

8-1-2013

Discourse of Defection: Political Representation of North Koreans

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DISCOURSE OF DEFECTION: POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF NORTH KOREANS

by

Bethany Stallings

B.A. Union University, 2010

M.A. Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2013

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Masters of Arts Degree

Department of Linguistics
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale
August 2013

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THESIS APPROVAL

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By

Bethany Stallings

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Masters of Arts
in the field of Linguistics

Approved by:

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May 10, 2013

ABSTRACT

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Bethany Stallings, for the Masters of Arts degree in Linguistics, presented on May 10, 2013, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: DISCOURSE OF DEFECTION: POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF NORTH KOREANS

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Janet Fuller

This paper uses theoretical frameworks from Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze articles from a South Korean English-print newspaper (the *Korea Times*), one humanitarian group's website (Liberty in North Korea), and an article in *The Economist* as examples of the two major discursive styles of representation(s) of North Korea and its people. In mapping the two major representations of North Korea and its people: 1) as "defectors" and 2) as "refugees," I examine the discursive themes employed in each of the three texts. I conclude by describing some of the implications of a discourse of defection and suggest that for future interactions with North Korea to be mutually fruitful, major English media sources must re-examine the terminology used and how it charges North Koreans with a political incentive that belies the underlying reasons for their displacement. Alternative representations and conceptions of North Korea should look to its people in order to see how they are representing themselves. In addition, international diplomacy and news media should learn about the history of relations between North and South Korea since the end of the Korean War in order to develop a culturally contextual representation of North Korea.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In December 2011, due to the succession of Kim Jong-Un as its leader, North Korea or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) entered a new era of its history. That history is interconnected not only with South Korea but also with the rest of East Asia. In December 2012, South Korea also experienced the succession of a new leader, Park Geun-hye, the first female president in its history. Kim Jong-Il's death was a pivotal moment in the history of the two Koreas because it allowed room for hope of a less-oppressive regime and a collective feeling of possibility. However, over the last year, the uncertainty over Kim Jong-Un's approach to leadership and policies has slowly conformed to or at least become a bellicose version of his father's "military-first" program. In December of 2012, North Korea successfully launched a rocket. This launch surprised and angered the United Nations Security Council, which publically condemned North Korea's action. In March and April of 2013, East Asian tensions escalated with North Korean threats of missile launches and nuclear war bombarding the South Korean and U.S. news media. Despite the apprehension and uncertainty surrounding these threats, they have proved vacuous. However, when looking at the current situation within the historical context of North Korea's interaction with South Korea, its neighboring countries, and the United States, alternative perspectives claim these threats are "perpetuated by over-generous media coverage" (Hogue, 2013) and life has not changed nor has North Korean "intensified their tone; the West simply started paying attention" (Hogue, 2013).

Many scholars, politicians, and journalists claim this time is critical because Kim Jong-Un's choices will influence the future of North Korea and the Korean peninsula. But, others claim that what is often lost in U.S. media representation of North Korea or even within English-translations of South Korean news and within dominant, hegemonic discourse(s) is the actions and agency of certain social actors. South Korean news, humanitarian activists, and the oft ignored North Korean people themselves, tenacious and enduring, are also a part of the future of North Korea.

If not silenced, at least these stories are lost amidst the din of diplomatic language. Human lives are lost when the complexity of North Korean experience is simplified, caricatured or cloaked in "complex" language without actually acknowledging or addressing the agony of North Koreans. As one 26-year-old soldier confessed to the Chinese medicine doctor Choi (2003), "What use is it for me to stay alive when my parents are starving to death and my entire family is gone? What is happening to this country?"

"What is really happening in North Korea?" is a prevalent question. It is difficult to find out, "gain access" or get the opportunity to hear alternative stories. What representation(s) of North Korea is the U.S. media perpetuating and why? What representation(s) are South Korean media creating and why? What discourse(s) are employed to create these representations? How can a person critically assess a system of language that all too often simplifies lived experiences by making sweeping generalizations based on a political history still marked by Cold War logic and rhetoric?

Within this geopolitical landscape, issues of power and the future relations between the two Koreas manifest in compelling ways ripe for linguistic, intercultural, and sociological research. In particular, the role of media is critical when seeking to explore

how North Korea has been represented over time and at this particular time. The current discourse(s) surrounding North Korea are not new. They are intertextually related to Korean history and the presence of Western nations in East Asia. Generally speaking, the dominant media discourse surrounding North Korea employs terms of policy/diplomacy, a discourse of democratic governments, an “awareness raising” discourse of human rights, and/or comical, laughingstock representations of North Korean leadership. These discursively constructed stories/images of the North Korean “Other” are part of the reproduction of ideologies that are potentially harmful, and thus a critical look at this discourse is warranted. No matter how overtly condemning government and diplomacy discourses are, and however benign or benevolent humanitarian aid and human rights activists position themselves, they are all still involved in the politics of North Korean representation. The language choices media make carry critical implications for North Korean representation.

In this paper, I will outline major literature on North Korea and North Korean refugees. I will then discuss the methodological and theoretical frameworks for my project and its historical context. Then, I will examine the discourse employed in articles from the *Korea Times*, which is the oldest of the three leading English-language newspapers in South Korea. *Hankook Ilbo*, the largest-circulating newspaper company in South Korea, owns the *Korea Times*. I will also look at the website of *LiNK: Liberty in North Korea*. *LiNK* is the only full-time non-profit organization in North America that exclusively focuses on and works with North Korea human rights. The discourse employed by *LiNK* represents a different vein that runs parallel to the discursive practices found within the *Korea Times* news articles.

A note about my own position and discursive choices:

Although I am not a fluent speaker of the Korean language, I lived in South Korea for over ten years. During this time, I was exposed to South Korean culture, international newspapers, and South Korean media. Living in South Korea only made me increasingly curious about North Korea. It was a constant presence, an image that floated in and out of South Korean life. The more I learned about Korean history, the more I wanted to cultivate a contextualized and critical understanding of the current state of the divided peninsula.

Critical linguists understand that investigating language is an ironic task. For “we investigate language, yet at the same time we must use language in order to make our investigations” (Billig, 2008, p. 783). Any analysis of discourse cannot and does not exist outside of language. In other words, it cannot separate the objects of analysis from the means of analysis. Thus, there is a double bind. For when seeking to critically analyze language, how can one describe and reveal the workings of power and ideology within language usage when one must also use language to make a critical analysis? According to Billig (2008), the irony in critical discourse analysis lies in the fact that one cannot be sure that one’s own use of language is unmarked by the very ideological factors that a discourse analyst tries to identify in the language of others (p. 783).

Aware of and in recognition of Michael Billig’s argument in “The Language of Critical Discourse Analysis: The Case of Nominalization” (2008), I choose to use the term “defector” or “refugee” throughout the literature review in order to echo whichever term the dominant discourse of that genre uses. However, in Chapter’s 3, 4, 5, and 6, I unpack the terms “defector” and “refugee” and analyze two forms of media in which these terms are predominantly used. In the text I have also chosen to reference all Korean authors by their

surnames first. This is in alignment with the way Korean culture and language places emphasis on surnames by noting them in an initial position.

The importance of this study lies in mapping the two major representations of North Korea and its people: 1) as “defectors” and 2) as “refugees.” Through looking at one South Korean English-print newspaper and one humanitarian group’s website, the two major discursive trends that exist at this point in time are evidenced and analyzed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

One of the most important theories within critical linguistics is the concept that language is more than merely representative. Language acts as “a highly constructive mediator” (Fowler, 1991, p. 1). Working from this understanding of language, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is concerned with understanding socio-political phenomena (events) through an interdisciplinary lens. Rather than solely investigating linguistic units, CDA focuses on how social practice and language use are bound up “in a dialectical relationship with other facets of the social” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 54). CDA particularly aims to uncover or bring to light patterns of belief and value which are encoded in language. With this as its goal, critical linguistics looks at any aspect of linguistic structure (syntax, phonology, semantics, pragmatics) as carrying ideological and social significance (Fowler, 1991, p. 67). Thus, these patterns of language *must* be explored “in light of the social and historical situation of the text” (Fowler, 1991, p. 67). The texts CDA examines are multifunctional, meaning they are “always simultaneously representing the world (ideational function) and enacting social relations and identities (interpersonal function)” (Fowler, 1991, p. 25).

All texts employ discourses, ways of representing the world through both ideological and linguistic processes. According to James Paul Gee (1992), the difference between Discourse (with a capital 'D') and discourse (with a lowercase 'd') is that Discourse is an integration of everything in life. Discourse encompasses what one says,

writes, does, values, believes and how all of those are combined in verbal and non-verbal language. On the other hand, discourse (with a lowercase 'd') is simply conversation or words (including written) that make sense in combination. But, a Discourse's interaction with ideology is not neutral nor is it always clear, simple or straightforward. Both Roger Fowler (1991) and James Paul Gee (1992) discuss the inherently ideological nature of Discourse. Applied linguistics was developed as a response to the "problems of fixed, invisible ideology permeating language" (Fowler, 1991). Roger Fowler specifically looks at "language in the news." Fowler (1991) writes that critical linguistics analyzes the way the structure of language "silently and continuously shapes the ideas presented, moulding them in the direction of established beliefs" (p. 231). As Fowler implies, the critical study of language stems from an understanding of the socially constitutive relationship between language and ideology.

When looking at articles from the *Korea Times*, I rely heavily on Fowler's assessment that news texts embody values and beliefs and represent experiences, events and concepts within a structure that operates under the pressure of the social and economic circumstances of communication. Thus, "the very notion of 'representation' carries within it the qualification of representation *from a specific ideological point of view*" (Fowler, 1991, p. 66, emphasis original). This point of view is not neutral. Within the world of media communication certain points of view are more dominant than others. This "imbalance of access results in partiality, not only in *what* assertions and attitudes are reported—a matter of content—but also in *how* they are reported—a matter of form or style" (Fowler, 1991, p.23). For Fowler (1991), this *what* and *how* of an instance of reporting reveals a larger ideological perspective. The concept of what is "newsworthy" also comes into play

when analyzing news media Discourse(s). Decisions about *what* is “worthy” of reporting and *how* those topics are represented operate to serve the interests of certain populations or groups.

As an example of this theory applied, Seo (2009) conducted a survey of ninety journalists (forty-five South Korean and fifty Western) and a content analysis of South Korean and U.S. newspapers reports on the six-party nuclear talks. Seo (2009) operated under the implicit theory that media organizations communicate/use language in ways that perpetuate ideology. Seo (2009) sought to explore “how the political orientations of media organizations relative to North Korea issues influence journalists’ coverage of North Korea” (p. 3).

