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"Landscape as Political Project" – The 'Greening' of North Korea, Exploring the role of the Environmental as 'Legitimater' within North Korean Presentational Narratives

Introduction

Current political, academic and media narratives surrounding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), focus primarily within three areas of approach. It seems difficult for many scholars to examine North Korea, its politics and policy from outside of paradigms of "unknowability" and opacity, threat or collapse. These narratives have not however, led to the making of much progress in understanding the nature of North Korea's policy or political actions or intentions in recent years. From an academic perspective they do not shed much light on the actuality of ideological or policy development within North Korea.

This paper/presentation and my research in general, seek to approach North Korea from a different perspective, that of regarding North Korea as a pragmatic actor in both its internal and external policy. I have utilised this paradigm of pragmatism and reflexivity to inform my research into the historical development of policy and ideology within North Korea surrounding the management of the environment, specifically in the areas of hydrological and forestry management.

Within this paper/presentation I will briefly introduce the historical environmental strategies of North Korea, with some examples from the areas of key interest to me, such as forestry and hydrology, tracking the development of such strategies through the historical narrative from time of the infant post-war North Korea through the Sino/Soviet split to the era of the "arduous march", the post 1992 famine and the general collapse of North Korean environmental policy of that time. I will suggest that North Korea has through-out its history, continually adjusted its environmental strategy not only to reflect its developing ideological formulation but also to accommodate new realities in its geo-political positioning and any presentational needs it might have in the realm of regime legitimation. Such a strategy has brought North Korea to its current position in which its environmental strategy revolves around elements of conservation and an awareness of the natural world that derives, it seems from western/wider world theories surrounding the environment and presents us with a North Korea that claims to be "green", and strategically undertakes many projects and schemes which seem to be sound from an environmental ethical standpoint. Finally this paper will seek to begin an investigation of the nature of North Korea's usage of such environmentally focused strategy within the realms of narrative presentation and whether this contributes in some way to the construction of a presentational or legitimative strategy when it comes not only to the legitimacy of its own regime, but also to that of other governments and institutions both within its local/regional context and within the wider geo-political world.

Historical Environmental Strategies of North Korea

Initial Capacity/Infrastructural Development post Korean War

Environmental management within North Korea and analysis surrounding it starts with war. Bruce Cumings describes the Korean War as having left a scorched earth in its wake (Cumings,1981). Within Pyongyang some 93% of all buildings had been destroyed and there had been an enormous level of damage and destruction done to the environment of North Korea. Much of the industrial and agricultural infrastructure that had been put in place by the colonial Japanese administration had been destroyed and North Korea found itself in as situation with something of a blank slate needing to rebuild much of its agricultural and industrial base and to rehabilitate much of the natural environment. This infant North Korea did so, engaging much technical expertise from both the USSR and the PRC, and incorporating much of the intellectual/ideological influence of Stalinist

era central planning. Once the war was over from a military perspective the institutions of North Korea spent quite a short period reorganising and assessing the damage done during hostilities. By September 1953 North Korea had formulated a "Three Year Plan" for the reconstruction of the country, and entered into negotiations with the USSR for an extension of its credit lines. The industrial and environmental policy this credit paid for focused primarily upon what I will term an "impositional" approach to the natural environment, in which industrial or infrastructural development is simply imposed on or within the environment, essentially regardless of context.

North Korea's Department of Agriculture described its policy outlook at the time as having only two primary goals; "the swift reconstruction and rehabilitation of the war-shattered factories making agricultural implements, and of farms and irrigation systems so as to increase grain production and meet the pent-up demand for food" and secondly "the rapid socialisation of agriculture by means of collectivisation" (Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1957). Although very little consideration was given to matters strictly environmental during this period large scale reclamation of virgin land or destruction of forests appears not to have been taking place during this period, merely improvements in already industrialised agricultural land which led to the overall increase in industrial production. It is in fact quite difficult during this initial period to see a distinctly North Korean or "Juché orientated" approach to the environmental or to agricultural development although Kim Il Sung's statement from 1956 that "Rice is immediately socialism. We cannot build socialism without rice", bears much in common with Lenin's "Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country" (Lenin, 1920) and resembles many during his period of rule.

