



**UNIVERSITY OF
TWENTE.**

University of Twente

Faculty of Behavioural, Management & Social Sciences

1st Supervisor: Dr. Minna van Gerven-Haanpaa

Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster

Institut für Politikwissenschaft

2nd Supervisor: Björn Goldstein, M.A.

Militaristic propaganda in the DPRK

The heritage of Songun-Politics in the Rodong-Sinmun under Kim
Jong-Un

Julian Muhs

Matr.- Nr.: 384990

B.A. & B.Sc

Schorlemerstraße 4

StudentID; s1610325

Public Administration

48143 Münster (Westf.)

(Special Emphasis on European
Studies)

004915141901095

julian-muhs@gmx.de

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1. Introduction

"[...] the Government of the Republic will implement with all consistency the line of independence, self-sustenance, and self-defense to consolidate the political independence of the country (chaju), build up more solidly the foundations of an independent national economy capable of insuring the complete unification, independence, and prosperity of our nation (charip) and increasing the country's defense capabilities, so as to safeguard the security of the fatherland reliably by our own force (chawi), by splendidly embodying our Party's idea of juche in all fields."

(Kim Il-Sung in Li 1972: 156)

Juche became the dominating ideology of the DPRK under Kim Il-Sung, who introduced these principles in his so-called Juche-speech in 1955 (Myers 2014: 780). His theories and thoughts strongly considered the DPRK's independence and autarky from all foreign influences, including Maoist China and the Soviet Union. While his version of Juche was mainly based on economic autarky, political independence and military security, his successor Kim Jong – Il emphasized the military. His “Military-First” or “Songun” politics prioritized the development of the military and fiscal expenses for it over the other two dimensions: political independence and economic autarky. This work aims at exploring how the DPRK under Kim Jong – Un's deals with the heritage of his predecessor's Songun politics and the standing of the military by taking a look at contemporary propaganda and its use for the regime. I want to know, how the military dimension of Juche is presented in the North Korean media and more specifically, if there are indications that the three Juche dimensions are equally considered or if the prioritization of the military might prevail. Therefore I will conduct a qualitative content analysis of the worker's party's daily newspaper – the Rodong-Sinmun. This newspaper has an English version available online since February 2011 including an archive which dates back about one year, so that a comparison between the content under Kim Jong-II and his son Kim Jong-Un is not possible. The publications caught my eye as it surprised me to see English content on such a regular basis, provided by possibly the most clandestine and closed country in the 21st century and that a well conducted content analysis could actually provide some interesting insights or as Young Whan Kihl and Hong Nack Kim state it in the preface of their collection of essays called “North Korea – the politics of regime survival”: “The DPRK [...] has become a modern-day “Hermit Kingdom”, isolated from the rest of the world.

In this age of globalization [...], however, no country can remain secluded for long” (Kihl/Nack 2006: X) What makes this insight even more relevant is that “It is the regime’s awareness of the pending legitimacy crisis, [...] which makes it even more provocatively on the world stage.” (Myers 2010: 17). I do have the impression that the scientific material as well as the primary sources is far more diverse and rich of multilayer content than European media take into account. To find a well-grounded and complex attitude towards the DPRK in Europe it is important to consider possible ideological changes and to understand North Korean rhetoric better. I hope to provide an additional insight in the contemporary DPRK’s politics in order to provide such a source to better classify and judge this capricious country, which is missing to some extent in the European perspective towards North Korea. To account for validity I will develop the theoretical background of North Korean Ideology and its leadership as well as the theoretical framework for press and propaganda in the DPRK. I will furthermore critically assess the primary source material provided by the Rodong-Sinmun. During my research I found different versions of Romanization of Korean terms. I decided to use the term “Juche” for the government ideology and the names Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il and Kim Jong-Un for the three leaders of the DPRK. Furthermore I will use the term “Rodong-Sinmun” for the worker’s party newspaper that I will analyse in this work.

2. Theoretical Framework

This part is divided in different sub-themes such as the role of the media in the DRPK and to be more specific the special role of the Rodong-Sinmun. Furthermore I will introduce the leading North Korean Ideology “Juche” with an emphasis on its military dimension. This will help to better understand the categories and their content within the analysis itself. The North Korean ideological development is important to consider when looking at their propaganda and serves to better comprehend the context and underlying meaning of the articles. As the role of the media develops together with the overall North Korean ideology this will also be represented in the structure of this part.

3.1. North Korean Ideology from Marxism-Leninism to Juche

Kim Il-Sung introduction of the concept of “Juche” in 1955 can be seen in the context of first De-Stalinization approaches in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and is now the leading ideological concept for the DPRK (Myers 2014: 779). The De-Stalinization represented a major thread to the leading position of Kim Il-Sung and his son Kim Jong-Il as Khrushchev strongly criticized personal cults and introduced a collective form of leading to the Soviet Union. In this context, Kim Il-Sung tried to detach himself and the DPRK from the Soviet Union by introducing their own ideology. This Juche – ideology includes three different dimensions of flexibility and autarky (Frank 2008: 381), namely political (chaju), economical (charip) and military autarky (chawi). Kim Il-Sung’s 1955 – Juche Speech (Park 1995: 129) can be considered the starting point of Juche in the context of Sino-Soviet tensions. Kim Il-Sung laid down more specifically in 1965 during a visit in Indonesia, what he considered to be fundamental elements of the Juche-Ideology. “[Kim Il-Sung] delivered a speech about three principles of his post-colonial revolutionary philosophy known collectively as juche’e (spirit of self-reliance [...]: independence in politics; self-reliance in the economy; and self-defence in the military.” (Heonik/Chung 2012:139f). Consequently, after 1965 the term Juche became more and more present in North Korean politics and subsequently replaced Marxism-Leninism as the leading ideology of the DPRK (Kihl/ Kim 2006: 8). While on the one hand, Juche is defined by the DPRK itself as the “creative application of Marxism-Leninism” to the conditions of North Korea, scholars view Juche at least as much connected to (Neo-) Confucianism (Myers 2014:780) and thereby try to explain the authoritarian and nationalist dimensions of Juche, as for example David West states: “The fundamental question of philosophy of Juche is the position and role of man in the world” (David-West 2011:106). This is also dis-

played by the slogan “we live in our own way” that emerged in the 1980s (Nahm 1994: 280). So “Juche” is not only about doctrines of autarky but also about philosophical implications about the position and possibilities of the people. A communist society in the DPRK is to be reached by the process of the “three revolutions” – namely anti-imperialist fights, the socialist revolution and the abolishment of capitalism and finally the establishment of communism. To reach a communist society, a special consciousness towards ideology or an “ideological education” and a strong individual and collective pursuit of independence (Park 1995: 533) is needed. According to Juche this pursuit and the creative forces of the people make up the central characteristic of the North Korean people and their revolutionary activities. These Juche principles actually not only meant an adaption to Korean conditions for building a socialist society, they also partly meant turning away from Marxist-Leninist thoughts and ideology and anticipated turning further away from the leading socialist nations – the Soviet Union and Maoist China. On the one side, the peaceful coexistence between the West and the Soviet Union under Chruschtschow threatened the DPRKs plans of Korean reunification under a communist rule, on the other side an involvement in Mao’s latent conflict with the Soviet Union would have had a potential destabilizing effect on the regime. This new orientation against the two leading socialist neighbours can exemplary be portrayed by the Rodong-Sinmun, which several times clearly criticized the USSR and China in the 1960 (Park 1995: 132).

