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Pillars of Power: An Anthropological Examination of Social Control in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

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Abstract

The goal of this thesis is to examine how the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea uses social control to enforce its will over its people. This examination will be based around social control mechanisms used in three separate areas of society. I referred to these three areas of social control as pillars of power. The first pillar of power is control over the economy and distribution of resources. The second pillar is control and influence over culture and the flow of information. The third pillar of power is the monopoly of force, both the ability to use physical violence and legitimize violence. To illustrate these pillars of power this report will rely on already established theories of anthropologists such as F.G. Bailey, Marvin Harris and James C. Scott. This thesis will also rely on content analysis of the written memoirs, testimony and lectures given by North Koreans who have escaped the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This thesis will also rely on content analysis of North Korean propaganda and media. Through the use of existing theory combined with content analysis of the accounts of everyday North Korean citizens this thesis will demonstrate how the three pillars of power work together to create a platform of power for the regime and what happens when

those pillars of power begin to fall. This thesis will also examine the current situation within the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the prospects for reunification with the Republic of Korea. This Thesis will prove that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has relied on control of these three pillars of power and that the regime's current tenuous situation and instability can be traced to its full or partial loss of one or more of these pillars of power.

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Introduction

Examining the topic of what I have conceptualized as the pillars of power upon which a state bases its legitimacy requires a number of theoretical paradigms to be utilized. The works of anthropologists such as Marvin Harris, Marcel Mauss, F.G. Bailey, Victor Turner, James C. Scott, Benedict Anderson and Max Weber have been examined with consideration to game theory, cultural materialism, anthropological Marxism, structural functionalism and state monopoly on force in order to prepare a foundation for further examination of the three pillars of power and how these pillars are used in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

These three methods of social control and manipulation are essential to the survival of the state. The best way I have found to visualize this relationship is to imagine a person sitting on a three legged stool. The person represents the state and each leg of the stool represents a method of control used by the state. When all three legs are intact, the state is able to sit on the stool quite easily, or maintaining legitimacy and control of the population is easier. If a leg is lost, this becomes more difficult, in terms of balance, but may still be manageable. However, if two of legs of the stool are lost, then maintaining power becomes difficult and the whole regime becomes unstable. In the broadest terms, the three legs or pillars of power that all states rely on are as follows: economic and resource control, control and manipulation of information and culture, and the monopoly of violence as described by Max Weber. By examining the relationship between these three pillars of state control, we can acquire greater understanding of how the state functions and maintains itself, while inherently being made up of a body of

millions of individuals.

I therefore hypothesize that state level societies rely on maintaining control of three key aspects of their society, number one being the control of the economy and the resources of a state. The best way to examine social control within the format of these three pillars is utilizing existing political anthropological theory as a basis for support of this format. Examination of the first pillar of power will utilize cultural materialism as outlined by Marvin Harris as well as the systems of reciprocity and patronage established by Marcel Mauss's work on gift giving. The second pillar of power will use F.G. Bailey's work on game theory and political arenas which will be vital to explaining how the state control of information helps to legitimize power. The third pillar is what sociologist Max Weber referred to as the *Monopoly on Force*. This individual theory is well established and focuses on the state's ability to utilize and legitimize force and violence. It is important to look at the monopoly of violence. However it is far more important to understand how the monopoly of violence acts in concert with the control of economics and control of information to create an effective base or foundation.

Additionally, as focus must be given to the historical context, it is only by understanding the state's history, as well as the history of the state's different ethnic groups that one can fully understand how systems of control are instituted and effectively used by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is imperative to effectively understand the historical context of a state, as one cannot make accurate comparisons and inferences to the nature of control in state level societies without the historical background.

To accurately examine methods of social control and the mechanisms used by the

state for maintaining social control, a case study is needed. For the purpose of this paper, the case study and primary example used is the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea (DPRK). It may also be referred to, in shortened form, as North Korea. For the purpose of this paper I will use the term DPRK with "North Korean" only used when referring to the people of the DPRK.

The DPRK provides an excellent example for examining social control mechanisms for several reasons. First and foremost is the level of direct control exercised by the DPRK on its population. This direct control provides a straightforward example for analysis and provides mechanisms of social control that are readily identified. Additionally, at the time of this writing, the DPRK continues to be a state of considerable importance in international affairs, often resulting in instability and tension in global events. It is therefore the intent of this paper to provide further insight into the working of this state. Examining what I am referring to as the the three pillars of power and viewing them through the lens of the DPRK will assist in providing understanding for behaviors of regimes which seem outside of the norm for state behaviors and identifying how states can move towards an environment that deviates from that which would be perceived as a successful environment and state.

It necessary to examine how economic distribution and political economy have played a significant role in shaping the regime's capacity for control. In examining this it will be necessary to include Marcel Mauss's work on gift giving and Marvin Harris's work on cultural materialism. This examination will also rely on available accounts from average North Korean citizens on the economic exchange in the DPRK.

Secondly, this paper will examine the use of media and the control of the flow of

information into North Korea. The regime's use and modification of traditional Korean culture to suit the political whims and goals of the Kim regime will also be examined. This will be done with the use of F.G. Bailey's Game theory as well as examining regime propaganda and its similarity to traditional Korean myths and history.

The third point that will be presented is the state monopoly on violence. This is not just about having control over a military force, but also includes the ability to legitimize violence. The concept of the monopoly of violence was first articulated by sociologist Max Weber. This paper will examine how the use of the monopoly of violence can vary and how, depending on the situation, the use of violent authority can achieve the desired outcome, or result in unforeseen consequences.

Finally, this is paper will examine how these three pillars work in concert to assist a state in maintaining legitimacy and control over its population. Additional information will be provided as to how control can waiver as a state loses different structures of control. For this section of the paper, the primary focus will be on North Korea as a case study for state level social control. The goal of this work is to establish a clear understanding of structures and concepts at work within the DPRK to ensure state control.

State level societies are large social structures that can encompass a single cultural group or multiple cultural groups of different sizes. The creation of these structures has by no means taken a single process. All state level societies are centralized political entities controlled through bureaucracy with the authority to use force as a means of maintaining power. While each state is different and must be understood within the context of the culture or cultures that created it, all state level societies share some

common mechanisms. Institutions that serve the function of maintaining legitimacy and the state in the eyes of the populace therefore maintain a level of control over their populations. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been chosen for the case study for this thesis because it provides a clearer example of each of these structures due to the regime's control of all official aspects of North Korean society.

Chapter 1 -Review of Relevant Material

Politics has been a subject of interest within anthropology since the discipline's inception. Even the earliest works of anthropologists, such as Lewis H. Morgan and Sir Henry Maine, could be argued to have political tendencies as they attempted to create a continuum and trace the evolution of human society from the '*primitive'* or '*savage*' to the modern state level society. Although these early writings were heavily ensconced with ethnocentrism and a sense of colonial superiority, they nevertheless contributed to clarifying information related to human society. Political systems and governance are a part of any human society. The focus of this thesis is on the state level society of the DPRK. This chapter focuses on examining the anthropological theories that contribute to understanding state level societies. However, earlier theories and political anthropology that relate to tribal or non-state level societies remain essential to this examination as quite often they will form the basis for theoretical paradigms used to examine state level societies.

The first pillar of political power within the state level society is economic stability and control, or influence. Economic anthropological theory is of paramount importance to political anthropology. The ability to influence or directly control the distribution of resources among a community of people can bring enormous political power. One of the most important theories with regard to economic anthropology is that of cultural materialism theorized by Marvin Harris.

Cultural materialism was first described by Marvin Harris in *The Rise of Anthropological Theory*. Harris argued that there were three components to cultural materialism, the first being the infrastructure followed by the structure and the third being the superstructure. The infrastructure refers to the key elements of society, the basic requirements that are needed to keep society together. The infrastructure refers to society's basic needs for survival such as food production and shelter. The structure refers to how society chooses to organize itself, such as systems of kinship, government, and methods of exchange. Finally, the superstructure is what we might call high culture, the arts, religion, recreation and stylistic architecture. (Harris 2001:53). Harris characterizes the infrastructure, structure and superstructure as components of the building. With the infrastructure providing the base and core for society, the structure providing in its general shape and organization and the superstructure being the final finishing touch that gives the building great distinction.

These concepts of cultural materialism are of particular importance in Harris's study of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. As a country with a similar economic system as well a tight control on communication and culture, the Soviet Union is a case study with many similar structural institutions as the DPRK. In a 1992 lecture Harris' described the basic failure of Soviet infrastructure to provide Soviet citizens with basic resources such as food, clothing and energy (Harris 1992:298). While the focus of Harris analysis is on the economic and cultural materialist perspective for the collapse, he acknowledges that the collapse of the Soviet Union was not simply due to the collapse of the infrastructure and that other factors did contribute to dissolution of the Soviet Union (Harris 1992: 300).

The exchange of gifts, goods or of services is an important part of political economy. These transactions not only involve exchanging of physical objects between two parties but can also represent an exchange of obligation or prestige between two parties. Anthropologist Marcel Mauss contended that all gift exchanges are in fact given with the expectation of reciprocation of the gift in one form or another in his 1925 short publication entitled *Forme et Raison de L'échange dans les Sociétés Archaïques or An Essay on the Gift: the Form and Reason of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Mauss argued that all societies from the most complex to the most basic contained some form of market exchange and that market exchange was a phenomenon known to every human society (Mauss 1967: 2). "This work is part of the wider research carried out by Davey and myself upon archaic forms of contract, so we may start by summarizing what we have found so far. It appears that there has never existed, either in the past or in modern primitive societies, anything like a 'natural' economy. German economists have invented the term Naturalwirtschaft, natural economy, to describe the period prior to the invention of money. "(Pirenne 1936: 103). One of the important distinctions noted by Mauss in the system of economic exchange is that when speaking of the natural economy existing he was not referring to how individuals conducted business between one another, but rather how groups conducted business between each other. "For it is groups and not individuals, which carry on exchange, make contracts, and are bound by obligations; the persons represented in the contracts are moral persons – clans, tribes, and families: the groups, or chiefs as intermediaries for the groups, confront and oppose each other." (Mauss 1967: 2). Within a state level society this approach to gift giving helps to reinforce the idea of the group over the individual and reinforce social norms. Within the DPRK gift giving

acts in a similar fashion, acting as a kind of second economy outside the state distribution system. Providing a legal way for individual citizens to gain power and clout economically and politically.

Another theory of great importance within political anthropology is that of F.G. Bailey's '*game theory'*. This theory was initially expounded in F.G. Bailey's 1969 book, Stratagems and Spoils. Game theory takes the approach that all political processes are governed by a set of rules and that all political combatants are obliged to follow these rules. These rules may be conscious, or subconscious, with political combatants not even aware that they are following the rules. Game theory divides these rules into two separate categories, normative rules and pragmatic rules. (Bailey 2004: 15)

Normative rules consist of conscious rules of which all political combatants are aware, or publicly profess. (Bailey 2004: 22) Within North Korea, the normative rules, or codes of conduct can be seen in professing devotion to the Kim family, shunning the trappings of capitalism and personal wealth, and professing a desire for self-reliance under the Juche philosophy.

The pragmatic rules are not formalized rules and are not publicly attested to by the political combatants. Nevertheless, these unspoken rules are important and play into any political fight for power. In many ways, the pragmatic rules are far more important to gaining political power than the normative rules (Bailey 2004: 14) Within the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we can often see this through maintaining correct personal relationships, or even in how central party leadership has been purged by Kim Jong-Un since taking over power from his father. Though the officials may have proven their loyalty to his father and the party as a whole, they do not owe their position within the

regime to Kim Jong-Un directly, and therefore purging them and replacing them with new officials who will owe their assent to him is an example of a pragmatic rule.

An additional component of Bailey's game theory is its focus on the different types of political and power-based coalitions that can develop. Bailey refers to these as political teams. Political teams can be divided into two basic arenas, contract teams and moral teams.

Contract teams are, as the name indicates, united by a common interest, or mutual benefit, and involved in contractually established relationships. These coalitions are derived from common goals among their members. While these can be powerful coalitions, they may not last once the members have achieved their individual political objectives (Bailey 2004: 28).

Moral teams are comprised of individuals that derive unity from shared identity, such as a shared ethnic, ideological, or religious identity. These teams tend to have loyalty instilled in them, as they are united by something more concrete than mutual benefit. While these different teams may refer to two entirely different makeups, there can be a mixture of both contract team members and moral team members in the same political camp. People may be drawn to a leader as a moral team member, whereas others could be drawn to that leader as a contract team member (Bailey 2004: 28).

