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국제학석사 학위논문

Analysis of North Korea's Political Discourse
during the Arduous March in the 1990s

1990 년대 고난의 행군기 북한의 정치담론 분석

2019 년 8 월

서울대학교 국제대학원

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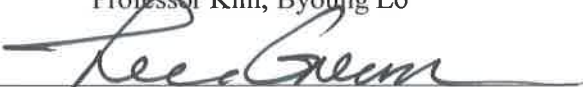
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Abstract

For North Korea's regime resilience, the political and economic crisis in the 1990s presented challenges that required a change in its propaganda strategy. In order to overcome the political challenge of power transfer and the economic difficulties caused by natural disasters and changing international order, the North Korean regime has revived the memory of the "Arduous March" during the Japanese colonial period in its propaganda. For the new discourse to legitimately invoke the past memories, the discourse has to be grounded upon historical facts as well as a constant structure of previous discourses for continuity. Through analyzing the propaganda works of public speeches, newspapers, movies, and music, the paper attempts to find the source of North Korea's regime resilience in the mobilization strategy.

The paper first identified the continuous structure of constructing and criticizing state enemies, recalling the memory of anti-Japanese struggle, eliciting empathy, and inducing self-sacrifice of the people. Then, the contents of the propaganda during the economic difficulties of the 1990s are compared to the propaganda used during the 1970s to justify the monolithic ideology of Kim Il-sung which allowed the family dictatorship to exist. Though the structure of propaganda has remained unchanged for legitimacy, the contents have changed to meet the demand of the external and internal changes.

The discourse formed during the economic crisis relied heavily on the apocryphal

fable of the Arduous March during the Japanese colonial period to justify the new ruling principles detached from the traditional Marxism–Leninism and to legitimize the ruling Kim family. The mobilization strategy was also aimed at strengthening social solidarity by creating a shared memory of history to overcome the economic crisis.

The North Korean regime has claimed that it has overcome the economic crisis and has achieved the goal of creating a strong military and ideological state. And, the regime has emphasized that economic development will be accomplished soon. However, the current situation of North Korea is quite distant from its presented goal of economic power. Limitations stemming from the previous discourses have also provided obstacles for the regime to make policy decisions toward economic development.

Keywords: Arduous March, Propaganda, Political Discourse, Agitation, Economic Crisis

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1. Introduction

Among the countries established with post-colonial anti-imperialist ideologies, North Korea is unique to have survived in its original form under three generations of family dictators. There have been multiple debates concerning the possibility of North Korea's regime collapse a long course of time. The constant economic hardship and the repressive authoritarian rule were factors considered for the prediction of the regime collapse. During the 1990s, North Korea also severely suffered from natural disasters with estimated casualty being in millions.¹ Some predicted a drastic fall of the hostile regime was imminent and called for preparation for the aftermath.

The end of the 20th Century presented the North Korean regime with a series of the harshest political and economic challenges it has ever faced. In the early 1990s, the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc collapsed marking the end of the Cold War. As the political tension between the two blocs ceased, Russia and China established diplomatic normalization with South Korea, while North Korea was unable to make any significant progress in easing its tension with the U.S. or Japan. In 1994, Kim Il-sung, the founder of the state, passed away with North Korea facing its first transfer of power. Just before the death of Kim Il-sung, North Korea withdrew from IAEA further isolating itself from the rest of the world. Coincidentally the most devastating

¹ Noland, Marcus, Sherman Robinson, and Tao Wang. "Famine in North Korea: Causes and Cures." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 49, no. 4 (2001): 741-67. doi:10.1086/452523.

economic crisis followed by floods and droughts, began around that time lasting until 1998.

During this period, the regime's ability to maintain power and governmental legitimacy was at stake. However, the North Korean regime has survived through such rigorous times and has experienced a successful transition between three generations of the Kim Family. In overcoming such difficulty and maintaining power, the regime has formulated political discourses to control the mind of the people. North Korea's political discourse had to go through significant changes from before when the country was economically more stable. Against this backdrop, it would seem meaningful to endeavor to analyze how the political discourse to survive the political and economic difficulty was formulated through the deeds and words of leaders within the regime, and how this experience has left an impact on the national idea and propaganda even to this day.

For that purpose, I would like to look at the period of 1995~2000, the so-called "Arduous March", to closely explore the source of the regime stability originating from the legitimacy established under the legacy of Kim Il-sung. To do so, I will delve into the political discourse of the regime carried by the state-run newspaper, novels and movies during the period. Then the pre- and post- crisis political discourses would also be compared to observe the lasting impact of the crisis in the propagandas of current times. I would also like to further explore how such political discourse affected the people of North Korea through interviews conducted in South

Korea with North Korean defectors.

The research is significant in that the poor economic condition of North Korea has been pointed out by scholars as a potential cause of the regime collapse in the future. The potential aftermath of regime collapse in North Korea would be detrimental not only to the regional security but may also cause a global-scale crisis. Objective assessment of the regime's solution to keeping stability during a political and economic turmoil would also shed light on the future of North Korea and therefore, provide insights helpful for the neighboring countries in making political decisions related to North Korea.

1.1 Motive

The motive in conducting this research primarily originates from the curiosity regarding the source of North Korea's regime stability. Numerous cases in which a state faces political and economic turmoil in the scale that North Korea faced during the 1990s, the distress of the people would be expressed in a form of revolt, military coup or mass exodus. Since the Arduous March, there has been much debate over the possibility of the abrupt regime collapse in North Korea due to poor economic conditions stemming from a natural disaster, famine and defection. Some scholars have suggested the potential collapse of the regime even early as 1993 saying "In North Korea, the possibilities run the gamut from implosion and collapse along the

lines of Romania to an explosion.”² As a reflection of the Arduous March, Gen. Gary Luck, the commander of United Nations Command, was quoted saying that “North Korea will disintegrate, possibly in very short order;” the only question was whether it would implode or explode in 1997.³ The logic of most experts that believed North Korea would collapse at this period was that of Social Darwinist determinism. According to their belief, reforms and change were inevitable due to the capabilities of crisis management quickly diminishing.⁴ However, the central leadership was unwilling to choose a new economic solution increasing their political vulnerability as well as an opportunity for elites to form an insurgent group. Some scholars saw that North Korea was attempting domestic and import liberalization while certainly not opening up to the rest of the world.⁵ The policy was identified as a variant of the East Asian Growth Model.

Yet, these scholars saw that the domestic resources to recover the economy were extremely limited, and suggested that North Korea should access outside resources through cooperation with the U.S. and South Korea.⁶ Then, the possibility of a sudden coup happening in the economic crisis was pointed out. From this point, they suggest either taming a new North Korean authority to be prone to full economic

² Manning, Robert A. "The Asian Paradox: Toward a New Architecture." *World Policy Journal* 10, no. 3 (1993): 55-64.

³ Cumings, Bruce. *North Korea : Another Country*. New York: New Press, 2004.

⁴ Snyder, Scott. "North Korea's Challenge of Regime Survival: Internal Problems and Implications for the Future." *Pacific Affairs* 73, no. 4 (2000): 517. doi:10.2307/2672442.

⁵ Lan'kov, Andrei Nikolaevich. *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

⁶ Noland, Marcus et al. (2001)

reforms and opening or South Korea directly getting involved in reforms through absorption.⁷ Such popular belief of the regime's short lifespan within not only academia but also in the foreign policy circle of the U.S. has affected policy decisions. Some officials reportedly mentioned that the Clinton administration was inclined to provide light-water reactors to North Korea with a view that the regime will collapse soon and the promise ultimately does not have to be met.⁸ However, the regime has survived this critical economic crisis, demonstrating to the critics around the world that it is much more resilient than expected. Certain experts blame the engagement policy of the U.S. and South Korea toward North Korea for regime survival. They argue that the ongoing crisis would have led total bankruptcy of North Korea and created enough dissatisfied elites ultimately bringing the collapse, only if the U.S. did not provide the economic aid supplied for inspection of nuclear facilities through Perry Process, and South-North Korea economic cooperation through the Sunshine Policy was not initiated.⁹

Even after North Korea has overcome the gravest economic hardship in history, George Tenet, the director of Central Intelligence Agency warned about “sudden,

⁷ Lee, Keun. "Between Collapse and Survival in North Korea: An Economic Assessment of the Dilemma." MOCT-MOST: 4 (1997): 155-72.

⁸ Harrison, Selig S. *Korean Endgame A Strategy for Reunification and U.S. Disengagement*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

⁹ Chung, Han-ku. "Will North Korea Collapse?" *National Strategy* 5, no. 2 (2009): 46-75.; Noland, Marcus. *Korea after Kim Jong-il*. Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 2004.

radical and possibly dangerous change” happening within North Korea at any point in time.¹⁰

More recently, the prediction of regime collapse received much attention after Kim Jong-il has passed and Kim Jong-un became his successor. Unlike his father who was designated as a successor fourteen years prior to the actual ascension to power, Kim Jong-un did not have much time to prepare for taking up the command and therefore would not be able to stabilize his reign especially under the pressure of international economic sanctions. Immediately after the death of Kim Il-sung, some scholars believed that the regime stability is at a great risk since it provided an opportunity for dissatisfied elites to take over before another Kim can establish himself as a legitimate leader.¹¹ By the time, some argued that the elites in opposition would have figured out an alternative source of their economic welfare, freeing them from the symbiotic relations with the authoritarian leader.¹² The prediction which was once again found to be wrong have not only given misperception of the regime to the policymakers but also provided wrong information to South Korean people which resulted in either wishful thinking or fear of what comes next depending on the audience. This paper attempts to seek the reason for the failure of the aforementioned prediction in the state mobilization strategy. Previous studies have mentioned that the political discourse using the

¹⁰ George Tenet. Statement Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on the Worldwide Threat in 2000: Gliobal Realities of Our National Security, February 2, 2000

¹¹ Chung (2009)

¹² Han, Byungjin. "Theoretical Study on the Durability of North Korean Regime." *National Strategy* 15, no. 1 (2009): 119-141.

memory of the “Arduous March” is crucial component in understanding the mobilizations strategy.¹³ To delve into how the memory has affected the regime resilience, the political discourse during the economic crisis will be compared with the political discourse of the 1970s when the propaganda related to Kim Il-sung’s legacy during the Japanese colonial period was used to justify the family dictatorship.

1.2 Structure

As the first step, Chapter 2 of this research will provide an overview of past research related to the regime resilience, the political discourse of North Korea and the economic difficulties of the 1990s. Chapter 3 will discuss the research questions that the paper will try to answer through thorough scrutiny of the historical sources. Based on the research questions posed in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 will lay out the research design to organize and analyze the political discourse strategy used by the regime. The actual analysis will be encompassed in Chapter 5 looking into the primary sources to find the characteristics mentioned and defined in the proposed research design for comparison of North Korea’s propaganda strategy in the 1970s when Kim Il-sung justified the family dictatorship and in the 1990s when Kim Jong-il had to overcome the economic crisis. Then, Chapter 6 will analyze how the political discourses were implemented into policies during the Arduous March period of the 1990s. Finally, Chapter 7 will summarize the findings of the paper with

¹³ Lankov (2015); Kang Jin-woong "Puk'anŭi Kajokkuk-ga Ch'ejeŭi Hyŏngsŏng: Kukawa Kajok, Yugyomunhwaŭi Chŏngch'ijŏk Pyŏnyongŭl Chungshimŭ-ro." *T'ongilmunjeyŏn-gu* 13, no. 2 (2001): 323-46.; Noland, Marcus et al. (2001)

a conclusion that would additionally discuss the implication of such research to North Korea's current difficulties under international sanctions.

2. Literature Review & Research Question

A fair amount of literature has been published to question the stability of North Korean regime during the 1990s as the regime was going through its first transition of power after the death of Kim Il-sung, economic crisis topped with natural disaster and isolation due to the collapse of Soviet Union. Because the regime was able to survive through the political and economic crisis, there have been attempts to explore the origin of the regime's resilience. Then, there have separately been studies on the North Korean regime legitimacy being built through the state propaganda. In this paper, I try to find the relationship between the state propaganda or political discourse and the regime stability through examining the impact of the "Arduous March" discourse in overcoming the crisis.