The dimension of political independence includes the ideology of Juche itself as a declaration of political independence from the Soviet Union and China but also includes a personal, dynastical cult around the DPRK’s leaders. Kim Il-Sung mainly tried to establish his leading role, as well as his successors with propagandistic efforts like presenting himself as the “superior brain” and introducing authoritarian Hobbesian concepts of the state with him at the top leading body of the North Korean people (David-West 2011: 110). In the end there were not even formal elections for the successors Kim Jong-Il and Kim Jong-Un but they were considered to be leaders “by acclamation” (Kihl/ Kim 2006: 6) while formally Kim Il-Sung is according to the 1998 constitution still the “Eternal President of the Republic [...]” (Heonik, Chun: 2012: 139f). Anderson defines the relation between dynasty and nation as following: “Both [dynasty and religion] were regarded as unquestionable [...] in their bloom, just like the nation today.” (Own translation, Anderson 1996: 20). He adds, “even 1914 members of dynasties represented a majority in the global political system, but many rulers reached out to national signs as the old basis for legitimacy slowly faded.” (Own translation, Anderson 1996: 29). Although Anderson most likely refers to European kingdoms we can see that dynasties and nationalism can complement each other. I consider this to be the main reason for the ideo-

logical goal of political autarky – to justify and legitimate the own authoritarian rule and the pursuit of autarky and independence. So this understanding of political autarky serves as an argument for establishing dynastical rule as Kim Il-Sung created a Stalinist inspired cult around himself, not only by omnipresent propaganda about his achievements, but also by mystifying his origin or, according to Britannica.com: “The omnipresent personality cult sponsored by Kim was part of a highly effective propaganda system that enabled him to rule unchallenged for 46 years over one of the world’s most isolated and repressive societies” (Britannica.com 2015). While nationalism in the Western world was used in order to find a new legitimate basis for leadership, the religious and dynastical reasons seemed not to fit modern thought anymore. Nevertheless, DPRK leadership still uses both arguments for them, the religious dimension becomes clearer when taking a closer look at the mystifications of the Kims (Hassig; Oh 2009: 54ff). Kim Il-Sung is said to have engaged in anti-imperialist fights at the young age of seven years – his name is connected to a series of fights against the Japanese, but mostly due to the fact, that his activities during that time were overemphasised by propaganda after he came into power, or because these activities and actions were taken by others but afterwards claimed by Kim Il-Sung. After his death, Kim Jong-Il introduced the Juche calendar, starting with his year of birth, so that year 1912 in the Gregorian calendar matches with year 1 in the Juche calendar (Hassig; Oh 2009: 53). Kim Jong-Il mystified his birth as officially an extraordinary bright star and a double rainbow predicted it. When Kim Jong-Il died the national news agency KCNA reported about a crane, walking around a statue of Kim Jong-Il in the mountains and at the moment of his death, the crane supposedly left to Pyongyang, showing, that even nature admires the Korean leader. Even Kim Jong-Un’s birth became mystified after he came into office. The Rodong-Sinmun reported about him being “born by heaven”. The Kims are also omnipresent in statues and pictures in the DPRK are another part of his personal cult (Portal 2005: 82). These places become a cult site and have to be kept well at any time, as well as pictures, quotes and their names have to be highlighted at any time (Frank 2008: 377) According to Juche and its roots in Confucianism harmony can be reached when everyone is at his/her place and works for the establishment of socialism and Juche. This, in the case of the DPRK, also implies a purification of the own people, which also serves to legitimate the consequent separation from the rest of the world. In this case, we more specifically speak of ethnocentrism, which seems contradictory to internationalist communist ideology but becomes dissolved by declaring the people to be the sovereign working under the guidance of the party not only to establish socialism but also to fight imperialism and to achieve national independence (Sasse 1995: 164). North Korean officials not only

praise the work of its own people, North Koreans also refer to themselves as “the cleanest race” – adding a racial and social Darwinist dimension to DPRK’s ideology (Myers 2010: 14). This “clean race” traces back to the Japanese colonial rule, where propagandists hoped to win the support of the Koreans, by presenting them as part of the superior Japanese race. North Korean propagandists used this myth to make Koreans the only superior and clean race by omitting the Japanese. When talking about the relation between the Korean people the connection seems clear: “The Korean people are too pure blooded, and therefore too virtuous, to survive in this evil world without a great parental leader.” (Myers 2010: 15).

The Juche-Ideology intended to foster national self-reliance and – as a long-term goal – national autarky while at the same time, the Kim-regime managed to play China and the USSR off against each other in order to gain financial and economic support. According to Britannica.com autarky is defined as: “the state of being self-sufficient at the level of the nation.” while at the same time it is stated that “There is general agreement that no modern nation, regardless of how rich and varied its resources, could really practice self-sufficiency” (Britannica 2015). This pursuit of independence and sovereignty finds itself at that time in nearly every policy field and is a key to understand the current situation the DPRK is in, as well as its big dilemma. Only a small part of the territory of the DPRK can be used for agriculture while many natural resources and industrialisation processes under the Japanese occupation would favour a export orientated economy this is not possible – mainly for ideological reasons, as Juche strongly opposes this kind of economic orientation in favour of approaches towards autarky. Until today, the socialist economy of the DRPK is ambivalent as there is on the one side a strong and advanced development of nuclear energy and a missile program while basic agricultural improvements hold off. The North Korean economy still is characterized by official distributions of goods instead of a working market so that money does not play such an important role in a hardly working price system (Frank 2014: 152). The national currency “ Won” furthermore belongs to the non-convertible currencies so that the DPRK can only limitedly participate on world markets due to a lack of foreign exchanges (Frank 2014: 153f). When looking at current developments in North Korean economy there are some approaches leading away from the ideal of total autarky. North Korea cooperates mostly with China to extract and export natural resources. This foreign currency income would be enough to reach security of the food supply so that it seems that the prioritisation of other policy fields is politically motivated (Hassig; Oh 2009: 92). There tends to be a problem in reaching both – economic development and the build – up of the military (Fritz 2004: 83)

One central contribution to the development of the Juche ideology can be seen in the Military-First or “Songun” politics under Kim Jong-Il who strongly favoured the military over independence in politics and economy – the other two dimensions of Juche (Myers 2014: 788). Although the development of heavy industry had always been one major goal of the DPRK, it is important to consider, that slightly before Kim Jong-Il succeeded his father as leader of the DPRK in 1994, the end of the Soviet Union and many Socialist states especially in Europe meant a major threat to the stability of the regime. The term “Songun” was first introduced in the 1990s and later in 2009 even included in the constitution, even though since the Korean War the “militarization of North Korea nearly reached its natural limit” (Frank 2014: 102). The explanation Rüdiger Frank presents lies in a quotation from the Rodong-Sinmun, which states that it’s not the working class but the military that is the driving force of the Socialist revolution (Frank 2008: 385). Without going into detail about the antagonism of this attribution of importance to the military with socialist theory the vast impact the military has in the DPRK is obvious. Hostility towards a common enemy is one characteristic supporting nationalism and nation building (Sasse 1995:172). This hostility from North Korea and towards it seems omnipresent in the history of the DPRK. Not only the colonial rule under the Japanese occupation but also the two great communist powers USSR and China and of course the West and especially the USA created a threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity ever since. Even the strongest ally, China, could not be considered a reliable partner referring to Korea as “lips and teeth” and thereby reducing it to a buffer state. This marks one important dimension of North Korean nationalism and gives an insight in the motivations behind military strength as well as its conflict-orientated propaganda. The turn to value the military over the working class is just one more indicator for the overall ideological development of the DPRK away from socialism and their leaders and strongest representing states. The nationalistic Juche – ideology is not a creative application of Marxism-Leninism but a negation of it in favour of nationalism, personal cult and the primacy of the military - the Songun- Politics and their representation in the constitution of 2009 show that exemplary. The impact these politics had on North Korea since the end of the war are also clear. The DPRK has the biggest standing army in relation to its population in the world and shows frequently its strength by nuclear tests and missile launches. In opposition to the other two members of George Bush’s “Axis of Evil”, North Korea also has a substantial navy and air force (Howard 2004: 807). There are several explanations for the purpose of the Songun-Politics, which might lay in stabilizing the government, preventing the rise of a bourgeoisie as well as to maintain national independence and prevent foreign interventionism. This last explanation is present in North Korean publications

ever since the Korean War. The (North) “Korean Review” for example introduces the chapter “9. South Korea under the occupation of US Imperialism” with a quotation of Kim Il-Sung stating: “The US imperialists have enforced colonial rule in south Korea and turned it into a military base for their aggression against the whole of Korea and Asia” (Korean Review 1974: 141). This worldview is still present or at least it serves the propagandistic purposes of the North Korean leadership as current and regular threats by North Korean nuclear test and the constant improvement of missile program has to be regarded in the context of maintaining their independence from the western powers. While it might seem unpredictable, crazy or even reckless how the DRPK acts in questions of their national defence, this primacy of the military as well as their threats towards the West especially towards the US must be seen in context of their overall ideological change and current geostrategic position. Nationalist Juche – ideology as an overall guideline and the interest of the ruling elite as well as the successful international negotiations since 1994 set the framework for such an evaluation of the DPRK’s military efforts and the Songun-politics. Keeping these conditions in mind, the military threats not only served the regime in domestic questions as a legitimization for cutting on the supply of its people, but also gave the regime importance in the global political system. Furthermore by posing such a threat to its close neighbours the DPRK successfully maintains its sovereignty because an intervention would only be possible with many victims and heavy economic backlashes. North Korean officials managed to negotiate foreign aid as a trade-off to either shut down their nuclear program for a certain time span or to stop military incidents especially with South Korea. These are just some of the arguments explaining the North Korean interest in a strong military. Their foreign propaganda can be seen as part of this strategy to keep the regime on the radar of global defence politics.