Another aspect of game theory alluded to by the Manchester school of anthropology and anthropologist Max Glickman, is the idea of '*maximization of power*', particularly through the idea of the economic man and the political man. This idea was emphasized by Victor Turner in his 1957 work, *Schism and Continuity in African Society*.

This work established the idea that there are different spheres of power and that one will not necessarily bring the same benefit(s) as the other. The economic man monopolizes economic power resources, distribution of resources and control of people or influence over people through an amassing of economic power. By contrast, the political man emphasizes power interpersonal relationships and charisma. The political man does not seek to monopolize or gain further control over resources but rather looks to utilize his own charismatic power to gain influence over individuals and use those personal networks as a means of establishing his power. The concept of the political arena appears when you have two or more of these actors competing in the same society for the same power (Turner 1996: 290,320). For example, if two or more political men are attempting to gain power over the same society, they would create a political arena. Many of these theories came from Turner's work in Rhodesia, among the Ndembu.

One of the most important anthropological contributions to the study of state level societies comes from anthropologist James C. Scott and his 1985 work *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Many of Scott's initial ideas about oppression and colonialism have been compared to early 20th century philosopher Antonio Gramsci. In particular, Scott's ideas on hegemony have been a contentious point of comparison. Scott has resisted this comparison, stating that in his work, looking at cultural hegemony, he has never indicated that subordinate groups consent to rule by a hegemonic group. Much of Scott's work was conducted in peasant villages in Malaysia, particularly looking at post-colonial society. During his fieldwork there he examined the different ways that peasant groups actively attempt to resist the hegemonic power structure, the state. In his work *Weapons of the Weak*, Scott examines how communities

of peasants operate outside the dominant post-colonial, state level system. In particular, he notes that the peasants, in general, prefer a patron-client relationship of wealthier peasants assisting in redistributing wealth to the less fortunate peasants, rather than the official originations and welfare structures established by the state (Scott 1989: 34).

Given the black market system that has taken over much of commerce in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, one can readily draw comparisons to this observation by Scott. Another of Scott's influential works is his 1998 work *Seeing like a State*. In this book, Scott examines several key instances of state mandated programs, or actions which have been undertaken for the benefit of society. The work reflects on how these endeavors have failed to achieve their stated goals.

Scott's work on peasant resistance has been criticized for being applied too broadly. Indeed, one can contend that all peasant populations, or any social class population, does not behave exactly the same. That however does not diminish the behavioral observations made by Scott, nor does it remove the applicability drawn from comparative inferences to other cultures. While one should always incorporate the individual history and cultural traits into any anthropological work before making a comparative inference to another culture, it does not mean that comparative inference is of no value. Scott's work on peasant resistance assists in providing a basis for anthropological understanding of resistance and deviance related to groups within state level societies, and goes deeper than Max Weber's idea of the state monopoly on force.

Much of Scott's work, in particular his focus on the Malaysian peasants, does have some similarities with the Manchester School of anthropology. The similarities rest within the idea of a case study and the fact that a case study can be applied to other

cultures. Much of the development of the Manchester School of anthropology can be credited to Max Gluckman, a British social anthropologist. The concept of case studies came from Gluckman's early training as a lawyer. While the Manchester School of anthropology reflected many of the problems which British social anthropology has been criticized for, such as its tendency to exclude historical context, the use of detailed analysis of social interaction, as well as the idea of making cross-cultural inferences were and remain a positive paradigm for anthropology and political anthropology. Much of the work conducted by the Manchester School of anthropology tended to center around conflict resolution and smaller societies' class conflicts, as well as conflicts between an individual and a larger social structure, such as the state.

Benedict Anderson's 1982 publication *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* is one of the most important works in anthropologically understanding the modern nation state. While many nation states are formed along ethnic lines based on traceable cultural communities, just as many are artificially created entities which have either been shaped by chance or outside forces. The modern nation state of India is actually a compilation of many ethnic groups and formerly independent political entities which were amalgamated into a single governance by British colonialism (Anderson 1983: 36). Additionally, this artificiality occurs when one nation state absorbs portions of another ethnic group into its political sphere of influence. This example is particularly valid with regard to the border between the DPRK and the People's Republic of China, as much of the northwestern region of China, along the North Korean border, is ethnically Korean. This work also examines the importance

of artificially created state cultures which is of obvious importance when examining the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the cult of Kim.

The Marxist approach to political anthropology focused on the work of authors such as Morton Fried. As with most Marxist theory, much of Marxian political anthropology focuses on the imbalance of power and the oppression of the masses by the bourgeoisie. Essentially, power is held by a few key players and is enforced upon the disenfranchised masses without power and multiple mechanisms of control are used keep the powerless in check. While the centralization of power and a gap in power between the masses and the bourgeoisie is certainly important, Marxists tend to overemphasize the importance of this and tend to underplay the power held by the masses. This is one of the key criticisms that Scott uses in his work in Malaysia and while the Marxist perspective is certainly an important part of political anthropology, Scott's critique is a valid one.

In Weber's well known 1918 speech, *Politics As a Vocation (1919)*, Weber outlines perhaps one of the most blunt, but important factors in any state level society's powerbase: the monopoly on force. Very often, we tend to focus on the violence aspect of this monopoly. However Weber's theory goes into deeper concepts such as the law, criminal courts, and the penal systems which also represent the state's monopoly on force. The state not only has the ability to utilize violent force for its benefit, it also can sit in judgment of when force committed by its citizens is justifiable, or when it is unjustifiable, and then can remove citizen's rights and punish them for the perceived infraction. (Weber: 1919).

When studying the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it is important to have a firm grasp of the anthropology of religion. While the standard anthropological

definition of religion would not qualify the personality cult created by the state around Kim Il-sung and his family as a religion, it bears many of the traits seen anthropologically in diverse religions.

Chapter 2 - Distribution of Resources and the Economic Pillar of Power

A group of humans ensures that our economic abilities are amplified and the amount of resources we can assemble are far more significant than that which can be accomplished by a single individual. We can apply the 'group' approach to nearly any endeavor, be it commodities such as grain and meat or more complex initiatives such as airplanes and string theory. By organizing and coordinating our efforts, the effect of this can be observed in small band level groups and massive state level societies which encompass hundreds of millions of people. From the time of the first city state the allocation of resources has been a question of paramount importance. Means of exchange and an economy have always existed within human culture and have been critical to relations and stability within and between cultures (Mauss 1967: 2). By extension within a state level society when the means of exchange is more formalized, this becomes an opportunity for the state to control to it.

The greatest stabilizer for a state entity is a robust, thriving economy and a high standard of living. Nowhere is this made clearer than in the Democratic People's Republic of North Korea. While people's desires are certainly not limited to the simple fulfillment of needs, human history shows that economic disparity and lack of resources are an impediment to the functioning of society. Therefore, one could accurately assert that economics and standard of living are good indicators of the health of a state, or lack thereof. Perhaps one of the most important geopolitical events of the 20th century was the collapse of the Soviet Union. While many have offered their own explanations for the collapse of the Soviet Union, Marvin Harris claims that its collapse came about due to the

collapse of the cultural materialistic structure within the country. Harris's explanation is that the Communist regime in the Soviet Union fell from power due to its failure to adapt to new circumstances and the economic expectations of its people. The state was no longer able to effectively distribute resources in the amount and level which people expected. Therefore the people lost faith in the ability of the regime to govern (Harris 1992: 299).

Means of exchange are of particular importance to any anthropological study of a society. The means of exchange and economy can display many characteristics of the society as a whole. This is in particular supported by Marvin Harris's cultural materialism research approach with regard to the principles of structure, and superstructure. Each of these aspects represent a layer of the culture with the infrastructure being the layer of culture which is focused on how society interacts with its environment, the structure focused on how society organizes itself, and the superstructure how society interacts with its self and other societies through concepts such as philosophy, morality and art. The objective of the cultural materialistic research strategy is to find causal relationships. With an understanding of the economic relationships that function within the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, it is possible to see how Harris's cultural materialistic approach is applicable to the North Korean case study. For example throughout most of the history of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea a distribution based rationing system was used and all industrial activities, as well as all commerce, were controlled directly by the state. Within Harris's approach the state would essentially have complete control over the infrastructure of society (Harris 2001: 53). Additionally, through its control of the government, the legal system, the means of commerce through the issuance

of ration coupons, and the printing and distribution of money, the North Korean state had nearly total control over the superstructure of the society.

Of additional importance within society, especially within the political economy which would fall into Harris's superstructure is the importance of reciprocal gift giving within the DPRK. Marcel Mauss's work *The Gift (1925)* provides an excellent insight into the role which gift giving and exchange plays within a society. Mauss states that all gifts are given in the expectation of some level of "reciprocity." “The gift not yet repaid debases the man who accepted it, particularly if he did so without thought of return... Charity wounds him who receives, and our whole moral effort is directed toward suppressing the unconscious harmful patronage of the rich almoner."(Mauss 1967: 63). In Mauss's viewpoint, the act of giving a gift is less an act of altruistic desire and more a patron and client exchange. This can be within the context of a relationship between two individuals, two kin groups, or even between the state and its citizens. Mauss uses the example of state socialism in the French Republic to illustrate his point, contending that within the context of social insurance it represents a patron client relationship in which the community owes part of the fruits of their labor to the state, and in return the state owes the individual and the community insurance for sickness, unemployment and old-age(Mauss 1969: 65).

This example has excellent parallels within the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Until the 1990s the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had a distribution based economic system. In the system workers owed the state their loyalty and labor and in return the state provided them with rations for food and clothing and other necessities based on the type of labor they performed. Additionally workers were given a salary.

However, the salary amounted to more of an allowance as the basic necessities were provided by the state through rationing coupons.

Gifts to the Eternal President Kim Il Sung or the Dear Leader, Kim Jong Il or Kim Jong Un can be a symbol of great status and translate to a level of practical clout within society. Members of North Korean society who have given such gifts tend to be given more lenient treatment for minor infractions against rules and laws. This can include lighter sentences or receiving no punishment at all. However, even gift giving has limits within a restricted society. Gift giving has its roots in the reciprocal relationship between the gift giver and the gift receiver (Mauss 1969: 65).

Additionally public displays of patriotism or past service in war against Japan, the United Nations or South Korea, as well as other noticeable services to the state, could be rewarded with more political clout and privileges. "To thank 'patriotic families' like ours, Kim Il-Sung had nonetheless, granted them certain privileges. For my grandparents the favor came in the form of a particularly fine house. The Great leader also sent them gifts from time to time. These might have been bottles of taepyeung sil, a very expensive rice sprit which most people can't afford, or else sweets or cakes. The special favors my grandparents enjoyed were also explained - or perhaps particularly explained - by the fact that one of my great-uncles, who runs a major company in Japan, had been very generous towards the Popular Democratic Republic of Korea in the seventies." (Kang 2005:28).

The gift givers offer their displays of patriotism, overseas connections and fundraising abilities to the central government and in exchange, the central government will reward such loyalty and service to the state with privileges and expensive gifts. This is a win- win for the state structure as it first receives the gifts which may be as simple as

extra work or displays of loyalty, or more substantial, such as connections to wealthy foreigners and sources of investment.

The second benefit is that it reinforces the economic benevolence of the state and encourages other citizens to follow the example set forth by the gift givers. The gift givers likewise can receive a level of privilege and status and certain items such as radios or televisions which can give them prestige within a community. This is particularly true of items such as televisions as they are very rare and hard to obtain within the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "My great-aunts had also brought a color television from Japan. This meant that we were incredibly lucky, since on average, only one family in ten had a television, and almost all of them were black and white. From that point onwards, the whole village came to watch television at our house. About thirty people would pile into my grandparents' house almost every evening, with children at the front and grown-ups at the back; and at least as many poked their heads through the windows to be sure they didn't miss any of the spectacle" (Kang 2005: 42).

Political patronage in the form of gift giving in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is an important pragmatic rule. The ability to bring resources to the government or a political official in return for rewards is one of a few ways to gain influence and prestige in a society with an otherwise rigidly controlled economy. Until recently gift giving represented a way to earn resources and gain influence outside of the systems set in place by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

While many believe the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to be a communist nation, this is in fact an incorrect perception. The DPRK's official state ideology is Juche. There is, however, one area where the DPRK is not significantly

different from the Communists and that is in regard to the approach to distribution of resources, as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a planned socialist economy. When discussing state level societies, it is important to contrast their economic systems in order to reveal the focus and ideology of the government and also how stable the country will be economically.