Seo (2009)’s study seeks to advance media sociology research and contribute “to research on international and foreign affairs issues . . .[and] help explain broader issues regarding media coverage of isolationist North Korea, other crisis states, and foreign affairs issues in general” (p. 2). Seo (2009) declares that the importance of these kinds of analyses is based on studies that demonstrate media’s “significant impact on people’s perceptions of international issues” (see Graber, 2006; Shoemaker, Wang, Seo, & Johnson, 2008; Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004, as cited in Seo, 2009, p. 2). Specifically within the context of news reporting on North Korea, the majority of attention centers on discussion of nuclear nonproliferation and political Discourse reminiscent of the Cold War and current-day preemptive, security-based Discourse.

Gee (1999) explains that people use Discourses to match certain contexts and those choices or uses in turn create and/or shape the very context. Van Dijk (1991) adds that this means our knowledge of the social and political world is highly influenced by news

reporting and media discourses. As Michael McLuhan's famous work reminds us, the media is the medium and the messenger. Thus, analyses of media Discourse and its powerful ability to create and maintain certain representations of the world are crucial to uncovering the ideologies of a society or culture.

In addition to Fowler, Gee, and Van Dijk, Norman Fairclough's work focuses on the function of Discourse in society, specifically media Discourses. Media texts are important for CDA because they serve as a powerful, wide-reaching channel for creating and perpetuating ideas and representing the world through specific lenses. Fairclough (1992) argues that textual analysis must be based on a multifunctional theory of language and should be recognized as a vital method of social research. In other words, Fairclough believes that textual analyses, as a part of CDA, are crucial to the interdisciplinary understanding of our complex social and political contexts.

Fairclough (1992) discusses textual analysis as consisting of two, complementary parts: linguistic analysis and intertextual analysis (p. 194). Fairclough (1995) discusses "orders of discourse," a phrase which refers to types of discourse used in a specific social institution or domain. Conceptually, "orders of discourse" deal with the relationships between different types of discourses, how rigid their boundaries are and whether they are mixed or separate in specific texts. This concept also encompasses the conventionalized practices that "are available to text producers and interpreters in particular social circumstances" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 194). Fairclough (1992) writes that while linguistic analysis draws on linguistic systems (phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax), intertextual analysis demonstrates how texts selectively draw upon these orders of discourse (p.194). Ultimately, the goal of intertextual analyses is to draw attention to the

interdependence of texts and society and history and the ways texts transform social and historical resources (Fairclough, 1992, p. 195). For Fairclough, this goal is crucial in that it aids critical linguists in understanding the connections between texts and their contexts.

The power of Discourse(s) operates through the intertextual properties of a text as it is realized through the systems or features of language. Barbara Johnstone (2007) provides six categories that both shape and are shaped by a Discourse: the world, language, participants, prior discourses, mediums, and purpose. According to Johnstone (2007), the way Discourse operates is through the deliberate linguistic choices made around a text. Similarly, Van Dijk (2001) writes that Discourses are shaped by textual and contextual properties. Textual properties refer to the medium, form or conduit of the Discourse (e.g. spoken, written) and contextual properties refer to the sociocultural situations in which the Discourse is located. CDA is interested in identifying the choices that surround the creation of texts and analyzing whether there are patterns to these choices that index specific ideologies and/or hegemonic interpretations and representations of the world.

2.2 Major Genres in Literature about North Korea

There are two major types of literature on North Korea: literature focused on foreign policy/relations (top-down) and humanitarian literature focused on human rights (bottom-up). Both are intertwined and they overlap in particular spaces, particularly in their political saturation and use of political terms. The Discourses that emerge from these genres of literature will be discussed in each section here and referenced in later chapters when I examine the Discourse of the *Korea Times* articles and a humanitarian organization's website, *LiNK* (Liberty in North Korea). These Discourses are also connected

to the topics that each genre centers around. Certain topics are discussed within both genres, yet the discursive approaches used for these topics present distinct differences.

2.2.a Literature of Policy and Government

The texts I will examine in this section are distinct from the texts which exemplify the politics of essentialism and unification in 2.5. Section 2.5 deals more with literature that is intra-Korean in its political nature. The literature I am outlining here deals with international policy and law. This form of literature largely deals with nuclear nonproliferation, six-party talks, and negotiation (see Snyder, 1999). This type of literature also focuses on the leading Kims, speculating about their next move(s) and more often than not criticizing the regimes capricious actions.

Within this literature there is a great deal of what Fowler (2008) calls “access voice” (p. 22). This is the voice of specialists, officials, and experts who claim to have exclusive or insider information and educated hypotheses about the politics of North Korea and North Korean negotiation behavior. This genre of literature also encompasses works like Victor Cha’s (2011) *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*.

Other human rights literature is blended with policy and government, with the global project of transplanting liberalism and democracy. One of the main purposes of human rights reports assembled by Western-based International Non-Government Organizations (INGOs) “is to shame the Third World state by pointing out the gulf between the state’s conduct and internationally sanctioned civilized behavior” (Mutua, 2002, p. 25). This creates a scenario in which INGOs position First World states and institutions as the taming or civilizing agents over Third World states. This is how policy literature often uses human rights discourse. This mixture is what makes it difficult to truly parse out literature

on policy and literature on human rights. In that sense, these distinctions that I have drawn are mainly for categorical or organizational means. These divisions are often more fluid within the literature.

However, because of North Korea's pariah status within the geopolitical context, they are not truly bound by international norms (see Snyder, 1999, p. 103). North Korea's political behavior, is deviant, a rogue departure from good behavior, and this behavior "is stigmatized and used to paint the state either as a pariah or out-of-step with the rest of the civilized world" (Mutua, 2002, p. 25). Thus, international reports and policies normally prescribe disciplinary measures or corrective recommendations to the offending state. Yet, the audience(s) of these reports is most often the West or some Western institution (Mutua, 2002, p. 26). These reports request cutting off aid, significantly conditioning assistance, imposing sanctions, and publically denouncing the "unacceptable conduct of the Third World state" (Mutua, 2002, p. 26).

2.2b Literature on Human Rights Issues

The most popular literature on North Korea centers on human rights, punctuated by discourse of "raising awareness" (e.g. Amnesty International, *LiNK: Liberty in North Korea*, Citizens' Alliance for North Korean Human Rights, Network for North Korean Democracy and Human Rights). Human rights organizations like these, whether they are government or non-government affiliated, publish human rights reports and briefings that discuss all the major human rights violations related to North Korea. These reports and studies outline the main reasons for defection or escape: the 1990's famine that led to a major food crisis, prison camps, and public executions (Amnesty International, 2004; Haggard &

Noland, 2005, 2006, 2011; Lee, 2004; Korea Institute for National Unification, 2006; Haggard & Nolan, 2006; Kwak & Lee, 2009).

Haggard and Noland's *Witness to Transformation* (2011) discusses topics of refugee prisoner abuse, criminalization, food access, employment status, legal risks, repatriation, and resettlement preferences. They also write about the demographic profile of refugees, their occupational statuses, future aspirations, and assistances available to them. In their writing about refugee's psychological condition, Haggard and Noland (2011) emphasize experiences of anxiety, noting that doctors document psychological disorders for almost every refugee patient they see (p. 36). The anxieties' main causes included lack of status in China, fear of arrest and repatriation, lack of stable home, and worry about family left behind in North Korea (p. 39). Interestingly, Haggard & Noland (2011) found that "hunger was not a widely reported source of contemporaneous concern, at least among North Koreans who had made it to China" (p. 39). Instead, Haggard & Noland (2011) note that political motives for movement are increasing (p. 103).

Other humanitarian literature (in the form of novels) come from the experience of escaped North Korean refugees like Hyuk Shin Dong (*Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West*, 2012) and Kang Chol-hwan (*Aquariums of Pyongyang*, 2005) in combination with western journalists like Barbara Demick (*Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*, 2010). These co-authored books of North Korean escapees and the Asian underground railroad (Kirkpatrick, 2012) place the North Korean's voice at the center. This is an important step, but this literature often simply narrates victims escaping from lives of oppression to lands of "freedom and democracy." This subtly continues an Us. Vs. Them, a Savage vs. Civilized discourse. This

literature predicts the eminent collapse of the North Korean regime and perpetuates the metanarrative that no one likes or could love North Korea, even its own people. But North Korea has not collapsed, even with the succession of a new leader, and North Korea does not look like it will “collapse” any time soon.

2.3 Literature on North Korean Defectors in China

Besides Russia, the only place for North Koreans to escape is China. In Northeast China, North Korean women are often sold as brides or given restaurant jobs where they perform for the customers. But even if they are on a work visa, they are essentially slaves and can easily be prostituted. If they have entered China illegally, North Korean men and women must hide or they will be forcibly repatriated. China views all North Koreans as migrant workers (Lankov, 2004) and thus they are seen as posing a threat to the Chinese economy (Moore, 2008). China will not grant refugee or asylum status to North Koreans. Lee (2003) notes, “North Korean famine victims who have fled to China or countries other than South Korea are now trapped by political, diplomatic, and legal restraints” (p.75). The major concern of many transnational humanitarian activists is that on top of these traps, North Korean refugees in China face forcible repatriation (Kwak & Lee, 2009, p. 57). China presents the politics and economics of North Koreans living within its borders as a “refugee crisis” that threatens China (Neaderland, 2004; Kurkantzick & Mason, 2006; Congressional Research Services, 2007).

2.4 Literature on Defector Resettlement in South Korea

A significant amount work has been conducted about North Korean defectors after they escape. Journalists cover issues faced by North Korean refugees, and the human rights situations in China and other countries are often represented in media. Refugee arrival in

South Korea is often seen as the ultimate solution. But, as Chung Byung-ho (2008) points out, “the structural conditions and difficulties of their life in South Korea have not been properly examined in systematic academic studies” (Chung, 2008, p. 3).

However, their stories of escape are just the beginning. Once in South Korea, North Koreans face tremendous difficulties (Choi, 2011; Kim & Jang, 2007; Jeon, 2000). Resettlement literature highlights how sixty years of separation have created a “gulf between the two Koreas” (Choi, 2011, p. 51). This gulf of separation and difference is what prevents North Korean refugees from a smooth transition. Numerous articles have been written about North Korean refugees’ psychological issues, post-traumatic stress disorders, and their general mal-adjustment to South Korean society.

Chung (2008) writes that South Korea’s definitions of and policies toward North Korean “border-crossers,” his substitution for the more commonly employed term “defector,” change over the years, resulting in confusion in both North Korean “newcomers” and the hosts (South Koreans). Thus, there is a problem in the fluctuating definitions of legal and cultural membership in South Korea (Chung, 2008). This troubles “newcomers” personal identities and influences their daily struggle to reconcile the cultural differences between the two Koreas. Chung (2008) believes these “difficulties experienced by the North Korean newcomers in South Korea reveal the characteristics of the cultural cleavage between the two Korean societies” (p. 3). For North Koreans, “the Korea they must live in has evolved into a far more competitive, individualistic, diverse, materialistic, and capitalist country than the Korea they left” (Chung, 2008, p. 13). Money, language, culture are generally the major stressors or markers of difference for these “defectors.”