This clearly points out, that not only Juche is dominating North Korean politics in theory and practice but especially Songun-Politics became the most substantial principles of North Korean internal and external politics. They make up the intellectual justification for the separation of the country from the global markets and international exchange, for the cult around their respective leader, the economic shortages and especially for the need to be able to defend themselves, if necessary also against the united forces of western states under the guidance of the United States. Juche and Songun can therefore be seen as sources and catalysts of militarism in the DPRK.

3.2. Press Theory between Marxism-Leninism and Juche

As socialist press theory finds its origins in the thoughts of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

who wanted the press to be free and independent and saw their purpose in educating the masses and to organise the political left against the bourgeoisie. To be able to reach these goals, the means of production in this area had to be available to the proletarians. Without excess to these utilities, the press would remain an instrument of the suppression of the working people (Park 1995: 12; 22). Marx' and Engels' idea of the press were determined by their thought that power over language and communication means to have – after all – power over the people so that freedom and emancipation can only be achieved through proletarian control over the media.

Lenin strongly contributed to these thoughts. He emphasised the avant-garde role of the party in leading the proletarian revolution and therefore constructed not only the “Party of a new Kind” but also the “Press of a new Kind”. He formulates a clear subordination of the press under the party and a clear orientation towards committing to spread the ideals of the revolution, which meant to be an organ of the press rather than an independent observer. With Lenin, socialist press theory clearly becomes authoritarian and loses its liberal implications that have been part of Marxist ideology still. For Lenin, the main purpose of the press is to organize revolutionary activities, to educate, agitate and to serve propagandistic aims. In his essay “Where to start” he states: “The press is not only a collective propagandist, a collective agitator but also a collective organizer.”. Agitation is described as a strategy to influence the peoples' will and their actions by using clear examples from their daily lives and experiences while propaganda should provide the theoretical framework and the ideological basis of Marxism-Leninism. Furthermore propaganda is described as the communication of many ideas to some or many people, while agitations are about communicating few ideas to a much bigger audience (Bussemer 2008: 227). The press in Marxism and Leninism plays an important role in supporting revolutionary activities and especially the proletarian workers parties. Questions about the freedom of the press have to be answered under the primacy of who benefits from possible freedoms, which class is supported and in whose interest these freedoms might lay (Revesz 1968: 163). Stalinist press theory does only differ in a few minor questions from Lenin's thoughts as he agrees on the subordination of the press under the party and sees its main purpose in serving revolutionary activities and the building of a socialist and ultimately communist society. In practice he tried to gain personal control over the Soviet press in order to stabilize and consolidate his leading position. He furthermore emphasizes the organisational function over propaganda and agitation and introduces the concept of the “Revolution from Above”. Mao shaped the function of the press in building a socialist society in 1939 when he emphasized the importance of a newspaper that is bound to the workers par-

ty and not independent from it. In 1948 Mao stated: The role and the power of the press consists in its ability to present the program and the party's goals [...] to the masses as fast and as extensive as possible (own translation; Park 1995: 31; 36). Besides the clear implications of agitation and propaganda, Mao furthermore saw the press' value for organizing society, the party and revolutionary activities. This organisational value lies – for Mao – in creating a contact between the party and its organs and the people to mobilise them and to bring revolutionary thoughts to them (Klaschka 1991: 99). These purposes are laid down in his concept of the so-called Mass line “from the masses and once again go to the masses” (Mao 1943:119). But besides these instrumental purposes that clearly aim for establishing the party's rule and afterwards to maintain it, Mao also included measures of critique and self-critique in his thoughts, one strong example for this is the Hundred Flowers Campaign where people were encouraged to freely share their opinion about drawbacks and possible improvements.

Marxist-Leninist theory is the framework for socialist states and their leaders, including Stalin and Mao but especially in the case of the DPRK we can observe some adjustments and some changes in order to apply the ideology to the specific conditions in the country itself but also in order to maintain power for the leading regime. Like Mao and Stalin, Kim Il-Sung also specified the role of the press and its purpose in his own thinking. Kim Jong-Il, as Kim Il-Sung's son and successor, established the Juche ideology and implied changes in the media and their role, too. While Kim Il-Sung's thinking was strongly influenced on the anti-Japanese anti-imperialist fights and the attempts to gain and establish power within the state, Kim Jong-Il and his Juche-Press further focused not only on anti-Japanese and anti-imperialist purpose of the press but furthermore included cultural education, the Dschontza-Doctrine and the function to foster and push the overall structural changes. The method of the anti-Japanese partisans involves publications of different individuals from among the masses in their own language according to their place in society but with a common revolutionary purpose. This definition implies a major role change from the pure reception to the production of publications. This approach finds its main argument in the potential identification of the people with the publications because of their close relation to everyday-life and can be practically seen in the “worker's correspondents” in the Rodong-Sinmun. The function of cultural education stems from the initial phase of building up North Korean socialism and aims at educating the masses and improving their cultural and revolutionary selves (Park 1995: 39; 72). In the Juche-Ideology, the arts and especially the press plays a crucial role in educating the people to become true and sovereign communists who will then help to build up North Korean communist society. This was the main purpose of the press especially under Kim Jong-Il in the

1970s and 1980s (Park 1995: 64). The purpose of supporting the speed of development and pushing this forward is an attempt to maximize production under a minimum of time. The Dschontza-Doctrine is crucial for understanding the leaders influence and impact on the content of the publications. While the Kims are even somehow famous for pictures of their “field instructions”¹, even in pop-culture², these instructions actually do have an enormous impact on North Korean society as they unconditionally determine the way of acting in the specific field. The Dschontza-Doctrine is a continuation of these “field instructions”. It means for the press to be able to produce the right and legitimate content by strongly orientating on the words of the leader. This way, Kim Jong-Un and the North Korean workers party crucially influences the content of all press publications, including the Rodong-Sinmun. Taking a look at the theoretical precursors I consider this as one consequent way of implementation of Lenin’s theory of the “Press of a new kind”. The Dschontza-Doctrine can therefore be seen as a synonym for “leading” the unfree and fully dependant press.

The press system in the DPRK is hierarchically structured. Regional newspapers as well as newspapers for specific organisations and collectives orientate on the three nationwide publications by the names Mindzu Dschosun and Pyongyang Sinmun (Government’s newspapers) and the Rodong-Sinmun (Party’s newspaper). Because the control over the press lies in the party and the Council on Ministers (Park 1995: 110) it is difficult to see one of these newspapers to be more important or “leading”. Nevertheless I focus on the Rodong-Sinmun as the newspaper with the longest tradition (daily published since 1946) and because of the fact that in socialist states, the party’s direct publications tend to be path breaking. Han S. Park states referring to the Rodong-Sinmun: “As the official publication of the Party, this daily paper is the primary source of both domestic and international news.” And adds that “practically all citizens have easy access to the paper” (Park 2002: 54). It is the newspaper with the biggest run of about 600.000 editions (Moon 2015). To give an impression about the importance of this newspaper it is helpful to consider the overall dimension of the editorial staff. There are twelve departments with about 100 to 120 editors each, not including so-called “workers correspondents”. These correspondents go back to traditional Maoist press theory and its demand to interact with the working class and to use their own language in reference to the “Mass-Line”. To furthermore emphasize the importance of the Rodong-Sinmun it is useful to take a look at the leading editors and especially the commissioning editor. His position in the politi-

¹ These field-instructions include advices from the leaders to solve specific problems. In combination with the personal cult around these leaders these advices are presented like extraordinary wisdom and therefore become a guideline for any further action in this field (PSOA 378)

² Kim Jong-Un looking at things ; Kim Jong-Il looking at things etc. AUFRUFE

cal system can be compared to a vice prime minister (Park 1995: 112). The composition of the six-page long daily newspapers follows the same pattern for every edition. The first page is dedicated to Kim Jong-Un, page two to four deal with domestic topics, page five deals with propaganda against South Korea and the back page is dedicated to international issues (Holloway 2011: 25).