Much of the twentieth century was defined by the struggle between capitalist market-based economic nations such as the United States and its Western European allies and the communist planned economies such as the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, and the Eastern European Nations. History has shown that a planned economic system is less efficient than a capitalist market system, which focuses on the distribution of goods and services and predicting the needs and desires of its people. However, the planned economy also carries with it a number of non-economic advantages as compared to the market-based economy. By contrasting these two approaches, one can see the advantages to the DPRK using a planned economy.(Martin-Lipset, Bence 1980 & 1994).

The planned economy that was used by the DPRK paid its workers a salary. The wages were actually quite low in comparison to workers in capitalist economies who held the same position. The government provided a set of rations as part of their overall compensation. This did not just include food, but also included clothing and other necessities which were issued at designated rationing stations. The added advantage to a controlled market is that wages and prices are set by the government, thus allowing the economy to be regulated and shaped by the state to suit its social engineering objectives.

In a capitalist market system, market forces, such as supply and demand, generally determine prices, wages, and production levels. An excellent way to demonstrate the differences between a market driven economy and a planned economy is to view the way rations are allocated within the DPRK. Rations were much higher for blue collar laborers such as miners or factory workers when compared with white collar workers. The theory was that the white collar workers expended less energy and thus did not require as many food rations. Higher pay was given to workers with more dangerous positions (Kang 2005: 21) By using this system, the government of the DPRK created a desire within the population to gravitate towards labor and the army over college and white collar work. "Most of us, from a very young age, had no desire to go to university. The collective ideal was entirely directed towards the army and defense of the country against the imperialist puppet aggressor"(Kang 2005: 53).

The controlled economic system also differs from the market driven system by setting quotas which were required to be met by workers rather than market-based demand driving production. Shortages in quotas could often result in extra work to close the gap:

> "Kim Il Sung sometimes issued instructions called 'battle orders'. When he did this my father was paid double his salary: two hundred and twenty won. The requirement was that the whole mine had to speed up production for two hundred days in a row. This was men's work! So, a number of times, my father spent a month or even two in the mine without ever coming out. He had to do twice as much work as usual, and sleep in the dormitories set up in the galleys. No one left the mines until the quota of extracted coal had been fulfilled. When, father finally did emerge, dirty and tired, his eyes could no longer bear the light of the day. After one particular 'battle order', the chief overseer told him to take ten days rest. But my father refused, accepting a break of only forty-eight hours." (Kang 2005:32).

Another benefit of the controlled market system is that it helps to instill a collective sense of loyalty to the system, as a controlled socialist economy by its very definition follows a collectivist philosophy. By contrast, a market based economy does not require the same allegiance and can be collectivist or individualist in nature. It also relies on a profit motive rather than meeting a set production quota which makes participation in the market an individualist endeavor rather than a collective effort.

The primary problem with a controlled market system is that it is not effective in the long term. This was not only the problem faced by North Korea, but also by the Soviet Union. Government planners could never accurately predict consumption needs and shortages were a common phenomenon. In the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, these shortage and problems with production proved to be minor for the survival of the state in the period from 1951 to the 1990's. During this period North Korea relied on aid from the Soviet Union. This actually led to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea having a higher standard of living than its counterpart in the south, the Republic of Korea. This economic inequity, in spite of a controlled economic system, worked in North Korea's favor for many years. The problem was so marked that it was not until the 1980's that South Korean troops were allowed on the border. Prior to that time, there were concerns of defections to the North. The fall of the Soviet Union changed this. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea experienced a sudden drop in economic stability and descended into one of the worst economic downfalls in history.

One of the results of this economic downfall was a famine that started in the early 1990's just after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a period which is known as the Arduous March by North Koreans. While the lack of Soviet aid in the form of both cash

and commodities entering into the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by itself would have been devastating for the North Korean economy, it may not have had as devastating an impact had it not been for the famine, which lasted from 1994 to 1998 and is estimated to have killed over 2 million people (Daniel, Loraine & Peter 2011). The famine virtually destroyed the first pillar of the state's level of control as the control of the economy had completely collapsed. In a socialist economic system, especially one as strict as the North Korean system, the state control of the economy is paramount to the state's maintaining legitimacy. North Korea practiced economic rationing for nearly all provisions, including food and clothing. North Koreans were typically allowed two new uniforms each year and food was rationed on a weekly basis from a ration book. During the Arduous March the North Korean economy had systematically shut down. As Victor Cha describes in *The Impossible State* (2013), the shutdown was almost like a body experiencing hypothermia. Critical systems were prioritized for dwindling resources and less critical ones were denied resources. Popular propaganda campaigns encouraged Koreans "Let's eat two meals a day". The Korean news channel ran a special program to support this campaign, on a man who ate too much causing his intestines to explode. Eventually, the signs of the failing economy became more obvious to North Koreans as factories and other work places sporadically stopped functioning, before eventually closing down completely. All North Koreans, except for a very select number among the upper echelon, had to try to find ways to make money in North Korea's fledgling black market. The quest for sustenance and economic survival was beginning to overpower the people's allegiance to the party and the carefully manufactured culture of North Korea.

The rise of the black market is a critical causal change in the infrastructure as well as the structure of the North Korean state system. As described earlier within Marvin Harris's cultural materialist theoretical approach, the infrastructure encompasses the means of production and the structure would encompass the systems of exchange. Before the economic collapse both of these sections of the economy had been controlled by the North Korean state completely. However the change in conditions forced North Koreans to adopt a new paradigm rapidly in order to survive, that of a market-based exchange system. To illustrate this, consider the example provided by Barbara Demick's in her 2009 work, *Nothing to Envy* which contains personal histories of defectors from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Demick provides an account from a defector, referred to as Mrs. Song, during a period when she held a local part-time post with the Korean Worker's Party in which her duties encompassed looking for and reporting disloyal attitudes among her neighbors:

> "She had no intention of complying. She knew that none of her neighbors were engaged in subversive activities. They weren't enemies of the state and she was simply too tired to worry about ideology. The lack of food had consumed her energy. The clothing factory had stopped operating entirely in 1991 and for the entire last year she had received no money, only food coupons, which were now useless since the public distribution center had no food." (Demick 2009: 71-72).

Eventually Mrs. Song, like many others, was forced to go into business on the black market. During this period, almost everyone was forced to find a means of privately earning money, often using the black market. Mrs. Song managed to earn a living making cookies and marketing them as an inexpensive meal. Opening restaurants was among the more popular methods for North Koreans to earn money. Farmers sold extra food from their personal kitchen gardens as they were able. Some factory workers

and others became adept at breaking into closed factories and scavenging parts to sell for scrap metal. Some even stripped copper wiring from electrical poles. This was not dangerous, as most cities outside of the capital of Pyongyang no longer received any electricity since fuel was too expensive. However, it was not just farmers and factory workers who were hit hard by the famine and economic collapse. Demick interviewed a North Korean defector in Seoul who had worked as a doctor. She stated that many doctors had begun charging money for simple surgeries, performed most of the time without an anesthetic, and one of the more lucrative ventures had been abortions. With food being scarce and expensive to come by, very few families wanted to have children as they could not afford to feed them, so abortions were a grimly popular way for doctors to make money.

These were some of the ways that people made a living in North Korea during the famine. However, many chose to leave the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for economic opportunities in China and some people traveled through China to South Korea. This migration out of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea created a lucrative high paying opportunity for many to become smugglers. Smuggling, however, presented significant risks because if a person were caught, he or she would very likely face death or be sentenced to a labor camp for leaving North Korea. Smugglers would bring people across the Chinese/North Korean border including both paying customers and sometimes paying female customers, who would be sold as wives to Chinese clients. In addition, heroin was and currently remains a popular black market export. Rice, tea and other food stuffs were among the most common black market imports. However,

items that we might refer to now as luxury goods, such as radios and eventually DVDs and DVD players, began to appear in North Korean black markets.

Suddenly, many North Koreans were exposed to other sources of information. Even though the state's control over the economy had eroded, its control over the flow of information and culture had not been seriously challenged up until this time. Now it had to compete with a growing realization by the public that the party had lied to them about the world outside and their own standard of living. In short, the failure of the North Korean economy led to the creation of the black market which now threatens the DPRK's hold over culture and the flow of information in North Korea. While it has not lost complete control, it is in jeopardy of ultimately losing control. One of Kim Jong Il's more famous policy decisions, giving priority to the Korean People's armed forces in allocating resources, is more commonly known as 'The Army First' or Seon'gun and is understandable as a response to the threat against state control.

One of the key functions of a state is to provide the framework for economic commerce for its citizens. A capitalist market based economy is better able to weather hardship. It is true that such a system can result in greater income disparity and large concentrations of wealth in the hands of a few. However, it is a more stable, long-term approach to maintaining a functional system for people. The controlled market economy creates a sense of collective unity and can help drive further loyalty to the state's authority; it also by its nature concentrates wealth in the hands of the state. The concentration of wealth and responsibility in the hands of the state is also its downfall. More often than not, planned economies are rarely able to anticipate demands and are very seldom able to function long term. Additionally, the lack of planning cannot be

blamed on an errant company or individual or the bad investments of a few. Ultimately when the state has total control of the economy, it will eventually be blamed for the economic misfortunes of a society. It is for this reason that the state must have adequate control of the flow of information; it could be argued that the control of information and the public narrative is the most important survival mechanism a state has.

Chapter 3-

Perception of Control – The State Control of Information and Culture as the Second Pillar of Power.

The world and society in which we live "reflects" a set of perceptions and culturally engrained ideas. While there are universal and natural phenomena which help to shape our cultural ideas about the world, most of our perceptions are shaped by culture and our own life experience. The notion of reality and how the world works is one that is culturally engrained from the time we are young children. And this is a fact of which state level societies are very aware. Culture exists independently of state level governments. Therefore, how a state level society chooses to interact with culture can vary widely.

One such example is the Communist Party of China, which one might consider on some level to be a native group. The Chinese Communist Party is in fact not a native political movement, communism is actually a western political and economic philosophy developed in Germany. Besides the economic ideas of communism which were previously discussed in chapter one, communism seeks to replace existing social traditions with new ones designed to create a new society that would be a better fit to serve the state.

> "The ideas of religious liberty and freedom of conscience merely gave expression to the sway of free competition within the domain of knowledge. 'Undoubtedly,' it will be said, 'religious, moral, philosophical, and judicial ideas have been modified in the course of historical development. But religion, morality, philosophy, political science, and law, constantly survived this change.' 'There are, besides, eternal truths,

> such as Freedom, Justice, etc., that are common to all states of society. But Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience." (Marx & Engels 1848: 26).

The Red Army wasted no time destroying temples and shrines to wipe away the old religions and practices of ancient China. However, the Chinese Communist Party also planned to go even further to remove the Chinese language as well. Early plans by the party had called for removing the Mandarin and Cantonese languages altogether. Many believed that these languages were too ingrained with ancient feudal superstitions and ideas that were counter to the Communist Party's goals. The idea was to use the artificially created language of Esperanto as the new language of China (Zhao 2004: 76). Logistically, the plan likely would not have worked and there was no previous large scale use of Esperanto in China. Mandarin, along with simplified Chinese characters, was adopted instead. This does show the power of the state to exercise efforts to forcefully remove traditions and attempt to replace them.

Such drastic changes will meet with both active and passive resistance from the people. Some people actively defy the regime in protest and others may resist in more subtle ways, such as teaching languages or traditional ideas in secret (Scott 1985: 31). The amount of planning and enforcement of changing cultural traditions makes the approach far riskier and less sustainable, as the government has to attempt to force people to stop using or thinking about concepts and ideas. Although our modern states have an impressive ability, as well as the technology to monitor their populations, enforcement of this type of change is extremely difficult. (Scott 1985: 38).

In North Korea, a more gradual method of cultural reshaping was adopted, one that did not try to destroy traditional Korean culture entirely, but rather changed and adapted it to suit the needs of the new regime in a way that would increase the power of the state. The government set itself to the task of creating a new ideology. The new ideology would focus the people's devotion on the new Democratic People's Republic of Korea and legitimize its ruler, Kim Il-sung, as not just a powerful political leader, but as an immortal demi-god who would rule over the nation.

The concept of legitimacy was one of which both the new regime and its Soviet backers were keenly aware when they set about the difficult task of establishing a new government under Kim Il-sung in the North.