2.1 Regime Resilience

In previous related researches, the authors have identified certain elements of the North Korean propaganda strategy. Several scholars mention the fact that the regime creates external enemies including the U.S. and its imperialist allies.¹⁴ Then, the imperialists are blamed for the economic difficulty to evade any responsibility being credited to the regime. The regime also underscores the natural disasters such as

¹⁴ Park, Han S. *North Korea: The Politics of Unconventional Wisdom*. Lynne Rienner, 2005.; Collins, Robert M. *Pyongyang Republic: North Korea's Capital of Human Rights Denial*. Washington, DC: Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2016.; Byman, Daniel, and Jennifer Lind. "Pyongyang's Survival Strategy: Tools of Authoritarian Control in North Korea." *International Security* 35, no. 1 (2010): 44-74; Kang Jin-woong (2001); Lankov (2015)

famine and flood as the cause of the turmoil because those are uncontrollable variables for the regime. On the other hand, the use of emotional attachment to tradition and maternal affections were also identified as the means to manipulate the people to consolidate in the name of Kim Il-sung nation even in times when individual survival is on the line.¹⁵ The discourse attempts to lure the mass into sacrificing themselves for the nation or the party which is at the center of the common identity. As mentioned above, the paper attempts to find a comprehensive framework related to the political discourse strategy of North Korean regime.

2.2 Propaganda

Previous researches focused on the propaganda of the party through official media and literary works including movies and novels considering these outlets as tools to consolidate the people in times of difficulty as well as a means to deal with “collective trauma” suffered by the mass. Juche Ideology was first declared as the discourse justifying the dictatorial rule in the 1970s and the ideology was systematically applied to the actual policies throughout the 1980s. With the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in the late 1980s, memories of the past were recalled to create discourse including the discourse of the Arduous March and Military-First Policy which were used to overcome the hardships. Though North Korea was established as a socialist dictatorship with the underpinning ideology of the Marxism–Leninism,

¹⁵ Kwon Heon-ik and Jeong Byeong-ho. “Geug-jang-gug-ga bug-han : ka-li-seu-ma gwon-lyeog-eun eo-tteoh-ge se-seub-doe-neun-ga” Pa-ju: Chang-bi, 2013; *Bukan e-hae*, Unification Education Institute, 234-36, 2012

it has mutated into its own unique political system where state's control over the mass has grown to the level that has not been witnessed before in order to maintain the regime against the backdrop of allies collapsing, isolation and economic turmoil.

Because the North Korean regime witnessed the Soviet Union gradually failing, it had to proclaim that the Marxism-Leninism has become obsolete and it is replaced with the "socialism of our own style." For better understanding of this concept, Seo focused on the Military-First Policy to explain how the political system of North Korea was reformed to have the military at the center to overcome the crisis. He concluded that North Korea has been neglecting the importance of labor and production ever since while only clinging to increasing military power.¹⁶ There were also researches done concerning the usage of once openly criticized nationalistic discourse stemming from Confucian and family-oriented tradition to overcome the difficulties.¹⁷ Since the death of Kim Il-sung to 1997 when Kim Jong-il was appointed the General Secretary of the Workers' Party, North Korea was officially under necrocratic rule. The idea of Kim Il-sung as the eternal leader sprang during the time.¹⁸ Though North Korea discounted almost all historical traditions and

¹⁶ Seo, Yu Seok. "Bug-han tong-chi-dam-lon-ui jae-saeng-gwa-jeong-e gwan-han yeon-gu. [A Study on Songun Discourse in North Korea]" *Bug-han-hag-yeon-gu* [North Korean Studies] 4, no. 1 (2008): 97.

¹⁷ Moon Jang-soon. "Bukan Daegajeongnonui Byeonyonggwa Jeongchijeok Hamui." *Daehanjeongchihakoebo* 25, no. 3 (2017): 49.; Kang Jin-woong (2001); Seo, Dong-man. "Bukjoseonui Yugyo Damnone Gwanhayeo: Gimjeongirui Tongchi Damnoneul Jungsimeu-ro." *Tongilmunjeon-gu* 18, no. 1 (2006): 99-148.

¹⁸ Chang, Sa-Sun. "Bug-han-ui che-je su-ho wi-gi geug-bog mun-hag dam-lon yeon-gu. [Studies of North Korea's Literacy Discourse after the Death of Kim Il-Sung]" *gug-je-han-in-mun-hag-yeon-gu* [The Journal for Oversea Korean Literature] 8 (2011): 259-88.

norms to found a socialist state, it has recalled them to create a discourse for overcoming a time of transition and calamity. A similar pattern is seen in literature works that emphasize the maternal love for the nation. Nationalism was once heavily criticized as an ideology against socialist ideas. However, Kim Jong-il introduced the idea of Kim Il-sung nation linking the Dangun myth with the myth that Kim Il-sung is the new father of the nation.¹⁹

As an analysis on the creation of a cult of personality for the Kim family, Lee analyzed *Rodong Sinmun*, the official newspaper of the Central Committee of North Korea's Workers' Party, and discovered that propaganda was used to exaggerate and distort facts about the leaders to justify the transition of power from Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong-il as well as used the propaganda to agitate the mass against external enemies in times of crisis.²⁰ Suh and Kim explored articles from *Korean Central News Agency*, *Choson Sinbo* and *Rodong Sinmun* during the timeline of the Six-Party Talks and discovered that criticism of Japan increased when North Korea's relations with the United States was relatively improving.²¹ Choi analyzed the propaganda strategy of North Korea during the Arduous March for recalling an enemy to

¹⁹ Kim Jong-il. "Wi-dae-han su-lyeong-nim-eul yeong-won-hi nop-i mo-si-go su-lyeong-nim-ui wi-eob-eul kkeut-kka-ji wan-seong-ha-ja-", Kim Jong-il jeo-jag-jib, jo-seon-lo-dong-dang chul-pan-sa 1998

²⁰ Lee, Kee-woo. "Bug-han-ui tong-chi-gi-je-lo-seo seon-jeon-seon-dong-gwa telg-lo-dong-sinmun-telm-ui yeog-hal : 'che-je-yu-ji'wa 'gwon-lyeog-se-seub' gwa-jeong-e-seo-ui gi-gwan-seong bun-seog [The Role of *Rodong Sinmun* for Propaganda as Ruling Mechanism in North Korea]" Kyonggi University (2014)

²¹ Suh, Sang Shin and Kim Sung Hae. "Bug-han eon-lon-gwa dae-oe-jeong-chaeg 6ja-hoe-dam bo-do-leul tong-hae-seo bon bug-han el-li-teu-ui peu-lo-pa-gan-da jeon-lyag. [Propagandizing Foreign Policy through the Press : Analysis of News Discourse over the Six-Party Talk Dealing with North Korea's Nuclear Program]" North Korean Studies 7.1 (2011): 255. Web.

overcome the crisis. According to his claim, North Korea emphasized the relationship between its economic turmoil with the blockade of the imperialist powers led by the United States.²² In other word, the regime reminded the people of the real and familiar historical hostility to use the U.S. as a scapegoat for the regime's responsibility in causing the economic turmoil. The strategy was evaluated to not only be effective in criticizing the U.S. but to convince the people of the necessity to protect sovereignty and be self-reliant.

2.3 Economic Difficulties in the 1990s

The previous researches have regarded the Arduous March as a period in which North Korean people have collectively experienced so-called "cultural trauma". The trauma caused by the events of the Arduous March period is believed to have made permanent marks on the group consciousness of the society. Kim and Oh asserted that the experience of the Arduous March period has brought changes in the political, economic and socio-cultural consciousness of North Korean people distancing them away from the sense of social solidarity and group mentality.²³ The characteristics of individualism were more apparent among the youth who grew up during the Arduous March period. While the research conducted by Lee and Oh agrees that

²² Choi, Jong Hwan. "Go-nan-ui haeng-gun-t-gi bug-han peu-lo-pa-gan-da jeon-lyag : jeog-ui ho-chul-gwa wi-gi-geug-bog. [North Korea's Propaganda Strategy in the Arduous March Period: Recalling an enemy and overcoming crisis" bug-han-yeon-gu-hag-hoe dong-gye-hag-sul-bal-pyo-non-mun-jib 2018 (2018): 307.

²³ Kim, Kap Sik and Oh, Yoo Seok. " Go-nan-ui haeng-gun" gwa bug-han-sa-hoe-e-seo na-ta-nan ui-sig-ui dan-cheung. [The Impacts of Arduous March on People's Mentality in North Korea]" Journal of the Korean Association of North Korean Studies 8, no. 2 (2004): 91.

such changes are made, they assessed that the level of disenchantment from the ideology is not strong enough to deny the legitimacy of the political system.²⁴ Lee, in his assessment, discovered differences in the memory of the novelists and state's official propaganda.²⁵ With such evidence, he claims that the regime's effort to depict the Arduous March as having a victorious ending and survival through self-reliance did not resonate with the people. Jeon and Kwon argue that the realistic depiction of the Arduous March period in *People of Chagang Province* was a piece of evidence that the regime tried to heal the cultural trauma through constructing a collective memory and claiming that the difficulties were overcome.²⁶ However, the authors doubted that the attempt was successful since the critical reevaluation of the memory by individuals is the first step to overcoming trauma. By reformulating the cause and effect of the events, the regime has blocked such a possibility of being healed from the trauma instead.

2.4 Research Question

This provides an interesting question of how was the memory of the "Arduous March"

²⁴ Lee, Ju-Cheol and Oh, Yoo-Seok. "1990 nyeon i-hu bug-han-ju-min-ui gyeong-je-wi-gi dae-eung-gwa ui-sig-byeon-hwa. [Economic Crisis Confrontation and Consciousness Change of North Korea People since 1990]" *The Korean Association of Regional Sociology* 8, no. 2 (2007): 59-87.

²⁵ Lee, Woo Young. "'Go-nan-ui haeng-gun-gwa bug-han-ju-min-ui ma-eum: gug-ga-ga gi-eog-ha-neun t-go-nan-ui haeng-gun ['Arduous March' and the Mind of North Korean People: the State's Account of the March]." *The Korean Journal of Unification Affairs* 28, no. 1 (2016): 173.

²⁶ Jeon, Young Sun and Kwon, Jeon Kee. "Jib-dan-jeog chi-yu-wa je-ui-lo-seo bug-han yeong-hwa : ja-gang-do sa-lam-deul-eul jung-sim-eu-lo. [Reading North Korean Film as Collective Treatment and Suggestion: Focused on <People of Chagangdo>]" *Bug-han-yeon-gu-hag-hoe-bo [The Korean Association of North Korean Studies]* 17, no. 1 (2013): 205.

transformed and utilized by the North Korea regime in order to overcome the economic crisis of the 1990s. The discourse of the “Arduous March” was used so commonly during the economic crisis that the crisis is more often referred to as the “Arduous March” than the actual march taken place during the Japanese colonial era. Even North Korean media refer to the economic crisis of the 1990s as the “Arduous March” era.²⁷

²⁷ “Chŏnhyŏngch'angjoŭi Pulgiltŭnop'i Chŭngsandolgyŏgundongŭi Charangch'an Sŭngnirŭl Iruk'aenagaja” *Rodong Sinmun* September 1, 2018, Pyongyang

3 Research Design

The research is primarily a discourse analysis. Discourse is related to interaction among people through language that will ultimately create or construct what are taken as the truths in a social setting. In academia, discourse has been very much concerned with power and hierarchy where some have a dominant position over the others and the others either accept or resist such power dynamics. Michel Foucault, who is considered as the pioneer of discourse theory, has argued that discourse is very much connected with social hierarchy.²⁸

The impact of social hierarchy is apparent in North Korean political discourse since it is monopolized by the state. Only state-run media exist in North Korea while literature and cultural works are either created with the mandate of the state or censored by state agencies. For a critical examination of the discourses of North Korea during the 1990s, I have identified four categories of goals the party's intention to achieve through propaganda: recalling memory, eliciting empathy, inducing empathy and criticizing harmful entities. For the comparison, a text analysis will be conducted for the propaganda of the early 1970s and those of the 1990s. The former period is when the political discourse intended to create a full-scale cult of personality surrounding Kim Il-sung, while the regime attempted to transmit Kim Il-sung's charisma to Kim Jong-il and overcome the economic crisis with the discourse

²⁸ Foucault, Michel *Madness and Civilization – A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Vintage Books. New York, 1966

in the latter period.

For the text analysis, categories of primary sources are analyzed. The state-owned media including *Rodong Sinmun* and *Kulloja* were the main resources for the discourse of each period. The recorded speeches of both Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il also provided the official discourse and revealed the intentions and goals that the leadership wished to achieve through the use of propaganda. Then, cultural products including literature in forms of novels and movies showed the variety of other means in which the state attempted to mobilize the people strongly appealing to their emotions. Then, secondary sources provided the factual evidence of the economic crisis and responding policies of the regime which could be matched with the discourse.