Grinker (1998) points out that Koreans are not a homogenous group. Chung (2008) adds to this assertion:

North Koreans in South Korea . . . are men and women of all ages from diverse regional, occupational, and class backgrounds. Accordingly, their motivations for leaving North Korea and their adaptation patterns to South Korea are also diverse. Once they arrive in South Korea, however, all of them are treated equally as 'escapees' or 'new settlers.' They receive the same cultural orientation, same level of housing, and the same amount of settlement money (p. 14).

Within this same vein, Andrei Lankov, a professor at Kookmin University in Seoul, notes that within most of South Korean society there is "the perception that refugees are outsiders, not quite adjustable to the conditions of South Korean society and thus a social and budgetary burden" (Lankov, 2006, p. 105). These 새터민 *saeteomin* 'new settlers' are met by "a 'shamefully ambivalent' attitude, despite [South Korea] affecting a 'one Korea' policy stance as enshrined in the ROK Constitution" (Haggard & Noland, 2006, p. 7).

Another section of scholarship views North Korean refugees as assets, rather than hindrances to South Korean society (Kim & Jang, 2007; Lankov, 2006; Jeon, 2000). According to Jeon (2000), North Korean defectors are "important people to South Korean society not only for humanitarian reasons, but also for their impact on the future Korean unification and the integration of the two different South and North Korean peoples" (p. 362).

2.5 Literature on the Politics of Nationalism and (Re)Unification

The history, politics, ideology, and postcolonial scholarship surrounding North and South Korea propaganda for nation building (Sung, 2009, Choi, 2006) is another, albeit smaller, section of literature involving North Korea and Korean Studies in general. Sung Minkyu (2009) critiques post-colonial criticisms of Korean nationalism (p. 441).

Both North and South Korea endorse hegemonic nationalism, “a nationalism that supports and endorses the political and economic authority and power” (Befu, 1993, p. 3). Hegemonic nationalism is normative and publicized. It becomes part of the dominant Discourse and representation of “us” and “them/other.” Alternative versions of nationalist ideologies are silenced. An example of this within the Korean context is the Sunshine Policy.

During his 1998-2003 term, South Korean president, Kim Dae Jung, implemented the Sunshine Policy. The policy’s stated aim was “to create conditions for a peaceful coexistence of the two Korean states during a prolonged period of time. It is hoped that the economic growth of the North resulting from such prolonged contact would make the eventual (and, ideally, very distant) unification less painful both socially and economically” (Lankov, 2006, p. 113). Kwak Tae-Hwan and Joo Seung-Ho point out that this is a soft landing approach. In other words, North Korea’s “economic reforms and an open-door policy . . . will set in motion the transformation of the Stalinist regime. As its economic structure begins to change under the impact of market-oriented economic policies and increased contacts with the outside world, its political and social structure is bound to change” (Tae-Hwan Kwak and Seung-Ho Joo, “The Korean Peace Process,” p. 80, as cited in Lankov, 2006, p. 113). The Sunshine Policy is widely disputed in South Korea, and among international diplomacy circles. Many disapprove of this approach, particularly North Korean defectors, many of whom see the policy as “an utter failure having only served as a cash and food giveaway for the Kim Jong-il regime, and didn’t help inter-Korean relations” (*Korea Times*, December 22, 2012).

Originally, the Sunshine policy was based on a conviction that warmth toward North Korea would soften the regime’s hostility toward South Korea. This warmth was largely

generated through nationalistic and reunification rhetoric. However, Sung (2009) critiques the Sunshine Policy as “taking advantage of popular nationalism for the purpose of curbing anti-North Korean popular antagonism among South Koreans . . .at the risk of making popular nationalism the political panacea for all anti-North Korean ills” (p. 440).

Additionally, Sung (2009) sees the discursive practices surrounding national reunification as an instrumental postulate “that merely translates national reunification into an economically calculable term” (p. 449).

Befu (1993) discusses the power of nationalism as a “pernicious, relentless, pervasive, and tenacious political phenomena” that has continued since the late eighteenth century and is not, despite media’s Euro and U.S.-centric focus, isolated to the West (Befu, 1993, p. 1). Befu (1993) outlines two manifestations of cultural nationalism: symbolic or physical objects and discursive or verbal objects. The symbolic expressions of nationalism overlap with the discursive “to the extent that symbols are subject to verbal, discursive interpretation; and interpretations inevitably vary from time to time, depending on who is providing the interpretation” (Befu, 1993, p. 3). Scott Snyder, a representative of the Asia Foundation, writes of a “Toughness Dilemma” in which North and South Korea are involved in a one-upmanship game, competing for legitimacy (Snyder, 1999, p. 102-103). This is a competition to dominate the cultural legitimacy of “Koreanness.”

Why this is important? Because it gives rise to questions like “for whom are these given identities created? What/who do these inventions serve? As Befu (1993) points out, “national identity is not a fixed, objectified, and eternally defined entity; instead, it is continually in the remaking to fit the needs of the creators and consumers. As national needs change, as historical circumstances alter, as new groups with new political agendas

emerge, differing definitions of the nation are packaged to meet the new needs and offered to the populace' (Befu, 1993, p. 5). What this means for this project, is that the two Koreas are at a watershed moment in their history. Grinker (1998) attests to the ways North and South Korean cultural identities have been formed in opposition to each other. He advocates for Koreans to deconstruct the myth of homogeneity and begin to "engage in more positive discussions of difference . . . [where] difference might be seen as constitutive of new identities and communities whose worth lies not in how they diverge from an ideal purity but in how they bring together new cultural elements in a way that provides meaning for their members. It follows that cultural identity has to be seen as process rather than essence, movement rather than stasis" (p. 270).

At the 2009 annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Minkyu Sung contended "the popular formation of anti-North Koreanism should be examined in terms of the way in which popular anti-North Korean sentiments are articulated through multiple practices of power relations dispersed and intersected across various social domains." Sung's (2009) work seeks to challenge and complicate the cultural Otherization of North Korea, the politics of national identification, and the Korean emphasis on the idea of ethnic homogeneity (p. 4). Agreeing with South Korean critical intellectuals who claim that anti-North Koreanism has shifted from simply being a cold-war ideology to become a set of discursive tactics that impose culturally imperialistic views on North Korea (see Kim Myung-Seop 1998; Kwon Hyuk-Bum 2000a, 2000b, 2005; Lee Namhee, 2002)," Sung (2009) adds that the Discourse of North Korea's cultural Otherization is not "'just a post-cold war phenomenon' . . . [but] Rather, . . . the supposed [historical/chronological] discursive rupture between cold-war anti-North Koreanism and

cultural Otherization Discourse about North Korea implicitly disrupts a discernable understanding of discursive strategies of anti-North Koreanism that implicitly collaborate with principles of nationalism”(p. 4). One way to strengthen nationalism is the discursive strategy described by McNair (1988) as an anthropological production of “ ‘inferior enemies’ ” (as cited in Sung, 2009, p. 4). In the words of Sung (2009), “the exercise of cultural differentiation [was]. . . ‘already programmed’ ” within Korean political culture prior to the cold-war. Sung’s (2009) work asks,

What symbolic and discursive exchange between the two Koreas was set to impose cultural Otherization on the popular perception of North Korea? To what extent does such an exchange become dynamic and productive, giving particular shape to anti-North Koreanism as biopolitical Otherization? How can the critical examination of the discursive formation of anti-North Koreanism help to discuss the idea of a revival or replacement of cold-war anti-North Koreanism in post-cold war South Korean society?

Seeking to answer these questions, Sung (2009) sees the post-cold war discursive transition in South Korea to one of anti-North Koreanism political culture. Sung (2009) stresses that the historical activation of the cultural Discourse of anti-North Koreanism functions in ways that produce particular discursive strategies of anti-North Koreanism and these position North Korea and its people as a biopolitical Other.

In addition to Grinker (1998), Choi (2006) and Sung (2009), another example of similar work is found in Cho’s (2009) examination of the South Korean film Joint Security Area (JSA) to unpack “the cultural representations of the South Korean notion of the Self/Other in relation to its major traditional enemy — North Korea” (p. 227). Through an analytical reading of JSA, Cho (2009) asserts JSA reveals that “in South Korea, the traditional discursive practices based on the Cold War thinking have been eroded [and] for the South, the North is part of the Self (Korean-ness; love for the North as the same nation)

and, at the same time, is an Other (South Korean-ness; contempt for the North as an inferior state)” (p. 227). Cho (2009) finds the film’s theme limited and references Michael Shapiro (1989) ““for the meaning and value imposed on the world is structured not by one’s immediate consciousness but by the various reality-making scripts one inherits or acquires from one’s surrounding cultural/ linguistic condition”” (p. 229). In other words, these cultural scripts are inherited through language. As CDA claims, language structures the world and is structured by the world.

2.6 Neglected aspects of the two genres of literature

Within both news media and humanitarian literature, the discursive choices are overlooked. Few major media outlets, besides human rights activists/groups make statements about the North Korean people and few are transparent about how the language used connotes far more than what is actually being said. In general, dominant media avenues focus either on government and political issues or on North Korea’s rulers, elevating them to celebrity status. What does the techno-strategic, Cold War language, and caricaturization of the ruling Kims accomplish? It serves to present North Korea as a backward, isolated, xenophobic, essentialist, hermit kingdom that has no rhyme or reason to its thinking. In 2006, mass communications professor and scholar Jinbong Choi used a framing analysis to quantitatively analyze two major U.S. newspapers (*The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*) and claims that “an anti-North Korea framed dominated the news coverage” (p. 2). This anti-North Korea frame included consistently negative images that framed the national image of North Korea as “evil, enemy, blackmailer, and poor country” (p. 2). Through the use of framing strategies and salient themes and terms, an anti-North Korea sentiment was established.

Besides explicitly framing North Korea in a negative light, Tan(2010) notes the elision of certain topics and the fore fronting of others:

Media outlets readily cover North Korea's missile launches, but do not provide such coverage for the concentration camps that can stun even the calloused of heart. The story of North Korean counterfeiting U.S. currency makes for a fine news headline, yet the wrenching narratives of refugees who are sent back to North Korea . . .receive all too little recognition (p. 682-683).

Chung (2008) and Cha (2012) also critique dominant media for often glossing over the flow of refugees and the reports of North Korean development in other areas besides military and nuclear program. One alternative media text sponsored by the publishing company AsiaPress International, seeks to counter the dominant, foreign-narrated and interpreted texts surrounding North Korea by working with North Korean journalists inside of the DPRK. *Rimjin-gang* is the title of the first independent publication directly written by North Koreans. This project recognizes the need to hear stories from inside North Korea, written by North Koreans themselves. Additionally, LiNK identifies the need for a shift in the dominant media and discursive practices surrounding North Korea (see Chapter 5).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Main Research Question(s)

Two media outlets largely control representations of North Korea around the globe: the U.S. and South Korea. The current theory and reporting on North Koreans and North Korean affairs in both South Korea and the U.S. is dominated by political themes and discourse(s) left over from Cold War ideology. These political themes and discourse(s) have shaped global attitudes towards and perceptions of North Korea and its people. I turn to the *Korea Times* website and LiNK website as two representative media outlets to explore the implication of these themes and discourse(s). Based on the current scholarship, Western diplomacy is failing to interpret important historical, cultural, and contextual messages surrounding the North Korean situation. An analysis of South Korean media and literature as compared with U.S. media and literature may reveal ways in which a new relationship might be developed between North Korea and the rest of the world.