Given these insights in Socialist and especially North Korean press theory, the function and composition of the Rodong-Sinmun and the methodological explanations concerning the purpose of these publications I deduce that this website and its content can be summarized under the concept of “propaganda”. Britannica.com defines propaganda to be “the more or less systematic effort to manipulate other people’s beliefs, attitudes, or actions by means of symbols”, while Schubert/Klein define it as “the written, oral or otherwise, newly also electronically, distribution of beliefs, often connected to further personal efforts of persuasion.” (Schubert/Klein 2011). The requirements of “electronically written symbols” are clearly met by Rodong-Sinmun, as well as the question of manipulation and persuasion as they are substantial parts of the function of socialist North Korean press. As we see “propaganda” and “agitation” are considered a substantial part of cultural education by socialist thinkers, especially in Lenin’s thought (Bussemer 2008: 225), once again emphasizing the central position, the press and the Rodong-Sinmun are in.

This insight in North Korean press theory under the influence of especially Juche shows, why the content of the Rodong-Sinmun can ultimately be traced back to the leadership of the party and the state, as well as the general importance of the press, propaganda and indoctrination in North Korea by using the media, among the printed press. The Rodong-Sinmun can be considered as the most important press publication in North Korea and its online archive, which is available in the English language is a mean to present the North Korean view towards the world and towards itself to an international audience. Therefore, the content of this newspaper represents a substantial insight in the way North Korea wants to be seen in the world by giving insights into their interpretation of global and national political situations. Thereby the articles resemble the leadership's attitude towards political prioritizations which I want to investigate in this study. By considering the theory laid down in this chapter one can draw a straight line of causality from the content of the articles to the ruling elite of the DPRK.

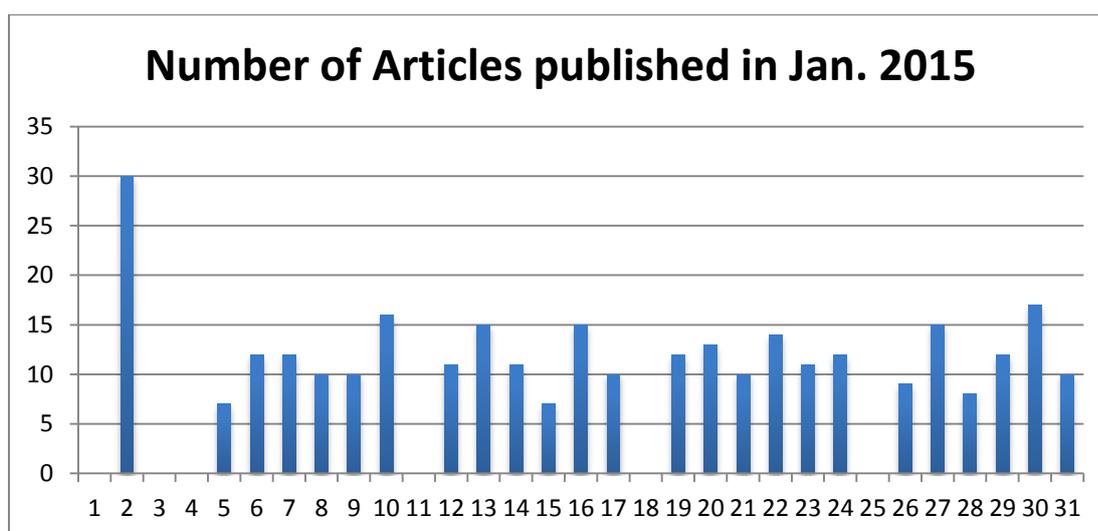
3. Methodology

With respect to the state of source material and the aim of my research, I will conduct a qualitative content analysis. Such a qualitative approach necessarily needs pre-work, considering finding the overall research question, finding and defining terms and categories and selecting criteria for the analysis. I decided to apply a non-standardized, qualitative content analysis as in my opinion it is the most practical way to include the specific characteristics of the DPRK and its external propaganda. Its unique position in world politics makes it hard to find methodological approaches that consider the conditions under which these works are published, so that an individualistic study that develops its operationalization in the context of this work will fit my research project best. Furthermore the qualitative content analysis emphasises the actual significance and meaning in the specific context, which is essential in my opinion, considering the ideological characteristics of the DPRK and the overall guiding question, which role Songun-Politics play in the foreign propaganda of the DPRK in its self-perception considering the three main dimensions of Juche. This methodological approach leaves space for special considerations of context, cultural distinctiveness and alternative explanations for social phenomena (Meyen et. al.: 153). A first summarizing step in the analysis will be followed by an explicating part (Flick 2009: 150). For the clearness of the methodology I will omit any standardized operationalization and try to keep calculations to a minimum as theories of chance only successfully apply if every unit of observation does have a calculable chance to be part of the sample, which does not apply to this work. I actively selected the cases (Merten 1995: 284) for this study according to the following criteria. I wanted to analyse a set of articles, that are dominant in the propagandistic strategy, that are meaningful and significant for my research question and that ideally develop a line of argumentation that deals with the military as well as the “Supreme Leaders”. The source for this content analysis is the website of the North Korean Workers’ Party’s newspaper – the Rodong-Sinmun. The Rodong-Sinmun is one of the nationwide newspapers in the DPRK and like I will further describe, is the central press institution in the DPRK, which has an English online archive available since February 2011 under <http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/>. From this archive I selected a set of articles dealing with the role of the military, external military threat and the role of the “Supreme Leaders” Kim Il- Sung, Kim Jon-Il and Kim Jong-Un who also represent the Commander in Chief of the North Korean army forces. These articles are selected from January 2015, because of the central and path-breaking role the New Year’s Editorial does play. Hassig and Oh state, that “No item published in North Korea receives more attention from North Koreans or is read

more carefully by foreign analysts” (Hassig, Oh 2009: 141) . This editorial is usually written by the current “Supreme Leader” – in this case Kim Jong-Un – and lays down his political agenda for the following year. In the aftermath, I expect references to this editorial in further publications, also regarding questions of the military and foreign threats. This means that my selection of articles can be traced back to this central event of the publication of the New Year’s Editorial as well as a thematic selection according to the general content of these articles. A direct comparison to the publications under Kim Jong-Il was not possible, as the archive dates back only about one year in retrospect. As a starting point I deductively constructed categories (Pfeiffer; Püttmann 2011: 67) for this content analysis that might be supplemented inductively during the analysis. My categories will only be specified in this first step by additional open rhetorical questions to give a better impression about their function but on the other side to not anticipate expected results or to further influence the researcher’s attitude towards the content. These category-drafts that I expect to develop and expand during the research itself are to be divided into a formal part and a content-orientated part (Meyen et. al. 2011: 155). By these formal categories I expect to operationalize the attribution of importance by the editors to the content. The first category will be the “*placement*” of the article in the context of the rubrics, the department and the order and layout in the archive. I want to ask here how the article is presented to the reader. The second formal category will be about the *form of representation of the article* and will therefore include questions about the genre of the article as well as the fonts used and additional illustration. The *content-based categories* as a third category for my analysis will include the actors, more specifically the question of who is the author, and to whom the articles refer and who else might be explicitly or implicitly mentioned. Another minor category might be used stylistic devices like metaphors (Herzog 2012: 84), but also sarcasm or analogies. From a first look at the material I do not expect this to play a major role as the articles are mostly kept in an unemotional down-to-earth tone. The fourth and last and for my research most central category will be about “*frames*”. These “frames” should include the core arguments and statements from the sources in the specific field of the research questions and will be divided in the sub-categories of “Problem-definition”, a “Weighting and assessment” of this problem and its sources, the formulation of “objectives” and suggested political “solutions”. These frames will not necessarily be obvious, explicit or will be linked in the text but could also be embedded in the context (Meyen et. al. 2011: 156). By this, I try to find out the self-concept and perception of the DPRK in terms of the role of the military. These categories will make up the main model of my categorical analysis system although there will be additions made in the research process.

