behind faith-based local environmental groups were the central leaderships of the religious communities backing their protest using their influential positions in the society. A case in point is the formal support given by the Jogye Order Headquarter for the Buddhist delegate who joined the Three Steps One Bow Pilgrimage in relation to the Saemangeum project. Another factor that contributed to the high rate of success is the unusual level of commitment with which religious environment organizations carried out their work. This is partly due to the inevitable role of their religious conviction.

Finally, the environmental movements of Christian and Buddhist organizations aimed at strictly practical goals. In the case of protests against the Donggang Dam plan and the Buan nuclear waste site, they set their goals not in developing a long-term strategic collaboration, but only in conservation of the sites at issue. Focusing on the actual problems themselves while keeping potential sources of disagreement at bay resulted in quick formation of consensus over specific action to achieve the desired goals.

A movement failed when it went against the interests of the majority. This was also the case, when there were a multiple number of influential groups with conflicting positions over a developmental project or conservation of a site, or when there was no one dominant voice. Or when a party in favour of a development project prevailed throughout the course of the debate, the argument in favour of conservation did not convince the general public. This was particularly the case when the consensus was leaning towards development within the government and political parties. The examples include the Seoul-Busan High Speed Railway Construction, the Mt. Cheonseong Tunnel
construction, the Seoul Outer Circular Motorway Project, the Mt. Bukhan Tunnel
collection, the Saemangeum Project, and the Four Main Rivers Project.

Politicization of some environmental groups, whether actual or merely apparent,
alienated the general public. Some Buddhist and Christian environmental organizations
publicly expressed strong political views during elections or supported particular
candidates, deterring a needed rapport with the general public which subsequently
viewed the environmental programs by these groups with suspicion. Jiyul, a Buddhist
monk, expressed public support for Roh Moo-hyun, then a presidential candidate, when
he promised to change the planned route of the high speed railway in order to avoid Mt
Cheonseong. In addition people treated some conservation and popular movements
as politically motivated, such as the protest against FTA, the massive candle-light civil
protest against the Grand Canal Project, and street demonstrations against the planned
naval base in Gangjeong Village.

Finally some extreme actions invited negative responses from the general public. As the
hunger strike by Jiyul lasted beyond the 40 day point, there was an apprehensive
mood that her possible death could give a fatal blow to the Roh government. The hunger
strike also drew serious attention from the media. Another example is the case of
Munsu, an ordained Buddhist monk, who set himself on fire in the wake of protest
against the Four Major River Project. There have been heated debates both within the
environmental organizations and without, on whether an extremist protest will serve
the purpose or not. In addition such events led some people to think that environmental
movements were none other than disguised political movements.

5. Conclusion

The discussions so far show at least two points clearly. At the level of doctrine the two
religions share a common understanding of what is at stake in environmental issues.
That is about the sanctity of life on the earth. Neither religion could afford to ignore the
environmental issue since the planetary ecological condition directly determines the
chance of biological survival of all life forms including human beings. When they faced
the challenge of the threats posed by the degraded environment, they first tried to
justify their actions through interpretation of their religious doctrines, and even through
reinterpretation, if it was necessary to go a step further than they were willing at first.

However there is no evidence that cooperation in environmental movement has
brought the two religions together to bridge differences of their faith. If the cooperation
presupposed any adoption of the other’s belief system, the collaboration would not have
happened. Cooperation between the two camps remained at the level of concrete action
sharing the same space and time schedule. In other words, facing issues that required an
urgent action, the two parties sought a synchronized action in an agreed place at an
agreed time, but no more than that. No actions so far indicate that the leaders of the two
camps got together to develop a common strategy or to agree to take common legal
responsibility for the consequences of strikes or demonstrations. Most of the

49 Hankyore Newspaper, 3 May 2010.
cooperation focused on no more than the publication of communique or common actions at the sites of pollution or development projects.

There may be a number of reasons why the cooperation between the two rarely went beyond the level of common actions. As mentioned above, at first environmental activists tended to be recognized as pro-democratic left-wing activists. Yet within the Christian or Buddhist circles, there were also people who supported government-driven development projects at the expense of ecological conservation. Hence the environmentalists have not represented the entire Buddhist or Christian establishment but rather the interests of some parties or factions within the two religions. This leads to a thought that the alliance for common protests arose not as a result of general religious harmony or reconciliation, but from limited cooperation horizontally forged between the progressive factions within the two institutions.