Great Leap Forward (PRC) influenced policy

This initial period of impositional environmental development, focused upon rapid capacity increase in North Korea was short lived however as upon the death of Stalin and the solidification of the power of Nikita Khrushchev as Soviet Premier a process of radical and abrupt political change began that would have a direct impact upon such environmental strategies. Khrushchev's 1956 "Secret Speech" denouncing Stalin and the document in April of that year entitled "On the Personality Cult in North Korea" which heavily critiqued the political strategy of Kim Il Sung as one might expect forced a shift in the positioning of the parties involved within the Warsaw Pact, a breakdown in relations between the USSR and China known as the Sino-Soviet split and rapid political and diplomatic movement away from the USSR on the part of North Korea. This tumultuous period for North Korea however also created the political and ideological space for a revision of its policy towards the natural world that in the end would enable a distinct "Juché orientated" environmental strategy to emerge. During this era of distantness from the Soviet Union Mao directed Chinese industrial, agricultural and environmental policy away from the path of development following during the "First Five Year Plan" and instigated what has become known as the "Great Leap Forward". In this period Chinese environmental and developmental policy was ingrained with an almost existential urgency. This sense of almost impossible pace served to break natural and historical connections citizens may have had with local natural environments, and sometimes religious and spiritual traditions connected with them, to disorientate and to militarise and it is this disorientated head-long rush into change that enabled many of the projects attempted and achieved within the Great Leap Forward to take place. It may have been this sense of revolutionary urgency that most inspired Kim Il Sung, because by September 1958 in North Korea, The Ch'ollima Movement was launched, the first of a number of categories of "revolutionary urgency" defined within North Korea over the course of its existence. However in North Korea context the revolutionary urgency and transformational approach of the "Great Leap Forward" appear to have been blunted within the agricultural field. Kim Il Sung perhaps aware not only of the impending and obvious failure of much of the Chinese policy (which eventually led to a collapse in industrial and agricultural production and a terrible famine), but also of particular issues of labour

supply within North Korea and the general size of the population, as well as the dangerousness of large groupings of people, refused gargantuan scale mega projects such as the draining of lakes or the wide scale demolition and terracing of mountains and focused instead through the Ch'ollima movement on a much smaller scale of development, abandoning much of the radicalism of the Chinese model (Good information on Ch'ollima movement (NKDP,2009)).

Technocratic/ Indigenous approaches to the Development of the Environment

The period of ferment created by the Sino-Soviet Split and the "Great Leap Forward" forced North Korea to begin the process of developing a set of strategies focused upon agricultural and environmental productivity that were relatively indigenous to it (although we must not downplay the role of technicians from either the USSR or the PRC, even at the height of Sino-Soviet split Soviet technicians were involved in preparatory works for some hydrological projects). Kim Il Sung's "Theses on the Socialist Rural Question in Our Country" (Kim Il Sung ,1964), gives a foundational grounding in both the role of the environment within the wider context of the industrial and agricultural strategy of North Korea, and the practical policies to be followed within that strategy. Within the theses Kim Il Sung lays out a fully Juché orientated approach to agricultural and environmental development. Environmental management and development was to be achieved through the functioning of the "three revolutions movement" within the landscape in which Juché thinking would be applied to the environmental and the agricultural through changing conceptions and strategies relating to the technical, cultural and ideological aspects of environmental development. The Theses also called for a hierarchical organisation of agricultural production according to the following pattern, peasantry over the urban working class, agriculture over industry and the rural over the urban, the full incorporation of industrial management practice into the agricultural and rural economy and lastly the final stage in the collectivisation of rural ownership. The Theses call for the treatment of agricultural and natural landscapes to be developed according to the same strategic system as the urbanised industrial areas, not just to achieve the goals of the "three revolutions movement", but also to further the wider revolutionary aims of Juché thinking. Here we see perhaps for the first time the beginning of a real systemisation of political ideology. The technological revolution called for in the "rural theses" led to a rapid and wide-scale revisioning of agricultural practice, within five key areas. These were the expansion of irrigation and water supply, the electrification of the countryside and rural areas, land "realignment" so as to incorporate mechanised agricultural process, an increase in the use of chemical fertilisers and the reclamation of tidal lands and swamps to create more land for agricultural production.