I will consider problems of reliability, validity and plausibility by working systematically (Früh 2015: 68); following content analytical rules and proceed with respect to theoretical methodology, because “meaning is constructed in a social process” (own translation; Froschauer 2009: 33). Especially I will consider my subjective perception of the content (Klammer 2005: 265) and try to reflect on it in my analysis. This will also serve the reader to better understand the results of this evaluation. Furthermore, the material used in this analysis will be provided to the reader in a separate document in order to strengthen intersubjective traceability of the analysis and its findings. To avoid further problems of reliability I introduce into a systematic critical assessment of the source material (Weischer 2007: 317) with regards to the context of the production, which information was available for the authors and in whose interest did they write, who edited the texts and in whose responsibility does the final publication lays. As I explain in this work, the editors responsible for the content are bound to the political leadership and cooperate in the editorial department with domestic editors. Therefore, the content can be traced back to the political elite so that the Rodong-Sinmun can be considered to represent the (journalistic) centre of power. I expect to find conclusions and inferences to the intentions and the self-concept of the communicator, which in this case can be traced back to the ruling political elite of Pyongyang. When first taking a look at the source material, this website provides, it is obvious that the audience the articles are directed to is international instead of (North) Korean due to the accessibility via internet and the English language. I do not know if the Korean and the English versions have the same content and I do not have any information whether the online version is congruent with the print versions available in the DPRK. Consequently, my findings will only apply to external propaganda. Possible intentions of the political elite in presenting themselves and the DPRK have to be reflected, too. Referring to this question Myers wrote about North Korean propaganda: “Generally speaking the following rule of thumb applies: the less accessible a propaganda outlet is to the outside world, the blunter and more belligerent it will be in its expression of the racist orthodoxy.” (Myers 2010: 18). Nevertheless North Korea also has an interest in publishing its propaganda, in order to introduce their ideology to people sympathizing with the regime, especially in South Korea and Japan, where the biggest communities of North Koreans outside the DPRK live. I expect the different dimensions of the propaganda to be not obvious (Hassig, Oh 2009: 166) but hidden, so that an in-depth analysis of the source material seems necessary to me. In practical terms, propaganda in the socialist block did not change as much over time as in the western capitalist societies. While strategies of persuasion in liberal and democratic countries became more and more complex, the socialist societies stuck to their

simplistic model of “manipulation by penetration” (Bussemer 2008: 229), making its content more open for a critical analysis on the other hand. In the publications of the Rodong-Sinmun, the overall structure in which the propagandistic articles are ordered is simple and repetitive. The first page of the print version of the Rodong-Sinmun refers to the “Supreme Leader’s activities” and gives insights in the fascists / religious cult around Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il and finally Kim Jong-Un. The pages two to four are dedicated to internal themes and find themselves in the category “In DPRK” on the website of the Rodong-Sinmun. There I expect to find information about the strength and superiority of the Korean people, as well as references to their political system, their economy and the military. The Juche principles might also come up in the “International” part and the “Inter-Korean” parts of the newspaper, where I also expect to find news about South Korea, the USA and external military threat in general. Before looking at the content of the publications I will reconsider the basic framework of this research to provide a good introduction in the analytical part. One of these basic pillars of a content analysis is the selection of cases that are to be analysed. The set of articles I selected is part of the overall population of articles published on the website <http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/> between the 1st of January 2015 and the 31st of January 2015. I selected this month to deal with an amount of material I am able to cope and to include the New Year’s editorial as an anchor-point, which is traditionally an important publication by the current leader himself. Some dates in January in this web-archive do not carry content, so that there are no articles to these respective dates. Therefore I will not be able to include publications from these days into my research.



(Own representation according to <http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/>; x: date in Jan. ; y: number of articles published)

Taken together we have overall 309 articles available over the website. I will select articles from this population that deal with the military, the military dimension of Juche, external military threat and the ideological heritage of Kim Jong-Il. I expect to find these references especially in the context of the New Year's Editorial by Kim Jong-Un, which will also be the first article to analyse.

3.1. Selection of Articles

The first and probably most important article in this study is the so-called New Year's Editorial. This article is written by Kim Jon-Un and published under his name in the Rodong-Sinmun. This year, it was published on the 2nd of January and is accessible over the Rodong-Sinmun at http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-01-02-0002 (1.).

Further articles I selected from the archive in January include the following publications:

2. 5th of January: "Korean-style Socialism Advances under Banner of Juche"
http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-01-05-0005
3. 6th of January: "Let Us Invariably Follow Songun Politics, Line of Developing Two Fronts"
http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-01-06-0011
4. 7th of January: "U.S. – Japan – S.Korea Triangular Military Alliance"
http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-01-07-0008
5. 8th of January: "Kim Jong Il's Songun Revolutionary Feats Praised by Egyptian Figure"
http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-01-08-0002
6. 9th of January: "Kim Jong Il's Songun Revolutionary Leadership Feats Lauded by British Body"
http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-01-09-0001
7. 14th of January: "DPRK Will Surely Achieve Final Victory in Showdown with U.S."
http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-01-14-0007

8. 16th of January: “Let Us Increase Might of Socialist Politico-Ideological Power”
http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-01-16-0003
9. 19th of January: “DPRK Will Invariably Keep to Road of Songun”
http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-01-19-0010
10. 20th of January: “Just Songun Politics of DPRK”
http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-01-20-0007
11. 27th of January: “Kim Jong Un's Feats Praised by Foreign Media”
http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-01-27-0002
12. 29th of January: “Songun Revolutionary Leadership of WPK Is Militant Banner for Final Victory”
http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-01-29-0008
13. 31st of January: “U.S. Persistent Hostile Policy toward DPRK”
http://www.rodong.rep.kp/en/index.php?strPageID=SF01_02_01&newsID=2015-01-31-0002

These 13 articles are selected out of the 309 publications from January 2015 from the website of the Rodong-Sinmun. By this selection I tried to include all relevant dimensions of the heritage of the Songun politics, among them specifically the appraisal of the Songun politics themselves, the appraisal of the leaders, the military in general, external foreign threat especially from the US, South Korea and Japan and the Juche ideology. Through these emphasizes I want to gain an insight into the way the DPRK considers and prioritizes the Juche principles and especially the Songun-Politics in the DPRK's self-perception in the context of both, internal politics and foreign affairs.

4. Analysis: Military propaganda in the Rodong-Sinmun

4.1. Category-system

Like I introduced in the methodology of this work I want to divide the category-system into a formal part and a content-part. The formal categories is about the “placement” of the article and deals with rubrics, department, layout and order of the article, while the category “representation” includes the genre, fonts and illustrations. The content orientated categories are “actors”, “rhetoric / stylistic devices” and “frames”. The category “actor” discusses who is named in the article, who is referred to and who is the author of this publication. The category “rhetoric / stylistic devices” includes the general language used in the article and its function. The category “frames” is the most central one in my opinion, as it deals with the core arguments in the articles and can be divided in four sub-categories, namely: “Problem-definition”, “Weighting and assessment”, “objectives” and suggested political “solutions”. I expect these frames to be especially meaningful and significant in answering the questions of the heritage of the Songun-politics under Kim Jong-Un. The analysis itself will be conducted according to the schemes provided by Meyen et. al. 2011: 155ff. From the theoretical perspective I laid down I do expect a strong emphasis on the military in these publications, especially in the part of external politics and foreign affairs. The self-perception of the DPRK in global politics is that of a country under permanent threat according to their ideological framework. On the basis of socialist press theory I expect an agitation and propagandistic rhetoric that uses figurative language. Furthermore I think that these articles will not include a large variety of individual actors but will focus on collective actors instead and are portrayed repeatedly in order to achieve that "steady propagandistic penetration" which is considered to be a substantial part of socialist propaganda (Bussemer 2008: 229). I also expect a clear link between the actors portrayed and the problem-definition and possible policies as solutions. While I think the USA will be associated with permanent and unjust threat and imperialist aggression I think that Songun, Juche and the North Korean Leaders will strongly be connected to the suggested solutions.

4.2. New Year’s Editorial

Kim Jong-Un’s New Year’s Editorial can be considered an anchor-point of this analysis. The editorial is not exclusively written for the publication in the Rodong-Sinmun. The editorial is a transcription of a speech Kim Jong-Un held in front of party officials. This transcript is five

pages long and considers a variety of topics. In this analysis I will focus on those passages that deal with his predecessors Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-II, the military in general, the Songun-politics and hostilities between the DRPK and the USA, South Korea and Japan.

The placement and representation of the article make up a considerable part of the actual propagandistic effort behind the article. The placement of the New Year's Editorial in the archive itself is at the third position of 30 articles for the 2nd of January 2015. There is no difference made in questions of the layout, neither is there any special accentuation visible. At the day of the publication, this article had been in the category "Supreme Leader's Activities" at the front page of the Rodong-Sinmun. This rubric is highlighted on the front page by a red font colour and a red underlined heading. This rubric is furthermore the first that comes up on the front page. The fonts and styles in which the article is written do not differ from the other publications on that day. The article also comes with a picture of Kim Jong-Un, supposedly during his New Year Address. The article is extraordinary long with its five pages compared to the usual publications with about half a page at this website. Considering the argument of the Dschontza-Doctrine, that indicates to put a maximum of information into a minimum of text and information. Pictures of the Kims have a special value in North Korean society. They have to be taken special care of but can also serve as a symbol of social recognition and standard as someone who is allowed to take a picture with Kim Jong-Un automatically better his Songbun-status, which determines his or her position in society, which is another contribution to the personal cult around the "Dear Leaders".