To understand the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, one must understand Juche, the philosophy of Kim Il Sung, the eternal President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Juche as a term can be roughly translated to 'self-reliance'. The ideology has a primary goal of solidifying the people against foreign powers and ideas while at the same time promoting a culture of devotion and loyalty to the state, specifically to the ruling Kim family and its patriarch Kim Il-Sung. Many people today refer to the DPRK as a communist nation. While the DPRK does draw its economic policies from communism, at its core communism is an international political movement that stresses the importance of the party and of the workers of the world uniting. In contrast Juche focuses on North Korea although it does borrow some terminology and facets of Soviet and Maoist style communism.

For example, the official party name is the Korean People's Workers Party. During the Soviet occupation of Korea and the early years of the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea, Kim Il-sung's rhetoric was in line with that of other early satellites of the Soviet Union. Kim Il-sung had been a member of the Korean resistance movement during Japan's period of colonization of Korea. The North Korean accounts identify him as a heroic leader of the resistance, bravely charging machine gun nests and fighting the Japanese day in and day out throughout the war. The reality is somewhat more clouded. He was indeed a member of the resistance and did do a significant amount of fighting against the Japanese. However, much of Kim Il-sung's time during World War II was spent training in Russia, which was under a non-aggression pact with Japan, until the final days of the war in the Pacific. During this time Kim attained the rank of captain in the Soviet Red Army and attended infantry school. It is also known that his son Kim Jong-il was born inside the Soviet Union. During the time Kim Il-sung was in the Red Army, he joined in the Soviet "liberation" of Korea from Japanese occupation. In response, the United States put together its own force to occupy Korea. Thus Korea, like Germany, had become a front line of the Cold War, and a nation divided by the two superpowers (Eckert, Lee, Lew, Robinson and Wagner 1990: 333)

As in most communist countries, capitalism and imperialism were strongly rejected because they were seen as tools of oppression used against the people. When the Soviets installed Kim as the head of the new provisional authority it was more the result of a lack of other options rather than Kim's impressive war record or devotion to the Communist Party. The portion of Korea north of the 38th parallel was not really a significant location for communism.There were very few Communists. In fact, the area had more members of the Christian Korean community. Therefore the Soviets had to establish the party in Korea from the ground up, utilizing Kim Il-sung's revolutionary and

resistance credentials to attract supporters. Additionally, in much the same pattern as other communist nations, secularization was a priority of Kim Il-sung's government. Buddhist temples and Christian churches were burned and clergy were eliminated. This has a particular ironic component to it as Kim Il-sung was raised in a Protestant household.

Many of the writing and propaganda styles in the early years mirrored their Soviet counterparts and the Soviet domination of Kim Il-sung was quite obvious, as stated by Tatiana Gabroussenko's 2010 book, *Soldiers of the Cultural Front*. Early literature in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was geared toward Soviet-Korean cooperation.

> "The first artistic task that Kim Il-sung gave to North Korean writers in 1946 was the production of accolades to Soviet-Korean friendship and eulogies to the Soviet Liberations and the Soviet way of life. North Korean writers quickly responded to this demand by producing pro soviet writings in various genres. An important niche in these tributes was occupied by Ssoryon Kihaenggi, travelogues of the carefully stage-managed trips made by North Korean writers to the Soviet Union in 1946-1955."(Gabroussenko 2010: 20).

This shows the early influence of the Stalinist Soviet Union on North Korea. The lack of an existing Korean Communist Party or Marxist Koreans in great numbers in the North during the early years meant that the Soviets had to establish a Korean communist regime with little to no native support. North Korean analyst, B.R. Myer's 2010 work, *The Cleanest Race*, states that "The peoples party had waited until 1948 to receive its own crash course in Marxism-Leninism and was therefore unable to provide much guidance to writers and artists. Reading out a speech crudely plagiarized from Mao, Kim Il-sung told them to study Marxism and 'communicate with the masses in words they understand'" (Myers 2010:32)

As the Soviets left the peninsula, the focus shifted away from strict Marxism to Juche:

> "In an ideological context, Juche consisted of four formal tenets: (1) Man is master of his own fate; (2) the master of the revolution is the people; (3) the revolution must be pursued in a self reliant manner: and (4) the key to the revolution is the supreme leader, or Suryong, Kim Il-sung. It was communist, in that it constituted a partial adoption of Marxism and Leninism. It accepted, for example, that capitalists and imperialists were the enemy and that the revolution would be won by class struggle of the laborers over their oppressors. But it placed less emphasis on the scientific view of history as an evolutionary, deterministic process, ultimately reaching a point of capitalist contradiction and socialist utopia." (Cha 2012: 37).

The first tenant, “man is the master of his own fate”, helps to empower individuals and give a personal sense of investment. The second tenant “the master of the revolution is the people” directs the individual's empowerment into a collective movement towards a unified purpose. The third tenet “the revolution must be pursued in a self relient manner” enforces xenophobia and encourages the collective to look inward and distrust external influence. The final tenant, “the key to the revolution is the supreme leader, or Suryong, Kim Il Sung” serves to enshrine the leader at the top of this newly created cultural identity. The new reality created within the concept of Juche is designed to enshrine Kim Il-sung at the head of this new system as its unquestioned leader (Cha 2012: 41).

Upon further reviewing Juche, it is possible to understand this ideology by examining each component of the Juche philosophy and then extracting its cultural or historical basis. This attachment to communism has helped to do more than just assemble the people into a workable mass that can be controlled by the state. It also helped DPRK to gain money and support effectively from two major communist nations during the

Cold War, the People's Republic of China and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Indeed Kim Il-sung as noted above owed his ascension to the head of the DPRK to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics after the end of World War II. While Juche contained elements of Marxism, it also contained elements that were nationalistic in nature. One of the key emphases was on racial purity and homogeneity, something that was more in line with the fascist nations of Europe and Imperial Japan than Soviet Russia.

To fully understand the role which the media and propaganda play in North Korea, one must first recognize that the Korean peninsula has almost always been under the influence of other regional powers. At first, the Chinese were the primary influence on Korea, bringing Confucianism to the peninsula. For a time, Korea actually strove to be more adherent to Confucian ideologies than the Chinese. Some of the important, nationalistic myths that were developed by the DPRK used folklore and tales that had been previously utilized by the ill-fated Korean Nationalist Movement and even at one point the Japanese colonial authority. During the war and for much of Korea's history under Japan, there were points and areas where the Japanese had attempted to erase Korean culture and replace it with Japanese traditions. In spite of this there had actually been an attempt to revive and instill in the Korean colony a sense of pride in their "Koreaness". The purpose of propaganda was to do this while envisioning a unique Korean people within the Japanese empire. There were many posters encouraging Koreans to re-inhabit their ancestral homelands in Manchuria. The Japanese obviously had little interest in Korean culture or the well being of Koreans, but were willing to cultivate the Korean image to aid in their conquest of Manchuria. Korean nationalists

drew upon old Korean mythology which placed the Korean people as originating on Mount Pektu, a volcanic mountain located in the modern DPRK.(Meyers 2010: 28). The myth indicated that this was the birthplace of the Korean people who, under the command of Tangun, conquered the Korean peninsula and created the earliest nation of humans. The DPRK was quick to exploit this nationalistic myth and spin it to their advantage. Very suddenly, it was revealed that Kim Il-sung's main base of operations for his guerilla army was none other than Mount Pektu (Meyers 2010: 64)This linked Kim Il-sung, Tangun and the original conquest of Korea, and made this creation myth central to the propagandist remaking of North Korean Culture. A key portion focuses on the Prince of the Heavens Hwanung and two animals, a tiger and bear, who wish to become human. While at first Hwanung was hesitant to grant their request, as the laws of heaven forbade this, he was eventually was moved by their dedication and resilience to give them a way to become human:

> "Recognizing that their determination was undaunted, Hwanung finally said ' Here are a bundle of mugwart and 20 cloves of garlic. Take these to the cave, and stay in the cave for a full 100 days, eating only the wormwood and garlic and without exposing yourself to sunlight, that you may become human beings'. As the she bear and tiger were mighty pleased to receive the mugwort and garlic from Hwanung, They returned to the cave after repeatedly expressing gratitude to him. For a while, they stayed in the cave eating only mugwort and garlic without seeing the sunlight. But the quick tempered tiger felt cramped and bored staying in the pitch dark cave. It was not long before the tiger bolted out of the cave and thus failed in his attempt to become human. As a result of overcoming the ordeal however, the persevering she bear turned into a beautiful woman in 21 days, shorter than the speculated period of 100 days. The she bear turned woman was called Ungnyo. As she was reincarnated as a woman, she wanted to do something worthy of a woman. Since the tiger failed to become a man, she had no partner to turn to. Ungnyo prayed to God under the sandalwood tree every day that she might have the honor of becoming a woman to concieve the first son of mankind. Shaken by her sincere entreaty, Hwanung decided to comply with her request once again. After Hwanung changed his figure by divine power , he became a

> handsome young man and made Ungnyo his wife. Their conjugal union made them the first married couple in the earthly world. Shortly thereafter, a son was born to the happily married couple. The prince was called ‘Tangun Wang-gom', so named because his birth had something to do with a sandalwood tree. It went without saying that his birth became a source of great joy for the couple. Tangun was born with no less natural talent than Hwanung's. As expected, after taking over his father’s huge task, Tangun helped place the kingdom on a solid foundation. Later Tangun moved his capital from mount T'aebak to P'yongyang... As time went on, Choson founded by Tangun, became more and more prosperous. Later the King moved his capital to Asadal at the foothill of Mt.Paekak... During the Koryo dynasty" (Hwang 2006: 11-12).

The significance of Mount Pektu or Parkak is central in Korean myth and is not only important to the myth of Tangun, but also to myths surrounding the creation of the Kingdom of Korguyo. Combining this with the selection of Pyongyang as his capital helped to give the young Leader Kim Il-sung a mythological claim to the legitimate rule of Korea.

The fact that Korea was a very Confucian nation was not lost on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea's small army of propagandists who immediately sought to play on the Confucian attitudes of the people and culture to increase the legitimacy and authority of Kim Il-sung. The Confucian system places a great deal of importance on respect for one’s ancestors, and particularly for one’s father as head of the household. Korean mothers are also of great importance in the Korean family and therefore highly regarded. The propagandists' goal was to paint Kim Il-sung as the Father of the Korean people and Korea as the Mother of the Korean people. This also had the intended effect of equating ordinary Korean citizens with children, children of Kim Il-sung, the father of the Korean people.

This is often seen in propaganda posters and paintings with regard to the way people are painted with rosy cheeks and youthful faces. Kim Il-sung is almost always

shown as a smiling warm fatherly figure. He is commonly shown giving instructions or advice to workers in different areas of labor. Unlike many other Communist bloc countries, where the emphasis of propagandists was on making leaders and officials appear to be strong willed super men, here the emphasis was on making the head of state feel like a kind warm fatherly figure who cares for his people as a father would for his children. This was combined with the effective elimination of all religions. Through his cult of personality, Kim was able to raise himself to god like status.

While in the anthropological sense we might not classify North Korea's Kim Il-sung's cult of personality as a religion, it cannot be denied that it did for all intents and purposes serves the function of legitimizing his rule by drawing on a supernatural principle, while helping to keep his people compliant. As noted by Victor Cha, "The State took draconian measures to erase any influences, political and religious, which might detract from fidelity to Kim. Over two thousand Buddhist temples and Christian churches were burned. As Jasper Becker notes, the persecution of Christian missionaries was especially intense given the relative success of the missionaries in Korea compared with other parts of Asia" (Cha 2011: 72). Removing these religious organizations effectively removed all other community structures that would have been a source of community organization, other than the party. The propagandists also seized upon this as an opportunity to replace the older religions with the Korean People's Workers Party. "Kim was replacing God with himself in the minds of North Koreans. Through destroying others, he made himself the creator of everything material and spiritual in the North Korean state. Nothing existed before him. State Propaganda thereafter referred to Kim as

superior to Christ in love, Buddha in benevolence, Confucius in virtue, and Mohamed in justice."(Cha 2011: 73).