Based on these considerations, I developed the following research questions:

Research Question 1: How has the Korean term 북한이탈주민 ‘buk-han-ee-tal-ju-min’ been translated and used in the English translations of articles in the *Korea Times*?

Research Question 2: What implications does the translation as “defector” have on Western and/or U.S. interpretations of these media texts?

The answers to these questions have broader implications for international relations and these implications are discussed in Chapter 6.

3.1 Research Processes

Working from the LiNK's website's information and rhetorical language use, I will select articles from the *Korea Times* published after the date of Kim Jong-Il's death. The articles will be chosen based on their content, whether the terms North Korean "refugees," "asylum seekers," or North Korean "defectors" are present. The articles were chosen to be a representative sample of the *Korea Times* articles that are written about North Koreans.

I will use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to interpret the use of two terms: "refugee," and "defector." I compare the words' connotation and historicity with the Korean term 북한이탈주민 'buk-han-ee-tal-ju-min' for continuity or lack of continuity in semantic usage. Working from that theoretical framework, I compared and contrasted the ways political themes are addressed in the *Korea Times* articles and the discourses of "shift" that LiNK proposes. The theories that form the basis for CDA have already been outlined in Chapter two.

To outline the use of the politically and ideologically charged term "defector," I will rely on CDA theorists and theories as well as on Orphin (2005), Bloomaert & Bulcaen (2000) and Baker et. al (2008). Orphin writes about "the comparison of frequencies, and the analysis of the syntagmatic environment of key words" (Orphin, 2005, p. 39) as two components of her study. Orphin's study and Baker et. al. (2008) incorporate corpus linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) into a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. For the purpose of this project, corpus linguistics was not employed. Instead, I will rely on inductive processes and develop emerging themes that are situated within this particular sociocultural context (Baker et. al, 2008). However, identifying and

describing these themes and discourse(s) is only the first step toward the main goal of exploring the implications of these themes and discourse(s).

In order to set up my claim, it is important to first outline the historical context and background for these discursive practices. As CDA theory points out, ideology is not formed in one day or from one text. Instead, ideological formation through Discourse is intertextual, building and shifting power over time within cultural and historical contexts.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In order to better understand these discursive acts within the context of the historical moment in North and South Korea's history, one must understand the collective memory, the political landscape, and the historical events that function as the building blocks from which we arrive at this moment in history. As explained in the theoretical framework, critical linguists and CDA itself seeks to place all communication within a cultural and historical context.

It is key to understand that Korea has historically experienced most intimately and intensely all of the four global powers. This experience and knowledge puts Korea in a unique position to provide insight into a plan for lasting transformation. Paige (1989) narrates how Korea was colonized by industrializing Japan first, then controlled by socialist Russia, then subject to capitalist American power. After that, the revolution of China reached out to exert its power over Korea. Japan continued to dominant Korea economically. So, "in less than 85 years, Koreans have received powerful influences from Ching, Maoist, and post-Maoist China; from Meiji, Taisho, and Showá Japan; from Czarist, Stalinist, and Gorbachevist Russia; and from the United States of Wilson, Truman, and Reagan" (p.60). Because of this incredible range of first-hand experience, the two Koreas could potentially, with their combined understandings of the world powers' capacities, natures, and limitations, transform the global power play. This potential should not be ignored. The actualization of a peaceful Korean reunification could offer incredible

resources in terms of political understanding that may lead to what Paige (1989) calls “the formation of a nonviolent policy analysis group that includes specialists from both North and South on China, Japan, the Soviet Union, and the United States” (p. 60).

At the end of the Korean War, The Allied Forces divided Korea into two. Since this division, both North and South have claimed to be the legitimate heir of Korea culture, the true Korea. Under North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung, the working class was considered the core of a revolutionary Korean spirit. According to Scott Snyder, two themes of Kim Il-Sung’s 주체 *juche* idea are:

1) the will to persevere despite tremendous odds for the sake of redeeming the nation, and 2) defiance of fate and assertion as the actor, or subject, as creator of history rather than as the passive object shaped by historical experience. . . .Commitment, solidarity, and unconventional tactics are the core resources of a guerilla fighter who has nothing to lose and yet faces the prospect of losing everything. . . The roots of Kim Il Sung’s nationalist ideology have been planted deeply in the mythology of the guerilla tradition, and Kim Il Sung’s own experiences are presented in prototypes for how North Koreans should respond in difficult situations, including negotiations (p. 22).

Unlike his father, Kim Il-Sung’s, original vision, Kim Jong-Il’s reign was characterized by intensified fear-tactics and a military-first economy. Although still espousing a *juche* spirit in theory and rhetoric, Kim Jong-Il shifted to a view in which the military was the core revolutionary force. Choi Ju Hyuk, a doctor of Chinese medicine who used to work in North Korea, writes, “In the past North Korea’s policy was focused on a parallel pursuit of economic development and military re-enforcement. It was holding a gun in one and a sickle in the other, so to speak, to build a socialist economy while resolutely trampling down any plans by the U.S. and its supporters to provoke war. But now, the North is holding guns in both hands” (Choi, 2003). Choi believes that the real purpose behind Kim

Jong-Il's military-first economy was to maintain security and power over the North Korean people. Yet, this was cloaked in claims that a strong military will actually serve to protect the North Koreans from the "enemy" who want to "eliminate the only socialist system left in the world" (Choi, 2003). Similarly, Paik Haksoon (2006) states that North Korea's military-first (song'un) idea is represented as simply a new higher stage of the *juche* idea (p. 48). Paik (2006) writes about the dual tasks facing North Korea: national security and economic development. He argues that these two priorities are difficult to juggle and "within the context of North Korea's provocation, it is important to understand that nuclear weapons, or even developing nuclear weapons, are not the ultimate goal" (p. 46). Rather, these provocations or actions are instruments used to achieve the higher goals of national security and economic development (via practical-gain socialism).

In the 1990s, due to a large famine that caused major food shortage in DPRK, the North Korean regime lost control of the people. The food rationing system disintegrated. However, with the issuing of the Sunshine Policy, the regime received aid with no strings attached and rather than collapsing, survived and strengthened itself. To many, this policy is seen as the creator of a "spoiled gangster" regime that constantly demands something by threatening South Korea or other nations (December 22, 2012). This image of a "spoiled gangster" has been an icon, meme, and comic of North Korea's leaders. But on top of that, this stance of threatening in order to receive demands has escalated into the current situation of threats from Kim Jong-Un.

In March of 2010, an unidentified torpedo struck a South Korean ship and killed 46 sailors. In November of 2010, North Korea shelled the island of Yeonpyeong and killed four South Korean civilians. North Korea never officially claimed responsibility for these actions

nor did it apologize, despite South Korea's Lee administration demanding an official apology. These events were key moments in the relationship between North and South Korea. They marked a shift in South Korea's positioning toward North Korea. Before these events, there was a general longing for reunification. However, these two attacks cut at the fundamental belief that Koreans are all the same, a homogenous group of brothers and sisters separated by outside forces and a tragic History. South Koreans with whom I talked said they interpreted these moments as a betrayal and decided that North Korea's regime was not concerned about reunification. Thus, there has been a large shift toward harder-line approaches to South Korean interaction with North Korea and the national security of South Korea is a priority. In the *Korea Times* articles, many South Korean interviewees mentioned the need for a leader to "keep the country safe," "working to keep the country and people safe" (December 22, 2012). In the same article, the journalist's main claim is that North Korean defectors were the most determined group of voters in the South Korean presidential election and the reason Park Geun-hye won was because North Korean defectors and South Korean citizens were reacting vehemently to the potential comeback of the Sunshine Policy.

With the December 12th 2012 North Korean missile launch, international tensions mounted and governments began to pay more attention to North Korea. The U.N. Security Council chastised North Korea and issued further sanctions in hopes of "encouraging" North Korea to put an end to its nuclear and missile technology proliferation. North Korea interpreted these actions negatively, taking on a victim stance, and began issuing more and more bellicose threats. This has led to the recent news media coverage of North Korea.

A lack of humanitarian willingness to “engage” or even aid or help North Korea is not a problem. Rather, the problem is that the “help” being offered is politically charged and predominately contingent on nuclear non-proliferation. North Korea is not going to discontinue its nuclear and science technology proliferation. Additionally, this chastisement and the subsequent condition-based stipulations are from countries that North Korea perceives as political enemies (mainly the U.S). North Korea represents any politically charged interactions as a threat to the richness of North Korean national narratives, metaphors, and stories about the Great Leader(s). Within this geopolitical context, what can be done? Suggestions for further research and ways to address the overly politicized nature of certain discourses are discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS: DISCUSSION OF THEMES

In this chapter, I discuss themes relating to how the Korean term 북한이탈주민 ‘buk-han-ee-tal-ju-min’ has been translated and used in politically charged ways in the English translations of articles in the *Korea Times* (Research question 1). Second, I compare the discourse of defection in the *Korea Times* to the discourse of shift in LiNK and *The Economist*. This sets up my exploration of Research Question two in Chapter 6.

5.1 *The Case of Nominalization*

The most striking and politically charged word used in association with North Koreans is “defector.” Interestingly, when one compares this English translation to the Korean terms used in the *Korea Times*, the political connotations are not the same. The most neutral South Korean term for North Koreans is: 북한이탈주민 ‘buk-han-ee-tal-ju-min’ (buk ‘north’; han ‘korean’; ee-tal ‘escaping’; ju-min ‘people’ or ‘citizens’). This is the term that is used in the *Korea Times* articles and in most other media. Yet, this term is translated into English as “defectors.” Unfortunately, this chosen English-counterpart is not neutral like the Korean connotation of ‘buk-han-ee-tal-ju-min.’ Thus, in order to retain the cultural context, why not translate this word as “refugee,” “asylum seekers,” or “immigrants”? The use of the political term “defectors” is key within the English versions of the *Korea Times* articles.

탈북자 ‘tal-buk-ja’ has absorbed negative meanings/connotations. So, in efforts to soften or create a politically correct term, the South Korean government invented a new

term 새터민 'sae-teo-min' meaning 'new comer(s)' or 'new settler(s).' This term was intentionally positive. It seeks to connote that North Koreans are simply new arrivals that will over time integrate into South Korean culture. 'Sae-teo-min' is more akin to the English term "asylum seekers" or "refugees" because it is a legal or top-down, government sanctioned neologism.

The term 북한사람 'buk-han-sa-ram' means 'North Korean person/people' and only refers to a person's nationality, without connotations of escape or political undertones. 보호 센터 'bo-ho-sen-teo' means 'protection center.' The largest protection center for North Koreans in South Korea is called the Hanawon Center. It is also known as a resettlement center. Within the *Korea Times* articles the Hanawon center was mentioned nine times.