The category of "actors" is also strongly connected to the personal cult of those leaders, but also conclusions about the prioritization of topics and personas can be drawn from this rubric. Therefore it is important to take a look at which actors are named implicitly and explicitly, how they are connoted and in which context they are mentioned. One example of this connection might be the naming of Kim Jong-II when referring to Songun-Politics as the only feasible political solution or reaction towards US-Imperialism. There are various actors in this publication. First of all, there is no author specifically named in the corresponding section on the website. The author nevertheless becomes clear in the headline, which states "New Year Address – Kim Jong Un". In the following, there are only two more persons explicitly named, "President Kim Il Sung" and "General Kim Jong Il", who are also referred to as "the President" and "the General", "the great leaders" and "sun of Juche". Furthermore Kim Jong-Un uses indefinite names, identifications and appellations. He begins his speech with addressing his audience with the term "comrades" and keeps using terminology like "we", "the great

DPRK”, “the DPRK”, “the Party”, “Our Party”, “the Worker’s Party of Korea” and “the Cabinet” to refer to the conglomerate of party, state and people. These actors are found in the entire work. Further addressees that are relevant to this study are found in his parts about the military, hostile foreign nations and on the other side the economy. These explanations about the economic goals of the year 2015 are concentrated on page three of the article, where he especially refers to the different economic sectors like “the construction sector”, “mining”, “industries”, especially “defence industries”, but also “factories and enterprises”, light industry sector” and the “fishing industry” to “supply our people including students and children” and the “educational sector”. In the parts about the development of the military at the second page and foreign hostile states at page four the terms “service personnel and people”, “service personnel and other working people” as well as “fighters of the Songun revolution” are found. There are also actors like “soldiers”, “officers and men of the Korean People’s Internal Security Forces”, which is quite specific, as well as “the People’s army”, the “entire army” and “the enemy”. From page four to page five the speech also includes the question of reunification with the south while keeping up the topic of the military development. Kim Jong-Un refers to the DPRK by using terms like “our country”, “our motherland”, “country and people”, “the whole nation”, “the entire Korean nation” and “our nation”. He talks about South Korea by using terms like “the north and the south”, “south Korean authorities” and “our fellow countrymen”. When talking about hostile countries he names “the United States” and “foreign forces”. I would therefore divide the actors named in this speech by Kim Jong-Un into different groups: the group of references to the past leaders Kim Jong-Il and Kim Il-Sung, the working people in their different branches and industries, the army, the people in general, the party, the nation and the enemies. The leaders are referred to continuously positively. Their superior position becomes clear when keeping in mind that they are the only people mentioned by their name and when they are not named it is clear that they are referred to by the high position and their corresponding title that is mentioned (like “President” and “General”). Furthermore, when they are mentioned, either their achievements are praised (“shining victories” – p.1) or their supposed wishes and plans serve as a legitimization for further actions under Kim Jong Un (“we should promote education in the greatness of the leaders [...] – p.2). The working people are not that clearly and often mentioned; instead they are mostly referred to as “service personnel and people”. The working class itself is not clearly named, which might be an indicator for its low importance in official North Korean Ideology. Instead, the army is mentioned frequently, often in combination with positive connotations like “our army” or “the People’s army”. this would support the theoretical argument of turning away

from classic socialist theory with the working class as the core of society while at the same time turning towards the army and Songun-Politics. The military as the leader of the revolution instead of the proletarians supports the ruling elite as belonging to the army is decided upon by those who are in power. The proletarians and their natural interests are clearly defined in socialist theory but by exchanging the role of the proletarians in the revolution with the army, the overall goals to reach in society are up for debate again. Questions of the army and self-defence can therefore be interpreted by the party and are through this ideological shift under the primacy of the party. Foreign hostile forces are either addressed nearly anonymously by being named “the enemy” or are addressed directly as “the United States”. This might be due to the fact that North Korea sees the United States as their most important enemy but includes a variety of countries in the international system, that is dominated by the US and seeks to impede the DPRK (“Last year, in the international arena, hostilities [...] persisted in several countries [...] due to the imperialist [...]” – p.5). While North Korean leaders are namely addressed the foreign leaders do not play a role. The enemy is displayed as nameless, maybe to avoid personal identification with them. The North Korean Worker’s Party (WPK) is mentioned continuously throughout the article, often with positive and integrating connotations. The party plays a role in every topic of his speech i.e. in the economic development, in the ideological development, in questions of the army and national security and throughout these topics, the party is always referred to as a pioneer and a guiding instance only topped by the “Dear Leaders” themselves (“[...] our people are looking back with great pride and dignity upon the glorious 70-year history of our party and homeland which have achieved shining victories under the wise leadership of the President and the General; [...] – p. 1).

Rhetoric and stylistic devices can tell a lot about the perspective towards a specific topic. The way an issue is addressed can praise, highlight and outstand topics like theory or a persona or can make it seem of secondary interest, emphasize an alternative or even make it seem ridiculous. It is therefore important to consider the rhetoric in these publications in order to investigate the meaning behind it so that it is possible to draw conclusions to the self-perception of the North Korean Leadership. The article is characterized by an appellative language. In the beginning Kim Jong-Un directly addresses his “dear Comrades!” and in the following he often refers to “we” and uses imperatives after names or appellations (“The People’s Army should [...] – p.2). Overall this article published in the Rodong-Sinmun is a transcription of Kim Jong-Un’s speech on the occasion of the new year. This becomes obvious not only in the appellative language but also in the overall structure of the speech, which has a strong arc of suspense. this can be seen as an indicator for the educational function of the elite to set guide-

lines and apply their doctrine to the situations the country is in. Kim Jong-Un begins with broaching the issue of the army and their great work, then gets to talk about economy and society and finishes his speech by directly addressing the enemy – the United States of America and calling out for a reunification with the South. This specific interplay of topics in this important speech gives an insight in the prioritization of topics in current North Korean propaganda. “National defence” and the development of the military serves to open up the speech and get the public’s attention. It is also such an important topic that is simultaneously addressed in the end in order to close the speech in a finale, where Kim Jong-Un contrasts the imperialists under the guidance of the US with “our Republic, the bulwark of socialism and fortress of independence and justice” (p. 5). Therefore he uses metaphors like “bulwark” and “vicious circle”. His visual language includes terminology like “backbone” and “lifeblood of the country” but these terms are somehow reserved for the last paragraphs of his speech, the parts before including the beginning are written in a appellative but strictly functional and objective language, that addresses the North Korean people and clearly lays down the actual output reached and the regime’s achievements but on the other hand describes further demands and goals for the upcoming year.

The frames make up the most substantial part of the analysis. They are the "arguments" of the North Korean leadership that are to be viewed in the context of the former categories to investigate the meaning and intentions behind these publications. The first topic that Kim Jong-Un addresses is the development of the army, which he praises and considers being very well. He states for example that “Last year, the fighting efficiency [...] was increased remarkably and that the defence industry sector “developed and completed various means of military strike”. In questions of the military development there is no actual problem he describes, but more of a satisfying status quo. In the following he addresses his goals for the further military build-up (“further demonstrate our country’s might as a military power”) and names some specific plans he has. This includes strategic considerations, improving the training (“update the content and methods”) and establishing a new command system in order to be able to “repulse any provocation by the enemy in one stroke”. Further goals are a better supply system for the army to “provide soldiers with better living conditions”. This is also one general goal of Kim Jong-Un for the upcoming year (p.1) where he demands an increase in production in various economic sectors in order to “build an economic giant” but also to concretely “improve the people’s living standards” (p.2). The current situation is explained with natural conditions and thereby, the supply situation in the DPRK is not associated with failures in its leadership, especially not regarding their “Supreme Leaders”. In the context of the supply situation and

