

# Analyzing the Use of Propaganda in North Korea

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**Abstract:** This paper talks about North Korea and how it was a colony of Japan and was formerly represented one country with South Korea. It talks about how the North Korean government uses propaganda to scare its enemies and controls its nations. It talks about how the North Korean Leader uses propaganda in order to achieve his objectives. In short, this paper describes how propaganda plays an important role in North Korea.

**Keywords:** Use of Propaganda, Role in North Korea.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

North Korea, a former colony of Japan is one of the East Asian countries. The country is considered to be more of a dictatorship with respect to its leadership style. The country does not depend on other world countries and this makes it consider itself as being self reliant. The state is in charge of the production means, that is, the ownership of major corporations is by the state. The country has over a relatively long period been isolated from other world countries. One of the key challenges that face the country is regular famines and lack of food security (Chen, Ko, & Lee, 2010).

The country has for a long time had strained relations with other global partners, especially its neighboring countries. Before being broken into the North and the South, Korea was one country. The relations between the North and the South are strained despite the two countries. Russia is one of the countries that has had positive relations with North Korea given that it has had its support since the times after its separation with the South. North Korea considers the U.S one of its greatest enemies and has made various threats towards the United States in the past (Berton, 2006).

## 2. PROPAGANDA ANALYSIS IN NORTH KOREA

### *The Warfare Metaphor:*

North Korea uses war as propaganda especially directed towards their immediate neighbors, South Korea and the United States. The country makes direct threats of invading their enemies from time to another. With relation to the use of war as a way of threatening its enemies, the North Korean leader is on many occasions seen preparing the army. The leader regularly orders military drills in preparation of war. The warfare metaphor used by the North is mainly aimed at threatening the enemies and is used as a show of the military might and capability of the North (Chen, Ko, & Lee, 2010).

In the use of the warfare metaphor, North Korea threatens destroying their enemies mercilessly, a term that has been used against the United States on several occasions. The threat of destruction of the enemy is mainly aimed at and to indicate that the country, North Korea would use lethal force against the enemies would not be capable of withstanding the destructive weapons that would be used against them.

### **Step 1: The Ideology and Purpose of the Propaganda Campaign:**

The propaganda that is used by North Korea is directed towards cementing a given ideology and achieving various goals and objectives.

***Political Ideology:***

The ideology that the propaganda used in North Korea aims at promoting is the Juche ideology which is centrally directed towards enhancing the development of a self sufficient economy and the ability of the country to rely on itself with respect to its military needs. The propaganda used in North Korea is also directed towards promoting the personality cult of Kim II-sung.

***Purpose of the Propaganda Campaign:***

The propaganda campaign that is propagated by North Korea is directed towards facilitating the achievement of the following purposes:

The propaganda that is used by the North is directed towards making the people of North Korea accept the Juche ideology that the government and leadership of the country propagates. This is one of the key objectives of the use of propaganda in this country (White, 2007).

The propaganda campaign promoted by North Korea is directed towards facilitating the establishment of grounds and values that would be applied in the process and practice of determination of the right and good thing in the society and the wrong thing in the Korean society.

The propaganda campaign used by North Korea is aimed and directed towards making the citizens of the country to view global countries as their enemies rather than friends who can be relied upon for purposes of facilitating sustainability (White, 2007).

The use of propaganda by the North is also directed towards making the citizens of the country to forget the impact of isolation of the country from other global countries. Propaganda is directed towards reflecting the country and the economy of the country as being self-sustained.

The use of propaganda by North Korea is also directed towards the organization of a relatively complex world into something that is relatively simple. The propaganda is also directed towards ensuring that the world appears as an understandable.

Propaganda Incorporates Elements of Ideology as references due to the following reasons:

The country has encountered relatively tough times and has undergone various struggles in the past. The situations and conflicts that the country has had in the past can be used to explain the incorporation of elements of ideology in the propaganda that it sponsors and uses (White, 2007).

The incorporation of elements of ideology in the propaganda used by North Korea can also be attributed to the frames that are currently existent in the country that are centers of reference. More importantly, the value systems of the country further explain ideological incorporation in the country's propaganda (Chen, Ko, & Lee, 2010).

The goals and objectives that the country aims at achieving in the future can be used to explain the incorporation of political ideology in the propaganda used by the country. The country perceives itself as a superior country given that it has been self-reliant, an aspect that is not possible for many global players.