3.1 Structure of Discourse

In assessing the discourse, a pattern of structure seemed constant in the propaganda. The propaganda would identify external enemies against whom the people should consolidate. Then, it tells the story of the glorious anti-Japanese revolution that has led to the national foundation. The discourse, then, attempts to attach the people to the history through evoking certain emotions. Lastly, the propaganda demands the people to sacrifice their individuality for the good of the entire society. The unchanging structure of North Korean propaganda helped in answer the question of how the “Arduous March” discourse was used to overcome the crisis. By referring back to the structure, the discourse could be compared to that of the past used in Kim

Il-sung's period for forming a cult of personality surrounding the Kim family.

3.2 Continuity of Discourses

Since the early 1970s, Kim Jong-il was in charge of agitation and propaganda and the full-scale endeavor to create a cult of personality surrounding Kim Il-sung began. Though the paper is mainly focused on comparing the “Arduous March” discourse of North Korea to the discourse of monolithic ideology in the 1970s that allowed the family rule in North Korea. Certain elements remain unchanged keeping the discourses continuous. In this continuity, the legitimacy of the ruling family could be discovered. Because Kim Jong-il did not share the same contribution of his father, who had the first-hand experience as an anti-Japanese guerrilla leader, there had to be an effort to anoint him with his father's charisma for transfer of power. For three years after Kim Il-sung's death, Kim Jong-il stays at the backstage of the party leadership, and even after Kim Jong-il was named for the position of General Secretary of the Workers' Party, the political discourse continues to use the legends of Kim Il-sung claiming Kim Jong-il as merely someone who fulfills the dying wish of the hero. Yet, the political discourse is assessed as being strong enough to saturate Kim Jong-il with the identity of his father.

3.3 Differences in Discourses

There still have been changes in the political discourse between the rule of Kim Il-sung and that of Kim Jong-il. The differences may stem from mainly two reasons:

the change of leadership and situation. This paper will identify the changes as power transfer was conducted from Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong-il. When Kim Il-sung was creating a cult of personality around him, domestic stability was assured via purging the rivaling faction. On the contrary, Kim Jong-il was met with instability from internal and external threats to its political stability. The use of propaganda in overcoming the worst political and economic situation will also be discussed in comparison to the time of stability when Kim Il-sung was consolidating absolute power around him. Identifying the differences would be crucial in this research so to investigate how the discourse changed and impacted the regime and its people during the economic crisis.

4 Political Discourse Analysis

Before moving further, it is necessary to understand what the North Korean regime intends to achieve by forming political discourse through propaganda and agitation. The intention of the regime can be conjectured through examining Kim Ki-nam's article in *Kulloja* a sister magazine to *Rodong Sinmun* that explains the guidance of the party. According to Kim, who was the Director of the Propaganda and Agitation Department at the time, "Dyeing the whole society one color with the leading ideology of the party is precisely the basic mission of the party's ideological work."²⁹ In summary, the article asserts that the role of the party's Propagation and Agitation Department is to remold ideologies of the mass to those of Juche-oriented communist revolutionary who has reverence and loyalty for the Kim family and to live in accordance with party intentions so that they can be mobilized for economic development and creating a strong socialist state. In creating propaganda, the functionaries are warned to never make work of empty talks that can neither resonate with people nor carry the intention of the party. And, the propaganda department was successful in creating multiple works including posters, movies and phrases, while also establishing a system and diverse methods to permeate the works into the people's minds. The paper will delve into how the "Arduous March" discourse was used to consolidate the people under the leadership of Kim Jong-il, and the Party

²⁹ Kim Ki-Nam. "Fundamental Changes Brought About in Party Ideological Work Under the banner of Converting the Whole Society to the Juche Ideology?" *Kullojaa [Workers]* no. 2 (1988): 1-6.

during the crisis.

Originally, the “Arduous March” is a fable of the hundred-day march of the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Force led by Kim Il-sung to escape the pursuit by the Japanese military in a very harsh winter of 1938. In 1937, Kim Il-sung’s force crossed the Amrok River and attacked Japanese detachment in Pochon County. Though the casualty that the Japanese force suffered was minimal, the attack received much attention from the Korean people at the time. The story of Kim Il-sung’s victory was widely spread starting from Hyesan, a neighboring city to Pochon County with a population of 13,000, and was covered heavily by the nation-wide newspaper, *Dong-a Ilbo*.³⁰ Due to the agitating effect, the incident had on Korean people, the Japanese Army held a strong grudge against Kim Il-sung and was determined to annihilate his force. Ultimately, Kim Il-sung’s force survived and won a victory in the Musan area in May of 1939. During the time, Kim Il-sung and his comrades suffered from famine and lack of daily necessities while having to continuously march to escape the surveillance of the Japanese army. Such memory has been invoked in the propaganda to convince the people that there will be light after the long dark tunnel.

The “Arduous March” discourse was first introduced in the co-editorial of *Rodong Sinmun*, *Joson Inmingun* and *Rodong Chongnyon* for the New Year of 1996, titled “Let Us Lift the Red Flag High and Dynamically Accomplish New Year’s March”. In describing the internal and external environment of revolution of the previous few

³⁰ Wada Haruki, Seo Dong-man, Nam Gi-jeong. “Bug-jo-seon : yu-gyeog-dae-gug-ga-e-seo jeong-gyu-gun-gug-ga-lo”, Dol-be-gae Seoul, 2002.

years, the editorial states that “imperialists were conspiring, with evil intent, to annihilate the great achievement of socialism and to isolate our republic”, and continues to blame unprecedented natural disasters. Yet, the editorial praises the memory as victorious and emphasizes the necessity of continuing the revolution and construction of a powerful and self-reliant socialist state as those are the dying wish of Kim Il-sung. In order to do so, the editorial calls for the people to build an indomitable fortress of ideology against imperialism; to develop agriculture, light industry, coal mining industry and metal industry; to build an invincible military that would always obey and protect Kim Jong-il and to foster international peace through the strong military rather than to beg for mercy from the imperialist powers. All these actions were to be accomplished with high reverence for the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance and fortitude descended from the elders and trust in Kim Jong-il, the son of the eternal leader.³¹

North Korean regime, which once boasted to its people that their country is a heaven on earth had to admit to the catastrophic reality. The scale of famine and suffering of the people was too large for the regime to try to hide. In the accounts of North Korean defectors, there are stories of smelling and seeing piles of rotten corpses on the streets.³² Even though a long time had to be passed, the North Korean regime finally admitted to the fact that the country was not a paradise, but it was going through a

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Kim Jong Gun and Jeong Jin Ah, “Go-nan-ui haeng-gun-si-gi tal-bug-ja i-ya-gi [Story of North Korean Defectors during the Arduous March]” Geon-gug-dae-hag-gyo Tong-il-in-mun-hag-yeon-gu-dan (Konkuk University Institute for the Humanities for Unification. tong-il in-mun-hag gu-sul-chong-seo ; 1. seo-ul: bag-i-jeong, 2012.

time of suffering in 1996 in the New Year's editorial of *Rodong Sinmun*.³³ The horrors, experienced by the people in their daily lives where even cannibalism was prevalent, could no longer be hidden by the words of the authority. Instead, the regime invokes the memory of the "Arduous March" to remind the people that the crisis is commonly experienced by everyone within the nation and to assure them that the difficulties will be overcome through the great leadership of the party as they have been in the past. By having the monopoly over the discourse-making, the party could play the leading role in formulating the common identity among the people through reinforced the collective memory of the crisis.

The distortion of the anti-Japanese guerrilla's history to legitimize the leadership of the Kim family began around the early 1970s. Since then, history is recalled and reconstructed to fit the needs of the time. For instance, Kim Il-sung was able to recreate the history in his favor that he was the sole leader of the guerrilla forces. In fact, he was only one of the numerous leaders of guerrilla forces who was not even the highest-ranking figure. However, he was able to become the founding father of North Korea through his early connections with the Soviet Union. As Kim Il-sung consolidated his power after struggles with and purge of his political enemies, history was reinvented to praise the accomplishment of Kim Il-sung during the Japanese colonial period. Behind the scene of Kim Il-sung's deification was his son, Kim Jong-il who directed the creation of propagandas before his rise as the successor.

³³ "Let Us Lift the Red Flag High and Dynamically Accomplish New Year's March" *Rodong Sinmun* January 1st, 1996

After the death of Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il had to transmit the legitimacy to himself as the successor through the reconstruction of history to add him to the legend of the anti-Japanese revolution. In a coincidence, Kim Jong-il's succession to the leadership happened just before the catastrophic crisis. Faced with the worst economic crisis and the challenge of the first transfer of power, the North Korea regime recalled the apocryphal fable of the hardship that Kim Il-sung suffered in 1938 to escape the Japanese forces in a harsh winter without food.

In the following analysis, North Korea's political discourse during the 1990s under Kim Jong-il will be compared with the political discourse of the early 1970s when Kim Il-sung's monolithic leadership was first legitimized.³⁴ The comparison will shed light on how the party utilized its discursive power to respond to the crisis. The historical legitimacy of the political discourse may lay in the commonalities between the two discourses while the differences show how the discourse can change to better fit to the critical situation. From the assessment, four categories of the political messages were identified which are the use of criticism, recalling of the memory, eliciting empathy and inducing self-sacrifice. Using these political messages, the party attempted to indoctrinate the people to have a unitary mindset about the crisis and to remember it in a certain way. Below is the chart laying out the comparison of the propaganda of the two periods according to the categories. The following sections will elaborate on the commonalities and differences seen in the two different

³⁴ Mushtare, Jeremy S. "PSYOP in Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations: Preparing for Korean Reunification." *PsycEXTRA Dataset*, 2005.

sets of political discourse.

Political Discourse for Monolithic Ideological System under Kim Il-sung	Political Discourse for Crisis under Kim Jong-il
A. Use of Criticism - To claim superiority over other systems and states - Hostility of the U.S. and imperialist states and inferiority of communist allies	A. Use of Criticism - To identify scapegoat from the economic burdens and responsibilities - Hostility of U.S. and imperialist states, corruption and incompetence of bureaucrats
B. Recalling the Memory - To consolidate and grant absolute power to Kim Il-sung - Legend of anti-Japanese guerrilla - Romanticization of Anti-Japanese revolution	B. Recalling the Memory - To transfer the legitimacy to Kim Jong-il and to justify the hardship - Legend of Mt. Paektu, Deification of the Kim Family - Realistic depiction of Anti-Japanese revolution
C. Eliciting Empathy - To create a “family state” - Orphans of war and young guerrilla warriors - Emphasis on care and welfare provided by the Party	C. Eliciting Empathy - To maintain the “family state” - Moral obligation for loyalty and respect - Emphasis on the duties of the people for the Party
D. Inducing Self-Sacrifice - To promote collective effort in economic development and loyalty for Kim Il-sung - Partisan Spirit, Filial Duty to Kim Il-sung and Party - Emphasis on mass participation and speed in construction, agricultural production, etc.	D. Inducing Self-Sacrifice - To leave individual’s responsible for their own well-being and to evoke pride in the revolution - Kanggye Spirit, Moral Duty to Elders - Emphasis on creativity, innovation and perseverance in individual survival

Figure 4.1 Comparison of the Arduous March Discourse Structure in Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il Period

4.1. Legitimizing Kim Il-sung's Monolithic Ideology

Soon after the purge of Kim Il-sung's rivaling Gapsan Faction, Kim Il-sung established the monolithic ideological system in the early 1970s. Juche Ideology, an original thought of Kim Il-sung that is stated to be "the most precise manifestation of Marxism-Leninism" was declared the official ruling principle of the nation at the 5th Congress of the Workers' Party. Through the Constitution of 1972, Kim Il-sung officially gained absolute and unrivaled power.³⁵ Since the regime was stabilized Kim also was able to select his son as the successor for his throne. Under the circumstance, the discourse was focused on reconstructing the memory of anti-Japanese guerrilla as accomplishment under the sole leadership of Kim Il-sung. In North Korean official discourse praised Kim Il-sung's complete power consolidation as a new period to pursue comprehensive victory of socialism.³⁶ In this historical context, the three classic novels including *the Flower Girl*, *Sea of Blood* and *The Destiny of A self-reliant Soldier* and the *Immortal History Series* were published.³⁷ The main purpose of the publications were to reconstruct the history of anti-Japanese struggle in favor of Kim Il-sung and to indoctrinate the people.³⁸ Through literature works, emotions of nationalism had to be evoked through the discourse to claim the society to be a large family led by Kim Il-sung and the Party as the parents. Then,

³⁵ Koh Byung Chul. "Juchesasangui Hyeongseonggwa Sasangchegye Bunseok", *Bukangaeron*, Euryumunhwasa, 1990

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Son, Hwa-sook. "1970Nyeondae Bukan Soseorui Yeon-gu:3Daegojeongwa Bulmyeorui Yeoksa Chongseoreul Jungsimeu-ro", *Uameomunhakoe*, No.6, 1997.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

filial duties originating from Confucian tradition deeply rooted in North Korea society were emphasized to induce the people to sacrifice themselves for the greater good of the society and to glorify Kim Il-sung. Lastly, the propaganda works criticized not only the U.S. but also North Korea's two closest allies to express its ideological superiority over all others. Meanwhile, North Korea was relatively more open to engaging with socialist, non-aligned states and the capitalist world largely because it was able to ensure domestic stability.