In short it would be a gross exaggeration to say that the two camps developed collaboration to the extent that it amounts to religious reconciliation. Cases of collaboration have so far triggered off no full-scale religious ecumenism, and among the lay believers there is still a considerable degree of antipathy towards each other. The two religions still seek an exclusive route to salvation. They cooperate with each other over environmental issues because they have only one physical space of residence unlike the transcendental salvific space which exists exclusively to one party in total separation from the other. For both religions there is only one nation, one land and water, and one Saemangeum. When this space of common residence is threatened, there is no other option but to protect it in concerted efforts, however uncomfortable the coexistence may be.

The crucial question is whether the two religions will continue to collaborate over environmental issues. Insofar as the government remains totally unable to shake off the ideology of economic growth and the whole world continues to fail to find viable alternative energy to restrain the wayward global warming, perceived and real threats in these religions will only increase. The grim future of humanity allows us to project that doctrines pertaining to environmental change will grow in significance in their respective faith systems. When faith and action increasingly converge within one religion, we still do not know whether it will shrink or expand collaboration between the environmental organizations of the two religions. It will depend on whether and to what extent the environmental doctrine of one religion develops in conjunction with that of the other.

In spite of such limitation, the cooperation hitherto developed revolving around environmental issues appear to exert significant influence in shaping the future relationship. It is always possible for the two religions to be plunged into a seriously damaging relationship. Yet even in this case the memory of the precious collaboration in the past will help them to find a way out.
References


Faith-based organization's support for migrant workers in Ansan city, South Korea

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Abstract
Recently, the inflows of migrant workers in South Korea is steadily increasing, and those migrants are filling the huge labor shortage in so called 3D (dirty, difficult and danger) job market. Some of the workers are illegally residing and working as of working illegally or visa overstay. For legal migrant workers, Korean government has a comprehensive approach to managing migrant workers at a latest level with various welfare provisions (four major insurances, occupational welfare, and community services). However, undocumented migrant workers are the most deprived from government granted welfare services. In this regard, Christian faith based organizations are emerging with a new vision and mission in order to provide basic social services to grant basic human rights. This study explores why Christian faith based organizations serve the welfare and religious services to undocumented migrant workers in their harsh living conditions and what community services they provide. This study was conducted through filed work observation, in-depth interviews of undocumented migrant workers and service providers for the purpose of exploring the role of religious institutions in welfare practice in Ansan city, the suburb of Seoul, South Korea.

Key words: migrant workers, faith-based organizations, social services, Ansan, South Korea

The Republic of Korea (Henceforth, South Korea) has become a center of attraction for people around the world after successful hosting the 1986 Asian Games and the 1988 Olympic Games. As Korean economy grew rapidly since late 1980s, native Koreans started to avoid so-called 3D (dirty, difficult and danger) jobs. Abundant jobs were available for low-paying manual labor markets that were a lucrative offer for workers from developing countries (Choi & Choi, 2005). Consequently, migrant workers started coming in a flock to South Korea especially from developing counties with Korean dream where they can earn enough money.

To fill labor demand and supply gap in industrial sector, South Korea started to invite foreign labors since 1987. Initially, South Korean government introduced Industrial Technical Trainee Program (ITTP) in 1993 so as to invite cheap labors to fill the labor shortage in medium and small-scale enterprises (SMEs) for the purpose of filling huge labor shortage and also to sustain nations' economic production (Choi & Choi, 2005). However, the ITTP was criticized of neglecting to serve basic human rights and exploitation of migrant workers by supervisors (Lee & Park, 2005). It was also criticized that many workers because undocumented (illegal) under this system; where 287,808 (78.4%) workers were undocumented in 2002 (Lee & Park, 2005). To address these problems, South Korean government replaced the ITTP into Employment Permit System (EPS) in 2004 (Choi, 2001; Kim, 2011; Seol, 2012). The EPS system was designed to provide same rights as domestic workers, protecting migrant workers under Korean
Labor Standard Act, the Minimum Wage Act, and the Industrial Safety and Health Act (Employment Permit System; Kim, 2011).