**Step 2: The Context in Which Propaganda Occurs:**

Propaganda in North Korea consistently takes consideration of and reference to the historical backgrounds and encounters that the country has had. The country's propaganda quotes the injustices and negative occurrences that the country has gone through and encountered in the past. The propaganda also occurs through the various myths that the country have formulated. The myths are closely related to the historical injustices and negative experiences that the country has encountered. Propaganda also occurs in the public mood of the country which holds negative prejudice against the 'enemies' of North Korea (White, 2007).

***The use of Myth:***

The country's story of the past encounters with various world powers is one of the key contexts through which propaganda takes place. The country's story with relation to past encounters and experiences is true. However, the manner

in which the story is manipulated is directed towards beliefs that are false trying to make the country appear as being superior to its 'enemies'. The myths portray the country as being an inferior power to other world player (Merkel, 2010).

#### ***National Glory and National Suffering:***

Propaganda in North Korea is found in the context of the suffering that colonists from the United States underwent after they lost to the North Koreans. The story of the suffering of the colonists is actually true given that many lives were lost in the battle with the North Koreans. The suffering that the Americans went through is used to spread the propaganda of North Korea given that it was the sole reason why the colonists underwent the suffering irrespective of the fact that it was a great power then (Merkel, 2010).

The victory that North Korea had against the British is also used as propaganda against the British is another aspect used to propagate propaganda by North Korea. The country's victory against the British is used to reflect on how the country is strong and capable of winning against its enemies (Chen, Ko, & Lee, 2010).

The Pearl Harbor is another context which is used by North Korea in the propagation of propaganda. This is used as an indication of how easy it is for the country to easily and successfully win against its enemies, the United States in this case scenario.

#### ***Reshaping Myths/ Images:***

The myths that North Korea has been reshaped to reflect its enemies transformation one of them being Japan. Japan in the propaganda and myths is reflected as having transformed from a country that was a military power in the 1930's and 40's to a country that ended up being negatively affected by the atomic bomb attacks.

The reshaping of myths as context of propaganda reflects the transformation of Germany to a state that loves peace and that is totally anti fascist.

#### ***Prejudice / Hate:***

The propaganda used by North Korea supports the idea of application of xenophobia as a strategy that would be effective in facilitating media persuasion of the masses. Hatred is also reflected as a way of persuading the masses in the North Korean propaganda.

#### ***The use of Myth: National Stereotypes:***

North Korea has various national propaganda traits that it associates with itself. These include politeness, the country having a traditional and pride in itself. Some of these can be traced back to the achievements that it has achieved in the past against its enemies (Merkel, 2010).

Other national myths that the country associates itself with are and include being ruthless, aggressive and cunning.

#### **Step 3: Identification of the Propagandist:**

The government of this country and the ruling family to be more specific is in charge of the propagation of propaganda. The propagandist structures propaganda in a bid to ensure that it effectively fits their target goals and objectives or purpose.

#### **Step 4: Structure of Propagandist:**

The propagation of propaganda in North Korea is facilitated by individuals who hold strategic positions in the government. The individuals who sponsor and promote propaganda are strong and highly influential to the rest of the population an aspect that makes it to be taken up by the North Korean people to be the truth. The decision makers in North Korea are therefore in charge of promoting and spreading propaganda (White, 2007).

There is a great deal of consistency with respect to the spreading of propaganda in North Korea. The leadership of the country sets the tone for the spreading of propaganda to its citizens. This influences the country's citizens towards accepting and taking up the propaganda spread.

***Propaganda Organization:***

The culture of the government is greatly associated with insincerity and misleading towards its citizens. The Juche ideology is what is directed towards being promoted. The members of the government are primarily composed of the ruling family and the information is mainly released to the media for purposes of dissemination to the public (Berton, 2006).

***Source Credibility:***

The public perceives the source of propaganda as being superior and powerful. The authoritative and rather dictatorial nature of the government and the ruling family is the strategy used by the propagandist in identification with the public. The propagandist instills fear in those who have credibility in a community in order for them to support the propaganda that is advanced. The propagandist provides few opportunities for face to face contact (Merkel, 2010).

**Step 5: Target Audience:**

The target audience who are the intended consumers of the propaganda is the citizens of the country. The propagandist also aims the propaganda at the international media and global citizens in a bid to make the international players to get to know the power of the North Korea.