4.1.1. Criticism to Claim Superiority

From the 1960s, the ideological conflict between the Soviet Union and China arose. The Soviet Union shifted toward de-Stalinization and peaceful coexistence with the capitalistic world while China kept a conservative interpretation of Marxism-Leninism and remained hostile against the Western world. At this time, the term, Juche Ideology was introduced in North Korea as the fundamental principle of the Party developed by applying Marxism-Leninism to the reality faced by North Korea.³⁹ In celebrating the National Liberation Day, the role of the Soviet Union was diminished while Kim Il-sung's independent role in the ant-Japanese struggle was overtly emphasized.⁴⁰

At this period, Kim Il-sung criticized the revisionist approach of the Soviet and

³⁹ “1952nyŏn Tangjungangwiwŏnhoe Che5ch'a Chŏnwŏnhoeüüi Ryŏksajŏk Ŭiüi”, *Rodong Sinmun*, December 19, 1962.

⁴⁰ Lee Jong-seok *Saero ssŭn hyŏndae puk'anüi ihae*. Yok-sa-bi-pyong-sa, Seoul, 2000

dogmatist approach of China for taking extreme stances and suggested an independent notion of ideology. The ideology was given the name Juche in the 1970s and was praised to be the most precise ideology that follows Marxism-Leninism.⁴¹ The propagandas continuously emphasized the originality and superiority of Juche Ideology while North Korea kept equidistance in its relations with the two traditional allies.⁴² The practicality of the ideology in applying to matters regarding politics, economic management, unification was also promoted by the discourse.⁴³

The Dawn of Revolution recounts the tale where the North Korean communist leaders who studied in the Soviet Union teaching the farmers about the communist ideology. Because the farmers were only given ideal or false hope, instead of pragmatic lessons, the farms were ruined and the community could not operate properly. Here comes in Kim Il-sung providing the farmers with pragmatic agricultural knowledge and leading the villagers in constructing schools for children.⁴⁴ Indirectly, the Soviet Union is mentioned as having only the ideology, not the practical means to fulfill the ideas. Kim Il-sung is depicted as the self-reliant man who, unlike the Chinese or Russian leaders, has embodied the communist ideas.

The regime has continuously criticized the U.S. and South Korea since its foundation.

⁴¹ Kim Il-sung. "U-ri Int'ellidŭrŭn Tanggwa Rodonggyegŭpkwa Inmindaejungege Ch'ungshirhan Hyŏngmyŏngga-ga Toeyŏya Handa", *Kimilsŏngjŏjakchip* 21, Chosŏllodongdang Ch'ulp'ansa, P'yŏngyang, 1983, 288

⁴² "Kim il-sung Tongjikkesŏ Hangilmujangt'ujaengshigie Iruk'ashin Sahoejuŭijŏk Aegukchuŭiŭi Pinnanŭn Chŏnt'ong" *Rodong Sinmun*, June 12, 1969

⁴³ "Kim Il-sung Tongjikkesŏ Ch'angjohashin Ilbanjŏk Chidowa Kaebyŏlchŏk Chidorŭl Kyŏrhaphshik'inŭn Hyŏngmyŏngjŏk Ryŏngdobangbŏp". *Rodong Sinmun*, August 20, 1969

⁴⁴ Chun Se-bong, *Hyŏngmyŏngŭi Ryŏmyŏng*. P'yŏngyang: Munyech'ulp'ansa, 1987

Another account is told where Kim Il-sung makes an improvised speech after Ahn Chang-ho's lecture criticizing Ahn Chang-ho for his toadyish and opportunistic ideology.⁴⁵ As such the hostility toward the capitalist world was used to underscore the heroism of Kim Il-sung who is said to have freed the North Korean people from the bourgeois and foreign influence. In *the Flower Girl*, *Sea of Blood* and *The Destiny of A self-reliant Soldier*, the bourgeois and Japanese were described as equally evil taking advantage of the working class. In *the Flower Girl*, the landlord Jang hits Sunhee for stealing a date out of hunger making her blind. Jang does not feel any guilt for his extreme violence.⁴⁶ In *the Sea of Blood*, the Japanese Imperial Army massacres the entire village even throwing infants into the fire.⁴⁷ The victims of the violence by the foreign power and bourgeois are ultimately saved by the anti-Japanese revolutionaries who fought under the leadership of Kim Il-sung.

4.1.2. Recalling the Memory: Making Legend of Kim Il-Sung

In December of 1955, Kim Il-sung demanded that North Korea shall engage in its revolution with its own method instead of following that of China or the Soviet Union while addressing propagandist of the Party.⁴⁸ Then he asks the Party members to keep close to their heart the memory of anti-Japanese struggle carried out by the

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Kotpanun Chonio*. Directed by Ik-gyu Choe and Hak Pak. By Kim Il-sung. Performed by Son Byung-ok, Chon Sob Han and Yong Hui Hong. 1972.

⁴⁷ *Pibada*. Directed by Ik-gyu Choe. By Kim Il-sung, 1969;

⁴⁸ Kim Il-sung. "sa-sang-sa-eob-e-seo gyo-jo-ju-ui-wa hyeong-sig-ju-ui-leul toe-chi-ha-go ju-che-leul hwag-lib-hal de dae-ha-yeo [On eliminating dogmatism and formalism and establishing Juche in ideological work]" December 28, 1955, *Kim Il-sung jeo-jak-jip*, jo-son-lo-dong-dang chul-pan-sa, Pyongyang

people and to learn how the anti-Japanese guerrillas persevered difficult times. However, the full-scale idolization of Kim Il-sung and his anti-Japanese legacy is executed since the 1960s by Kim Jong-il.

The event that has quickened the consolidation of power to Kim Il-sung occurred in 1967 when the Gapsan Faction of former anti-Japanese guerrilla force attempted to reduce Kim Il-sung's cult of personality and introduce Pak Kum-chol as his successor.⁴⁹ Having perceived the challenge to his authority, Kim Il-sung decided to purge the faction completely charging them for engaging in activities of anti-party and anti-revolutionary "individual heroism" and declare *Ten Principles for the Establishment of a Monolithic Ideological System* so to eliminate pluralism and assert his absolute sovereignty over the state as well as the historical legacy of anti-Japanese revolution.

In 1968, multiple monuments praising Kim Il-sung's anti-Japanese accomplishments were established in major revolutionary sites including Pochon County. Films including *the Five Guerrilla Brothers*, *the Sea of Blood* and *A True Daughter of the Party* are released. To make the accomplishments of his father the inspiration for the contemporary revolution of the Party, Kim Jong-il also suggested and emphasized his fondness of the slogan "Let us work, study, and live like the anti-Japanese partisans" in March of 1974.⁵⁰ In the 1970s, three classic novels including

⁴⁹ Jae-Cheon Lim. *Kim Jong Il's Leadership of North Korea* Routledge, New York, 2009

⁵⁰“<Saengsando hakseupdo saenghwaldo hangiryugyeokdaesigeuro!> kuho gangjo”, *Rodong Sinmun*, May, 8, 2004

the Flower Girl, Sea of Blood and *The Destiny of A self-reliant Soldier* and the *Immortal History Series* were also released in order to reconstruct the historical memory in favor of Kim Il-sung. Through the culture and education scheme created by these efforts, Kim Il-sung was able to privatize the memory of anti-Japanese struggle and retain absolute power over the people.

To make the historical account realistic, the names of real people and locations are recorded in detail. Yet, the historical distortion to idolize Kim Il-sung is quite apparent once a thorough investigation is conducted. For example, the regime officially claims that Juche Ideology originates from the formation of the Down-with-Imperialism Union by Kim Il-sung in 1926 and the Carun Conference of 1930 led by Kim Il-Sung.⁵¹ To back this official account, *the Dawn of Revolution*, one of the books in <Immortal History> series, describes the achievements of Kim Il-sung between 1926 and 1928 when he supposedly led the union and the conference mentioned above.⁵² In describing Kim Il-sung's achievement as the leader of anti-Japanese guerilla, *the Year 1932* tells exaggerated accounts such as an entire Japanese fighter squadron searching for the swift eighteen guerilla fighters and the people and guerilla soldiers worshipping Kim Il-sung for his graceful actions.⁵³ Yet these tales are so far from facts. By 1926 when he supposedly formed the Down-with-Imperialism Union, Kim Il-sung was only fourteen years old and a new member

⁵¹ Son, Hwa-sook (1997)

⁵² Chun Se-bong (1987)

⁵³ Kwon, Jeong-woong. *1932 Nyeon*. Pyeongyang: Munyechulpansa, 1972

of the anti-Japanese force. Not only does the historical record of Kim Il-sung's military career only begin in 1935, but the name of Kim Il-sung was only known to the public after the Battle of Pochonbo twelve years after the formation of the union.⁵⁴ The later books of the <Immortal History> series including *the Shore of Mt. Paektu* and *the Arduous March*, describes the Nanhoutou Conference and the legacy of the anti-Japanese guerilla during the late 1930s.⁵⁵ By this time, however, the guerilla force was almost annihilated by the Japanese Imperial Army and Kim Il-sung actually had to flee to the Soviet Union.

4.1.3. Eliciting Empathy: Large Family and Orphans

Confucianism and its family values have been heavily embedded in Korean society. Even though Marx viewed the family as a means of production formed in a capitalistic setting and set it as a goal to abolish the institution, the North Korean regime decided to use the Confucianism culture of family for its own benefit instead of denying it. In the late 1960s, citizens are re-registered and re-categorized into three "Songbuns" or social classes according to their family background. The citizens were discriminated according to the Songbun system in getting jobs, education and receiving necessities from the state.⁵⁶ During that time, five families formed an

⁵⁴ Suh, Dae-Sook. *Hanguk Gongsanjuuiundongsa Yeon-gu*, Hwada, 1985

⁵⁵ Hyeon Seung-geol and Choe Hak-su.. *Baekdusan Giseuk*. Pyeongyang: Munyechulpansa, 1976; Seok Yoon-ki. *Pulmyŏl ūi Yŏksa: Konan ūi Haenggun : Changp'yŏn Sosŏl*. [P'yŏngyang] : Munye Ch'ulp'ansa, 1976.

⁵⁶ Kang Jin-woong. (2001)

“Inminban”, a cooperative organization of families to watch each other.⁵⁷ However, it is the 1970s when the mobilization of the family-oriented organizations took place to create the Large Socialist Family for the Juche revolution.⁵⁸ Now, ten families formed an “Inminban” and its role in controlling the society and the mass was strengthened. Since then, Kim Il-sung was recognized as the father and the party as the mother and the people as their children. Families were seen as the smallest cells that together form a social organism or the nation. In this Large Socialist Family or social organism, the same Confucian values, such as patriarchal structure, each family members’ roles and duty, apply. The Party is to work hard and provide for the children so that the father could be respected and be glorified.

To form the Large Socialist Family, a discourse that expands the unfortunate life of individual to an issue of the working class and the Korean people. In *the Flower Girl*, Koppun who has to take care of her sick mother and blind sister symbolizes the working class Korean who suffer from the oppression of the bourgeois and the Japanese invaders.⁵⁹ Likewise, most of the novels have an ordinary character who realize the social and economic origin of their misfortune. Then the character becomes determine to fight along with the anti-Japanese guerilla. These novels and movies depict the difficult and poor reality of the characters to emotionally appeal

⁵⁷ Bae Young-ae. "Bukanui Chejeyujireul Wihan Tinminbantui Yeokalgwa Byeonhwa." *Tongilgwa Pyeonghwa* 10.2 (2018): 193.