"When defectors arrive, they are sent to Hanawon, a resettlement center run by the government, where they spend six months, getting adjustment training to the new environment. Graduating from it, they are offered a place to live and put on a six-month long allowance, whose amounts varies from person to person." (12/22/12)

This, however, is not what Chung (2008) claims (see literature review). Chung works extensively with North Korean refugee resettlement in South Korea.

The most pejoratively connoted Korean word for North Koreans is: 빨갱이 'bal-keng-ee' which means 'people of red' or 'red people.' This is a highly derogatory term which is used in ways akin to profane language; it is a colloquial term used in hushed tones in private, never in media or formal, public spaces/mediums.

To defect is an action, one of betrayal, or abandonment. Its definition is “to abandon one’s country or cause in favor of an opposing one.” Etymologically “defect” comes from the Latin “failed.” Defector gives the person much more agency whereas ‘refugee’ implies a more helpless state. The *Korea Times* online website has 1,101 articles with the word “defector” at least once within the article. Within the 20 *Korea Times* articles that I analyzed the term “defector” (in singular and plural forms combined) appeared 113 times. “Defector” is the most frequently used term to refer to North Korean people/refugees.

As evidence of this, a simple Internet search of academic articles that deal with or differentiate between defector and refugee, reveals that the top articles are all about North Koreans. I entered “difference between defector and refugee” into Google Scholar and the first eight articles were about North Koreans. Of the 9,820 hits, an overwhelming majority was about North Koreans.

The term “defector” is specifically related to North Koreans and it is explicitly politically charged. No other refugees or asylum seekers from other countries are collocated with this word as often as North Korea(ns). The repetition of this term also serves to make it a salient one in the representation of North Koreans. Not only is it salient, it serves to limit the number of terms to frame a certain topic or event; it replaces and excludes the use of other terms in association with North Koreans.

The differences in these expressions carry significant ideological distinctions (Fowler, 1991). The lexical item “defector” possesses structure, a meaning “map” (Fowler, 1991, p. 81). It carries a sense, a meaning that is based on the relationship between words. Sense-relations create a structure system that acts like a map. The map’s structure and meaning are governed by “the structural conventions appropriate to figuring the territory

for a specific social purpose. . . .as a representation of the world *for* a culture; the world as perceived according to the ideological needs of a culture” (Fowler, 1991, p. 82). Naming North Koreans as “defectors” serves to create a sense-relation where North Korean consistently being in a collocation with “defector” creates both an overt and subliminal effect. Rather than someone to save, these people are seen as constant failures or untrustworthy, traitors who could just as easily abort back to the other side. They are constant outsiders within the South Korean culture and, as Chung (2008) points out, must employ a variety of strategies to come to an understanding of their identity, to make sense of their selves within the cultural discourse.

A “refugee” is defined as a person who is outside of the country of his/her nationality and is not protected by their nation/country because of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. On the other hand, a “defector” is defined as a person who willingly exchanges allegiance to one state or political entity for allegiance to another. When the meaning of “defector” is broadened it can involve abandoning a person, a cause or a doctrine that binds or ties one in allegiance or duty. The sense of agency and choice associated with these two terms is strikingly distinct. A “refugee” is not only more victimized, but they leave their country for basic survival-based reasons. It is as if they are drive from their homeland, whereas a “defector” chooses to “abandon” a cause or doctrine, a nationality, an ideology, for reasons that are not necessarily connected to their survival.

The definition of “refugee” is largely associated with legal documents and international law. Melissa Kim (2010) writes that the most central documents dealing with international refugee status and protection are the Convention and Protocol. These are also

the most widely ratified treaties. In order to define an applicant as a “refugee,” Kim (2010) writes that the applicant must be:

outside their country of nationality; unable or unwilling to take advantage of the protection or that country, or to return there; and the inability or unwillingness is attributed to a well-founded fear of being persecuted on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or being a member of a social group (p. 432).

However, Tan (2010) recognizes a problem with this definition because the on-the-ground interviews by Amnesty International and other NGOs report that North Korean escapees have difficulty demonstrating a subjective fear of persecution. Although this is in opposition to Chang, Haggard & Noland (2008)’s claims, Tan (2010) claims, “many sources indicate that the primary reason for leaving North Korea is to search for food, not for fear of persecution” (p. 435). This is a top-down approach to defining refugees based on legal status in accordance with proof presented to a jury.

5.2 Themes in Korea Times articles

Does the *Korea Times* have a similar viewpoint about North Korea as the U.S. government or generally western audiences? In many ways, the answer is yes. Rather than truly being open to various, multiple, alternative discourses, “International” news is largely influenced by the West and the global North, particularly when translated into English or for an English-speaking audience.

Top down

Repeated reference to “analysts” or “analysts and experts” hails a Discourse of power in which these, often unnamed voices, are imbued with exclusivist knowledge. They represent the elite entities in which the public must blindly place trust. In other words, these voices are the ones allowed to speak on the issues surrounding North Korea. They are

the ones entrusted with the access to specified, technical, strategic knowledge and privileged to have their agenda dominate the media's representation of the facts about North Korea. The voices of analysts, even if they are unnamed, often deliver the "Truth" at the expense of other narratives, alternative discourses and alternative terminology (nominalization). Could the term 'defector' be a type of officialese that cloaks North Koreans in a Discourse of defection? Does it carry semantic baggage from the Cold War era and its discourse?

Most of the articles in the *Korean Times* employ a discourse of contingency planning and tentative statements permeate media discourse(s) surrounding North Korea. There is a considerable amount of "tough talk," talk of power play, showing signs of weakness, one-upmanship, threatening stances, and reactionary responses.

The main topic of most articles centers on politics, analysts, or with governments and their policy and strategies of engagement. It is common for the *Korea Times* to use only the capital city of countries as a metonymic device (i.e. "Pyongyang" standing in for North Korea, the North Korean government or ruling regime, and "Washington" as standing for the federal government of the United States).

Interestingly, even a large number of the articles in which "defector" appeared also dealt with Park Geun-hye's election and policy. Park's main policy related to North Korea is termed "Trustpolitik" and involves mutually binding expectations. In an article in *Foreign Affairs* she wrote:

"Seoul must respond immediately to ensure that Pyongyang understands the costs of provocation" (December 12, 2012).

“If North Korea takes steps toward genuine reconciliation, such as reaffirming its commitments to existing agreements, then the South should match its efforts” (December 12, 2012).

In the first statement the use of the two capitals situates the issues as one of political power, government centrality. The second statement places the responsibility on North Korea. It is its job to prove or demonstrate its “seriousness about dialogue” or “commitment.” It is North Korea’s (or Pyongyang’s rather, the government’s) duty to rehabilitate itself or conform itself to international laws. This conformity, these “steps toward genuine reconciliation” mean making efforts to lessen North Korea’s pariah stance.

In the January 31st, 2013 article “2 Koreas poles apart in motives” the metaphor of poles spatially connotes how far apart the two Koreas are: as far as the North and South Poles. Conceptually, this metaphor positions their motives in a binary/oppositional relationship. Additionally, at the beginning of the article two photos are side by side, juxtaposing the South Korean Naro rocket launch and the North Korea Unha-3 rocket launch.

“With the successful launch of the Naro rocket, South Korea has gone head-to-head with North Korea, which recently succeeded in sending a payload into orbit. Analysts and officials, however, said Thursday that the two were starkly different” (January 31, 2013).

The phrases “head-to-head” and “starkly different” position the North and South as in opposition to each other. This oppositional or confrontational different is because, based on the “analysts and officials” proclamation

“the South followed international norms that safeguard against weapons development and proliferation, measures that the North defied’ (January 31, 2013).

This representation is telling. South Korea is the compliant, obedient child of international norms and North Korea the defiant, rebellious one. In fact, the article uses those exact words:

“Observers say South Korea’s compliance with relevant treaties such as the NPT and Missile Technology Control Regime, and its compliance with the International Atomic Energy Agency, make its program more transparent” (January 31, 2013).

Compliance indicates following rules and being forthcoming or transparent, whereas the North’s actions “raise red flags” and are secretive. North Korea’s “deviation from international norms raises security concerns.” U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said:

“there is no basis for comparing the behavior of the ROK in space with the behavior of the DPRK” (January 31, 2013).

“The North says its Dec. 12 launch was for scientific purposes; but the international community condemned the move as a test of ballistic missile technology” (January 31, 2013).

These statements indicate a U.S. position that does not even consider North and South Korea as similar in any way. No matter what the North claims, the international community distrusts it.

“The regime is feared to be moving toward long-range nuclear capability” (January 31, 2013).

“Pyongyang isn’t trusted to launch rockets” (Ibid).

“(the council) has determined that North Korea’s behavior is a threat” (Ibid).

Additionally, Pyongyang’s actions are described

“amid a spate of anger. . . [and] Pyongyang said that its rocket launches and nuclear tests were directed at changing Washington’s ‘hostile policy’ toward it” (January 31, 2013).

This justification is a reaction, employing the language of victimhood and a stance of retaliation. The spate of anger description creates an image of Pyongyang (or North Koreans) as belligerent and emotional, lashing out in tantrum-like “spates.”

The Economist magazine writes:

“The mood has soured since Mr. Kim’s new-year speech called for an end to confrontation between North and South. Yet, as soon as the UN Security Council issued new sanctions against the regime as a result of the rocket launch, the response was apoplectic, warning of more tests and threatening to attack America. The son’s regime, it turns out, is not less capricious than his father’s was” (February 9, 2013).

The word “capricious” is often collocated with the actions or nature of the ruling Kims or the North Korea regime in general. In addition, words like “apoplectic” are often used to describe North Korean responses.

Similarly, throughout many media channels Kim Jong-Un is consistently referred to as a “young leader” and represented as struggling or fumbling to garner support. Both North Korea as a whole, and its leadership in particular, are represented as belligerent and irrational. The strategy of demonizing or dehumanizing the “other”/the enemy, is one that allows the constructed group “US” to dismiss the irrational, young and capricious Kim Jong-Un. Although most often employed when representing Kim Jong-Un, this dismissal as a result of Discourse driven “othering” is also subtly used when representing North Korean who have left their country.

Us vs. Them

In articles I analyzed, North Koreans in South Korea were represented in ways that position them as outsiders, or at least residents that should be approached with a small level of distrust or wariness.

One article “25 NK spies caught since 2008” describes an “underground espionage group” that the South Korean government uncovered.

“Recently, a growing number of operations have been uncovered involving instances where agents disguise themselves as North Korean defectors.” (January 27, 2013).

“The North seems to actively use the defector camouflage tactics”
“once they [the agents/spies] pass the South Korean authorities’ screening, they get legal status as residents here as well as financial support from the South” (Ibid).

“defector-disguised spies”

This scenario plants a fundamental distrust for the validity of defectors status: are they defectors or secret agents? That very same day, the Korea Times published another article “Gov’t to beef up verification system for NK defectors.” This article outlined the preemptive measures the South Korean government was seeking to implement in order to catch any more North Korean spies that had slipped through their system.