**Step 6: Media Utilization Techniques:**

There is a combination of media used in spreading the North Korean propaganda key among them being the international news media and the social media platforms. The flow of communication from one media to another is relatively quick and simple. The competing media is various internet platforms that try to dispute various propaganda spread by the North Korean government. The use of media has played a key role and has been successful in facilitating the spread of propaganda in the country (Berton, 2006).

**Step 7: Types of Techniques:**

The various techniques used include predispositions that the target audience has with respect to the negative projections with regards to other countries which they perceive as their enemies compose the best and most effective messages for propaganda for use by the Korean government. The beliefs, values and norms that are commonly held by the people are associated with the propaganda used.

***Rewards & Punishment:***

In order for the country to comply with foreign policy, many countries have curtailed the provision of aid to North Korea. In order to secure aid, the country is expected to fully comply with international laws and legislations (Chen, Ko, & Lee, 2010).

Fear, Intimidation

The North Korean government uses fear and intimidation on its citizens and other countries in spreading propaganda with regards to various issues. The use of intimidation and fear is directed towards silencing defectors.

**Arousal Of Emotions:*****Language:***

The language that is used in the spread of propaganda is sympathetic and sounds true making the 'enemies' to appear as being on the wrong with regards to various issues that are pointed out through the propaganda being spread.

***Music:***

Music is also used to spread propaganda in the country. In the use of music to spread propaganda, music spreads misleading information regarding various countries while giving praise for the government and making it appear as being clean and for the people. Music also uses sound and language making it as an effective tool for use in spreading propaganda. Music is used in the creation of memories with regards to past unpleasant experiences that create negative

images of enemies of enemies of North Korea. Music as a tool for use in propaganda is relatively diverse given that it is used in patriotic songs, religious songs, in the military and even in the National Anthem of North Korea (Merkel, 2010).

#### **Visual Symbols:**

Visuals and symbols are also used to spread propaganda. The various symbols of power that are used in spreading propaganda by North Korea include the concept of nationalism, patriotism and even unity. Patriotism in spreading propaganda depicts the country's citizens as being individuals who are united together and who should always devote themselves towards their country especially in the protection of the sovereignty of the country against enemies.

Nationalism is used in spreading propaganda in that the country tries to make the citizens of the country feel and appear to have been set aside from the rest of the world (Berton, 2006).

With respect to the use of visual symbols, there are various murals, manipulations, visual symbols, posters and art that are used for purposes of sponsoring propaganda in North Korea. Mainly, visual symbols are used to make the people to believe in the government and the leadership of the country to being on the right track and to be the people to believe in. This way, they get to reinforce their influence on the people.

#### **Step 8: Audience Reaction:**

The country's populations, who are the major target audience of the propaganda that is spread by the government, tend to register a relatively big number with respect to believing and support for the propaganda that is spread by the government. More importantly, the media in North Korea also pledges support for the propaganda that is widely spread by the government and worse still, supports the spread of propaganda by the government by providing a medium for propaganda by the government. The country polls relatively high with respect to belief and support of propaganda spread by the government (Chen, Ko, & Lee, 2010).

Media reports in a big way support the government and acts in solidarity with the government. The various media which are mainly state owned or controlled is made to take up propaganda and subsequently spread it to the citizens of North Korea. The international media does not however support and idolize the leadership of the government like the North Korean media does.

#### **Step 9: Counterpropaganda:**

Various organizations and media across the world have worked towards countering the propaganda that is spread by the North Korean government through various avenues. In countering propaganda, organizations and media provide information regarding misleading aspects and concepts by North Korea. The news agencies and organizations point out on the misdeeds and evils that are committed by the government of North Korea and propaganda used to cover up. These activities have played a key and an integral role in countering propaganda by the North Korean government (Berton, 2006).

Various movies and films have been made in a bid to counter the North Korean propaganda though many of these have been banned in North Korea. The movies are used to depict the negative aspects of the country's leadership one of the latest of these being 'The Interview'.

#### **Step 10: Effects:**

The propaganda that is used by North Korea had had various effects on the word especially its adjacent enemies and close neighbors who have had strained relations in the past. The country's propaganda has from time to time instilled fear in the neighboring countries. This is one of the negative impacts that propaganda by the North has had (Films for the Humanities & Sciences (Firm), & Films Media Group, 2006).

The propagandist, who is the government and the ruling family, has been capable of achieving the target goals and objectives. The majority of the people of North Korea support the government due to the influence of the propaganda spread and the image of the country globally is perceived as being superior due to the attention it gets from various international players. These aspects indicate that propaganda has really worked in achieving some of the intended goals

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