To those in Western Democratic states, this might seem to be nothing more than obvious propaganda. However, it is imperative to try to understand the North Korean context. The repetition of this particular propaganda in an environment that has no other outlets will eventually lead to people accepting it as reality. In Barbara Demick's work she tells the story in which Mrs. Song talks about her devotion to the party during the years before the Arduous March. "Mrs. Song believed what she said. All those years of sleep deprivation, all those lectures and self-criticisms - the very same tools used in brainwashing or interrogations - had wiped out any possibility of resistance. She had been molded into one of Kim Il-sung's empowered human beings. Kim Il-sung's goal wasn't merely to build a new country; he wanted to build a better people, to reshape human nature"(Demick 2009:43-44). The cult of personality of Kim Il-sung had been well established to the point of God status amongst his subjects. This was expertly done through the state propaganda and myth making. His leadership was not in question.

Much of the state's propaganda sought to build upon existing xenophobic tensions that had developed during both the Korean War and Korea's period as a Japanese colony. The importance placed on the homogeneity and the cleanness of the Korean people, as well as hostility toward foreigners, was actively encouraged by regime propagandists. The leaders of the DPRK were able to use this already present xenophobic orientation to draw the Korean people to their cause. They put in place severe restrictions on interactions with outsiders visiting the country, as well as imposed serious penalties for those who violated these restrictions.

In the BBC documentary, *This World: Escaping North Korea - 2009*, the film crew interviewed a young woman who had escaped from North Korea to China but was eventually found and repatriated to the DPRK while in the late stages of pregnancy. " I tried to resist, but they forced a poisonous injection into my unborn baby". This is an extreme example of how racial purity is considered to be an important part of Korean culture. It is not just a sense of blood purity, but also a sense of ideological purity including the idea that the Korean people are innocent and childlike and their virtuous minds are in need of protection from the cruel outside world. Xenophobia is not unique to the DPRK. South Korea has also had its struggles with xenophobia. This is a predictable reaction from a people and nation who have been invaded and subjugated by foreign powers. Although there is still a level of xenophobia and anti-foreigner sentiment in South Korea, it has sharply decreased over the years. In contrast the DPRK has deliberately maintained a strong level of xenophobia.

A central component of Juche is its resistance toward outside influences and the emphasis on the pure homogeneity of the Korean people. The image of the Korean people as a pure race that needs protection from the cruel non- Korean world helps to reinforce the strength of the position of the leader, or rather the ruling Kim family. Many North Koreans still express an affinity for the Kims despite their new found liberty and access to sources of information.

Xenophobia was encouraged by the state with special attention toward enemy groups such as American soldiers and Christian ministers. Stories are told of Christian ministers injecting diseases into Korean children to kill them. American and South Korean soldiers were said to have spent much of the war driving around bayoneting

children. Korean propaganda posters would portray American soldiers as tall and skinny with hooked noses. This was to add to the image of the Americans as ugly, imperialist, warmongers who wanted to destroy the wonderful, virtuous people of the DPRK. However xenophobia and hatred of foreigners was not just directed toward enemies such as the Americans or South Koreans. Even the DPRK's allies were often harassed en mass by average North Korean citizens.

Xenophobia is a potent force for an isolationist state such as the DPRK, even against its own allies. In today's context, we often hear of the perils of North Korean refugees crossing into China. However, lesser known were the five American soldiers who chose to defect to North Korea when stationed on the demilitarized zone along the 38th parallel. James Dresnok is the central figure of focus in the 2009 documentary, *Crossing the Line*, which chronicles his life both before and after his defection. As a defector he was often used at first in propaganda films, aimed at encouraging other American servicemen to defect to North Korea. However after growing weary of his time in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea he and several other American defectors tried to request asylum at the Soviet Embassy. They were refused and turned over to the North Korean authorities. From this point on, the North Korean authorities decided to use the defectors in a more active role. They became actors playing the villainous American imperialists in numerous North Korean films. Film was one of North Korea's most capable forms of propaganda, both on television and in theaters.

Televisions were quite rare in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Even if someone could afford a television, they needed special permission from their job site to buy one. Even then, there were special seals on the televisions to prevent tampering with

them to pick up foreign broadcasts. If the security forces found those seals to have been tampered with, there were significant consequences, which could range from a time in a work camp to more severe punishments such as permanent imprisonment in a penal labor colony.

Cinema, on the other hand, was a popular and affordable activity for North Korean citizens. Films also provided an important propaganda tool for the North Korean state to use in its efforts to manipulate the people and help instill loyalty to the party and more importantly to Kim Il-sung. This is one of the more well-known areas of contribution by Kim Jong-il. His earliest pursuits were in developing North Korea's film industry. He is perhaps best known for the monster movie Pulgasari in 1985. Other than its confusing plot, this movie is probably known as being one of kidnapped South Korean actress Shin Sang-ok's more well-known films from her period of captivity in North Korea. Kim Jong-il had actually ordered her kidnapping to help develop the film industry. Despite the sometimes ridiculous plot points and the heavy insertion of propaganda into every facet of the films, movies were still very popular in the DPRK as well as TV programming, for those who could afford TV's.

Programming was varied despite people having access only to North Korean broadcasts. Situation comedies, dramas, news broadcasts, and films were often a staple of North Korean television. North Korean defectors have indicated that occasionally foreign films from the Soviet Union were broadcast on national TV and that these were preferable because they were less heavily laden with propaganda, or at least the propaganda was more subtle.

Another interesting program that has recently become available via the Internet is

a North Korean children's program that in online circles is known as *Hedgehog and Squirrel*. It is unclear if *Hedgehog and Squirrel* is a TV program as would think of it in the West. This series has been in constant production since 1977, with early animation taking a stylistic influence from Russian cartoons and later styles taking more influence from Japanese animation. This children's program centers around the portrayal of Hedgehogs, Squirrels and Cranes, who live in the land of Flower Hill, which is meant to be an allegory for North Korea. The animals of Flower Hill are engaged in a desperate battle against armies of mice, likely the South Koreans, as well as Weasels that are meant to represent the Japanese and wolves that are thought to represent the Americans. In the earlier cartoons it is difficult to see some of the obvious differences between the animals. However in later episodes, the show has adopted a more sophisticated animated style and one is able to see some of the propaganda elements more clearly. For example, the Flower Hill characters tend to have larger, child-like faces, as well soft child-like voices, suggesting a play on North Korea's attempt to encourage its citizens to think of themselves as child-like. By contrast, the Wolves and Weasels have larger stature, narrower eyes and deeper and sometimes more menacing voices.

This cartoon serves the purpose of helping introduce young children to the propaganda of the North Korean regime in a way that they will be more readily able to identify with and watch. The first episode in particular could be seen as a historic parable for the early 20th century history of Korea. In the episode, the village of Flower Hill is a peaceful spot in a world that is otherwise being oppressed and conquered by a Weasel army. Flower Hill remains free of the Weasels, because it is protected by 'Mr. Bear'. The bear is thought to represent the Soviet Union or possibly even Imperial Russia, as the

Russians had a great deal of influence over Korea prior to the Russo-Japanese war of 1905. Mr. Bear successfully protects the Hill from several Weasel attacks. However a visiting group of Hedgehogs warn the Squirrels about depending too much on Mr. Bear. In the episode the Weasels, using their allies the Mice, possibly meant to represent South Korea or Japanese sympathizers, manage to kill Mr. Bear by tricking him into drinking a poisoned bottle of liquor, thus removing Flower Hill's only defense. Just when it seems like the Squirrels will be enslaved, they are saved by the Hedgehogs and the Hedgehogs allies, the Cranes. After being rescued, the Squirrels swear to join the hedgehogs and cranes and pay back the Weasels 1000 fold for burning Flower Hill.

The earlier episodes are more ambiguous with regard to whom, exactly, the Weasels represent. However, as the series progresses and the animation becomes more sophisticated, one begins to see the different animal types take on more distinct identities, with the Weasels wearing uniforms reminiscent of the Japanese during World War II. The Wolves wear uniforms reminiscent of the American Army during the Korean War. Another notable fact is that the show does not seem to have an exact animal parable. However the series does encourage patriotism and a desire to serve in the armed forces. Additionally, the show does not portray the Wolves or the Weasels as weak. It actually shows them as being very powerful and often having better technology than Flower Hill. There is an inference, a subtle cue to the North Korean children that though they are opposed by more powerful enemies, they can defeat them.

The cult of personality surrounding the Kim family has been one of the most critical propaganda tools used by the regime to maintain power. The cult of personality centers on the nation's first leader and still eternal president, Kim Il-sung. Leaders and

ruling governments the world over understand the importance which images play in establishing the credibility and appeal of a leader to the masses. While many leaders have been said to possess unique abilities and qualities which elevate them above the average person, most are still viewed as humans, at least within the modern context. The personality cult manufactured by the North Korean regime has in many ways moved beyond this by incorporating elements of religious worship into its make-up. Clifford Geertz stated that religion is composed of four anthropological components, "(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic" (Geertz 1966: 90).

With regard to the first aspect of religion described by Geertz, Juche philosophy and the veneration of Kim Il-sung create a potent combination that symbolically serves as a vehicle for his promotion to near God-like status. Images of Kim Il-sung, as well as his son and grandson, adorn the homes of all North Koreans and must be kept clean at all times. Additionally, any photos taken of images or statues of the Kims must capture the full image and not be obstructed in any way. Many images of Kim Il-sung also tend to portray him in a warm benevolent light as a father figure, which helps to engender genuine emotional attachment as well as respect for the traditional patriarchal Confucian kinship structure in Korean society. This exemplifies the second component of Geertz's definition of religion in the anthropological sense. The details of the myth surrounding Kim Il-sung's death, such as a flock cranes attempting to return Kim to Heaven, seem to imply a level of divinity and are consistent with the fifth aspect of religion proposed by

Geertz. Kim's personality cult incorporates multiple religious aspects which enhance the Kim family's political legitimacy and high status in North Korea. In an officially atheistic society, this cult functions as a quasi religion.

The importance of cultural manipulation and control of culture is the second pillar of state level power and is central to the regime and the Kim family's political rule in North Korea. Through the cultivation of political myth and the control of the influx of information the regime is able to engineer and actively change the society's perception of the world and thus manipulate the culture to suit their designs. The manipulation of traditional existing culture helped to transition North Korean society into a collective that was more malleable to the regime. However, this pillar depended on a complete monopoly of the flow of information from the outside world. The regime is only able to maintain control of individual North Koreans if it is able to control what information about the outside world is available to the general populous. When outside information began to challenge the narrative constructed by the state, the regime began to lose control and the narrative became a questionable concept rather than an absolute truth. The regime was then left with only one stable pillar of power that it could use to maintain control.

Chapter 4 - Pillar Three - The Monopoly of Violence.

The ability to use force is perhaps one of the state's most powerful and direct methods of controlling its population. Weber indicates that while the state may not be the only actor committing violence, it is the only one who can successfully legitimize violence and force.

> "Every state is founded on force,' said Trotsky at Brest-Litovsk. That is indeed right. If no social institutions existed which knew the use of violence, then the concept of 'state' would be eliminated, and a condition would emerge that could be designated as 'anarchy,' in the specific sense of this word. Of course, force is certainly not the normal or the only means of the state--nobody says that--but force is a means specific to the state. Today the relation between the state and violence is an especially intimate one." (Weber, 1918: 1).

While most frequently, such a statement is associated with violent force, law and surveillance are also a component in the monopoly of force. The monopoly of violence is the state's third pillar of power.

The monopoly of violence is the most basic way in which the state can manipulate its people to obey its will. This can be achieved through laws and legal codes, imprisonment, using overt threats of violence against the populace or subsets of the populace. Within the context of the DPRK, the regime's monopoly of violence has always been a present factor in the everyday lives of the people. However, with the collapse of the regime's control of the economy (the first pillar of power), the use of violence has become more central in the state's strategy to maintain control.

In order to understand how this third pillar affects the society at large, it is necessary to examine how force has been applied within the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This can be done by looking at accounts of personal experiences from North Koreans who have escaped the regime. By examining the methods of force used by the regime, it is possible to understand more effectively the nature of the state and its third pillar of power.

While it may seem that the force of the state is expressed through the use of military force and the implementation of a security network to obtain the compliance of its citizens, the role that legal codes and regulations play in gaining compliance of a population must be considered (Rosen 2006:163–164). Although the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is not a communist state in the traditional sense, the state philosophy, Juche, still uses a socialist economic model, which rejects private ownership of property in favor of public ownership. The legal codes against private ownership and property protected the state from ideas of individualism taking root in people. This is not to imply that North Koreans or individuals living in a communist state have no concept of self or individuality. However, they are encouraged to think of themselves as part of a communal group and to place the ambitions, goals and values of the collective before their own individual aspirations. The reasons why the state fears an individualist outlook are revealed in the 2014 documentary *Frontline: Inside North Korea*, which states

> " looking at footage shot inside North Korea, we can see that a huge number of people have started doing business with each other. This used to be illegal and anyone caught buying or selling for personal gain was severely punished... people's willingness to confront or ignore authority has become more common. People around the world have this image of North Koreans as brainwashed but that is very mistaken. Often now, when

> North Koreans are challenged for infringing in relation to a certain law, as long as the offense is not political, they do not hesitate to protest if they feel the law to be irrational."(Frontline: Inside North Korea 2014).