⁵⁸ Kim Il-sung. "Juch'esasangŭi Kich'irŭl Nop'idŭlgo Sahoejuŭi Kŏnsŏrŭl Tŏuk Tagŭch'ija" (1978) *Kimilsŏngjŏjakchip* 33 Chosŏllodongdangch'ulp'ansa, P'yŏngyang, 410

⁵⁹

to the audience.

For emotional appeal, orphans were also the main subjects of the Large Family discourse. According to North Korean novels based on the anti-Japanese struggle, large of the guerrilla soldiers were youths who have lost their parents to the Japanese Army. Because of their lack of experience in the battle conditions, Kim Il-sung constantly lectures them on endurance and overcoming hardships.⁶⁰ Remembering that time, Hwang, Sun-hee, a former member of Kim Il-sung's guerrilla force, titled her memoir, "Kim Il-sung is Our Parent."⁶¹ In his speech of 1986, Kim Il-sung declares that the people shall consider the Party as their mother and let it take care of their fate.⁶² In other words, he is claiming that he and the party are doing their parental duty of caring for the people and thus the people shall do their filial duty to him and the Party. As such, the core theme of the contemporary major films *the Sea of Blood* and *the Flower Girl* is related to the orphans, who have lost their parents to the Japanese Army, following the footsteps of Kim Il-sung on their way to the revolution.⁶³ In the process, the children find their emotional comfort in the guerrilla army and accept it as their new family. The image of the anti-Japanese guerrilla evoked a sense of solidarity among people not only against the external forces but also toward themselves as a large family. In *the Year 1932* and *the Dawn of*

⁶⁰ Seok Yoon-ki. (1976)

⁶¹ *Reminiscences of the anti-Japanese guerrillas*. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Pyongyang, Korea, 1968.

⁶² Kim, Il-sung. *Historical experience of building the Workers' Party of Korea : a lecture delivered to the teaching staff and students of Kim Il Sung Higher Party School* May 31, 1986. Foreign Languages Publishing House Pyongyang, Korea 1986

⁶³ *Pibada*. (1969); *Kotpanun Chonio*. (1972)

Revolution, Kim Il-sung is characterized as being down-to-earth caring for the young soldiers and the people.⁶⁴ In actuality, Kim Il-sung established Mangyongdae Revolutionary School, an elite school for the orphans of the anti-Japanese revolution, and several other elite schools for the orphans of the Korean War.⁶⁵ Therefore, the discourse constructing a family relationship among the leader, the party and the people also had a practical aspect to heal the society that has been torn by the tragic history of colonization and war. By the means of such discourse, Kim Il-sung was able to construct the image of the nation's father.

4.1.4. Inducing Self-Sacrifice: Partisan Spirit

After having elicited a filial affection toward the regime, the discourse demands filial duties to be fulfilled by the people. According to Lee, North Korea can be considered a “family state” influenced by both socialism and Confucianism.⁶⁶ In contrast to China and Vietnam, two other Asian countries that were heavily influenced by Confucianism, North Korea utilized certain parts of Confucianism tradition in its process of social integration while criticizing the other parts of feudalistic heritage.⁶⁷ North Korean propaganda constantly emphasized the significance of loyalty and filial duty in the relationship between the leader and its people.

Another call for the people from the Party was that they shall all become

⁶⁴ Kwon, Jeong-woong (1972); Chun Se-bong (1987)

⁶⁵ Kang geun-jo, *Jo-seon-gyo-yug-sa*, No. 4 1991.

⁶⁶ Lee Mun-woong. “Bug-han-jeong-chi-mun-hwa-ui hyeong-seong-gwa geu teug-jing bug-han-yeon-gu”, 1996

⁶⁷ Kwon Heon-ik and Jeong Byeong-ho. (2013)

revolutionized. Women were to be “freed” from house chores and participate in labor.⁶⁸ At the first look, this may seem to be a discourse supporting gender equality. Instead, the discourse still had patriarchal nuance and was interpreted to mean that women have to not only do their house chores but also to participate in the economic activities and mass mobilizations for consolidating powers to Kim Il-sung. Here, the tales of often neglected groups of people were also mustered in the efforts to create the cult of personality surrounding Kim Il-sung.

In *the Destiny of a Self-Reliant Soldier*, Gapryong puts his genuine efforts to provide for the family, yet the family only meets with despair.⁶⁹ Koppun in *the Flower Girl* attempts to fight the bourgeois family but gets locked up in a storage room as a consequence.⁷⁰ The consequence of struggle against the despair of individuals can only be overcome through following the revolution led by the anti-Japanese guerilla in these stories. The message these stories intend to reinforce is that individual happiness or comfort has to be sacrificed or reserved and the individuals have to align themselves with the revolution through altruistic attitude toward fellow working-class Koreans in order to achieve the ultimate happiness. Thus, the regime can claim that anything that promotes the interest of the nation or the working class is good and moral while anything that harms the interest is evil and immoral. And only through answering the call of the nation, the individuals can enjoy true

⁶⁸ Kim Il-sung "Kanbudŭlsogesŏ Tangŭi Yuilsasangch'egyerŭl Seumyŏ Hyŏngmyŏnghwa Hagi Wihan Saŏbŭl Kanghwahalte Taehayŏ" *Kimilsŏng Chŏjakchip* 25 Chosŏllodongch'ulp'ansa, P'yŏngyang, 1980, 183

⁶⁹ *Han Jawidanwonui Unmyeong*. Pyeongyang: Munyechulpansa, 1973.

⁷⁰ *Kotpanun Chonio*. (1972)

satisfaction. And fulfilling the revolution requires loyalty toward Kim Il-sung according to the official discourse. In *the Year 1932*, people offer bear's bile and ginseng to Kim Il-sung out of thankfulness. This shows that extreme loyalty to Kim Il-sung and sacrifice amid difficult circumstance is necessary to fulfill the revolution and show grace for the salvation.⁷¹

4.2. Kim Jong-il's Response to Crisis

When Kim Jong-il seized the power, the role of propaganda in maintaining solidarity among the people became more crucial in the face of the worst political and economic crisis North Korea ever faced. The eternal leader, Kim Il-sung has died as natural disasters broke out. Around 3.3 million people are expected to have died of famine and the Public Distribution System failed. Since the Eastern Bloc collapsed around the same period, North Korea did not have any foreign subsidies to rely on. The changes both inside and outside of the regime left a great impact on the society which required a new discourse that can be differentiated from the past discourses. To effectively control the population amid the crisis, consolidating power around Kim Jong-il through passing on the legacy of his father was urgent. According to *the Dictionary of Literature and Arts*, shaping the image of the leader through emotional literature and artistic images is “a basic linkage between the ideology and the arts that allow the people to faithfully follow the Great Leader.”⁷² Thus, through

⁷¹Kwon, Jeong-woong (1987).

⁷²*Munhagyesulsajeon*. Pyeongyang: Sahoegwahakchulpansa, 1972

literature works, tales were told that Kim Jong-il was born in Mt. Paektu to Kim Il-sung and his wife who also was told to have been a general during the anti-Japanese struggle. Then, Kim Jong-il spawned the memory of his father's Arduous March against the Japanese to encourage the people to keep fighting against the difficult situation. The people were demanded to do their individual parts in reviving the state out of filial piety. Then the imperialist world led by the U.S. was blamed for the economic difficulty on top of the natural disasters. Corrupted and inefficient bureaucrats were also targets of criticism due to their inability to meet the needs of the people and answer the call of the leader.

To understand the discourse, the understanding of Kim Il-sung's anti-Japanese legacy and the mystified tale of the Arduous March is necessary. Having grown up in a family that had been involved in resistance against Japanese and having been educated in Chinese school at an early age, Kim Il-sung quickly joined the Sino-Korean resistance against Japanese imperialism led by the Chinese Communist Party and was able to move up the rank relatively quicker than his fellow Koreans. Then, the event that brought the attention of all Korean people to Kim Il-sung took place on June 4, 1937. Kim Il-sung led a division of Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, mostly consisted of Koreans, to attack Japanese detachment stationed in Pochon County in today's Ryanggang Province. The actual damage and casualty suffered by the Japanese are assessed to be minor, but the event received spotlights of the media. *Dong-a Ilbo*, which was a forcefully closed by the Japanese government, reopened just before the event. And the newspaper heavily covered the story releasing two

extra editions on the story.⁷³ It was a wake-up call for the Japanese and the Korean independence activists elsewhere that there were activities of resistant forces so close to the Korean peninsula. However, the incident became an excuse for massive raids by the Japanese against the anti-Japanese guerrilla causing irrecoverable damage to the forces. According to Haruki, 739 soldiers of the guerrilla forces were captured within one year since the battle and many of Kim Il-sung's affiliates either betrayed to the Japanese or were executed.⁷⁴ Though Kim Il-sung won a battle at the Hongqi River causing Japanese casualty in hundreds, the anti-guerrilla forces could not turn the tide having to still retreat from the formidable pressure of Japanese troops.⁷⁵ From 1938, the Japanese military officially began an operation to suppress the resistant forces. From November 1938 to March 1939, Kim Il-sung's troops had to hide in the mountains and retreat toward China without many resources in a harsh winter. This period is called the "Arduous March", and such hardship is actually put to an end in 1940 when Kim Il-sung's troops escape to the Soviet Union in smaller groups. The historical discourse comes to alive so that the regime can claim that the difficulties will eventually be overcome since Kim Il-sung's determinism has been proven as an effective solution in the past.

4.2.1. Criticism to Identify Scapegoat

Classically, North Korea has blamed the U.S. and its imperialist allies as obstacles

⁷³ " Hamnam Bocheonbo-reul Seup-gyeok." *Dong-a Ilbo* (Seoul), June 5, 1937, Extra ed.

⁷⁴ Wada (2002)

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

to the goals it wishes to achieve. *Rodong Sinmun* follows this tradition during the Arduous March period claiming that it is the economic blockade of the imperialist states led by the U.S. that has made economic development goals of the party near impossible to achieve.⁷⁶ In other words, the claim is that the economic situation has worsened since the regime had to focus on defense to protect the state from the pressure and blockade of the imperialist forces. In the novel *Kanggye Spirit*, the protagonist is ordered by Kim Jong-il to discuss with others and find a solution to the problem of electricity amid the “evil economic blockade and pressure from the enemies.”⁷⁷ The novel refers to the song “Red Flag” and notes that the country is at war without guns and bombs against the imperialist forces.⁷⁸ The people are called to fight the battle like those guerrilla warriors who continued their revolution against the Japanese Army through extremely cold winter. Another imagery brought into the literature was the ideology of “red flag”. This is another reminder of the Arduous March where the people are demanded to hold onto the North Korean revolutionary tradition and values, and to implement them in life as the guerrilla warriors who held on the battle flag on their march against the enemy.

Another scapegoat that has not been as apparent in earlier North Korea discourse is the bureaucracy, or to be specific the mid-level bureaucrats who have constant interactions with the people. Instead of facing the criticisms of the people, the central

⁷⁶ “Let Us Lift the Red Flag High and Dynamically Accomplish New Year’s March”

⁷⁷ *Gang-gye Jeong-shin*. Bul-myol-eui-hyang-do. Mun-hak-ye-sul-chul-pan-sa, Pyongyang, 2002.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

leadership decides to blame the middle bureaucrats for not understanding the directions of the party and being too harsh on the people. This is most evident in novels where those with the weakest voice in the society criticize the bureaucrats for their wrongdoings. In the novel *Ganggye Spirit*, Ri Seong-ha, who is in charge of power plant construction, decides to stop the construction of the power plant thinking that he should not put himself through hardship when power plant construction in other provinces have also been halted. Ri is often chastised by others in the novel for his myopic and selfish thoughts and actions. In *the Aspiration*, Choi identifies the national economic failure as being caused by not only the economic isolation of the imperialists but also by the irresponsibility of the bureaucrats. He believes that the bureaucrats are abusing their position and power for their self-interest while blaming the workforce for economic difficulty. Choi ultimately finds a solution of importing electrode rather than trying to make it with much higher cost. The idea did not come to the bureaucrats since they were passively following the Juche ideology. The novel further claims that true Juche ideology is not to blindly follow self-production but maximizing production even if that meant importing goods from a foreign country.⁷⁹ The bureaucracy is again bashed on as the cause of economic failure in the novel, *Seed Money*. The leader of the farm management only yells at the workers to produce more instead of finding a solution. As a result, the leader only made the people more upset due to the working condition as well as the poor outcome of their labor.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Kim, Mun-chang. *Yeolmang*, Pyeongyang: Munhagyesuljonghapchulpansa, 1999.