“ ‘We need to embrace the 24,000 North Korean defectors here, but if there are any spies among them it can put national security at serious risk,’ an official at Ministry of Public Administration and Security. . .”
(January 27, 2013).

North Koreans also often say they feel like second-class citizens. In one article, the North Korean Refugees Foundation conducted a study that showed that “39% of North Korean defectors think they belong to a lower class” (January 6, 2013). The photo at the beginning of the article depicts a group of eight North Koreans being escorted by two guards and one man in a suit. Each person in the group of North Koreans is all wearing white masks over their mouths and jackets with the hoods over the heads. They are also all looking down at the group and walking. There is no caption for the image; however, this image serves to express an attitude of outcast/outsiderness, a feeling of shame or secrecy. Perhaps the people in the photo want to be left alone; perhaps they want to be invisible, or perhaps they have a secret.

In another article, North Korea defectors question, “the military’s claim that they are eligible to serve in the Armed Forces and are treated the same as their South Korean counterparts.” They believe their legal rights are being thwarted without being fully

informed. All South Korean men who are over eighteen are required to serve a two-year military service.

“A growing number of North Koreans are finding that the two-year mandatory tour provides a pathway to mainstream Korean society” (August 8, 2012).

However, the Military Service Act allows ‘a person who has immigrated from north of the Military Demarcation Line’ [to] be exempted ‘upon his request’” (August 8, 2012). The issue is that many North Korea refugees/“immigrants” claim that their social workers take care of the military matters upon their arrival to resettlement centers like Hanawon. At these centers North Koreans often sign away their right to serve in the South Korean military.

“The Hanawon official pointed out that all North Korean defectors subject to military service have thus far agreed to sign an exemption form before they leave Hanawon” (August 8, 2012).

This claim sounds questionable for the article also claims that many North Korea defectors feel they are being deprived of their right to serve and discriminated against.

“The government should stop discriminating against North Korean defectors and depriving them of their right to live as ordinary citizens,’ he [Yeom, a North Korea refugee] said” (August 8, 2012).

The Military Manpower Administration (MMA) “claims that 1,765 defectors exercised their option for exemption between January 2008 and June 2012” (August 8, 2012). The verb “exercise” seems to give North Koreans agentive action in this; however, this “option for exemption” actually seems mandatory based on the descriptions of defectors who have gone through Hanawon and other government resettlement centers. These North Koreans

claim they did not willingly, knowingly sign away their “right to serve.” When they later want to enlist, they are denied. This leaves them asking why they experience differential treatment. The “option for exemption” exists but there is not “option” to serve. With subtle and cursory strokes, this article touches upon discrimination and the distrust surrounding North Koreans living in Seoul. An underlying and unarticulated logic is “They are defectors and if allowed to serve in the military they could be spies or defect again and place South Korea’s security at risk. They are unfit to serve. They are second-rate citizens.” There is a wariness that is elided in this article and this elision could possibly be connected to the Korea Times articles about North Korean spies (February 2, 2013).

In these instances and in other ways, the English translations of the *Korea Times* articles sets up an Us/Them dichotomy or at least sections off “defectors” as a minority group within South Korean society. Within one editorial, under a heading “Hope for a better future in the South,” there is a hint at the failures of the South Korean government to seriously invest in North Korea defectors. There is also a more varied representation of North Korean refugees in South Korea. After describing the largest resettlement center, there is a paragraph that reads:

“When the allowance stops, they’re thrown into a job market which they find highly competitive. Many fail, finding themselves back at home, falling into depression, trying to kill themselves, or sometimes returning to North Korea.” (December 22, 2012)

The article then quotes a North Korean now living in Seoul commenting on the defector couple that re-defected/returned back to North Korea.

“Kim, 44. . .said the defector couple . . .is an example of how defectors struggle to adjust [to the South]” (December, 22, 2012)

Kim adds to this comment that she believes Park Geun-hye, the new president of South Korea, is the best candidate because she will pay more and better attention to “how defectors feel while going through a lot in a new country” (December 22, 2012).

Generally speaking, *The Korea Times* texts are politically charged in that they employ the term “defector” significantly more than “refugee.” Interestingly enough, this distinction becomes more visible when looking at English translations of South Korean news, news for English-speaking audiences or within mainstream U.S. media. South Korean media in Korean, for an exclusively Korean-language-proficient audience is not as fear-driven. It seems the common denominator is a Western-centric audience whose ideological framework still rests in Cold War logic. Something is lost (or gained) in the English translation. This gain in most cases is an increase in politically charged terms and discourses. One reason for this may simply be that governments and organizations at the top of societal structures heavily influence dominant channels of news media.

5.3 Themes in LiNK.org and The Economist

Conversely, in the LiNK website the rhetoric is one of “together—with” or “we” discourse in which the readers are implicated, involved, positioned, and invited to support North Koreans in solidarity. As an activist website predominantly viewed by young U.S. American liberals, LiNK is an example of “awareness raising” discourse. Rather than an Us/Them or a Savage/Savior dichotomy, LiNK seeks to be the voice of the West coming alongside the North Korean people through actions that empower North Koreans and establish solidarity.

Bottom-up Approach

LiNK's website explicitly points out that within media there is an absence of images of everyday life in North Korea. Not only is there an absence but the images that do exist within mainstream U.S. media and within major South Korean news sources consistently represent negative images of North Korea (see Choi, 2006).

To counter this absence and negative representation, *LiNK* advocates for a bottom-up approach. In general, a more bottom-up approach toward representation of North Korean people is evidenced in the Discourse employed by LiNK and the *Economist* (February 9th-15th, 2013).

LiNK identifies the need for a shift in the dominant media and discursive practices surrounding North Korea. The organization specifically wrote "The Shift Manifesto" which reads as a pledge:

The current perception of North Korea is dominated by politics, doing more for the regime than for the people. I am going to shift public perception and support media that helps make the stories of the North Korean people known to the world. North Korea should be defined by the people, not the politics.

If this is to be true, narratives of the North Korean people represent an alternative media, one that will shift current representations. LiNK, its staff, and its "nomad" representatives, seek to present alternative narratives to the dominant U.S. media. Sokeel Park, the director of research and strategy for LiNK, begins an article for SkyNews by writing, "Despite all the attention-grabbing angry rhetoric of the past month aimed at the US and South Korea, the North Korean regime is not crazy or suicidal (actually it is very clever and calculating - that's how it's managed to survive this long)" (Park, 2013). From this statement, there are two alternative stories. One is that the common representation of North Korea as crazy is

flawed and the other is a comment about the “much attention” paid to the Kim family, which is a major concern for LiNK. Thus, shifting attention to the people requires supporting other narratives and media outlets. For example, on April 9th, 2013, the LiNK Facebook page posted this admonition:

It's easy to forget about the millions of innocent North Koreans during a time when media is obsessed with every move and threat coming from the regime. Don't let the regime define North Korea! The biggest threat the North Korean regime poses is not to the outside world. It's to its own people.

In these words, LiNK explicitly points to media’s role in drawing attention away from the North Korean people and “obsessing” over the North Korean regime. The exclamatory sentence “Don't let the regime define North Korea!” emphatically urges its readers to take responsibility for shifting public attention and definitions of North Korea. Here “definition” could easily be read as “representation.” This statement also insists that the North Korea regime is not a threat to the “outside world” and this is in direct oppositional logic to the security-based, diplomacy discourse that is employed in the news and in dominant communication channels. Instead, LiNK takes the stance that the North Korean people are the ones who are truly at risk or threatened by the regime’s actions. This is the alternative narrative that LiNK wishes to share. Rather than focusing on international security, LiNK desires for concerned people to focus on the threatened security and human rights of the North Korean people.

Similarly, *The Economist*, a newspaper/magazine based in Great Britain, writes of a glimmering hope for the most oppressed people of the world (p. 11). The February 9th, 2013 issue devotes two texts: a one page article entitled “Change in North Korea” and a special North Korea briefing entitled “Rumblings from below.”

In the article “Change in North Korea,” *The Economist* writes, “fissures are thus emerging in what used to be a monolithic state.” A few pages later, the title of the news briefing itself “Rumblings from below” evokes a volcano or earthquake connection, creating the idea that there is more going on under the surface than one sees. The by-line reads: “A sealed and monstrously unjust society is changing in ways its despotic ruler may not be able to control” (p. 24).

A natural disaster, or a natural force is unable to be controlled. Thus, the analogy of an earthquake or volcano “rumbling from below.” Other place in the briefing read “as yet there are no visible signs of protest. . .there are, however, tentative signs of openness to the outside world” (p. 26). “In such endeavours, experts say, information on other ways of life is more valuable than political indoctrination. Mr. Lee, the defector, believes that information should be as high a priority as food aid.”

According to this article, contact with the outside world has two effects. First, North Korean’s can access outside influences and compare their lives to others’. This “trigger[s] a craving for the material trappings of the modern world” (p. 24). Secondly, the new flow(s) of information give outsiders “insight into the changes taking place in North Korean society. . . .It helps unravel the all-enwrapping shroud of secrecy” (p. 24).

The Economist points to defector-led news sources like the DailyNK, which is based in Seoul. The article also notes that working with and studying defectors aid in forming a better understanding of what lies behind the “shroud of secrecy.” “What has emerges is a picture of two-speed society. Pyongyang has surged ahead of the rest of the country, the kleptocrats have grown stronger, and the canny traders has joined a fledgling class of nouveaux riches” (p. 25) “Change in North Korea” claims that “For years now the world’s

dealings with North Korea have chiefly been about stopping its nuclear programme, which poses a grave threat to peace. But that policy has pretty much failed” (p. 11). This acknowledgement is what leads texts like this one and LiNK’s website to advocate for a shift in perspective, approach, discursive practices, and alternative media.

The Economist quotes Andrei Lankov as saying that North Korea has “become a society where money now talks even more loudly than your relationships to the regime. ‘It’s a completely different society than it was 15 years ago. This has not happened because of government policy. It’s a change from below.’” (p. 24). This is a shift in perspective, an approach that features the North Korean people (bottom-up) rather than the regime. *The Economist* goes on to cite Lankov’s writing: “North Korean society has become defined by one’s relationship to money, not by one’s relationship to the bureaucracy or one’s inherited caste status” (p. 26).