Much expected to grant rights to migrant workers and to curtail illegality through EPS systems; however EPS system could not be able to curtail illegality of migrant workers (Lim, 2008). In fact, employers received more bargaining power than migrant workers in EPS system so as the migrant workers turning into illegal status could be much similar to the previous ITTP system (Kim, 2008). In 2009, total number of foreigners constituted to 1,164,166, where 15.6% of the population were undocumented (Ministry of Labor). The majority of the undocumented population consist migrant workers (Ministry of Labor).

Undocumented migrant workers have become a social problem since they were deprived of government granted comprehensive welfare packages. They were targeted by immigration police that immigration police could deport whenever they were found, either in street, restaurants, dormitory or at their work place (Amnesty International, 2009). Additionally, these undocumented workers were deprived of medical insurance, insecurity at work place by frequent immigration police intervention, and wage overdue, non-payment, and both verbal and physical abuse (Seol, 2009). As a result, increasing faith-based organizations (mainly Christians) emerged to provide social service to support them in harsh living conditions. With no discrimination on the legal or illegal status of migrant workers, religious groups voluntarily provide services, both religion and welfare to both documented and undocumented migrant workers.

Religion has been studied and discussed that played important role for integration of immigrants and social service distribution in harsh situations (Cox, 1983). The involvement of religious institution in offering social service to needy population especially poor or underprivileged is not a new phenomenon in Europe and the United States of America (USA). In this context, Korean churches are also model for developing community development programs and they involved in providing social assistance (services) to their congregation and community members, especially vulnerable and needy population (Tirrito & Cascio, 2003). Dominance service providers for immigrants in South Korea are Christian faith-based organizations (Kim, 2003). Thus, this study attempts to explore the role of Christian faith-based organizations support on migrant workers, especially undocumented in their dire living conditions with following research questions:

a) What are the problems of migrant workers, especially undocumented?
b) What are the social services available for migrant workers in South Korea from community level?
c) What are the vision and mission of faith-based organizations for supporting migrant workers in Korea?

**The case of Ansan city**

Ansan city, the suburb of Seoul, is located at the Western part of Gyeonggi Providence in South Korea. It is the country's first planned city that Banwal/Sihwa National Industrial Complex plays central role for nation’s economy. Seventy-thousand migrant workers from 67 countries are living and working in Ansan that Wongok-dong has the highest
Wongok-dong symbolizes the "melting pot" that those migrant workers shop exotic vegetables on the street, buy international telephone cards, dine at their own traditional restaurants, sings Korean songs in no re bang and so on. The city gives the impression to visitors as it is the city of immigrants.

Faith-based organizations for example, Ansan Migrant Center, Foreign Workers Ministry Center (Galilee), Ansan Chosun jok Center, Ansan First Church, Salt Garden Church, Ansan Foreign Workers Shelter & Korean-Chinese Shelter, Ansan Missionary Church, SDA Migrants Center, Ansan Andoiok International Missionary Chuch, Bonum Temple, No Boarder Center, Onnuri M Center, Islamic Center, and recently inaugurated Global Multicultural Center have been providing supports in all matters concerning their welfare and rights. Majorities are Christian faith-based organizations, except Islamic Center and Bomun Temple.

With collaborations with those faith-based organizations and locals in Ansan, the Government designated Wongok-dong as the Ansan Multicultural Village Special Zone in 2009. As such, Ansan is regarded as a leading city in matters pertaining to migrants' welfare and multicultural policy in South Korea.