We can investigate the manifestation in practical environmental policy of ideological development derived from the "Rural Theses" and other statements and pronouncements from Kim Il Sung more easily by examining the realm of hydrological engineering. The Korean Peninsula, and especially the north had always been a highly irrigated geographic area (Totman, 2004), and there had been much irrigation construction during the colonial Japanese period (Myers, 1984). However after the publication of the Theses North Korea adopted a radically technology centred approach, disregarding almost completely gravity-fed systems. What followed inspired by the "Theses", was the building of an extensive and elaborate system of pumping stations and reservoirs. Perhaps unsurprisingly these developments and the completely irrigated furrow system transformed upland agriculture, massively increasing productive capacity and transferred enormous spaces that were previously wild to agricultural exploitation.

We can also examine the impact on what North Korea has termed "under-utilised" land, through the medium of land reclamation. "For The Large Scale Reclamation of Tidelands" (1968), contains Kim Il Sung's foundational statement on this issue that. Not only does North Korea focus on the need to create land for cultivation through this tidal reclamation but themes within the "Theses" related to the furthering of the technical and ideological revolution are also sustained through this work. As

well as serving such ideological aims these projects can also be demonstrative of North Korean ideological reflexivity and pragmatism. Within such large projects it appears that problems can be the source of their own solution, such as the South Hwanghae province Iron ore mine that faced with a problem related to the disposal of spoil, was instructed by Kim Il Sung to “begin dumping this in the sea from a long conveyor belt to create a causeway linking several islands to the mainland” (Kim Il Sung, 1985).

Arduous March” era – emergency environmental strategies

Western political and academic narratives surrounding North Korea, its ideological approach and institutional functionality today generally sites the failure of North Korean environmental strategy within a much more recent historical context. As one might expect there has been an enormous amount of research and comment focused upon the food crisis of the early to mid 1990’s. Much of this research has connected with the developing field of academic research focusing on transitions from communism at the end of the cold war period and the place of North Korea within the new post USSR political scene. The famine period of the early 1990’s is seen by many researchers and politicians as evidence of the failure of “Juché” and of North Korean economic, agricultural and industrial policy throughout its history, such as that I have already covered. In many ways the famine is an indictment of the entire structure of North Korea institutional framework and not just its policy based on ideological development. However it could also be seen as the result of a “perfect storm” of contributing factors including unrelated environmental impacts such as serious droughts in the early 1990’s which reduced harvest levels and intense and sustained rain fall events in 1994 that further reduced harvest levels and damaged agricultural land. We must also include within these factors the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact and the economic realm that North Korea depended on for much of its trade and economic support. As well as ultimately the coming together of the cumulative and frequent technical inefficiencies and discrepancies within North Korea’s industrial and agricultural sector (Eberstadt,1997).

Faced with such a disastrous set of circumstances and radical changes in the possibilities for seeking help to deal with them North Korea adopted some radical survivalist strategies. In 1992 the Russian Federation and Commonwealth of Independent states, the successor bodies to North Korea’s former ally, the Soviet Union informed North Korea that all future trade was to be at world market prices, and worse than that for a country with virtually no hard currency reserves, by cash in advance of delivery. Within the year Kim Il Sung announced what was known as the “Let’s Eat Two Meals a Day Campaign”, at the very least presaging the famine that was to come. In the field of environmental management, strategies were also abruptly changed. As an emergency solution to the crisis the authorities within the forestry sector abandoned the policy of many years and decades surrounding afforestation in an attempt to create more land area for cultivation of basic crops. Internal documents and data from North Korea on the extent of such deforestation are not forthcoming, but external studies undertaken by United Nations agencies after 1995, the peak year of disruption, note the impact of this change in policy. Bobilier records the results of the UNDP/FAO investigation which concluded “...that more than 500,000 hectares of marginal lands were deforested and cultivated” (Bobilier, 2002).