The Economist writes “these changes have been easy to miss with so much attention falling to the Kim family, particularly in the past year” (Change in North Korea, February 9th-15th, 2013, p. 25). This comment about the “much attention” paid to the Kim family is major concern for LiNK. Sokeel Park, the director of research and strategy for LiNK, writes, “From speaking with many refugees and learning of the long-term social trends that are spreading throughout the country and seem irreversible, we have concluded that the regime's system is ultimately unsustainable. At some point the regime will either have to change its system or it will be changed out by the people.” Park (2013) claims the West might realize opportunities to interact with North Korea if they shift the focus from nuclear weapons and missiles to the 24 million ordinary North Korean people. In fact, since threats, force, and sanctions have proved ineffectual in the past, perhaps the only positive

transformation will result from a demilitarized interaction. Paik (2006) also writes about this idea. He sees North Korean politics as being overloaded by competing forces that threaten to rip it apart. Paik (2006) sees North Korea's regime as teetering through a balancing act between self-preservation and necessary development to prevent internal collapse.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Reorient Discourse

These representations, as they are formed/shaped through discourse, are only the beginning. They are the starting point, the justification used for approaches organizations and governments take toward interaction with North Korea. I believe, and seek to argue, that politically charged interactions and negotiations with North Korea will continue to fail. However, because the majority of representations and discussions about North Korea operate under a Discourse that is politically charged, the implications then become: For future interactions with North Korea to be mutually fruitful, they must avoid politically charging North Korean people with a Discourse of defection. Alternative representations and conceptions of North Korea should look to its people in order to see how they are representing themselves. In addition, international diplomacy and news media should learn about the history of relations between North and South Korea since the end of the Korean War in order to develop a culturally contextual representation of North Korea(ns). Western scholarship should also look for ways to de-center its West-centric ideology and learn from South Korean media and scholars.

6.1a Re-examine terminology surrounding North Koreans and North Korean affairs

In an op-ed article in the *New York Times* entitled “Stay Calm. Call North Korea’s Bluff” (2013) Andrei Lankov claims everything on the Korean Peninsula is continuing on as usual and “It would be better if people in Washington and New York took a lesson from the people of Seoul.” Taking a lesson from the South Korean people would mean not

exaggerating North Korean threats and/or actions. It would also mean being people who want to do work with North Korea must reflect on the use of terms like “defector” and the historical context and interdisciplinary matrix that influences interactions and communication surrounding North Korea and its people. Workers within this context need a critical understanding of the overlapping, interwoven complexities of idea formation, representation, and the powerful workings of discourse within human society. This is not only about humanitarian aid, policies, human rights, but also about the very ideas and mental constructs that are at work on both sides and how Discourse creates these (i.e. Us vs. Them discursive practices where North Korea is the barbaric Other and/or North Korean propaganda in which the U.S. is the barbaric Other).

It is helpful to consider the ways that South Korea discusses North Koreans in comparison with the English terms of “refugees,” “defectors.” Instead of “refugee” or “defector,” Kim Ki-Sik (2006) uses the term “displaced persons” to refer to North Koreans living outside of North Korea. Kim Ki-Sik (2006) writes,

Earlier, the main human rights concern regarding North Korea was one of humanitarian aid by the international community in response to the humanitarian calamity brought about by food shortages and massive famine resulting from severe flooding. However, over the last years, the focus on North Korea seems to have zeroed in on issues relating to the North Korean political system; this focus has become very much politicized (125).

In other words, rising international criticism of the human rights situation in North Korea has served to only further aggravate the very issues that surround North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons and this shifts the attention to issues of nuclear nonproliferation, thus occluding primary attention on humanitarian issues.

Since 2010, the conditions for asylum and integration have been expanded to, in South Korea, defining "defector" or "refugee" to include North Koreans who had spent up to 10 years in third countries (Haggard & Noland, 2011, p. 152). In China, the definition of a candidate for refugee status "is a legitimate fear or persecution on return to one's country of origin. Whatever their stated motives for exit, the fear of persecution can hardly be in doubt given the fact that exit is criminalized (also in contravention of international law) and the accumulating evidence on the internment of those seeking to leave or returning to the country when caught doing so" (p. 146). China is reluctant to label these "economic migrants" (Haggard & Noland, 2011, p. 152) as refugees, but both South Korea and China's positions towards refugees are highly politicized.

Chung (2008) writes that the apolitical and nonideological identities of North Korean 'migrants'/'defectors' "may have stronger political meaning than is often imagined . . . The way in which the migrants challenge and ignore the powers of both Koreas in favor of their more practical concerns has the potential to redefine the nature of division itself as something more economic than political" (Chung, 2008, p. 23). Similarly, the *Korea Times* interviewed a 31-year-old South Korean law student as saying that the South Korean government has not invested seriously enough in North Korea defectors. The student says:

"Although newcomers don't know very much, they have a potential to play a bridging role when unification happens, and the government should think hard about it" (December 12, 2012).

In this translation, the term "newcomers" is the Korean word 새터민 'sae-teo-min.' This is the politically correct term not the typical 북한이탈주민 'buk-han-ee-tal-ju-min.' These comments are based on the actions of North Koreans living in South Korea. But, Haggard

and Noland (2011) speculate about everyday forms of resistance practiced by North Koreans still living within the DPRK. They explain that large-scale organizations or networks within the country report very little in terms of organized, clandestine action against the government and “overt anti-regime action remains sporadic at best” (p. 112).

6.1b Realize change may come from the bottom-up

This does not mean that citizens of DPRK are inactive, for “disaffection may be channeled into private actions that while not overtly political may nonetheless have longer-run implications for the stability of state socialism” (Haggard & Noland, 2011, p.112). An example of this is “the willingness of citizens to access alternative sources of information that are likely to conflict with official mythology. . . .Not only is foreign media becoming more widely available but also inhibitions on its consumption are disappearing” (p. 112). Haggard and Noland’s (2011) study specifically found that foreign news reports are more consumed than foreign entertainment products (p. 112).

Media scholar Hamid Mowlana writes “These technologies in many cases permit the poor to move beyond simply being a passive audience. Cheaper and more accessible technologies allow individuals and groups to become their own message-makers. . . . Alternative communication networks link together grassroots and policy groups throughout the globe, working on environmental, peace and relief efforts and forging together interests and activists into a new global civil society” (Mowlana, 2001, p. 67). The impact of technology and access to alternative communication channels is paramount and cannot be understated. These innovations created at grassroots levels “challenge dominant transnational interests . . .[and are] assisted by such phenomena as the growing physical and social mobility of populations across national boundaries” (p. 69).

At the end of his study, Rowen (2006) concludes that the North Korean regime is unlikely to relinquish its nuclear weapons or to comply with inspection. Thus, rather than focusing on the diplomatic level of North Korean interaction, the diplomatic community should work to illuminate and aid the plight of the North Korean people. There may be new, alternative commercial ways of fostering political change in the North, and we cannot, at this point, write off the potential for reunification. Rowen (2006) also notes, though the regime opposes capitalist movement in all its forms, the "market-oriented actions" that seem to have caught on in Pyongyang may promise new opportunities for capitalist involvement with the country. Rowen (2006) compares this economic moment to the early Chinese experience, warning that unless the North Korean regime allows the economic changes to spread, they may cause more harm than good. Important to note, however, is the fact that along with the economic reforms came "marked increase in North Koreans' access to information" (p. 199). The outside media is all smuggled and illegal, however, and the regime responded to the increased interest with increased prosecution of deviant North Koreans.

6.1c Center economic considerations in policy

Lankov (2006) includes implications for economic policies with North Korea. He writes of the gradual wearing away of North Korean Stalinism, the collapse a central economy, the rise of small businesses, the relaxation of police control, and the breaking of North Korea's self-imposed information blockade (p. 96). Due to these processes, although North Korea still rests under authoritarian rule, it is no longer a "Stalinist" state. Slowly, information from the outside world is flowing in. Lankov (2006) believes this is good news, for in the past, "because of the uniquely monolithic nature of the North Korean

dictatorship, engagement was meaningless. Foreign countries lacked a means of reaching the common people” (Lankov, 2006, p. 120). Lankov (2006) specifically suggests that U.S. and other foreign businesses encourage the current development through economic exchanges in small-scale activities that engage the common people. Lankov (2006) believes “these projects should be seen as small investments toward larger-scale change in the future” (p. 121). These exchanges would teach North Koreans about how capitalism works, expose them to the outside world, and “help to end the demonization—and contribute to the demystification—of foreigners in the eyes of North Koreans” (Lankov, 2006, p. 121). Demystification and ending this demonization go both ways. Should the international community perpetuate images of the North Korean regime as a global threat? Perhaps the misrepresentation of North Korea as belligerent and irrational is at fault for creating fear and defensive, preemptive measures of force.

6.1d Recognize threats of force as historically ineffective

Essentially, condition-based, hardline, confrontational approaches that mitigate cessation of nuclear technology or nuclear nonproliferation will not work with North Korea. International condemnation and stigmatization does not work either. Putting “pressure” on the DPRK does not work; instead, it invites a one-upmanship mentality, a power play. Few times in history has North Korea responded in the “right” way to threats of force. This is the same today in that North Korea’s recent threats are in response to the sanctions imposed after its “unauthorized” missile launch in December 2012. This is a critical time in the history of relations with North Korea. Although timing is not everything, it is crucial to understanding what actions will stimulate desired outcomes. If the only desired outcome is to cause North Korea to cease its nuclear and military science program,

the current geopolitical atmosphere is not conducive to that aim. This discussion is not about whether hardline or soft-landing approaches are better. Rather, there are certain approaches that, based on the context of a given time, lend themselves to and naturally fit into the processes that are already happening within North Korea.

6.1e Forefront North Koreans' own representation(s)

Whether or not multi-lateral talks lead to any kind of agreement, the promotion of political and economic change from below should be the principal goal of South Korea, China, Japan, the U.S. and other countries. Chung's claim regarding "defectors" is also echoed by *The Economist's* recent article entitled "Change in North Korea" and its briefing entitled "Rumblings from below." However, like Haggard and Noland (2011), *The Economist* points to North Koreans still living and working within the DPRK, not on North Korea "defectors" living abroad. LiNK's website also echoes this type of rhetoric, one in which there is a bottom-up look at or approach to representing what is happening in North Korea. In this way, the North Korean people can begin to represent themselves. They can take apolitical or nonideological stances to identity formation. This is not an easy task, however, especially when one's background is so politically charged and the world's interpretation of North Koreans is so politically charged.

Based on Chung (2008)'s assessment of North Koreans who resettle in South Korea, Kwak and Lee (2009)'s analysis of transnational advocacy for North Korean human rights, Okuyama (2008)'s critique of international cooperation, I believe alternative approaches to engagement with North Korea must be implemented. As one example of this call for alternative approaches, LiNK seeks to challenge U.S. Americans to focus on stories of North Korean people and empower them in their efforts to survive and thrive as individuals and

as a nation. This means focusing on universal human rights, rather than on divisive ideological discourses charged with political and historical baggage. Is this possible? And if so, how or in what ways and through what avenues? Aren't human rights discourses used to perpetuate Western, democratic, individual-based political norms? Yes, and often human rights discourse, as critiqued by decolonized states and nations from the global South, emphasize how human rights discourse(s) originate in the West and are based on the tenets of Western liberal (and now neoliberal) thought. This critique of human rights discourse(s) extends into critiques of the very Discourse of CDA.