Methods

For the purpose of exploring the above mentioned research questions, the study conducted series of interviews from Christian faith-based religions leaders who reside and serve for migrant workers in Ansan city, the suburb of Seoul where majority of the population were industrial migrant workers. The interview was conducted in the 2013, February and March. Christian-faith based organizations were purposefully selected for the study purpose because Christian faith-based organizations are the most active in social service delivery in migrant workers' welfare related issues. Five purposive samples were drawn. One religious leader who support for migrant workers was denied to be interviewed. Finally, two Christian faith-based leaders and three undocumented migration workers were recruited for interview. Christian faith-based leaders were interviewed through prior appointments at the religious centers. An undocumented migrant worker was contacted from one of the religious leaders' personal contact and interview was conducted through telephone with informed consent. The interview was conducted in-depth, and the interview lasted for 55 minutes. Other two undocumented workers were contacted through the personal contact of formal undocumented worker. The interview lasted for 23 minutes and 30 minutes respectively.

Two separate unstructured questionnaires were designed to ask religious leaders and undocumented migrant workers for the purpose of natural flow of the interview and purpose of exploring research questions. The interviews were conducted in Korean and English and Nepali language. All interviews were voice recorded and later transcribed into English.

Results

Migrant workers' problem
Wages-related problems

Wages-related problems were frequently reported problems among migrant workers in Korea (Seol, 2003; Yoon, 2005). Overdue wages is a big issue for undocumented migrant workers since many testimonies of overdue wages were heard. In addition to wage-related problems, undocumented workers have high rate of changing their work place.

I1: Do you have any overdue problem?
P: I don’t have any problem at this moment. My supervisor is relatively kind and he pays salary every 12th of the month. Well, I have 12 days overdue. ha ha [Laugh].
I1: Do you know any illegal friends who do have overdue payment?
P: Yes, there was one problem, I saw. A Nepali woman who worked in a garment factory, she was not paid for 3 months.
I1: Oh, what did she do, then?
P: She filed her case at no-dong-bu (Ministry of Labor) office, no-dong-bu contacted at her company by telephone; supervisor denied it for the first.
I1: What happened, then?
P: Again this Nepali worker visited church shelter, told her problem. She visited the no-dong-bu accompanying with a missionary. The no-dong-bu called both the supervisor and the Nepali worker at the same place. Later, the supervisor agreed to pay.
I1: Well, do you know, now her overdue salary paid?
P1: Yes, I heard that her salary is paid now, and now she is working at another company. It is a common. Ha ha [Laugh].

(P., worker, 31)

Industrial disaster/accident

Industrial accidents such as rolled/jammed-type injury, burn, imputation, and death were frequently reported (Seol, 2003). The injury-related deaths among migrant workers were 2.2 times higher than for native workers in a factory (Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2008).

I1: Have you ever experienced industrial accident?
P: Yes, industrial accidents are common. When I was working in legal status, my job is about cutting aluminum. If I am not very concentrated on the work, and fixing the machine well, the accident could happen easily.
I1: You said, you have accident, what happened to you?
P: It was a just a minor. There are some scars on my hands. See… another. Peace of aluminum fell down on my knee, and it hurt for a week. Not a big deal.

254 I1 refers to interviewer (author)
I1: Do you know anybody get accident?
P: Ha ha...[Laugh]. This is common. You see. We are working 3D. Do you know 3D? ha ha... [Laugh]. There are many.
I1: Well, so what happen if you have accident?
P: If I have a serious accident, my supervisor helps me.
I1: Do you know, is there any mental health related problem?
P: I read the newspapers that 3 Nepali workers were committed suicide last year. They all are in EPS visa. We are always in stress and fear...fear of accident and deportation.

(P., worker, 31)

Health problem

Poor health statuses among migrant workers have been much studied in Korea. Yoon (2005) studied on poor health condition of migrant workers and revealed that long-working hours, poor dietary, poor-working environment are some of the factors influencing poor health among migrants. A study revealed that 21.2% of migrant workers got respiratory, 20.6% of musculoskeletal, 15.8% of digestive and 12.5% of cardiovascular symptoms found among migrant workers (Hong, Ou, Lim, Choi, Cho, & Huh, 2000). Depression symptoms on undocumented migrant workers were higher (Lee, Kim, Kim, Ryu, Lee, Won, & Song, 2009)

I1: Do you have any health insurance?
P: No. When I was in visa, I had.
I1: Are you sick?
P: No, by God’s grace!
I1: What happen when you are sick, suddenly?
P: I go to hospital.
I1: You said you don’t have insurance, and then hospital cost must be coasty.
P: Yes, it is. But, I have not yet been at hospitalized for serious illness.
I1. Nice, but, what happens, when you are suddenly sick? What will you do?
P: There are some free medical service offered here in Ansan, I will go there. They don’t care legal ... illegal... ha ha [Laugh].
I1: Who are they?
P: They are many. You know chumim center (Ansan Migrant Community Center)? They have service. They offer service.
I1: Are they church?
P: They are church and Buddhist too, Churches are easy to access. Every Sunday they have gathering, and they have program like medical care, dental care, etc. For free.