This presents two key facts regarding force in North Korea. First, it demonstrates that, in some ways, the state's monopoly on force is weakening. The fact that people are now willing to defy authority openly, even on minor issues, indicates that the regime is not in total control.

It should be noted that the regime has chosen mostly to ignore illegal markets and market activity for certain commodities. While simple necessities such as food and transportation might receive only a minor chastisement, items such as electronics or foreign media will likely lead to a more significant punishment. Executions have become a far more frequent occurrence in modern North Korea due to the period of famine and economic decline known as the Arduous March. Execution has always been in place for severe political crimes and it also served as a severe punishment for crossing the border illegally. "In North Korea, Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong Il are perceived as gods. They have supreme power. If an individual or group criticizes them in any way even once, the person(s) may be charged and suffer imprisonment or public execution. You may have reservations or opinions in your heart but you can never express them." (UN Human Rights Commission Transcripts, Seoul August 24th, 2013). It can be difficult to identify what may be seen as a political crime and what is not a political crime. In the early days simply leaving the country without authorization could be considered a political offense and result in life imprisonment.

While regulation and laws create a code of conduct that must be followed, voluntary compliance is still required for them to work. While utilization of effective propaganda and cultural manipulation can assist in conditioning the population to follow the laws and regulations, a strict regime of punishment for crimes committed provides a strong deterrent to the commission of crime.

As the economic system in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has worsened and smuggling, as well as black market activity, have increased, foreign media have become more common place. The regime has gone to great lengths to deter its citizens from viewing foreign media.

> "The officials, who also faced charges of bribery and womanizing, were thought to be close to Kim's executed uncle, Jang Song-thaek, Yonhap news agency reported...All television and media is under strict state control and access to the internet is limited, but despite a harsh crackdown, banned foreign shows and films have been gaining popularity in recent years....Some are believed to be secretly streamed over the internet, while others are smuggled into the country on DVDs, video cassettes or memory sticks sold on the black market."(Dearden 2014:1).

Currently the use of public execution in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea serves to remove possible opposition and ensures that its populace is under control. This form of punishment and state control is not just for the average citizen, but also for the most elite among the population. The use of public execution is perhaps one of the most effective reminders of the power of the state. These laws seem to be specifically targeted to support or attempt to strengthen or regain the state's total monopoly on the flow of information and its regulation of the culture. The International Federation for

Human Rights published a white paper assessing the current situation with regard to the use of the death penalty in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

> "The scope of crimes punishable by the death sentence has further increased following the announcement in September 2012 of two public decrees called "circulation of foreign media punishable by execution" (by the Department of People's Security) and "execution by gun squad for divulging classified information via cell phone" (by the State Security Department, SSD). As a result, the total number of crimes that carry the death penalty in the country stands at twenty four. Of these, at least nine have a mandatory death sentence requirement, including crimes like kidnapping, theft, damaging or destruction of state or military property, currency counterfeiting, smuggling and introducing narcotics or jewels and colored metals into the black market."(The Death Penalty in North Korea: 19).

Further examples of public execution listed in this report come from the period of famine in North Korea. The regime responded with the use of execution as a way to quickly reestablish its dominance, or at least to establish fear in the populace to ensure compliance.

North Korea utilizes a system of collective punishment, depending on the crime committed. The perpetrators could find not just themselves entering a prison camp, but could also find their entire family and extended family for up to 3 generations brought to a prison camp. These camps serve as an additional method of the regime to use its monopoly of violence to maintain and attempt to regain control of its other two pillars of power, economic and information/cultural.

"The background of my comrades who worked with me were mostly from privileged families. In 1987, I was the only one who was summoned from Hong-eun [ph] area. The ranks of comrades who worked with me belonged to the family of descendants

of those who fought against Japanese colonial rule, who were loyal to the regime." (UN Human rights Commission Transcripts - 2013.12.19: 2). The goal of stationing the sons of privileged families at the camp could be to ensure loyalty. The use of soldiers from privileged families ensures the solders will have a higher than average loyalty to the regime, as they have lived and grown up with a comfortable lifestyle. Additionally should they break the rules they know exactly what the consequences would be to them and their family.

The type of camp for imprisonment and the duration of stay at the camp is dependent on the crime:

> "When I was questioned, I wrote down everything about Song Hae-rim. But if I knew that I was going to be taken to Yodok camp, I would have not written down about Song Hae-rim. So that's why I wrote down everything about Song Hae-rim and her coming to my house and about her going to live with the immediate family of Kim Il-sung. The people who are taken to Yodok camp, [0:24:00] I mean I was taken to the camp without trial and I didn't even know what crime I had committed. And, maybe Kim Jong-il asked Song Hae-rim whom she has talked to about her going to, and maybe Hae-rim told Kim Jong- il that she told me that she was going to Kim Jong-il's family. " (UN Human Rights commission transcripts 8.21.15).

As can be seen in this example from the United Nations Report on human rights abuses in the DPRK, the regime is very willing to imprison its people as needed, to ensure that it is able to control its image in the eyes of the public. As one former camp prisoner described in an interview about her experience, "There were people there from all over the country, and we were worked to death". (BBC This World: Escaping North Korea 2009). As recounted in the BBC documentary *Escaping North Korea,* many North Korean refugees escaped by hiding in China and Thailand, where they would be allowed

to enter an embassy belonging to the Republic of Korea so they could officially defect. Many of the refugees featured in this film had been previously captured. They either had escaped from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or were captured in the People's Republic of China and then repatriated to the DPRK."I was sent back to North Korea. An intelligence agent beat me up, and demanded to know if I had met anyone from Korean Churches. I said 'no', But he said that I was lying and beat me again. I was interrogated over and over and then sent to a forced labor camp."(BBC: Escaping North Korea 2009). This punishment could also be used if you had knowledge or were privy to a fact that might be embarrassing to the state or the Kim family.

While previously, a crime such as leaving the country might have brought a death sentence or you and your family being sent to a forced labor camp permanently, during the Arduous March punishments were more lenient by comparison. You might spend only a few years in a camp, but that time in the camp would be brutal. Lack of food is common within the forced labor camps, the rations are incredibly small and it is often against the rules of the camp to catch rats or other small animals for food.

North Korea today maintains the world's 4th largest standing army with just over a million troops on active duty. However, when one adds in reserve forces, the North Korean military is the largest in the world at nearly 9.5 million. Military spending is 25% of the country's GDP. For a country with a failed economy, as well as a population of 24 million, that means that the armed forces are enormously large in proportion to the overall population of the country. This focus on the military serves two purposes. One is to help establish Kim Jong-il and now Kim Jong Un as the defender of the Korean

people. Propaganda paintings and videos from the Seon'gun period focus on Kim Jong-il's commitment to national defense. One propaganda painting portrays a smiling Kim walking up to the bow of a naval vessel in rough waters while the sailors around him fear the waves. This increased focus on the military has also coincided with an increase in anti-U.S. and anti-South Korean propaganda, blaming the U.S. for the famine and economic woes of North Korea. The propaganda payoff of this is to deflect blame for the economic mismanagement of the country onto North Korea's enemies and portray Kim Jong Il and now his son Kim Jong-Un as the tireless defenders of the North Korean people. The second purpose for placing the military first is to ensure that the Kim family's last method for maintaining power over their country is maintained. Massive force could be used to ensure that the population remains compliant and under the control of the current leadership. The use of propaganda and deflection is preferable to the use of military force. Although force can quell the populace and ensure compliance, an act of mass violence could have an undesirable backlash and result in dissolution of the power of the state. Two examples of the use of force are instructive.

The first example of is the attempt at a coup de tat by leaders of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1991 on the eve of signing of the Union Treaty. The second example is the successful attempt to use mass violence to restore government control that resulted in the Tiananmen Square massacre. Examining both of these case studies will demonstrate the effective use of power and why one approach may succeed over the other.

The Soviet Union had undergone a major shift in the late 1980s. Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev had introduced a package of reforms which had greatly improved the

autonomy of the member states and trade arrangements. This resulted in the Soviet Union being more open to outsiders and granted ordinary Soviet citizens more freedom. In particular, the Union Treaty would have given a much greater level of autonomy to the individual republics of the Soviet Union. Worried that this would lead to the breakup of the Soviet Union, key members of the Politburo standing committee staged a coup and sent columns of tanks into Moscow. The goal was to put down a protest by ordinary Russians in the Soviet Parliament Building, known as the White House. This move was partially negated, as many of the tank crews sided with Boris Yeltsin and the ordinary Russians. Later in the night a military operation occurred which attempted to remove the protesters from the White House. The attempt failed and the public failure only helped to speed the decline of the Soviet Union by further eroding people's faith in the system. The actions failed to create the necessary fear that those staging the coup had hoped would move people back to compliance and submission. Additionally, the government had lost too much of its ability to spin the story and the failure to remove the protesters allowed the people to move toward ending the Soviet system.

Conversely the Tiananmen Square massacre is one of the most deadly and effective displays of a government entity exercising violence to regain power. The Tiananmen Square political movement was a set of protests against the corruption of the Chinese communist party and supported the desire for having a free and independent press. These protests were originally public displays of mourning for the former president of China, Hu Yaobung, a popular reformer who had pushed for both economic and social reforms. His liberal reforms had made him popular among the people, but not with party hardliners and he was purged from office. After his death, students as well as

Chinese from all walks of life began demonstrating against corruption and for more reform across the country. The first action of the party was not to officially acknowledge the protests. Eventually the party published a statement that the party must struggle against disturbances. The party never mentioned the Tiananmen Square protests or protests in other cities specifically. After this paper was published, the party attacked the protesters with brutal efficacy. The numbers are very speculative, as the Chinese government has released no official numbers, but unofficial estimates of the death toll are at over two thousand in Beijing alone, and thought to be much higher especially once the other cities are factored in. The Chinese government was able to do this effectively because of having total control of the military and effective control to spin the story. The military was able violently to put down the protests and create a widespread fear of engaging in mass disobedience. The main contrast here is the success of the Chinese government in ending the rebellion, as well as its having enough stability to retain the loyalty of the troops. When we apply this to the North Korean context, we need to ask the critical question of whether or not the North Korean troops will continue to believe the propaganda.

The state needs to have the monopoly of violence for several reasons. The first reason is to reinforce the economic and cultural pillars of power by smaller and more calculated applications of violence. The government is able to maintain power and stability as a result. "Organized domination, which calls for continuous administration, requires that human conduct be conditioned to obedience towards those masters who claim to be the bearers of legitimate power. On the other hand, by virtue of this obedience, organized domination requires the control of those material goods which in a

given case are necessary for the use of physical violence. Thus, organized domination requires control of the personal executive staff and the material implements of administration." (Weber 1918: 1).

However, the use of mass violence is perhaps one of the last moves of a state desperately attempting to stay in power. It can only succeed if the violence is successful in crushing the resistance and instilling fear in the rest of the populace of rising up again. This is perhaps the most important pillar of power because it helps to reinforce the economic and cultural pillars of power and provides a means to keep government from falling. Despite this, if a state needs to resort to mass violence, it is overall a sign of the greater instability of the state.

"Like the political institutions historically preceding it, the state is a relation of men dominating men, a relation supported by means of legitimate (i.e. considered to be legitimate) violence. If the state is to exist, the dominated must obey the authority claimed by the powers that be" (Weber 1918: 1). What Weber suggests in this quote is that a state can survive on the use of violence and force, but ultimately a state cannot survive indefinitely if the people do not believe it has the ability to rule them. This indicates that having one pillar of power, even that of force is insufficient. Ultimately the state will need all three pillars of power to survive.

Chapter 5 - The Current Situation North Korea and Prospects of Reunification

The current state of affairs in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea reflects the government's loss of control over its populace. The most obvious pillar that has been lost is the first pillar of power of economic control over the distribution of resources. While political instability does not require a failing economy, a failing economy and the inability to provide effective resource distribution to its citizens has had a major impact on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the resulting loss of control over the lives of its citizens.