Post “Arduous March”/Famine Period – Towards a “greening” North Korea

There is no doubt that the famine era was an time of great challenge for North Korea, and much of the research literature that focuses on the possibility of its collapse, dissolution an eventual reunification with the ROK derives from the seeming inability of its institutions and leadership to respond with meaningful or positive solutions at the time. In the midst of this tumultuous and disastrous period however I would claim that it appears to be possible to determine the development of a set of new institutional responses towards the environment within North Korea and an increase in its internal bureaucratic and ideological ability to mitigate against

environmentally destructive practices. We might even be able to declare this process of development “greening”.

Obviously there are a number of questions to be raised surrounding the possibility of a “green” North Korea, the first of which being, given its apparent lack of receptivity towards ideas deriving from outside its traditional ideological realm, how has it encountered such ideas and where have they come from? As with most things connected to North Korea the routes of passage for such developments are both interesting and for most people entirely unexpected, though perhaps for seasoned North Korean watchers not that surprising. If we can remember the triangulative approach that North Korea took to cope with the geo-political shifts during the Sino-Soviet Split and the nimble ideological and practical footwork undertaken as the difficulties with the “Great Leap Forward” in China became clear, it cannot be surprising that forced to adjust to this new era in which North Korea had even fewer political allies and virtually no economic or practical support it attempted similar triangulations.

In order to extract itself from the period of crisis and disaster North Korea had been forced to ask for help from outside agencies, The World Food Programme, UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and International Committee of the Red Cross being some of the initial entrants. North Korea authorities are regarded by many scholars (such as Woo-Cumings, Eberstadt and Noland), as having despite being beset by crisis and potential regime collapse, utilised the entrance of these organisations to their own advantage. Although I do not aim to contribute to the debate surrounding the veracity of North Korea’s claims surrounding the famine, nor whether outside agencies and other NGO’s have been subject to institutional exploitation by North Korea (Noland, Haggard and many others), I believe that it is undeniable that the entrance of western institutional actors into the role of funders and supporters of some aspects of North Korea governmental framework has enabled it to develop its institutional capabilities and equip itself with some of the bureaucratic and ideological tools to survive in the post Soviet and post famine era, and which focused its ideological direction within the environmental field in the direction of a rapidly developing environmental and conservational institutionalism.

When I write here of North Korea encountering western green movements, I do not mean by this that North Korea has made a serious engagement with organisations such as Greenpeace, the Sierra Club or Earth First!, instead what I mean is that North Korea has encountered environmental philosophy and a “green” agenda, springing from a western context in the guise of its newly professionalised, bureaucratic managerial elite, members of the International Panel on Climate Change, or the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention. This sort of environmental actor is that which North Korea encountered as it opened its doors in desperation during the period of famine between 1992 and 1997. North Korea had visits from many international organisations, such as the World Food Programme and UNICEF at the time in part in order to mitigate the food crisis, but also to alleviate North Korea’s institutional crisis and to build infrastructural capacity. Within the environmental sector both UNDP and the FAO engaged with North Korea to this end after the initial famine period in. Part of the exercise and review undertaken was to assess the state and condition of North Korea’s forests and the functioning of North Korea’s forestry sector. The results of this review were summarised within the three volume series, “DPR Korea: Agricultural Recovery and Environmental Protection (AREP) Program, Identification of Investment Opportunities”. Encountering such organisations and the environmental philosophy that inspired them, that deriving from a conservational paradigm appears to have piqued North Korea’s interest a great deal. Soon policy statements and ideological or theoretical statements that included an element of environmental thinking occurred quite regularly and a “greening” of ideology, policy and approach within North Korea appeared to be underway.

What is it to be “Green” in a North Korean context?

Perhaps the most pressing question at this point is to ask what does North Korea mean by “green”? Having been exposed to this new development in political and practical environmental management, has North Korea incorporated “green” or environmental thought or action in a conventional way? Is it an environmental approach of theory or action, of thought or practice/performance? It would not perhaps surprise if it were suggested that North Korea’s conception of environmentally sound practice differs somewhat from found within in a conventional political or institutional context.