economic development Kim Jong-Un also demands to further successful scientific research. Although this is presented as just one more goal of his politics, it also would serve as a political solution for his agenda. Another solution is presented in building up structures like a specific stockbreeding base for the fishing industry. In questions of defining actual problems in the economy, the strongest commitment to expressing a lack of success can be seen in Kim Jong-Un's considerations about electricity, which he expresses to be at "a shortage", while right afterwards associating electricity with being "a major source of power of the economy" (p.3). A suggested solution for this problem is the fostering of coal and electricity production, which is just one example of the overall tendency to address plans and possible achievements while laying down plans to reach these goals that are not profound but instead just include a strategic core of "improving" at this policy field or economic sector ("All the economic sectors and units should make positive efforts to increase production, [...] p.3) or by demanding more efforts by the working people which is claimed as it would resemble their belief in the system and their motivation to serve the nation ("confidence in victory", "patriotic devotion" - p.3). On the other hand he gets specific about introducing the "management method of our kind" in order to increase productivity. Something interesting in the part about the economic development is that he demands to increase "external economic relations", which seems to be one more indicator for a shift in the economy from autarky to international (mostly Chinese) cooperation. To quite openly address problems in the supply of the people serves various purposes. It gives the speaker, Kim Jong-Un, credibility as he addresses issues that North Koreans can directly relate to and find in their everyday life. This gives him the possibility to interpret the underlying reasons for this. For the hierarchy of the Juche-principles this means that economic autarky and supply are an issue but they depend on foreign politics and the military. When Kim Jong-Un talks about foreign threat and the US-embargo as reasons for the supply situation he implicitly states that the national defence is prioritized over other policy fields and thereby strongly supports Songun-Politics. The only direct approach to speak about the ambitions to process the party and therefore the political dimension of Juche is found in an address towards party officials urging them to keep up the contact to the people (p.4) while at the same time reminding them of their accountability to only serve the country. Implicitly he thereby describes a problem of lacking compliance from the party officials towards the leaders, himself, or the party and its cause. This address is only a short paragraph in his speech, which deals with either economic advancements or mostly with questions of the military. This topic with a special focus on the perceived threat from a coalition of states under the guidance of the US (South Korea and Japan, but also Western states and societies in general) is given

attention on the last two pages of this speech. Central arguments in this publication are threat, efforts for the reunification and the suffering of the people due to imperialist USA. The reunification with South Korea as a policy-goal is outlined as the central purpose of North Korean foreign politics. These North Korean approaches are described as un-ideological, natural, necessary and honest (“We should remove the danger of war, ease the tension and create a peaceful environment on the Korean peninsula” – p.4). The obstacles for implementing reunification and achieving peace are found in the actions of “outside forces” (p.4) and more precisely in the military actions conducted by the South and their allies (“The large-scale war games ceaselessly held every year in south Korea are the root cause of the escalating tensions on the peninsula [...]” – p.4). The proposed reaction to these “provocations” is unspecified as being “resolute” (p.4.). South Korean authorities are urged to stop the hostile cooperation with the USA and instead work together with the DPRK to achieve the common goal of national reunification. As a central policy-suggestion, Kim Jong-Un explains that he and the DPRK never tried to “force their ideologies and systems upon each other” (p.4.). He moreover suggests that they might “resume the suspended high-level contacts and hold sectorial talks” to “promote dialogue”, which can be found in North Korean rhetoric ever since Kim Il-Sung (Kim Ir-Sen 1975: 229). The last frame deals with “the enemy” – respectively the USA – again and lines out several arguments. First, the enemy is described as imperialists who threaten the DPRK’s “self-defence nuclear deterrent “ to harm the nation. The situation of tension between the states is then described as a sign, that the North Korean military defence system is potent enough to restrain the enemy. Here, Kim Jong-Un mentions the Songun-Politics as a basis for these military capabilities, which will also serve to react adequately on foreign threat in the future, according to him (p.5). Nevertheless, Kim wants to establish good relations with neighbouring countries who “respect their sovereignty”. It is not further stated, which countries do this and what his definition of “respecting sovereignty” is about. Moreover, Kim wants to encourage the “progressive people” and hops to establish good relations with them. In these arguments we can spot some central concepts of self-perception. On the one hand it is obvious that Kim sees the DPRK as a victim of the constant threat of US-Imperialism. The DPRK’s reaction is the Songun-politics in order to develop military capabilities that hinder the US (and its allies) to attack the DPRK. These politics and the capabilities are referred to as a “backbone” of the country and serve to keep up the state’s sovereignty. Nevertheless, Kim lays down that future goals are to achieve peace and good foreign relations with its neighbours and “the progressive peoples” as well as to reach their overall national objective – reunification with the south even without transferring their political system to their neighbour.

These conciliatory, quiet and peaceful words stand in sharp contrast to the characterization of the enemy – mostly the US – who is considered responsible for the split of the country, their people’s suffering and the on-going tensions on the peninsula.

To conclude on this central publication of Kim Jong-Un there are some points I would like to summarize. The conflict with the south and the US is still the most important topic for the North Korean leadership, especially in their self-perception. Kim’s speech focuses especially on the division of the country, a future reunification and the “state of siege” under the foreign aggression. These are the central themes of his speech – where he sometimes implicitly or even explicitly refers to the Songun-politics. Other, non-military, dimensions of Juche are also found but are not addressed that directly and on so many different levels in unemotional language when reporting about future plans and the current state of affairs but also highly emotional when condemning foreign aggression and stressing the need to defend. While the military is clearly the most important topic of this speech, the economic situation is described surprisingly critical and sometimes even more specific than I would have expected it from the secondary sources about the discreetness of the regime. The strategies to enhance the economy and foster its development on the other hand had been quite unclear.

4.4 Analysis of selected publications

The further articles will be analysed together in one chapter only as they are much less detailed and often only carry one clear argument. They are analysed in chronological order and implicitly follow the category-system I laid down. I will not explicitly name the underlying categories but they follow the scheme I used in the more extended analysis of the New Year's Editorial.

Korean-style Socialism Advances under Banner of Juche – 5th Jan.

This commentary is published directly after the New Year’s Editorial by an author by the name “Ri Choi”. The commentary is about half a page long, belongs to the section “In DPRK”. The fond resemble the usual style in which the Rodong-Sinmun publishes its articles. Namely addressed are Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il who are also referred to as “Great Generalissimos” and are stylistically emphasized by being separated from the further text by two sections. Moreover, Kim Jong-Il’s work is named as an entrance statement and serves as an overall anchor point of this commentary. Also, Kim Jong-Un is mentioned in the later part of the commentary, where Ri Chol connects him to “the Songun revolutionary leadership” and his military guidance. Furthermore, the DPRK is mentioned and synonymously referred to as

“the great Paektusan nation”. The Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK) is also mentioned and once in the context of confrontation, Choi speaks of “the US”. The main Frame of this commentary is its appraisal of the North Korean leaders by explaining their connection to the military potential of the DPRK. While in the first paragraphs, Choi lays down the thought and aspiration of Kim Jong-Il and his work, he begins in the following to connect these thoughts about Songun Politics and the overall ideology of Juche to the North Korean leaders and to the military capabilities that are build up. The ideologies “Juche” and “Songun” seem to be at least equally constitutive to the DPRK and Kim Jong-Il is mentioned and praised more often than his father Kim Il-Sung. The problem of the confrontations with the US is brought up but the solution to this problem is even much more present in the article. Central figures are Kim Jong-Il who laid the ideological and en-acted basis for the military potential with his Songun-Politics. Secondly, Kim Jong-Un’s guidance and application of these politics as well as his overall abilities as a general and leader are presented as the reason that North Korea presently achieved “invincibility”. Lastly, Ri Choi sums up that it is the Workers’ Party that guides the people of North Korea to be an ideal “thriving socialist nation”. This article tries to connect the two "Dear Leaders" with Songun-Politics and an optimistic view into the future. It glorifies the guidance of those two figures and thereby contributes to the personal cult around them, while at the same time Songun-Politics are presented as the necessary political answer to foreign threat. They also serve as a basis for future development also in economical questions. Although it is unclear who Ri Choi is there are a few options. He might be a high party member or could also be a worker's correspondent. For both options it is clear that only an appraisal of current politics and leadership is possible in such an article, as the press itself is under total control of the party and by definition has to contribute to the advancement of the revolution. Under this perspective it is also clear that the military has to be appraised.

Let Us Invariably Follow Songun Politics, Line of Developing Two Fronts – 6th Jan.

The commentary is kept in the usual style of Rodong-Sinmun publications and might belong to either the “In DPRK” category or the category “International” – unfortunately, this cannot be traced back anymore. The central actors named in the article are Ri Kyong Su as the author, “hostile forces” in the following specified as “the US”, the DPRK and various synonymous, positive descriptions of it, the service personnel and the people of the DPRK and the Workers’ Party, as well as the “revolutionary armed forces”. The publication is half a page long and is the only online commentaries for that day. In this commentary, the Songun-Politics are the central momentum and the WPK becomes the authority connected to it and the interpreting authority, setting the ideology into being. The Songun-Politics are described as an

exclusive feature to the DPRK. Songun is what actually enables the DPRK to withstand and finally defeat the imperialist USA. The ideology without any doubts works for North Korea, but the people have to be faithful to it and dedicate their efforts to Songun. According to Ri Kyong Su the scientific accuracy of Songun is prove and the final defeat of the US is inevitable, while at the same time he calls for the North Korean people to actively and with full effort defend their country. To sum up the intention of this article, on the one hand, the own superiority is portrayed in combination with a call for patriotic defence of the nation. In this article, the leaders Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il and Kim Kong-Un are not named, neither are they implicitly mentioned or referred to. The frame of natural superiority is central in this article but also the uniqueness of North Korea and its people is referred to. This context is crucial for the justification of Songun-Politics as it provides the argumentative basis for the "creative application of Marxism-Leninism" and thereby the implementation of Juche and Songun. Because North Korea is unique and extraordinary, the measures applied in politics cannot be compared to those of other countries and this way present the most substantial reason for the policies implemented by the leadership around Kim Jong-Un and justify large empowerments on the side of the leadership as well as a strong focus on the military under the guidance of the "Dear Leader".