I1: So, will you visit the church when you want to receive these services?
P: Ha ha... [Laugh], I don’t want to. But, if there is no any option, at the last moment, I have to visit.

(P., worker, 31)
Another undocumented migrant workers, who have got multiple health-related problems describes his situations as:

I1: Your friend said, you were sick. What happened to you?
S: Yes, I was sick for two months. At first I had the problem of back pain. Actually I had this problem since I was in my country. But this has become so intense, I could not work. I was really worried.
I1: Did you take medicine?
S: Yes, I did.
I1: Do you have insurance? How did you do it?
S: For back pain, I was just took some painkillers. But, later I have got some stomach-related problems, what they say “gastric”, kind of digestive problem.
I1: What did you do for your treatment?
S: For minor check up, the church has the medical program on Sunday. I had a check up. Doctors said that it is going to be chronic. He has prescribed medicine. I got it. It’s not perfectly okay, but I feel better these days.

(S., worker, 31)

Money remittent problem

Undocumented migrant workers do not prefer to use legal way of banking; rather they remit money through illegal way. They are forced to remit money through broker (or, money-laundry).

I1: How do you send your money at you home?
P1: I will send money from hundi (money laundry).
I1: Is it not possible to send money by bank?
P1: Well, it is possible, but you know I don’t have visa, and for security issue, I don’t visit bank.
I1: So, bank will arrest you, and deport you?
P1: No, not this. Some bank remit money only with passport. I have passport, no problem! But sometime, they ask ID card. You see, my ID card, no visa...And, I cannot remit money. Hundi is easy.
I1: Is it safe?
P: Well, sometime, it is safe, sometime not. Case by case. But, I choose only those I trust and those I know their family background. In case, my family could not receive money I sent, I can contact their family.
I1: Do all friends like you remit through hundi?
P: Yes, no way!

(P., worker, 31)

Violence at work place

Migrant workers experience violence at work place mainly because of cultural and language misunderstanding between Korean supervisors and migrant workers. The use of abusive language is common from senior workers to junior worker in a factory work setting. They were several realities of being beaten in case of disobedience, and

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misunderstanding of cultural differences. Workers endure of fear of being fired from the work place, and being deported as being undocumented worker.

I1: How is your supervisor? Is he good to you?
P: Which supervisor you are asking about? Now? Or, previous one?
I1: Both, how are they? Are they good to you?
P: ha ha...[Laugh]. They are good, not-good...
I1: How are they good, or not-good?
P: They are only expecting our work. Some are very controlling.
I1: Controlling? What do you mean?
P: You see, now I am working in a company, the supervisor is too controlling. You see. They are watching us through CC camera. And also looking us how often we went toilet. We did not know it. You know what happens one day, there are some Chinese girls working in our company. One day supervisor asked her to work 2 hours more.
I1: Why?
P: The owner calculated the time how long they spend time on toilet, and asked for the extra work.
I1: Ha ha...[Laugh]. Do you sometime argue with your supervisor?
P: No.
I1: Does your supervisor use some offensive language?
P: Ha ha ... [Laugh]. you know what types of people are working with us. It is common, but I don’t care.