In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the result of the loss of economic power has had a cascading effect. The lack of resources within the DPRK has led many citizens to ignore previous tenets of the government's controlled economy and therefore attempt to make a living on North Korea's burgeoning illicit market. Legally, it is forbidden to sell for profit in the DPRK or engage in any type of capitalistic economic activity. However, thus far the DPRK government has had to tolerate these markets, as it is otherwise unable to provide any kind of basic sustenance for its people.

This has resulted in a second problem. Not only does the government no longer fully control the distribution of resources, it is also unable to ensure that those resources coming across the borders are strictly survival goods such as food, fuel and other essentials. The regime cannot ensure that specialty items such as small transistor radios, portable DVD players and even foreign films and TV shows are not entering the country.

This represents a serious challenge to the state's authority and loss of control over the second pillar of power which is the control over the flow of information in the country.

This has resulted in the government's reliance on its third pillar of power, the state monopoly of violence. Another factor that has to be considered is the ascent of Kim Jong-un, who assumed the position of Supreme Leader on December 17, 2011. Kim Jong-un was only 29 at the time of his ascent and he faces a serious problem of legitimacy, even within the somewhat still rigidly controlled state of the DPRK. By examining the four key factors that exist currently within the DPRK it is possible to make reasonable inferences with regard to the near future and outlook of the health of the state as a whole. The first factor is the economic collapse of the North Korean state run distribution based economy. The second factor is the rise of the illegal markets and the black market generation. The third factor is the new availability of foreign media and information to the public. The final factor is the growing number of North Koreans willing to risk leaving the country.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was a planned and controlled economy until the early 1990s. The Democratic People's Republic of North Korea rationed goods to all citizens in direct proportion to their job. Laborers and especially those individuals who worked in highly labor-intensive fields or dangerous fields would earn higher rations than a white-collar worker who had a more sedentary job. The primary problem with this system was that it relied on the government having control of the resources and its ability to distribute enough resources to all workers. "By 1995, North Korea's economy was as stone cold dead as the great leader's body. Per capita income was plummeting, from $2460 in 1991 to $719 in 1995. North Korea's

merchandise exports dropped from $2 billion to about $800 million. The collapse of the economy had an organic quality to it, as though the living being were slowly shutting down and dying" (Demick 2010: 115). In North Korean cities across the country, factories began to shut down. Fewer freighters came to receive North Korean goods and the country's economy began to shut down at all levels. By the mid-1990s, the situation had reached a new level of desperation and there were extreme cases of this, as evidenced by those who were willing to pick up and eat undigested grains out of the excrement of farm animals and eat them.(Demick 2009:134).

" The fundamental cause behind development of the second economy in North Korea, as in the former Soviet Union, was the chronic shortage of consumer goods. The second economy in a socialist country is, by definition, excluded from the state-coordinated distribution channel. It therefore needs to develop its own markets. Second-economy activities often are illegal in nature, and the markets in which illegal activities occur are consequently called black markets. "(Lee, Chun 2001: 213). People's ingenuity, borne of the necessity to use their resources effectively as well as find a means to obtain additional resources, would eventually lead to the creation of illicit markets which still exist within the DPRK. The government must unofficially tolerate these markets as it is no longer able to adequately provide for its people. Its own attempts at creating markets and shopping centers sponsored by the state have thus far been unsuccessful. Film footage smuggled out of the country and shown in numerous documentaries such as 2014's *PBS's Frontline: Inside North Korea*, show that these government-run department stores are more about projecting an image for the country, than a practical means of distribution. There are actually very few goods available for sale. While this shift away

from the government controlled planned economy has created problems of legitimacy for the DPRK government among its older citizens, it has created an absolute crisis of legitimacy amongst the younger citizens who grew up during the famine.

These young millennials grew up during the height of the famine. In the beginning years of the illicit markets and for the majority of their lives they have never known the state's distribution system. In this way, they have never viewed the state as a provider of resources but have had to rely on the illicit markets and their own venture capitalism to survive.

> "... younger North Koreans are helping to make grassroots market changes a permanent part of the economy. The black markets are too big and entrenched for the government to shut down. And as ordinary citizens scrape together a living, outside information is stirring intoxicating feelings about what's possible. 'The leadership in North Korea knows what's going on among its domestic citizens, especially the younger generation,' said Jieun Baek, who traveled to North Korea in 2013. As part of a closely watched tour group, curious North Koreans asked her about America and the outside world. She offered her makeup and bottle of Motrin as gifts. 'You can't unlearn citizens' knowledge of the outside world,' said Baek, a fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University." (Wee 2015).

The prevalence of illicit markets in the DPRK, as well as a lessening of the famine, has created another situation in North Korea. There is a new commodity, foreign media which is now traded more frequently than one might think. Portable DVD players are surprisingly common within the DPRK and most people also have USB drives that allow them to play video files from USB storage devices. The USB devices are easier to conceal and can also hold more information than a traditional DVD. A mix of entrepreneurs, as well as activists working against the regime, have been diligently working to smuggle in foreign media and news to North Korea's illicit markets.

It must be noted however, that being caught in possession of American or South Korean media is still a very serious crime and is punishable by death. As Dr. David Kang, the director of the Korean Studies Institute at USC explains in the PBS documentary *Frontline: the Secret State of North Korea*, "Information and knowledge of the outside world is beginning to widen out, there's far more inter-penetration of North Korean society today than before. If the North Korean people themselves stop believing in the regime and the story they tell themselves that means central control is breaking down in some way"(Kang 2015). The documentary goes on to note that within the last year Kim Jong-un has been sending security forces house to house searching for DVDs and USB drives. There are reports that 80 or more individuals have been executed for watching foreign media. It is also believed that, of those who have chosen to leave the DPRK, 50% or more of them had watched foreign media.

> " It's my generation often called 'janmadang' for black-market generation that will make change permanent. North Korea's black-market generation has three main characteristics. The first characteristic of our black-market generation is it has no devotion to the Kim Dynasty. I was born in 1993, and Kim Il-Sung, the country's founder, he died in 1994. And I was brainwashed to glorify him, and his national self-reliant economic system. But, I have no actual memory of him. The second characteristic of our black-market generation is it has had wide access to outside media and information. The private market provided us with more than food and clothing. It provided us DVDs with movies like Titanic and USBs with Wikipedia. The third characteristic of our black-market generation is we are capitalistic and individualistic. We grew up with markets. We experienced selling and buying... Once you start training for yourself, you start thinking for yourself, and that's a big threat to the Kim regime."((Park: Oslo Freedom Forum 2014).

The black-market generation is perhaps the greatest threat to the current Kim Dynasty, and the greatest driving force for lasting change in the system of government in North Korea. This access to information as well as a willingness to enter into business to

gain their own resources has led many of the black market generation and older generations to make an incredible leap of faith and flee North Korea in hopes of finding a better life.

The government's inability to provide for its own people has completely undermined the distribution based, controlled economy which North Korea relies on or had previously relied on. This is creating a staggering refugee crisis, "The current social and economic crisis in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has resulted in an explosive increase in the illegal migration of North Koreans to Northeast China. The stream of North Korean refugees are a new phenomenon, but its extent has become one of the factors exercising considerable influence on the situation in the region." (Lankov 2004: 856). The International Rescue Committee estimates that between 30,000 and 60,000 North Korean refugees are currently hiding within the People's Republic of China. Very few of these individuals will ever make it to the Republic of Korea. Some reports have placed this estimate much higher. "The refugees, estimated at around 100,000, are caught in a complex web of hidden agendas pursued by all sides involved in the crisis ..." (Lankov 2004: 856).

The current refugee crisis is compounded by several factors. The most obvious route for North Korean defectors would indicate they should go south and simply cross the border to the Republic of Korea. However the significant size of the Korean People's Liberation Army at the border, as well as the 2 mile wide demilitarized zone, make crossing into the Republic of Korea from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nearly impossible. The demilitarized zone which separates the two countries is well known for being the most heavily mined place on earth estimated to have over 2 million

mines in the ground. Over the years, fewer than 10 people have managed to cross into the Republic of Korea by this route. For most individuals the only option is to cross into the People's Republic of China. Currently North Korean refugees in the People's Republic of China hold no legal refugee status. They are considered illegal migrants and repatriated back to the DPRK if they are caught. This is in spite of the fact that China is a signatory to the United Nations convention on refugees. As previously discussed in reference to the third pillar of power, the government of the DPRK is willing to utilize harsh punishments, even capital punishment on those who leave the DPRK. While a certain amount of smuggling seems to be tolerated, attempting to escape from the country is a very serious act. So harsh are the punishments that many who leave are willing to go to extreme lengths to make sure that they are not captured "armed with knives, we were ready to kill ourselves, if we were going to be sent back to North Korea." (Park: Oslo Freedom Forum 2014).

China's current refusal to recognize North Korean refugees is based on several factors. First and foremost, the People's Republic of China has for years used the DPRK as a buffer state between it and the capitalist and now democratic Republic of Korea. As is so often the case for refugees around the world, many North Korean refugees who are simply motivated by a need for survival find themselves in the midst of a three-way political tug-of-war for regional influence. "Internationally, the refugees constitute a considerable nuisance to the authorities of at least three countries. Sadly, in fact, the refugees, whose only goal is survival (or, perhaps, a slight improvement in their lot) have become victims of the real or perceived political interests of Beijing, Pyongyang, and Seoul. " (Lankov 2004: 872).

For the People's Republic of China, maintaining a buffer state between China and the Republic of Korea is of some benefit. There is however the larger problem which is what should happen if the DPRK were to collapse. "The Chinese authorities are not happy about the presence of many illegal immigrants in their country. Apart from the economic and social problems refugees cause (or may cause) in the cities of Northeast China, their presence creates a number of diplomatic problems and adversely influences relations between China and the two Koreas. China also worries about the stability of North Korea, which serves as a strategically important buffer between the Chinese Northeast and the U.S. forces in South Korea." (Lankov 2004: 872). The collapse of the DPRK would undoubtedly create an even larger refugee problem, and put further strain on Northeastern China's economy, although this would largely dependent on how the regime collapsed and what occured afterward.

China's refusal to recognize North Korean refugees in any legal capacity has made these refugees incredibly vulnerable. Many North Korean women face possible exploitation, either as forced brides or in the sex industry. North Korean refugees can also face exploitation as laborers and live in constant fear of deportation. "There are now 13,000 North Korean refugees living in the South, four times as many as just four years ago... These are the lucky few, the ones who've made it and survived the last great escape from communism"(BBC - This World - Escaping North Korea). The greatest hurdle to refugees making it all the way to the Republic of Korea is a refusal by the Chinese government to treat these refugees as refugees. The process of rejection has gone so far as posting guards around the Republic of Korea's embassies and consulates to keep people from defecting.

The current state of affairs in the DPRK indicates a high degree of political and social instability. The death of North Korea's previous leader, Kim Jong-il and the subsequent transfer of power to his son Kim Jong-un represents a critical moment in the history of the DPRK. When North Korea's former leader, Kim Il-sung, chose Kim Jong-il as his successor, this was seen as an unexpected move within the upper echelon of the Korean Workers Party. Kim Jong-il was not perceived as intellectual, charismatic, or as exhibiting qualities of leadership. However, once Kim Il-sung had selected Kim Jong-il as his successor, the country's small army of propagandists went to work creating a godly mythos around Kim Jong-il.

While Kim Jong-il may not have been the most practical choice, the fact that Kim il-Sung had the sense to select an heir well ahead of his death meant that the North Korean propagandists had nearly 20 years to build a mythos around Kim Jong-il. While members of the Kim family and upper levels of the government would not be swayed by these propaganda films, the masses could be.

Kim Jong-un faces two significant disadvantages in his succession. The first and foremost is his age. Kim Jong-un is only 32 years of age at the time of this writing. His age creates a major issue in a country which has a strong Confucian past. Despite the state's official ideology of Juche, traditional Korean ideals, such as Confucianism and respect for elders, factor heavily into this philosophy. At only 32 years of age, and only 29 years of age when Kim Jong-un took power, he is significantly younger than his father was when he first took control from Kim Il-sung. An additional problem that Kim Jong-un faces is the short amount of time during which he was named as his father's eventual

successor. While his father Kim Jong-il had had the better part of 20 years to have his mythos established, Kim Jong-un had less than a year.