⁸⁰ Byun Chang-nyul. "Mitcheon", *Joseonmunhak*, Munhagyesuljonghapchulpansa, 2005.

4.2.2. Recalling the Memory: Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il and Mt.

Paektu

In formulating the Arduous Discourse, the official propaganda has to continuously spawn the memory of Kim Il-sung led anti-Japanese guerrilla and socialist revolution to paint it as a victory amid a difficult time. This task had to be undertaken in parallel with the attempt to connect Kim Il-sung's legacy to the newly appointed leader, Kim Jong-il. Kim Jong-il was selected as the legitimate successor by Kim Il-sung and was officially recognized by the party in 1974. By the 1980s, Kim Jong-il was very much involved in the decision-making process. However, he waited until October of 1997 to be appointed the General Secretary of Workers' Party. In a way, he was evoking emotions of the people showing that he has shown his due respect to the father by mourning for three years. At the same time, it also shows that the legitimacy to rule in North Korea lies heavily on the legacy of Kim Il-sung as General who led anti-Japanese guerrilla forces. As Haruki has noted, "Kim Il-sung's anti-Japanese war in Manchuria is the alpha and the omega of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's national ideology."⁸¹ In other words, the everyday moral norms and standards of North Koreans are deeply affected by the ideology stemming from the mythicized history of Kim Il-sung's struggle against the Japanese.

As the power transition from Kim Il-sung to Kim Jong-il occurred, Kim Jong-il

⁸¹ Wada (2002)

mythicized the anti-Japanese revolutionary tradition to establish an absolute authority for his father through constructing tall statues, investing in developing the sites of anti-Japanese guerrilla activities and putting up signs with quotations from Kim Il-sung.⁸² Especially during the economic crisis of 1990, the regime attempted to recall the anti-Japanese revolutionary tradition of Kim Il-sung and to recreate or reinterpret the tradition. As Han argues, there already existed certain dynamic within the North Korean society where “history does not belong to the past, but governs the present.”⁸³ With repeated recalling of the anti-Japanese guerrilla history for the regime’s legitimacy, the national ideology has become one with such history. Having lost all its communist allies, North Korea declares “socialism of our own style” since the late 1980s. On July 15, 1986, Kim Jong-il proposed the “Korean-nation-first spirit” calling for the people to have pride through being aware of the greatness of the nation and be determined to make the nation greater.⁸⁴ His nationalistic discourse further strengthens equating Kim Il-sung with Dangun in his claims that “The founding father of socialist Korea is Kim Il-sung whereas the founding father of our nation was Dangun,” and that Kim Il-sung is the eternal leader of Korea.⁸⁵ From then on, Kim Il-sung has been deified and Juche Ideology has adopted many

⁸² Lee, Tae-sup. “Kimj Jong-il hu-gye-che-gye-ui hwag-lib-gwa dan-gyeol-ui jeong-chi” *Hyundai-buk-han-yeon-gu* No. 6 Ed. 1, 2005, p.15-21

⁸³ Han, Hongkoo. *Wounded Nationalism: The Minsaengdan Incident and Kim Il Sung in Eastern Manchuria*, 1999, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

⁸⁴ Kim Jong-il “Ju-che-sa-sang-gyo-yang-e-seo je-gi-doe-neun myeoch ga-ji mun-je-e dae-ha-yeo (On Some Problems of Education in the Juche Idea),” talk to the senior officials of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea), July 15, 1986

⁸⁵ Kim Jong-il. “Wi-dae-han su-lyeong-nim-eul yeong-won-hi nop-i mo-si-go su-lyeong-nim-ui wi-eob-eul kkeut-kka-ji wan-seong-ha-ja” *Jo-son-lo-dong-dang-chul-pan-sa*, Pyongyang, 1998, 427-428

religious features. In 1988, a peak in Paektu Mountain was named Jong-il Peak by Kim, Il-sung who also writes a poem for his son in 1992 to create the myth of his son through his own legitimacy.

Soon after Kim Il-sung's death, Kim Jong-il emphasizes that Kim Il-sung is forever with the nation and his revolutionary spirit of death-defying implementation and self-reliance in order to overcome the economic crisis and stabilize his authority. And the attempt of transmitting Kim Il-sung's charisma to Kim Jong-il began through official discourse. On the surface, the discourse emphasizes that Kim Il-sung is eternal within the heard of all individuals, it is actually reinforcing the belief that Kim Jong-il's rule is no different from the rule of his father. In *the Reunion*, Kim Jong-il is depicted as a leader who is always with the people by describing the personal visits he takes to villages and military units. Through this image, the discourse reminds the people that their suffering and struggle are shared by their leader.⁸⁶ On October 16 of 1994, Kim Jong-il gathered the military leadership to present them with the "Paektu" pistols. In this event, the military generals watched one of the last speeches given by Kim Il-sung where he states that the military leaders "shall accomplish the Juche revolution through unity and loyalty toward Kim Jong-il with these pistols." Then, Kim Jong-il demanded, "according to the last words of Kim Il-sung, the military shall be military of the Party, of the Supreme Leader and General Kim Jong-

⁸⁶ Ri Hi-nam. *Sangbong*, Joseonmunhak, Munhagyesuljonghapchulpansa, 1996.

il.”⁸⁷ Through recalling the memory of the revolution, Kim Jong-il equated himself with his father, and induced the loyalty of the people emphasizing the “spirit of escorting the great leader.”⁸⁸ Since then, Kim Jong-il’s orders were given the legitimacy of the speeches by Kim Il-sung as having the effect of the supreme law of the land. The people were demanded to follow the leadership of the legitimate heir Kim Jong-il with absolute loyalty to accomplish the revolution as requested by the dying will of Kim Il-sung.⁸⁹ Against this backdrop, Kim Jong Il declared the crisis of the 1990s as the Arduous March stating that it is a time for “the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance and fortitude and indomitable optimism piercing through all obstacles.”⁹⁰

4.2.3. Eliciting Empathy: Innate Good and Maternal Affection

As mentioned above, just recalling the revolutionary history was not going to provide a discourse for going through such a challenging time. By mentioning the difficult times of guerrilla warfare and making Kim Il-sung eternal, the regime desired to give hope to the people that overcoming the crisis was possible. The regime ultimately had to admit that it cannot provide a life of paradise for its people. Experiencing and

⁸⁷ *Seon-gun-tae-yang gim-il-seong-jang-gun* Vol. 3, pyeong-yang, jo-seon-lo-dong-dang chulpan-sa, 2006

⁸⁸ Sahoegwahagwon Eoneohagyeonguso *Joseonmal Daesajeon* . Pyeongyang: Sahoegwahakchulpansa, 1992.

⁸⁹ Jang, Nam-sik. "Widaehan suryeong gimilseong dongjikkeseo gongpohasin ryeoksajeogin juseongmyeongnyeongui jungyo teukjing", *Sahoegwahagwonhakbo*, Ed. 34, No.2, 2002.

⁹⁰ “Let Us Lift the Red Flag High and Dynamically Accomplish New Year’s March” (1996)

admitting to the collective memory of the Arduous March period, the regime has constantly poured its efforts to provide solutions. In many works of literature of this period, emotions and moral obligations for the family has been repeatedly mentioned. Especially, increased instances that are introduced in the literature are about females who are motivated by love for the nation and act selfless depicting them as the symbol of North Korea's national identity.

Through creating stories of these women who have maternal affection toward the nation, the regime has evoked patriotism in the hearts of ordinary individuals so that they would have affection toward their national identity. The emotion that the stories tried to evoke the most is that of a mother who sincerely cares for the family with love and sacrifice regardless of their own suffering or hardship. Such idea stems not only from the theory of the Large Socialist Family but also from traditional Confucianism. In other words, the traditional value of filial piety has been adopted to the patriarchal socialist family structure where Kim Il-sung is the father, the Party is the mother and the people are children. As previously mentioned, Kim Jong-il established the concept of Kim Il-sung nation formulating the idea that North Korean people have blood relations with one another through the eternal Father Kim Il-sung.

In terms of maternal affection, Kang Pan-sok and Kim Jong-suk are considered as the ideal female figures of North Korea. Yet, literary works dedicated to idolizing Kim Jong-suk saw exponential growth in this period. There could be many explanations for this notion, namely to strengthen Kim Jong-il's legitimacy through

raising his mother and to bring out certain aspects of her character that may encourage the people to cooperate with the regime during the crisis. All these explanations seem to be plausible and non-exclusive. Here, I will focus on the last cause for the sudden rise of reference to Kim Jong-suk in literature.

In North Korea, Kim Jong-suk is considered as one of the three Great Generals along with Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il. During the time of anti-Japanese guerrilla, Kim Jong-suk symbolizes the female members who not only had to participate in the battle but also had to serve their domestic roles of cooking, cleaning, caring for family, etc. The female soldiers who had successfully contributed to the fight against the Japanese were also introduced in the literature of this period.⁹¹ Such images of women were utilized to justify the love and sacrifice of the people for the nation. In *Our Sky*, Kim Seon-ok a female soldier of the anti-Japanese struggle who sacrificed her youth achieves her dream of becoming a pilot thanks to Kim Il-sung recognizing her wartime achievements.⁹² *The Song of the Textile Workers* depicts the female protagonists as the sacred laborers of the nation.⁹³ Also, the image of the traditionally weaker and excluded groups including females, technicians and ordinary laborers become the protagonist of the artworks who overcome difficulties through innovation challenging bureaucrats who stubbornly stick to the old ways. Another example of such would be Choi Gwang-hyun from *the Aspiration*. Choi is

⁹¹ Song Byeong-jun, "Cheot Nyeoseongnakabyeongdeul" *Joseonnyeoseong*. Geullodanchechulpansa, 1999.

⁹² Cho, Sang-ho, "Uriui Haneul", *Joseonmunhak*, Munhagyesuljonghapchulpansa, 1997

⁹³ Ryu Jeong-ok, "Bangjigongui Norae", *Joseonmunhak*, Munhagyesuljonghapchulpansa, 199

a manager working under the Party secretary who only yells at the people to increase production without changing the means of production. Choi suggests an innovative means of production that leads to a successful boost in the operation of the mine.⁹⁴ These stories are not meant to only apply to the less-privileged members of the society but also applies to the general public in that all of those with innate good nature should be ready to sacrifice for the nation.

The emphasis of patriotism and moral obligation of remembering the past in the discourse is a result of the economic failure that could no longer be hidden or fixed through state policies. The speeches, given by Kim Jong-il on October 2 and December 25, are good examples of such propaganda.⁹⁵ Through the speech, Kim Jong-il argues that it is a matter of one's conscience and morality to have respect and loyalty to the leader who is an elder of the revolution and to the Party. Another value emphasized is perseverance and trust in the regime during difficult times.

4.2.4. Inducing Self-Sacrifice: One for All

Through evoking empathy stemming from human's innate good nature and maternal affection, the regime was sending out a message that individual sacrifice is often needed for collective survival. The discourse of self-sacrifice during this period is

⁹⁴ Kim, Mun-chang (1999)

⁹⁵ Kim Jong-il. "Jo-seon-lo-dong-dang-eun wi dae-han su-lyeong gim-il-seong-dong-ji-ui dang-i-da." At his discussion with the Central Committee of Workers' Party Kim Jong-il Seon-jip No. 14. Joseon-lo-dong-dang-chul-pan-sa, Pyongyang 2000; Kim Jong-il. "Hyeog-myeong-seon-bae-leul jon-dae-ha-neun geos-eun hyeog-myeong-ga-deul-ui sung-go-han do-deog-ui-li-i-da." Discussion published in the Journal of Central Committee of Workers' Party." October 2, 1995 *Kim Jong-il Seon-jip* No. 14. Jo-seon-lo-dong-dang-chul-pan-sa, Pyongyang. 2000

best symbolized by “Kanggye Spirit”. The terminology, “Kanggye Spirit”, was introduced in the *Rodong Sinmun* editorial that was commemorating the 56th birthday of Kim Jong-il on February 16, 1998. The editorial praised the exemplary actions of people in Chagang Province. The Kanggye Spirit described in this editorial has three elements: absolute obedience for the leader, struggle to realize the intention of the leader and to keep the spirit of self-reliant and fortitude.⁹⁶ Ultimately, the slogan shows the intention of the regime to consolidate the power to the leader and maintain the regime stability rather than caring for the economic conditions of the people. In this difficult time, the people are called to sacrifice themselves for the glory of Kim Jong-il. A novel within the “Immortal Leadership” collection directed, titled “Kanggye Spirit” realistically depict the economic situation of Chagang Province, the region that was most harshly hit by flood and the following economic crisis. The area is on the northern end of North Korea in a mountainous area where transportations cannot easily access. The novel begins with Kim Jong-il becoming worried after hearing that his beloved laborer died of hunger and Chagang Province has been deadly hit by the flood.⁹⁷ It describes even Pyongyang having a problem with the supply of electricity. People in Chagang Province come up with creative ways to overcome such a difficult condition. Scrap metals from roofs, columns and electric generators are recycled for construction, bread is made out of turf and scientists put their efforts in inventing new chemicals to increase production while

⁹⁶ “Wi-dae-han dang-ui yeong-do-e tta-la choe-hu-seung-li-ui gang-haeng-gun-eul da-geu-chi-ja” *Rodong Sinmun* February 16, 1998.