(P., worker, 31)

Another undocumented migrant worker explained the tension at the work place as:

I1: Do you shout with your supervisor?
K: No, not.
I1: Do they scold you?
K: Some time when I am late to respond their saying, they got angry.
I1: What happens then?
K: hmm, angry.
I1: I heard supervisor use abusive language at the work? Is it true?
K: Ha ha... [Laugh]. It is common, when they are angry, they say shekhya (son of the bitch), sibal (fuck you!), it is common. First, I got angry. Now, I am used to, and don’t care.
I1: do they sometime hit you? Or, do any violence?
K: No, not yet.
I1: Do you hear any friend of yours have this experience?
K: Yes, some of my friends said that when their supervisor got angry, they sometime throw things upon them whatever they have on their hand. One of my friends is hurt.
I1: Do you report this to police?
K: No, not yet.
I1: So, do you sometime report this to the church, where you attend?
K: Church people are kind, and sometime they ask us our situation at work, at that time we share our life.

(K., worker, 31)
Deportation of illegal migration

The Korean government is not willing to accept unskilled foreign workers who could permanently settle in Korea, deportation for illegal migrant workers were intensified every year. According to the Ministry of Justice, 37.3% of EPS workers visa is going to expired in 2012, and 37% of them were residing illegally in Korea. To address this problem, the Immigration Bureau has been taking stricter measures against illegal immigrant workers (Kim, 2013)

I1: Do you have any fear of deportation?
P: Immigration police arrested me while I had even in visa.
I1: Oh, then? How?
P: We are walking around the Ansan Station, around 4 p.m. We were three people. Some civilian-looking person approached near us, and politely asked for our Alien Registration Card. I had left my ID card at my company. I could not show it. They quickly handcuffed me and dragged me into their van. I resisted and told that I am not illegal with my little Korean. They did not listen it, and took me at the detention center. At the detention center, I told the immigration officer that I have left my ID. They match my ID card number, and passport. Later they released me. They say “Sorry”, and behaved me with respect. They also instructed me how to go to my work place. You know, immigration police respect those who are living with visa. But for those who are illegal, they are just too cruel.
I1: What happens to your other friend?
P: There was one undocumented, he was deported.
I1: Do you know that any faith-based organizations help those arrested illegal migrant workers?
P: I know that they help. But they have also their limitations. They only help in limited conditions. Once you are arrested, and you have no visa, there is no chance at all to be released. Immigration does not listen to anybody if you are illegal and arrested. One of my friends, his wife was pregnant. One church coordinated to help him; later immigration extended his deportation period around 2 weeks longer. Some time, if church said that we did not receive our salary, or any medical problem, the deportation period could be extended 2-3 weeks.
I1: What else more the church is helping to those arrested people?
P: Well, they could help, for example, for bringing luggage at the airport, assist for ticketing, and receiving the unpaid dues from the work place, something like that. But not to release at all.

(P., worker)

Faith-based organization’s support for migrant workers

Faith-based organizations aim to build up a “Utopian” place in Ansan, where natives and migrants community live in harmony with better living conditions for locals as well as foreigners. Acknowledging the needs of migrant workers, faith based organizations offer services:
Medical service

Every faith based organizations have programs to support medical-related programs in Ansan. Most of them have medical treatment program on every Sunday at the center. It is shown that they display pamphlets for free-medical programs at Wongok Dong Street. They also publicly announce at street about the medical service information. As for Example, Ansan Migrant Center provides free medical treatment collaborating with Ansan medical association. With support of hospitals in Ansan, Ansan Migrant Center also offers treatment like preventing psychological anxiety, treatment caused by misuse chemicals at low cost and so on.

Shelter service

Support for shelter is one of the major programs offered by faith-based organizations. Around 77% faith based organizations have shelter service. As for example, Ansan Migrant Center accommodates around 50 persons with free meal. In addition to the shelter, the Center has nursing home for workers who got industrial accident.

Counseling service

Counseling service is one of the top priorities and all the faith-based organizations have this services for migrant workers. With reference to Ansan Migrant Center, it offers free counseling such as labor situation, immigration, citizenship, human rights, and work-related policy by professional counselors.

Korean language and education service

Realizing that Korean speaking ability as an essential to minimize the gap between co-workers and they could be able to express themselves, Korean language education classes are offered by all faith-based organizations. Ansan Migrant Center provides Korean language class. It provides education of related laws and regulations that migrant workers need to know such as industrial safety education, immigration control law, labor law and so on.