6.1f Stop universalizing values (human rights and political)

In light of this critique, Shi-xu (2012) argues for alternative paradigms of Discourse research under the term Cultural Discourse Studies (CDS). Shi-Xu (2012) points to “a growing body of critical scholarship on the cultural and intellectual limitations and consequences of CDA . . .(see e.g., Blommaert 2005; Jones 2007; Schegloff 1997; Shi-xu 2005, 2007, 2009; Slembrouck 2001; Stubbs 1997; Toolan 1997; Tyrwhitt-Drake 1999; Verschueren 2001; Widdowson 1995; Xin 2008). These (and other) authors have pointed to an over-reliance on universalistic concepts and perspectives and a lack of intellectual reflexivity” (p. 487). By implicitly portraying itself as universal, unproblematic and academic common sense, when it is in fact culturally singular and exclusive, CDA's description of research objects ('discourse', 'text', 'social practice', 'ideology', 'context') and methods of analysis is Western-centric. CDA, in Shi-xu's conception positions itself as universal, thereby “adjudicating the discourses of other cultural communities, governments or institutions . . . [and these] culturally different standards and ideals . . .are usually taken as pseudo-questions or ideologically charged pretexts or human deviations” (p. 485). Shi-

xu (2012) also critiques CDA for being a limited, disciplinary monologue that presumes universalism and objectivity, taking for granted that human discourses operate equally across cultures.

Kim (2006) believes “humanitarian assistance to North Korea by the international community aimed to deal with the food crisis. . .should not be stopped or reduced for any political reasons, but rather maintained and even increased . . .[and] displaced North Korea should never be exploited for political or commercial purposes” (p. 136). One of the implications of this statement is that the South Korean government should not use settlement policies, promises of a better life, political incentives or political propaganda to induce more border crossings. Kim (2006) writes, “a critical approach is needed about the current politicization of human rights issues in North Korea and the simplistic attitude that fails to take into consideration the various interrelated and interconnected factors surrounding human rights issues” (p. 137). In keeping with his own advice, Kim (2006) critically states that,

Using human rights issues as a political vehicle for attacking a state deserves to be criticized as undermining the very principles of human rights. A human rights policy directed at North Korea couched in such a political motivation will only bring out greater internal control and closure; it will foster an even greater climate of confrontation and tension, aggravating the threat to peace in the whole of the Korean peninsula, and willingly, cynically, or inadvertently will lead to an deterioration of the human rights situation (p. 137).

In light of this understanding of the interconnected factors issues which surround human rights issues, Kim (2006) also claims that the U.S. government should realize that “the North Korean Human Rights Act [NKHRA] and other human rights policy activities directed

at North Korea are having an opposite effect in terms of the human rights situation of displaced North Koreans” (p. 136).

Doubts and debate about the U.S.’ policy approach to the issue of North Korea’s nuclear weapons development program contribute to the general position of South Korea’s civil society movement. This movement believes the U.S. human rights policy toward North Korea “is guided by a goal of bringing an end to North Korea as it is currently organized” (Kim, 2006, p. 137). In other words, this movement is uneasy with this idea and critiques the U.S. as an example of exploiting human rights policy, couching political agendas, ideologies, and biases within the Discourse of human rights issues.

The People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), which is South Korea’s leading NGO and exerts considerable influence on policy issues, explains humanitarian focus that was first in response to the North Korean famine of the 1990’s but has now shifted to focus more on issues relating to the North Korean political system. This politicization has evolved into a rising critique of North Korea’s nuclear weapons development, which has correlated with a decline in humanitarian assistance to North Korea. Kim (2006) claims that despite good intentions, the U.S. government should realize that its policies, particularly the North Korean Human Rights Act (NKHRA), have an opposite effect, making conditions harder for those whom it desires to aid. Kim (2010) writes that this contradictory effect is “because political agendas embedded in human rights policies may not be thorough enough to help refugees’ human rights improve” (p. 79).

The PSPD’s statement about the human rights situation in North Korea questions the role of the U.S. government in North Korean affairs and expresses the belief that “the

impact of the security approach to human rights is worsening since the government of the United States took the path of labeling the DPRK a rogue state and a member of the axis of evil” (PSPD as cited in Kim, 2006, p. 140). PSPD literature in general calls for a cooperative link between various governments and non-government organizations (NGOs) based on the belief that transformation of the environment surrounding DPRK is beyond the scope of just one or two countries. The PSPD illuminates the constitutive role of a Discourse of defection and other politicized Discourses within media. This explication points to the need for more attention to be paid to alternative constructive interactions.

6.2 Develop new Discourse out of local understanding with a global perspective

Shi-xu (2010) defines CDS as “a broad international project to create and practise a form of Discourse research that is locally grounded (viz. exhibiting cultural identity and usefulness) and globally minded (viz. capable of engaging in international dialogue and showing global, human concerns)” (Shi-xu, 2012, p. 485). Citing Clifford (1986), Said (1978), Van Dijk (1993), and Wilkinson & Kitzinger (1995), Shi-Xu (2012) points to critical approaches to a wide variety of disciplines that examine “many general as well as particular cultural biases and the cultural-intellectual consequences of the mainstream social science” (p. 486). In hopes of creating an intercultural dialogue with CDA, Shi-Xu’s work focuses on “the cultural nature of language and communication studies in general and the cultural peculiarities of the universalising and globalising discourse of Critical Discourse Studies (CDA) in particular” (2012, p. 486).

6.2a Integrate Korean concept of 민중 ‘Min-jung’

Based on an understanding of Shi-xu (2012)’s admonitions, I believe that a possible alternative nationalism can stem from Nancy Abelmann’s exploration of the Korean

concept of 민중 '*minjung*'. *Minjung* is a historical and political practice, "a gaze at the past that calls for a reordering of the present" (Abelmann, 1993, p. 163). *Minjung* appropriates from elements of traditional Korean folk culture. Leaders or proponents of this movement use elements that they believe capture the essence of the Korean nation. With these elements "they create an identity of Korea that resists and competes with the definition of Korea created by the state" (Befu, 1993, p. 4). Ironically, the state also uses elements of traditional folk culture to present its version of national identity (e.g. the South Korean Ministry of Culture, national heritage sites). However, Befu writes that these kinds of state-created national identity, are often tempered with "the themes of modernization and industrialization" (Befu, 1993, p.4).

Abelmann praises the work of Kim Chongyu's *Modern Korea's Ideology* (Han'guk hyŏn-dae-sŭi-i-de-o-lo-gi) (1988). In his work, Kim dismisses "left" and "right" discussions of nationalist legacy and positions *minjung* in an "alternative historical logic" that moves away from ideological frameworks (Abelmann, 1993, p. 155). According to Abelmann (1993), Kim Chongyu's (1988) work explains how both "right" (democracy and enlightenment leaning groups) and "left" (Socialist leaning groups) are equally guilty of foreign-orientations and intellectual elitism. As an alternative, Kim places *minjung* as a force that is "untainted by foreign ideological dogma and intellectualism" (Abelmann, 1993, p. 155). Whether it is possible for foreign ideological dogma and intellectualism to be stripped from this remains to be seen, but at least as a cultural idea this could be a powerful force for Koreans.

6.2b Imagine Collaboration Between North and South: Korean Core Values

Glenn Paige (1989) suggests an un-coerced combination of creativity, a working together between North and South Koreans that would result in the expression of a “combinatorial creativity (even nonviolent dialectic) of northern red and southern blue striving purposively for the welfare of all within the circle of peaceful Korean unity. The greatest challenge to Korean creativity, of course, lies in the need to transform violence-prone political and military conditions into constructive nonviolent institutions for common problem-solving and for common security—both within Korea and between Korea and its neighbors” (Paige, 1989, p. 57). Unfortunately, his description of this suggestion employs a yin-yang analogy that further Orientalizes Korea and its relations. However, Paige (1989) goes on to suggest “a second source of peaceful promise”: *ingansŏng*, which is “the life-respecting humanist roots of Korean tradition”(p. 57).

Violence, historically, has never come from inside the Korean tradition or culture. The Korean people have routinely been the recipients of outside military aggression, but history consistently shows that, left alone, Koreans chose civil officials rather than military leaders. In Korean values, peacefulness and morality have always trumped competition and violence. In fact, Western capitalist and competitive notions are in direct opposition with Korean “life-respective indigenous values, Buddhism, Confucian ideas of influence by moral example” (Paige, 1989, p. 58). In fact, the values are so strong in Korean culture that even after massacre attacks from outsiders, Koreans at their core will turn to reactionary violence and killing as a last resort.

Paige (1989) claims that these inherent characteristics mean peaceful Korean reunification would pave a way for further development of a nonviolent global

transformation. The kind of values deep in Korean culture are essential for creative, peaceful, and informed relationships within and between nation-states. A nonviolent global transformation led by the Koreans could lead in “achievement of demilitarization, economic well-being for all, respect for human dignity, preservation of the biosphere, and establishment of problem-solving processes that respond to human needs” (Paige, 1989, p. 58).

Yet, there is more than just global potential that drives the peaceful Korean reunification efforts. The dominant Korean feeling “that something in common unites them—despite all the violence of 40 years of divided hostility—provides one of humankind’s best hopes for progress toward nonviolent global transformation in the present era” (Paige, 1989, p. 65). This drive to unite based on mutual commonality and respect is the kind of value that must undergird a nonviolent movement. The deeply human sentiments driving Korean reunification are strong and compelling, but are also the kinds of sentiments that, coupled with Korean core values, may not lead to immediate and total solutions as the West might want. Non-violent, harmonious values will avoid harm to both or either side, and will take each step slowly and carefully. As things unfold, “the peaceful reunification of Korea should provide humankind with an inspiring example of the Revolution of Peace in the process of nonviolent global transformation” (Paige, 1989, p. 66).

Although I do not completely ascribe to the essentializing argument Paige (1989) presents, one cannot ignore that, as Shi-Xu (2012) suggests, the colonizing and West-centric Discourse on North Korea must be unlearned. In addition, non-Western scholarship should be welcomed to the table. Though it parades itself as emancipatory, Western

political and scholarly involvement in North Korea is often no more than exportation of theory and praxis. Mignolo (1993) argues that one of the only ways this oppressive tendency can be reduced or avoided is to rely on "learning from those who are living and thinking from colonial and postcolonial legacies" (as cited in Shi-xu, 2012, p. 131). Without this approach, the scholarly community will struggle to ever fully understand, interpret, or address complex anti-West ideologies like that of the Kim Jong-Un regime. A locally contextual and effective solution will not be found in outsider, capitalist, colonizer-diplomatic study or theory. This is another way of pointing to what LiNK and *The Economist* both predict: the crumbling of the North Korean regime because of the rumblings from within its nations and these rumblings start from the people not the government. As Western scholarship and political theory wakes up to the reality of both South Korean scholarship and North Korean action from the bottom-up, both Korean communities must persevere in offering their innovative insights. Without that insight from Koreans' wisdom and lived experience, research and scholarship may never be able to address or even fully understand the political and ideological state of North Korea and its people.

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Discourse of Defection: Political Representation of North Koreans

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