⁹⁷ Ri Shin-hyon. (2002)

suffering hunger and illnesses.⁹⁸ These actions are praised by Kim Jong-il as the Kanggye Spirit that has been inspired by self-reliance and fortitude.

To induce the mass to not fear sacrificing one's life for the others, the regime had to glorify death. Sacrifice by normal citizens also had to be praised as heroic actions that match those of the anti-Japanese guerrilla force. Through political discourse, the regime had to demonstrate to the people that honorable selfless death inspires the people and is remembered by them. *The People of Chagang Province* illustrates the death of Song Man-ho as a noble one since he died in the middle of searching for food to bring back to his colleagues. In the film, the colleagues continue with the alternative food contest as a commemoration for their fallen comrade. Song Man-ho was replacing the role of the party which is to provide food for the workers. In the eyes of North Korean people, he may seem heroic for his selfless action with the aim to assist Kim Jong-il and the party, who are always concerned with the economic situation, in accomplishing their role to feed the people.⁹⁹ And the people constantly solve the dilemma of scarcity through creativity, care for one another and self-sacrifice. Even the last bite of food is shared and people on their deathbed are worried about the others who will have to take over their share of work. Workers try to think about how to accomplish the project more efficiently and how to make the life of their neighbors more comfortable.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *People of Chagang Province*. Directed by Ri Woong-yong and Ri Dok-yun. Performed by Kim Ryong-rin, Kim Yong-il, Jun Jong-hee, Kim Ok-hee. North Korea: Choson Yesulyonghwa Chwalyongso, 2000. DVD.

A counter-example is given through *the Record of a Group Leader*. In this short essay, a group leader Cha Young-se attempts to maximize the interest gained for his own group of 25 workers. When there was a surplus in agricultural production he would falsify the report so that he could use the surplus to hold a feast for his group. He also allows the workers to take a rest when they feel tired. A new group leader becomes appointed and he chastises Cha saying that individual sacrifice is necessary for the good of larger society. The new leader criticizes Cha for having been myopic and selfish when the larger society was suffering the economic crisis.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Byun Chang-nyul. “Han Bunjojangui Sugi”, *Joseonmunhak*, Munyechulpansa, 2001.

5. Policy Implementation of the Discourse

In terms of the policy, the political discourse of Arduous March manifested in different forms. *Rodong Sinmun* describes “three major strongholds of socialism of our own style.”¹⁰¹ The strongholds, which are required for the successful revolution and construction, are socialist political ideology, economy and military. The policies are concerned with the values and goals mentioned above. While the editorial emphasizes obedience to Kim Jong-il as the priority accomplishing Kim Il-sung’s dying wish, the following paragraphs are divided into the details regarding the three strongholds.

In terms of socialist political ideology, filial piety for Kim Il-sung and the elders of the revolution is mentioned as the moral obligation. Then, the people are warned to never allow “the penetration of imperialist culture and ideology” to society.¹⁰² Then, the necessity for the party, the military and the people to fight together is mentioned. Especially, it is calling for the people to remember that all the people have traditionally been part of the defense mechanism against enemies in difficult times. When it comes to the economy, the production of food and other consumer goods necessary for a living is mentioned as the most crucial aspect, then industries related to natural resources are mentioned as having the potential to break through the economic difficulty. Defense and international affairs are mentioned together stating

¹⁰¹ “Let Us Lift the Red Flag High and Dynamically Accomplish New Year’s March”

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

that the regime wishes for peace but peace without preparation war is possible due to the imperialists. Therefore, the regime expresses its desire to strengthen the military.

Though not mentioned as one of the three strongholds, the editorial discusses the matter of national unification while criticizing the U.S. and South Korea at the end. The article mentions three principles of unification: autonomous, peaceful unification and national unity, as part of Kim Il-sung's final order. Then, it mentions a mechanism to ensure peace between the U.S. and North Korea is necessary to practically move forward with the principles. While criticizing the U.S. and South Korea as imperialists and calling for the people to strengthen the military and prepare for war, the article has kept the potential of diplomatic solution open. In the latter part of this chapter, the manifestation of discourse in these three areas of policy will be further explored.

5.1 Social Policy: Songun Policy

Even before 1972, Kim Jong-il was moving up the ladder of the Party, often being referred to as the center of the Party.¹⁰³ As is true in many other socialist states, there are three branches of power that have to be controlled by the leader which are the party, the state and the military. Because the states are run as a one-party system, the

¹⁰³ "Su-ryeong Kim Il-sung won-su-nim-gge-seo-wa dang-jung-ang-e-seo woo-ri-dae-hak-e to-da-shi gui-joong-han- seon-mul-eul bo-nae-ju-shi-eot-da" *Kim Il-sung University Newspaper*, August 21, 1975, Pyongyang

control of the party automatically guarantees the control of the state. However, the military is a different story. According to Yang, Kim Jong-il made the move toward dominating the military in 1979 by making most of the military decisions with his authority except for the crucial ones that require Kim Il-sung's attention. In this effort, the propaganda has constantly stated that Kim Jong-il is a genius in a military genius like his father even though he did not have any military experience. Finally, through the 6th Congress of the Workers' Party, Kim Jong-il is appointed a member of the Central Military Commission.¹⁰⁴ In 1982 at the Central Military Commission, Kim Jong-il expresses his determination to directly control the military as a leader should.¹⁰⁵ Then, three major decisions were made at the first session of the 9th Supreme People's Assembly: Ministry of People's Armed Force was transferred from the Cabinet to the National Defense Commission; the National Defense Commission became independent from the People's Committee; Kim Jong-il was named the first Vice Chairman of the National Defense Commission.¹⁰⁶ And finally, Kim Jong-il is appointed the Chairman of the National Defense Commission on April 9, 1992. With economic hardship, it could be speculated that Kim Jong-il recognized having a strong grip on the military as the priority.

According to *Rodong Sinmun*, the Songun Policy was created to respond to the

¹⁰⁴ Kim, Il-sung. *Report to the Sixth Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea on the Work of the Central Committee*, October 10, 1980. Foreign Languages Publishing House. Pyongyang 1980

¹⁰⁵ *Woo-ri-dang-eui Son-gun-jeong-chi*. Jo-seon-lo-dong-dang chull-pan-sa. Pyongyang 2006.

¹⁰⁶ Jeong Chang-hyun, Shin Gyeong-hwan Gu-sul, *Kim Jong-il: CEO of DPRK*, Joongang Books, Seoul, 201-202

hostile external environment caused by the imperialists.¹⁰⁷ The newspaper asserts that the military has to be considered the most important in order to accomplish the socialist goals during the unprecedented struggle against the imperialist states. The article further claims that the imperialists will present North Korea with threats as long as they exist on the earth since such war-mongering characteristics are embedded in their nature. Therefore, the Songun Policy is justified as a long-term strategy against the hostile international environment rather than merely as a short-term response to the crisis.

As long as the regime has maintains its monopoly on violence by retaining strong control over the military, the possibility of revolt could be minimized. Kim Jong-il added his personal touch by visiting the military units even as low as battalion-level. *Figure 5.1* shows the number of personal visits by Kim Jong-il categorized by the theme between 1995 and 1997.¹⁰⁸ Due to the cult of personality surrounding the Kim Family, Kim Jong-il's visit is considered as the most honorable present by the people. The records of his visits would be engraved on the walls of each sites and crowds would be gathered cheering to get glimpse of Kim Jong-il. When Kim Jong-il visited the military units, the soldiers would welcome them with signs that says "Let us defend our Supreme Leader". From outside world, there could be suspicion that these scenes are acted out, however there seems to be certain sincerity in the people's joy

¹⁰⁷ "Widaehan ryŏngdoja kimjŏngil tongjikkesŏ palk'ishin sŏn'gunhyŏngmyŏngnyŏngdoe kwanhan tokch'angjŏng sasang" *Rodong Sinmun* February 26, 2001, Pyongyang

¹⁰⁸ Lee Gye-sung. "Bug-han mi-di-eo-bo-do bun-seog-eul tong-han gim-jeong-il hyeon-ji-ji-do yeon-gu" gyeong-gi-dae-hag jeong-chi-dae-hag-won bug-han-hag-gwa Ph.D. Dissertation, 2008

to see someone who is deified in their country. Several ceremonies were held in Pyongyang and the rest of North Korea even amid the hard time to boost the morale of the soldiers and remind them of the anti-Japanese guerrilla spirit.

Year	Military	Economy	Diplomacy	Others	Sum
1995	14	0	2	20	36
1996	32	6	0	15	53
1997	39	1	2	14	56

Figure 5.1 Kim Jong-il's Personal Visits between 1995-1997

All the efforts to have a close relationship with and tight control over the military seems to be a strategic decision that Kim Jong-il has made. In the time of a drastic economic failure, the discourses may not have been enough for the regime to maintain the power to mobilize the entire mass. Instead, Kim Jong-il decided to mobilize the military and use them for economic development. To justify the political and economic focus of the regime to military matters, the might of unwavering pressure from the imperial powers have to be reminded constantly. The military was put to work for constructions of power plants, and their accomplishments were praised as showing the Revolutionary Soldier Spirit during the visit of Kim Jong-il to the construction sites.¹⁰⁹ The role of the military expanded to cover various social

¹⁰⁹*Sŏn'gunt'aeyang Kimjŏngil Changgun*, No. 3. Jo-son-lo-dong-dang-chul-pan-sa Pyongyang. 2006.

functions including construction, agricultural production and social control.

5.2 Economic Policy: System of Economic Regional Self-Sufficiency

After the Korean War, North Korea needed to recover the industries destroyed by American carpet bombing. According to Kim, North Korea's productivity in mining was reduced by 80%, manufacturing by 60% and agriculture by 78% causing a collective trauma.¹¹⁰ Kim Il-sung demanded that the reconstruction of industries shall be carried out with consideration of another war. He demanded that the factories should be built not only in cities but spread out throughout the country.¹¹¹ If possible, he also requested the factories to be built underground for energy efficiency in the winter and better defense capability against the enemies.¹¹² Due to the trauma of the war, North Korea felt the need for self-sufficiency in each region. In 1968, Kim Il-sung explains that the administrative districts have to group the traditional villages into a county that has its own self-sufficient factories in case of an emergency where the region is isolated from the central government and therefore was required to

¹¹⁰ Kim, Byoung-lo Philo. *Pukhan, Chosŏn Ŭro Tasi Ikta: Pungnyŏk E Silchae Hanŭn Kamchwŏjin Sahoe Ŭi Simchŭng Punsŏk* [Reading North Korea by Chosun Korea: In-depth Analysis of the Real North Korean Society]. Seoul: Sŏul Taehakkyo Chulpan Munhwawŏn, 2016.