Culture support service

Along with Korean language and education classes, faith-based organizations have programs to support for understanding and experiencing Korean cultural understanding programs. These organizations organize cultural understanding –as such Chuseok (thanks giving holiday) or Sealnal (Korean New Year). In the similar fashion, Ansan Migrant Center provides an opportunity for learning traditional culture.

Support to human rights

All faith-based organizations have programs to support for human rights of migrant workers. Ansan Migrant Center is leading for these services as it opened
signature-seeking campaign to be institutionalized and conduct meeting for establishment of migrant worker's law in order to curtail human rights problem. Recently, it has opened Korea validation movement of UN protocol for protection of migrant workers and their family rights. Besides, it rejects all distinction by ethnic group through the activity of political proposal. It publishes bulletin about human rights campaigning for security. It has also initiated borderless civil right activity movement for institutional rights.

Along with these services, Ansan Islamic Center provides prayer services for Islamic believers. Bomun temple provides prayer and worship service for Buddhist believers. Onnuri M. Center offers skill developing training such as 'beauty shop' training. From these services all migrant workers, including documented and undocumented are benefited.

**Vision and mission to support for migrant workers**

**I1:** Why do you support for migrant workers here?

**H:** In the name of God, we are God's children. We have to help our neighbors. The Bible says: 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these.' (Mark 12:31). I want to follow the Bible exactly.

**I1:** Yes, there are documented and undocumented migrant workers here, is there any different programs, I mean do you have any specific programs for undocumented?

**H:** We have services that are targeted mainly migrant workers, here. Not only particularly for undocumented. All could have equal. We want that they could work hard, make money, and return their country being rich. We also want that they could learn Korean culture and language too. We want that they have a good life.

**I1:** Do you intend to convert their religion into Christianity?

**H:** Believing God is always good. Some of them willingly want to believe God. We have fellowship programs, and interested people can join the Bible reading program. It is not compulsion, but only for those who want they can join. They are welcome!

**I1:** What do you think about undocumented workers?

**H:** In heavenly country, there is no nationality... and there is no legal or illegal...We want people live in happily... But, every people must follow the law. Law of a country is also important. I want that they could return their country happily. Why to be illegal? Of course they have their own problem, and we must have to help in their difficulties.

(H, Pastor)

Most faith-based social service organizations supports are concentrated in Ansan city in South Korea. These organizations are oriented towards service delivery in integrated way with welfare and religion and forefront to deliver services for needy migrant workers in the industrial complex of Banol and Siwha, Ansan.

**I1:** What is the vision for establishing this Center?
P: Our Center was built by Seoul meeting of The Presbyterian church. It was based on the foundation of two Bible verses: "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40) and "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor...He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed" (Luke 4:18-19). The core objective of the center is to build good neighbors and help for migrant workers in this borderless village.

I1: What is this borderless village?
P.: It is the philosophy and the rehearsal to live together without exclusion and distinction in the realm of God. Based on this philosophy, Korean and migrant workers themselves move toward "living together communality" overcoming the difference of cultural, economic, religion, skin color, language, nationality in their local community.

I1: How does borderless village work?
P.: The borderless village project has attempted to embody the effort to overcome the exclusive distinction phenomenon that migrant workers live without recognition as inhabitant of local community. It aims to improve for securing them as being a human with safety net of their social interest formation. That is to say, it aims to build the culture of new community and break the culture of silence. It presents the vision that Korean society should make multi-cultural community and remove the exclusive and discriminative homogeneous myth.

I1: ...Finally, why do you support migrant workers?
I1: What specific supports that undocumented workers?
P.: There are problems of nonpayment and industrial disaster of migrant workers. We are working for it, and also we have the Home for Kosian, we are also taking action to improve their children life situation and legal status.

(P., Pastor)

Discussion and conclusion

The current qualitative study attempts to explore the migrant workers problems, especially undocumented that are living and working without proper visa status. In addition to exploring the problems of undocumented workers, the study finds the available services exist to support for those workers and services are available in an integrated form of religion and welfare in the industrial city of Ansan. Further, this study explores that city of Ansan has been built as a “borderless village” through the Christian ideology and the cooperation of faith-based organizations to make the city a model of true-multicultural city in Korea.