“Green” policy in North Korea – The Practical Realm

It is tempting when addressing issues of policy development in North Korea, as it with most countries and political systems, to start with the realm of the ideological, and ask ourselves, what does it mean ideologically to be “green” in North Korea, is there now a “green” Juché? This is to assume however that North Korea’s ideological system is in some way coherent or cohesive, and that academics or theoretician’s within North Korea will have first systematised environmental or “green” thinking within the wider ideological construction followed by the institutions and the population in general. It is in fact best to start with the realm of practical policy, as this is often where ideas are first generated within North Korean institutional practice; ideological or theoretical formulations coming later as a way of explaining, justifying or extracting some propaganda advantage from a successfully developing situation.

For example, one of the technologies and concepts offered by academics and NGO’s from a Western context to North Korea at the time of the famine was wind generation technology. In May and September of 1999, a team of American energy specialists from The Nautilus Institute including the academics Peter Hayes, and David Von Hippel along with their North Korean counterparts, installed seven wind generators, with just over 10 kilowatts of capacity, and a power house with electrical equipment that could provide stand-alone power, as well as interface with North Korean grid, at Unhari, a small coastal village 70 miles west of Pyongyang. This was the first instance of wind power installation in North Korea, as well as the first time an energy survey or socio-economic assessment of the impact of a project had been undertaken on any issue.

Since 1999 North Korea has continued to develop its wind power capacity, helped perhaps by the gift of two fully functional large capacity turbines from Vestas in Denmark the blue prints for their construction and some technical support and training and there are now many turbine projects in North Korea some with turbines of a capacity of up to 75 KW and an estimated nationwide production of 3MW by the end of 2004. There is now a National Wind Energy Strategy which involves comprehensive mapping of areas of exceptional wind speed and therefore potential power generation, and extending national capacity to 100 MW through the development of test sites running at up to 10MW a site. Most surprisingly perhaps is the fact that the South’s Ministry of Unification has engaged in a collaboration with North Korea’s Ministry of Power on a project to construct a series of 750 KW turbines near Rason, enough to generate the power for a population of 150,000 people.

Investing in wind turbine technology of course could be regarded as simply a normal part of energy production planning policy, as it would be for most other nations. However, in the case of North Korea it is important to remember that this was a country facing utter economic and institutional ruin, whose power production and transmission systems were reliant on materials and support that either no longer existed or unobtainable due to North Korea’s lack of hard currency reserves. Thus the development of technology such as wind power was vital to the authorities and institutions of North Korea on the grounds of cost and reduction in dependence on foreign agencies. Naturally North Korea has continued to explore the possibilities for utilising the natural world through wind and tidal power technologies and to move towards operating as much as possible as a low-carbon economy. This is indeed environmentally friendly, however it is better for the environment in the

way that the countries of the former Soviet Union drastically reduced their carbon emissions after 1992 (presenting countries such as Russian Federation and the Ukraine with a very good deal in terms of their post Kyoto protocol position (Bohringer,2000)), due to the collapse of the Soviet and Warsaw Pact industrial sector.

“Green” Juché thinking – The Ideological Realm

Ideologically North Korea has incorporated the environment within its own meta-physically nationalistic philosophical construction (Park,2002). Just as citizens of North Korea are expected to play their part in the glorification of the nation, the current manifestation of the mythical nation “Koryo”, the ultimate personification of which is which ever member of the family Kim is currently in power, so to the environment and the natural world. During the periods in which environmental policy focused around paradigmatic relationships with the natural that we might term “impositional” or “transformational”, the role of the environment was essentially that of the passive element of support for both nation and regime. The environment was there to be imposed upon or to be transformed, and its active role in North Korean ideology was to be the subject of such actions, as well as to generate the highest level of productive capacity as was possible. Since the famine era however, and following on from North Korea’s propaganda focused conception of this environmentally difficult period as “the arduous march” and therefore connected to the guerrilla struggle against Japanese occupation in the 1930’s and 1940’s (and also called “the arduous march”), imagining a seemingly hostile natural world as a force to be militarily overcome, the environment has been conceptualised in a different, more active way. North Korean political ideology now apparently incorporates the natural world, almost in an individualistic sense within the realm of those who offer their support and loyalty to the governing sources of power within the country, namely the Kim dynasty.