Former CIA analyst, North Korean expert and research scholar at Columbia University, Sue Mi Terry states, "In North Korea there is reverence for age and experience, these things matter. And now you're sort of parading around this 29-year-old who has never served a day in the military. I doubt that people genuinely have the same kinds of feelings towards Kim Jong-un as they did for Kim Jong-il" (Frontline: The Secret State of North Korea). Video footage from inside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea presents numerous scenes of average citizens, as well as members of the elite, in the capital of Pyongyang expressing displeasure and frustration with the regime.

The idea of reunification of the two Koreas has been a consistent topic for both nations, since the two were split by the Allies at the end of World War II. The greatest hurdle to reunification is dependent on what form reunification would take and what role each government would play in a new, unified Korean state. The Republic of Korea generally tends to favor an East German reunification model.

One of the initial issues that led to East Germany's willingness to rapidly open up and reunify with West Germany was the rapid depopulation that occurred out of East Germany. East Germany bordered several countries both communist and capitalist. The North Korean situation is different due to both reasons of politics and geography. As previously stated, there are only two practical countries that North Koreans can directly escape to: the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation only shares a small border with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Therefore North Korean citizen's only country to escape to is the People's Republic of China, as the DPRK's border with the Republic of Korea is the most heavily militarized zone in the world.

Current models dealing with reunification tend to focus purely on the economic side of a reunified Korea. This can be contrasted to the economic disparity that existed between West Germany and East Germany, with the East German state economically behind West Germany. Indeed the economic aspects of a possible reunification cannot be ignored, as much of North Korea's infrastructure has either been destroyed through scavenging or disuse, or would require significant upgrades. This would place a high financial burden on any reunified government.

> "With regard to a desirable political system after unification (NUB 1976, 1988, December 1989b; MoI June 1990, August 1990; KISD 1991), over the last 20 years most South Koreans preferred a liberal democratic system, although it is interesting to find that lower percentages of citizens chose this option when the survey used the term "South Korean system" or "capitalist system": instead of liberal democratic system as in the 1988 and 1990 surveys. By contrast, using "North Korean system" instead of socialist or communist system did not make a difference, but this option was chosen by less than 2 percent. Surprisingly, however, there has been a significant increase over time in support for a mixed system (although the term "mixed" was left undefined)."(Chung, Nagel 1992: 856-857).

One of the major problems that any Korean unification will face is the likely unwillingness of the Kims to relinquish power. An additional point of contention is the difference between the East German government and the government of North Korea. While the East German government was by no means a democratically elected body, it was a body of politicians who made no claims to divinity. The East German government utilized similar tools of oppression as the DPRK, but it did not utilize a work camp

system or a three generation punishment system. These factors will likely prevent any kind of peaceful reunification so long as the current Kim regime remains in power.

The current situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is one that is constantly evolving. The state has all but lost any semblance of control over the economy. The state's attempts to introduce a more controlled economy to this point have been unsuccessful as the illicit markets that developed during the North Korean famine and economic collapse persist to this day. The nation's millennial generation, the 20 and 30-year-olds of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have little, if any allegiance to the regime directly and have grown up working and surviving in an illicit underground capitalist marketplace.

On a daily basis, the regime is losing more of its control over the information North Korean citizens have from the outside world, as well as the perception they have of their own lives and how the regime provides for them. This is a cultural change that represents perhaps the most grave challenge to the regime's authority and has been responded to with the last stable pillar of power, that of force and violence.

While the regime is seemingly in a tenuous position and in danger of undergoing a serious shift in the balance of power, it still has its army and security apparatus to maintain power. As revealed in footage from the Frontline documentary, while even members of the elite in the capital of Pyongyang are dissatisfied with their lack of rights and abilities within the current system, no one thinks of active direct resistance, firmly believing that anyone who resists the regime will be killed. It is very unlikely that unification will occur if the Kim family remains in power. The current basis for legitimacy in the North Korean state revolves around the Kim family. The harsh reality of

the current situation in North Korea is best summed up by author and North Korea expert Andre Lankrov: "If a government is willing to kill as many people as necessary to stay in power, it usually stays in power for a very long time. There are many people who are not happy, there are many people who in the privacy of their bedrooms sometimes say something very, very subversive to their wives and most trusted friends. But no networks and no activities yet, because the government is brutal" (PBS Frontline: Secret state of North Korea).

Conclusion

The state level society is currently the largest power structure that exists within human society. State level societies rule and control the destinies and fates of millions, and billions, of human beings. For this reason it is imperative for us to understand the ways in which states practically derive their power. In the anthropological sense the ability of the state to influence power over its people can be divided into three types of power, which I have referred to as pillars. Each of these pillars is independent of the others and it is possible for two to exist where the other does not. What this thesis has labored to prove is that losing one of these pillars of power creates instability in the state, losing two of these pillars only heightens the instability, and should the state lose all three pillars of power then it will cease to exist.

The first of the pillars of power is control of the economic system and/or influence over the economic system, as well as control or influence over resource distribution. Cultural materialism has shown us that the priorities of society can be inferred from what resources and commodities are given the greatest attention. Within the example of the DPRK we saw how the controlled economic system was utilized by the government to control both the infrastructural and structural components of the economy. When the government was no longer able to provide that service people were forced to adapt to the new situation and the power over the infrastructural and structural elements became more distributed amongst the people through the new market based system. A group of people who previously had had little to no experience with any kind of free-market economic exchange were able to rapidly change from the distribution based

controlled economy into one where they were forced to do business for profit in order to survive. Much of North Korea's previous system and economy had been held up because the state had been able to successfully distribute needed resources to its people. Once those needs were no longer met people began to seek other methods to acquire the needed resources to survive.

The second pillar of power that was examined was the state's control or influence over of culture and the flow of information. Within the DPRK the government's complete and total control over all internal and external communication and the flow of information has been one of its most critical and important pillars of power. By limiting information and contact from the outside world the regime was able to create a political arena in which it had incredible advantage over any would be challenger. When examining the state's control of the flow of information as well as over the North Korean culture it was important to understand the context of Korean history. Certain historical periods such as the role played by the city of Pyongyang in the Three Kingdoms period, as well as the mythological importance of Mount Pektu, are of key importance in understanding the regime's propaganda as well as how the regime constructed the cult of Kim Il-sung. It is additionally important for this particular pillar to understand the concept of game theory. Understanding the normative rules as well as the pragmatic rules of politics in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is critical for understanding how the regime proceeded to exercise its control over information and culture to create a more compliant and loyal population. In particular one needs to understand the concept of Juche within the context of using Juche's tenets to create a moral team. The entire Korean system of information and cultural control is designed to create a moral team to maintain

control over the populace rather than a contract team which would be less loyal. This is also used to build up the cult of personality surrounding the Kims and to cement the people behind them into a moral team.

Additionally this practice of controlling and limiting the amount of outside information that is able to enter the country has helped the regime to create a political arena that creates a strong advantage for the Kim Family regime and marginalizes any potential political opponents. Control of information also allows the regime free reign in portraying the Kims as successful political men and, to an extent, economic men.

The third pillar of power in the state level society is the government's monopoly on the use of violence and force. This is based on Max Weber's assertion in his now famous speech "politics as a vocation". In the speech Weber asserts that the state not only has the ability to marshal large amounts of violent force but also has the ability to legitimize force. Elements such as legal systems and punishment are examples of the state monopoly on force and violence. With regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea this is of particular importance as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea not only utilizes a massive military and secret police force to enforce its will but also utilizes a system of prison camps as well as its now infamous system of three generations punishment, which is not practiced in any other state level society. Given the current situation within the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, especially with regard to the rise of the black markets and the increasing attempts of ordinary North Korean citizens to escape North Korea for China, this particular pillar of power has become even more important for the regime.

This combination of the direct control over the infrastructure and structure that makes up the economy pillar of power uses gift reciprocity and patronage to invest citizens in the system and make them morally indebted to the system. In addition to economic controls, by limiting and shaping the political arena through limiting and controlling information, the regime is able to build up the credentials and mythos of the Kim family as a political and economic men, even making them seem to have divine ability. Finally using the monopoly of force to enforce strict legal codes that keep deviants in line. The regime's goal is to keep the political arena favoring the regime and providing a support for the other two pillars of power. These paradigms in combination make up the proposed three pillars of state power within the DPRK. When the state controls these factors its ability to the control the population is almost complete. However when the state loses control of just one of these pillars of power then it becomes unsteady and vulnerable.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is at a critical tipping point in its history. It has an economy that has utterly failed for many years. It was under a famine that may have wiped out as much as 10% of its population and left an entire generation stunted. The famine period in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or the Arduous March, as it is now known, left what might be an irrevocable scar upon the nation’s psyche regardless of the careful propaganda that the state has attempted to weave using Korean history and culture to help create its ideal society. The death of Kim Il-sung, just before the start of the Arduous March may have preserved his legacy and reputation in the eyes of the people. The virtual economic collapse that happened during the Arduous March exposed people, or rather forced people, to engage in a makeshift capitalistic

barter market in order to survive. This created a black market that not only provided food and other essential items for sale but also smuggled in goods from China and South Korea. Everything from TVs and DVD players to South Korean movies and pop music were brought into the culture. The very act of turning on a television or radio to a foreign station to loading a thumb drive with foreign movies is a very bold display of active resistance as described by Scott. Perhaps more important, is the number of North Koreans who every year attempt the dangerous crossing over the Yalu and Tumen rivers into China. Before the Arduous March that number was under a thousand for the whole period of rule by Kim Il-sung. During and after the Arduous March, the number of North Koreans crossing into China swelled into the hundreds of thousands. Although the situation has improved slightly in North Korea, the economy is still in shambles and hunger and homelessness are still common. More importantly, the regime's once iron fisted control over communication and information, as well as manipulation of the culture, is starting to weaken. The regime of the young Kim Jong-un is left with only one truly reliable tool for maintaining control of its people, the monopoly of violence.

Currently the Democratic People's Republic of Korea faces its greatest challenge to authority from the new so-called "black-market generation". This refers to a generation of people, mostly the millennial generation that has grown up without any experience of the regime, being able to directly distribute resources. These people grew up having to survive conducting business in the country's burgeoning black market. As such they have grown up under a capitalist market place, and have very little direct loyalty to the regime other than the propaganda that was forced upon them. One of the major differences however is that this propaganda had to compete with increasing amounts of foreign

media as well as "footpath news", a system of word of mouth where news is passed from person to person and town to town, and accounts of the world outside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This combination of a lack of economic control as well as competing foreign media and information presents a greater threat to the stability of the current regime's hold on power than any previous external threat since the end of the Korean War. With this challenge to its first two pillars of state power the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is left only with the third as a stable basis of power, the monopoly on violence and force.

While North Korea has never been afraid to use violence and force to control its people, it has always done so only when a well-constructed and effective propaganda net and cultural indoctrination regime have failed to ensnare a relatively small number of people. There has been a strong reliance on the North Korean government being able virtually to control and/or keep out all outside cultural influence. That appears to no longer be possible. While one would not be so bold or hopeful to say that the collapse of the regime is imminent, one could say that the DPRK is in a critical stage and that the government is very vulnerable to collapse. This is especially relevant given the recent news out of North Korea that Kim Jong-un has dismissed his Uncle from the 2nd most powerful position in the country and publicly executed two of his Uncle's supporters. North Korea is an interesting case amongst nations. It reveals how a state can manipulate culture and history to create an incredibly compliant and loyal citizenry. It also demonstrates how the larger, direct control exerted by a state over its population creates an environment that is more susceptible to failure during periods of hardship. When one pillar of the state power fails, it can still maintain control, but if two pillars fail, the state

itself is in danger of failing with it.

Attempting to predict the downfall of an entire political regime is almost always an exercise in futility. Many of the most important geopolitical events of the 20th century were not predicted, examples including the fall of Soviet Union. While these events could not have been predicted, the potential for something to happen certainly could be seen by any educated observer. The current situation in Korea is certainly a tenuous one with the rise of the black-market generation. People are increasing willing to resort to forms of everyday "peasant" resistance against the regime and the regime's is increasingly unable to control the flow of information within the country. Given these developments, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's government finds itself in a very tenuous position. As stated earlier one can imagine the three pillars of power as legs of a stool, the more legs that are removed, the more unstable the regime becomes, and if all are removed then the whole government can fall apart. While the government still has a firm grasp on the military, as far as we know, the current situation and people's increasing frustration and willingness to combat the regime on certain issues shows that the regime's grasp on power is no longer as strong as it once was.

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