Congruent of the previous studies, the current study also reports that both documented and undocumented migrant workers have problems at the work, health-related problems, violence at work place, abuse, discrimination and other work-related
affairs. Yet, the Ministry of Labor (*no dong bu*) and formal insinuations assist and have institutional regulations to address those problems for documented migrant workers. However, for the undocumented migrant workers need only to seek help through the faith-based organizations. The study reveals the intensity of the problems is not much different between documented and undocumented migrant workers, but undocumented migrant workers have fear of deportation even to find a legal way of banking. It is interesting to note that undocumented migrant workers do not remit money through the formal way of banking; however they remit money through alternative illegal way of banking through money laundry. This is another issues to be studied that is the beyond the scope of the current study.

The current study reveals a harsh way of arresting and unusual treatment of migrant workers in Korea as being just a suspect of undocumented worker. Through the testimony of a worker, it is revealed that s/he was arrested despite of being in a legal status. The immigration police arrested, handcuffed, and dragged him/her into the van, in a situation of leaving Alien Registration Card at the factory and unable to show the card at the street of the city.

The study finds that undocumented migrant workers seek to ask for help from faith-based organizations at the last and the direst situations, where they are unable to get support from their own networks or the absence of other formal way of assistance. However, faith-based organizations assist them in their most difficult situations with the maximum as they could. A testimony of an undocumented migrant workers reveals that faith-based organization support an arrested migrant workers to prolong his visa status for 2 weeks longer where the spouse of the worker was pregnant. Additionally, it is revealed that faith-based organizations assist to ticketing, bringing luggage at the airport, assist to receive unpaid dues at the work place, and even shopping for family members.

Author’s field visit at Ansan revealed that varies types of support are available at the most of the churches including migrant centers and shelters. Whoever has difficulties, not discriminating on the basis of workers legal status, nationalities, color or religion, faith based organizations supports for language classes, medical services, counseling services, shelters, cultural support services, human rights services, legal services and so on. However, it is revealed that these services are scattered and incongruently organized. It is rather need based, yet to further investigate the effectiveness of service delivery and program evaluation, which is beyond the scope of the current study. The author notes that there needs organized and one-stop-service delivery program and systems, collaborating with churches, shelters, centers and relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

It is revealed that the operating principles and service delivery strategies are religious oriented and supports are on the moral and spiritual principles based on the Bible scriptures. The service providers help migrant workers with no discrimination in any level. It is noted that they do not encourage staying illegally rather supports on the difficult situations to serve them in the name of god. The fact is that minorities including migrant workers are victims (anti-oppressor) in any homogeneous cultural context (*Freire, 2000*), the vision and mission of “borderless village” as a social movement aimed for multicultural society in Ansan City correspond to the appropriate demands of this
time. Yet, the vision of the borderless village is a utopian concept which is difficult to measure in what propensity the underprivileged people in a community got benefited. Another is that workers who are reluctant to visit faith-based organizations are also deprived of the services. In this context, it needs to translate the vision and mission of faith-based organizations into more practical way, which needs to go beyond the religious conversion, and not to victimize the workers further again converting into Christianity for the greed of little support.

From an example of a faith-based organization, it is acknowledged that migrant workers are a corporate-member, not a stranger in the Ansan city. The faith-based organizations attempts to build a world of happiness based on religious theme for creating a single community of migrants who belong to different color, ethnicity, and nationality where they live harmoniously as brothers and sisters. Undocumented migrant workers, who were deprived of instructional support, got some relief aid and support from faith based organizations. It is yet to acknowledge that the support for undocumented migrant workers has directed within the realm of Christianity and a current legal provisions of South Korea.

Despite the limitations of the current study as it has smaller sample size and concentrated only in the city of Ansan; however, the findings of the study can be generalized in entire Korea. It is found that religion has played an important role in the migration and integration of immigrants in South Korea. In the dire conditions of undocumented migrant workers in Korea, the support of faith based organizations is relief options that can address workers immediate needs where any institutional welfare services are unable to offer. The supports from the faith based organizations are structured within the realm of religion, within the principles of the Bible, and welfares are directed within these boundaries.

References


The Holy Book of the Bible