The Environmental as Presentational Legitimator/De-Legitimator

Internalising North Korea’s conception of “Green” - Regime Legitimacy and the Death of Kim Jong Il

The environmental has entered our age in North Korea as an element and function of regime legitimacy and plays an important role in the legitimative/presentational process for the regime. Perhaps the first example of this can be seen not long after the famine period ended and in the midst of many connections with foreign environmental institutions, in the forestry management sector. There had been a National Tree Planting Day for many years in North Korea, April 6th, ostensibly commemorating the visit of Kim Il Sung in 1947 to Munsu Hill. This visit formed the foundational event within the Forestry Sector and is recounted in the text “Let Us Launch a Vigorous Tree Planting Movement Involving All the Masses”. However in 1999, and in true North Korean style without reference to the change, National Tree Planting Day became March 2nd. This new date was recounted as commemorating an earlier event, on March 2nd 1946 when Kim Il Sung climbed Mt Moran (on the outskirts of Pyongyang), with both Kim Jong Il and Kim Jong Suk. The reader will perhaps note that at this point in 1946 the hill climbing Kim Jong Il would have been 4 or 5 years old. In this way the institution of the National Tree Planting Day and the Forestry Sector for which it serves as the annual ceremonial connection around which popular events and other projects within the sector are organised is connected with the developing themes of environmental awareness, as well as serving to extend the grounds of both the legitimacy of the regime and of North Korea more generally. It does this through incorporating an environmentally focused act within an “on the spot guidance” visit, and within the context of North Korea’s holy trinity of Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il and

Kim Jong Suk (Kim Jong Il's mother and anti-Japanese heroine in North Korea). It is a powerful image for North Korea, and indigenous readers would understand it as such.

Recently during the mourning period following Kim Jong Il's death (itself an intense period of performance and political theatre), and including the accession of Kim Jong Un, there were many similar examples of the environmental being utilised in order to underline the legitimacy or superiority of the nation and of the regime. North Korea news agency, KCNA reported many at the times, such as an inscription on Mt Paekdu, a sacred mountain for Koreans, glowing red ("Kim Jong Il's autographic writings "Mt. Paektu, holy mountain of revolution. Kim Jong Il." carved on the mountain, in particular, were bright with glow. This phenomenon lasted till 5:00 pm.", KCNA (2011)), the ice on the lake at the top of the mountain, Lake Chon cracking despite freezing temperatures and even birds supposedly adopting postures of reverence or mourning. Such events and reports serve as a form of demonstrative theatrics, connecting the legitimacy of the regime, representing as it does the manifestation of the Korean nation's most positive elements, with the realm of the active environmental and doing so through the connection of the nation as constructed and participated in within the human realm, with the natural world, allowing the environmental to form part of the meta-physical construction of Korean nationhood.

Externalising North Korea's conception of "Green" – North Korea as Successful Environmental Actor vs the USA/South Korea/Japan as Environmental Fiends

We have examined the use of the environment as a performative tool for the legitimation of both regime and nation, serving, internally quite an important role within the perception created by the institutions of government that its citizenry are expected to adopt. It follows therefore that if such a use of the environment, in a "green" sense can be a positive factor in legitimating either the regime or the nation itself, it must be possible to utilise such a narrative in the external realm.

It appears that North Korea has already incorporated such legitimated practice into its external relations with both non-governmental actors and with foreign sovereign governments. Since the year 2000 for example North Korea has marked, World Environment Day has instituted a "biodiversity day" from 2001 and connecting this with the "International Day of Biodiversity". Since 2011 North Korea will also mark annually "International Swamp Day" and has even established an "Environmental Protection Fund" in 2005. It has reorganised its internal legal frameworks surrounding usage of land and the protection of the environment. North Korea utilises its commitment to all of these trans-national days, as well as its new systems of environmental law in order to leverage up its role within regional diplomatic initiatives that focus upon the environment. Within this regional context North Korea now seeks to develop relationships with its near neighbours focusing on conservation and the environment in order to support wider regional sustainability of agricultural production and environmental management. North Korea is part of the "Greater Tumen Initiative", a project shared between Russia, Mongolia, the PRC and North Korea to reduce water pollution, habitat loss and reductions in biodiversity in the areas surrounding the Tumen river, as well as wider issues of biodiversity and is part of the North East Asian Forest Forum, which exists to promote and develop strategies for forest restoration in the region. Ultimately it uses these regional and local collaborations and relationships based on environmental issues to not only increase the level of authority proffered by such relationships within its internal context, among its own population, but also to function as a contrast between it and nations which are not perceived as being so environmentally sound or engaged, namely, the USA, Japan and the ROK.