¹¹¹ Kim Il-sung. "Kun-ŭi yŏk-hal-ŭl kang-hwa-ha-yŏ chi-pang-kong-ŏp-kwa nong-ch'on-kyŏng-li-lŭl tŏ-uk pal-chŏn-si-k'yŏ in-min-saeng-hwal-ŭl hwŏl-ssin nop'-i-cha", *Kim Il-sung Jeo-jak-jip* 16, 1962, Pyongyang, Joseon-lo-dong-dang-chul-pan-sa

¹¹² Kim Il-sung. "Chagangdo inmindŭrŭi hubanggonggŭpsaŏbŭl kaesŏnhagi wihan myŏtkaji kwaŏbe taehayŏ" *Kim Il-sung Jeo-jak-jip* 26, 1971, Joseon-lo-dong-dang-chul-pan-sa, Pyongyang.

survive on its own.¹¹³ From a purely economic perspective, this system is inefficient. As long as there is a centralized market, the regions should specialize in their production and trade according to their comparative advantage. For factories, it is often the case that flowing water is required not only for its operation but to circulate its products. However, the system has developed manufacturing industries even in the inland areas.¹¹⁴

Due to the economic crisis of the 1990s, the Public Distribution System had difficulty in operation and finally shut down. The regime considered this as another Arduous March in their struggle and revolution against the imperialist force. In 1995, the regime decides to operate official markets based on the system of regional self-sufficiency, a system designed for survival during wartime.¹¹⁵ The number of official markets exponentially increased up to 300 evenly spread out to each regional area. In these markets, the people were to struggle for survival with the legacy of anti-Japanese guerrilla force: self-reliance and fortitude. The regime established market management authorities in each region. However, Kim points out the limitation of the development labeling it “segmentalized marketization”, meaning that the markets are separate from one another causing inefficiency due to restriction in the circulation of goods to other regions. In the end, the critical weakness of inefficiency that the system of regional self-sufficiency has been inherited to the new

¹¹³ Kim Il-sung. “Sahoejuūi nongch'on'gönsörül tagüch'imyö kunül chal kkurilte taehayö”, *Kim Il-sung Jeo-jak-jip* 22, Joseon-lo-dong-dang-chul-pan-sa, Pyongyang

¹¹⁴ Kim, Byoung-lo Philo.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

development in marketization as well.

Individual contribution to the economy has also been emphasized because of the inability of the Party to provide. Economic failure was blamed partially on the mid-level bureaucrats for not properly delivering what the Party has instructed them while creativity and scientific innovation was demanded to the scientists, technicians and average laborers.¹¹⁶ The cooperative farms were also reformed from consisting of 10~25 farmers to 7~8 farmers mostly grouped by family. The required production for each farm was lowered and the farmers were permitted to take surplus as their own property.¹¹⁷ As shown above, the economic policy of this period is focused on individual efforts to survive rather than a collective or joint effort in developing the economy. North Korean regime could no longer provide the necessary food, medical care, education and welfare for its people. The people had to meet their own needs which detached them from the social system.

5.3 Defense & Foreign Policy: Anti-Imperialist Stance and Self-Reliance

Although the official discourse has always been utilized to differentiate North Korea from the Soviet Union and China, North Korea still kept close relations with its two neighboring allies. In 1980, North Korea systematized its foreign policy principles

¹¹⁶ Kim Jong-il. “Kwahakkisulbalchönesö saeroun chönhwanül irük'ija” 1991 10.28 *Ch'inaehanün chidoja kimjōngil tongjiüi munhōnji*, Joseon-lo-dong-dang-chul-pan-sa Pyongyang, 1992.

¹¹⁷ Lee Jong-seok (2000).

to the slogan of “independence, friendship and peace,” hoping to maintain friendly relations with the two allies, approach the non-aligned states and also attempt to build rapport with capitalist states based on mutual respect for the two different systems.¹¹⁸ At the time, it is evident that North Korea had a confident stance and a more positive attitude towards engaging with the international community. This confidence must have stemmed from having stabilized the domestic political environment and also having China and the Soviet Union as strong allies.

The regime, however, became more defensive and hostile toward the rest of the world in its propaganda after the end of the Cold War. Self-reliance has a characteristic of distinguishing North Korea from all the failed socialist states. Meanwhile, after the collapse of the eastern bloc, North Korea has attempted to expand its relations with the western world through the modification of its former diplomatic principles for pragmatic purposes. Kim Jong-il admitted that the improvement of relationship with the U.S. and Japan is a necessary step toward the goal of unification.¹¹⁹ Though not openly mentioned, it was also true that trade or aid from the western world would have been an attractive source of boost to the failing economy of North Korea. Even in diplomacy, the military was used as the single available resource left for the regime. In other words, the military was used internally for maintaining stability while also used as a bargaining chip at the

¹¹⁸ Kim Geun-sik. “Puk'anŭi Ch'ejebojŏn'gwa Taeoejŏngch'aek Pyŏnhwa.” *Kukchejŏngch'inonch'ong*, 42(4), 2002 151-166.

¹¹⁹ Kim Jong-il “Widaehan suryŏng kimilsŏng tongjiŭi choguk t'ongil yuhunŭl ch'ŏlchŏhi kwanch'ŏrhaja”, *Rodong Sinmun*, August 20, 1997

diplomatic negotiation table. North Korea and its negotiating counterparts tried to solve military tensions through economic compensation. For example, North Korea requested from USD 300 million to the U.S. in return for allowing their entrance to the underground nuclear facility in Gumchang-ri.¹²⁰ During the negotiation, North Korea would express its rejections on the ground that the military cannot trust the intention of the U.S. and that there were military or other means than diplomacy to solve the issues.

In 1994, North Korea was able to agree on the Geneva Agreement with the U.S. The Agreement was received positively by the international community with expectation that North Korea would stop and dismantle its facilities related to developing nuclear weapons while the U.S. and South Korea provide the North with a nuclear reactor for peaceful use and ensure the stability of the regime via reducing the hostility. In 1997, North Korea seemed genuine about the idea of diplomatic normalization with the U.S.¹²¹ There also were attempts between Japan and North Korea to negotiate diplomatic normalization and war reparation. However, trust between North Korea and the international community was not strong enough to move forward the aforementioned agendas. Many argue that North Korea should have had a more flexible approach in its negotiation since the past records rendered it difficult for the rest of the world to accept North Korea as a “responsible member” of the

¹²⁰ “3ök tallörül posanghandamyön chihashisöl pangmun hōyong”, *Korea Central News Agency*, January 11, 1999

¹²¹ Kim Jong-il. “Widaehan Suryōng Kimilsōng Tongjiūi Chogukt'ongil Yuhunül Ch'ölchōhi Kwanch'ōrhaja.” August 20, 1997

international community.¹²² In other words, North Korea was met with limitations in reform and opening due to its “independent” or “self-reliant” diplomacy. Even though North Korea was able to survive through the crisis, the economy has not been reformed to fully enjoy prosperity from the international trade market.

¹²² Izumi Hajime, “Kim Jong-ilŭi Trchajuoeogyot'wa Kŭ Han'gye.” Hanilgongdongyŏn'guch'ongsŏ 7 2004: 59-79. Web.

6. Conclusion

While comparing the political discourse of the two significant periods in North Korea, the similarity in the pattern was found. For both periods, the enemies to the solidarity were criticized and blamed on for hardship, and the memory of the anti-Japanese struggle led by Kim Il-sung was recalled and reconstructed to put Kim Il-sung at the center of the legend. The legends were added with messages evoking nationalism and close ties among the people via shared historical background. Then, the emotions were used to mobilize the people to build or protect the national identity and solidarity among them against the formidable imperialist enemies.

There certainly had to be an extra step taken when power was transferred to Kim Jong-il so that the charismatic image of Kim Il-sung could be also transmitted to his son. The legends of the anti-Japanese struggle were reconstructed to add details about Kim Jong-il's birth near Mt. Paektu. A mountain peak in the area was named after Kim Jong-il while the house, where Kim Jong-il was supposed to be born, was rebuilt. After three years of the mourning period, Kim Jong-il slowly replaced his father's name with his own as the father of the nation from the propagandas.

During Kim Il-sung's rule, mostly the romanticized and glorious aspects of anti-Japanese struggle were depicted in the propagandas. However, to reflect the urgent situation, the realistic images of hardship during the struggle were described in detail under Kim Jong-il's rule. While Kim Il-sung emphasized the role of the Party and the leader to provide the people simultaneously with the people's filial piety for the

former two entities, Kim Jong-il had a more one-sided demand for filial duties to be met by the people.

In eliciting empathy, the moral obligation for loyalty is emphasized recalling that the anti-Japanese guerrilla warriors were able to see the victory because they did not give up to the Japanese during the Arduous March. The propaganda emphasized that only through self-sacrifice for the greater purpose of the revolution, society can overcome the hardship. The people were told that they can no longer trust in the party bureaucrats who may be corrupted or incompetent. Instead, the discourse emphasized the heroism of individuals who could contribute to the revolutionary struggle through their creativity, innovation and perseverance.

6.1 Impact of the Arduous March

Two main impacts of the Arduous March period in the 1990s are the acceptance of individualism and the vitalization of the unofficial economy. Although the scale may not be as grand as exaggerated from outside of North Korea, the propagandas admit the difficulties of individuals during the time. Certain individuals, for their sacrifice, were praised as heroes through the propaganda works as if they participated at the frontline of anti-Japanese guerrilla warfare. The normal people gained voice to criticize corrupted and incompetent bureaucrats.

The operation of black markets has also weakened North Korea's control over its people. Now, a large portion of people can survive without government hand-outs. They no longer are dependent on the nation to provide them. In trading necessary

goods with bordering China, the people also get familiar with outside goods and information. The Jangmadang market is estimated to have gradually increased and it is said that the regime failed to have a strong grip over these markets.

6.2 Implications: Can North Korea Survive Another Crisis?

If North Korea and the U.S. do not find a peaceful resolution, the UN sanction on North Korea will continue. Then another economic crisis would likely hit North Korea. There has been debate over whether North Korea could handle the consequences. In terms of survival, I believe that the regime will succeed. There is no alternative political faction that can muster the support of the people to topple the regime. Periodic purges remind the higher ranking officers who are in charge. Empirical evidence suggests that political alliance against the reign of terror is very likely to be detected in the initial stage.

However, another crisis may cause detrimental damage to social unity. As anti-Japanese struggle and the Korean War have a traumatic effect on the people, the Arduous March period also is engraved deeply in North Korean people's mind as a traumatic experience. The people will instantly engage more in the illegal trade of foreign goods and get familiar with outside information. The propaganda and agitation effort of the state may become mostly ineffective. The distress of the people may be apparent in the society in the form of disobedience of local authorities and other minor everyday interactions of the people with order, authority and state control.

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국문초록

성명: 백승훈

학과 및 전공: 국제학과 국제협력전공

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1990년대의 정치 및 경제위기는 북한 정권에게 탄력성을 유지하기 위한 선전전략의 변화를 요구하는 과제를 제시해왔다. 북한 정권은 첫 지도자 지위 계승에서 오는 정치적 어려움과 자연재해 및 변환하는 국제정세에서 비롯된 경제위기를 극복하기 위해서 항일무장투쟁 시기 “고난의 행군”의 기억을 소환하여 새로운 정치 담론을 생성하였다. 이렇게 생성된 새로운 정치 담론이 과거의 기억을 효율적으로 호출하기 위해서는 역사적 사실에 근거해야 하며 기존 정치 담론의 구조를 어느 정도 표방해야 한다. 본 논문은 지도자의 연설문, 신문, 영화, 음악 등 북한의 다양한 선전물을 분석하여 선동전략에서 북한 정권 탄력성의 근원을 찾고자 한다.

본 논문은 연구는 우선 적의 형상화 및 비판, 항일투쟁역사의 소환, 공감 유발, 자기희생으로의 유인이라는 북한 정치 담론의 기본 구조를 파악하였다. 나아가 1990년대 경제위기의 정치 담론과 현재 세습제도를 정당화하는 유일사상체제를 완성한 1970년대의 정치 담론을 해당 구조를 기반으로 비교한다. 비교분석을 통해서 정당성을 확보하기 위해 정치 담론의 구조는 변화하지 않았으나 내용은 시기의 국내외적 요구에 따라 변화한 것을 알 수 있었다.

본 연구는 1990년대 경제위기의 정치 담론이 북한에서 신화로 굳어버린 항일투쟁 시기 “고난의 행군”의 역사에 크게 의존하여 마르크스-레닌주의에서 비롯된 기존 사회주의 사상에 변화를 주어 세습정치의 정당성을 확보했던 것으로 보인다. 또한, 당시 선동전략은 경제적인 어려움을 극복하기 위해 역사에 대한

공통된 기억을 환기하여 사회에 연대감을 강화했던 것으로 보인다.

북한 정권은 경제위기를 극복하였고 사상과 군사의 강성국가를 이룩했다고 주장해오고 있다. 그리고 최근 북한 정권은 경제 분야에서도 강성국가의 꿈을 이루겠다는 목표를 강조해왔다. 하지만 현실에서의 북한은 경제 강국의 건설이라는 목표에서 거리가 멀어 보인다. 과거 정치 담론에서 오는 제약 또한 북한 정권의 경제목표를 달성하는 데에 방해요소로 작용하는 것으로 보인다.

실마리어: 고난의 행군, 선전, 선동, 정치담론, 경제위기

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