North Korea within its diplomatic and "propaganda" narratives is something of a "past master" when it comes to the utilisation of de-legitimative practice/performance strategies. If one examines the output for example of its information/propaganda ministries or from its art studios one will be aware of the image presentation of American's in particular within North Korean cultural narratives

(at least those created by institutions of government), has been deliberately highly negative over the years. Americans are presented as physically degraded and ugly in most visual presentations, symbolic of their perceived moral and ideological degradation and decadence (Brian Myers, 2011 book "The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans see Themselves - and why it Matters", is a vital text for this theme), and are contrasted with clean, tall, attractive and young Koreans as much as possible. North Korea often contrasts within its news media and press releases its apparent goal as it sees it of an international paradigm of self determined, independent and self-reliant nations with what it sees as the United States and other western nations' goal of imperialist, exploitative action against weak, disempowered nations whose sovereignty is constantly called into question. Along with this, North Korea regularly through its news agency KCNA and within its localised and indigenous presentational narrative, attributes social or economic misfortune (such as the credit crunch and economic downturn, or the recent riots in the United Kingdom), to what it perceives as the decadence and de-legitimate nature of ideological formulations of those nations. It has recently started to include environmental issues within this de-legitimative narrative. The Tsunami and Fukushima disaster in Japan last year for example was utilised by the KCNA as a narrative tool to demonstrate the apparent weakness of the Japanese government as well as its economic and ideological model. The United States is also a target of this de-legitimative strategy, its approach to managing the chemical aftermath of the Korean War is heavily critiqued, as its strategy towards climate change negotiation, the functioning of institutions such as the Kyoto protocol and the world wide environmental impact of both the United States itself and its diplomatic and strategic priorities.

Environmentally Sourced Legitimation/De-Legitimation as Presentational Narrative Strategy?

Within this paper/presentation I hope I have first given a clear account of the development of policies focused towards the environment during the cold war period within North Korea, and perhaps demonstrated how these policies and the ideological/philosophical conceptions and construct behind them have been subject to change and transformation dependant on external factors, such as the diplomatic, military or political situation in which North Korea found itself at the time. How North Korea consistently operated within a paradigm of reflexivity and pragmatism regarding its actions within the environmental field during this period. I hope I have also made it clear how North Korea has continued to utilise a pragmatic strategy during more recent history, and how it incorporated the environmental ideas and strategies of the institutional actors it engaged with for the first time during the famine period of 1992 to 1997, such as NGO's and departments of the United Nations, which were sourced from ultimately the environmental or "green" movement. North Korea has incorporated such theory, strategy and approach in its own inimitable way, one which we may not immediately recognise as "green" or environmentally focused at all. Just as it is difficult, if not nigh on impossible to assess the sincerity of any element of action, strategy or theory that derives from North Korea, it is perhaps impossible to determine whether North Korea has really undergone an ideological or policy transfer to a "green" or environmental paradigm. However the fact of the incorporation of apparently "green" or environmental terminology and practice/performance within not only the institutional management of some of North Korea's priority areas such as energy production or industrial development, but also within North Korea's presentational framework and both its internal and external legitimative/de-legitimative narratives and other presentational strategies perhaps suggests something that in North Korean terms is more important. That the environmental has been harnessed by the ideological and institutional framework of North Korea and now both forms part of and contributes to the wider realm of performative practice within its extensive and all encapsulating meta-physical meta-narrative of nationalistic superiority and destiny. The Environmental will make its contribution to the creation, sustainment and performance of the "strong and prosperous nation".

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