U.S. – Japan – S. Korea Triangular Military Alliance – 7th Jan.

The publication is kept in the usual style and displayed as the Xth article for that date. The only person mentioned by name is the author himself – Pae Kum Hui. Furthermore, the U.S. and their senate is mentioned, as well as South Korea, Japan, the Asia-Pacific region and the DPRK. There are no further institutions or personages named, including no reference to one of the DPRK's leaders. The article by Pae Kum Hui is introduced with the overall topic of the article, the confrontation between the DPRK and the coalition between the US, Japan and South Korea. A bill from the US-Senate, which is establishing a missile defence cooperation, and a bill establishing intelligence service cooperation between these states on the DPRK is described and commented. These bills are addressed on different levels, on the one side, he describes the perceived intentions on the side of the US behind this alliance. According to Hui, the U.S. wants to "stifle the DPRK at any cost" and use their allies for this. Therefore, the U.S. uses a fictional nuclear threat in order to justify their hostile actions towards the United States. But Hui also announces that these U.S.-American attempts in cooperation with South Korea and Japan will not work out but instead are a "foolish act". He concludes, that the DPRK will "punish [...] provocateurs and thereby presents a solution for the problem of unjust, imperialist threat by the US – to strike back and win against any state that does not

respect North Korean sovereignty. The general tone of the article is trying to fulfil standards of objectivity by introducing to the article with some general information and news but in the end obviously becomes war propaganda that calls for revenge and punishments for hostile foreign forces and clearly characterizes an enemy of the whole nation and how to react to it. This foreign threat is a central element of the construction of the global political situation that enables the ruling North Korean elite to reproduce their power as well as to keep up the focus on military power and the army as the first priority of the nation. To keep up the foreign threat is a strong indicator for keeping up the emphasis on Songun accordingly.

Kim Jong Il's Songun Revolutionary Feats Praised by Egyptian Figure – 8th Jan.

This article is one of a series of publications dealing with the appraisal of foreign figures or other kinds of international reputation for the DPRK's leaders, their thought and the DPRK and its people. The foreign personage is described in the headline as "Egyptian Figure" and in the article itself named as Yehia Zakaria Khairullah – the vice chairman of the Socialist Freedom Party of Egypt. While Kim Jong-Il is named in the headline, Khairullah remains anonymous in it, but becomes namely addressed in the article, as well as Kim Jong-Il, Kim Jong-Un and Kim Il-Sung. Noticeably formal characteristics of the article are that some lines are kept quite short for no obvious reasons. These lines include references to Kim Jong-Il and Kim Jong-Un and seem to be more eye-catching due to the formatting. Further actors in the article are the "Rodong News Team" as author(s), the Soviet Union and "socialist countries", the US, the DPRK, the Arab people, Egypt and East Europe. Although this "News Team" is named as the author, the text itself is only introduced from the North Korean side and then becomes a transcription of the Egyptian article. The central point of Khairullah's publication is, that Kim Jong-Il's Songun Politics are the reason, the DPRK could defend itself against the USA. North Korea is said to be representing socialism even in times, when the socialist block collapsed. The reason, why the DPRK is still a great and sovereign nation lays in the Songun Politics and the "revolution with arms". The article ends with declarations supposedly from the side of the Rodong News Team stating that the DPRK supports "the Arab people" and Kim Jong-Un sends supports to the Egyptian and that the friendship between Egypt and the DPRK "will last". Although the article is about a foreign supporter of the Kim-family, Songun-Politics and the DPRK, it does not aim at informing about local Egyptian approaches and their perspective towards Juche and the DPRK but instead just reassures the DPRK in their internal and external politics. The "foreign figure" serves as witness, as a third party between the DPRK and the US that recognizes the intentions and approaches on the side of the DPRK and confirms their politics. The conflict between the DPRK with its Juche ideology

and the US with their imperialism is not a conflict among others and equally important as for example the current conflicts in the Arabic world but instead, the situation in Egypt is not even mentioned and even the "Egyptian Figure" focusses on the Korean Peninsula. This shows how much the role and function of the press is directed at presenting the self-perception of the DPRK to the outside world and tries to be as credible in this as possible.

Kim Jong-II's Songun Revolutionary Leadership Feats Lauded by British Body – 9th Jan.

The article covers a statement of the “Korean Friendship Association UK” and was already released in the end of December on the occasion of Kim Jong-II’s anniversary as a commander of the Korean army. The “Rodong News Team” is named as the author and besides the British Association, Kim Jong-II and the Korean People’s Army only Kim Il-Sung Kim Jong-Un and the US are addressed. The article is kept in the usual style and deals with the topic of Songun Politics and their function to prevent the US from starting warfare against the DPRK. Songun Politics in this context are described as a successful and necessary strategy to keep peace on the peninsula and worldwide. Kim Jong-II is thereby presented as a great theorist, visionary and strategist, while his successor Kim Jong-Un is characterized foremost as an heir to him, who further glorifies the work of his father. The article therefore aims at connecting national sovereignty and its preservation with the strength of the army due to Songun and the leadership of the party and reproduces the primacy of the military dimension of Juche. Furthermore, like in the publication about the "Egyptian Figure", this "British Body" is used to gain credibility for the North Korean politics. Although this “Korean Friendship Association UK” is practically meaningless, the actor gains importance by being "British". This foreign recognition seems to be an important contribution to the propagandistic effort to connect the Kims, Songun and the inevitable victory over the US.

DPRK Will Surely Achieve Final Victory in Showdown with U.S. – 14th Jan.

This commentary is published in the Rodong Sinmun by Ri Kyong Su, who also wrote the commentary from the 6th of January under the headline: “Let Us Invariably Follow Songun Politics, Line of Developing Two Fronts”. The similarities between these two articles become clear when taking a look at the actors and frames. The opening-statement is about the confidence of the working people in North Korea, who believe that the final victory will happen this year. In the following, the conflict between the DPRK and the US is described, marking the US as desperate imperialists who need to apply impudent methods but will finally be defeated. At the same time, the DPRK is described as the just future winner, who had been unfairly threatened by the US but already has a long historic line in victories over the US.

Songun Politics and the line of promoting the two fronts is presented as the root cause for this final victory and also described as irreversible and constant features of the DPRK's political strategy. There are no names, including Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il and Kim Jong-Un, mentioned in the article; only the US and the DPRK are addressed as actors, which to some degree reflects my expectation, that the focus might lay on collective actors in order to keep up a simplistic world view which corresponds a lot with the purpose of these publications: propaganda and agitation.

Let Us Increase Might of Socialist Politico – Ideological Power – 16 Jan.

The editorial is written by no named author and it is unclear who could be the creator of this publication. The core of this one third of a page long article is the role of ideology for North Korea and its function in international confrontations. The term “ideology” is not further specified and – to my surprise – did not include references to Juche or Songun. Furthermore, the founders of the DPRK's ideology are not addressed, neither Kim Il-Sung, nor Kim Jong-Il are named. The “ideology” is characterized as the principle of the nation and the strongest weapon against the enemies. Moreover it is expressed that by ideology, the people will create a prosperous nation and that the final victory is secure. The only person named in the article is Kim Jong-Un. He is presented as the incorporation of ideology as the entire article argues that ideology itself is the leading forces to victory while the last sentence concludes that the North Korean people shall turn to Kim Jong-Un to seek guidance. This naturally implies a reference to Juche and Songun but it is up to the reader to make that obvious deduction. By explaining the general importance of ideology to nations it is clear that in the case of North Korea only a consequent application of Juche will lead to the final victory. This article further serves the naturalization of Juche, Songun and the North Korean leadership.

DPRK Will Invariably Keep to Road of Songun – 17th Jan.

Ra Myong Song writes in this article about the North Korean need and obligation to further follow Songun Politics. He links the Songun Politics to the presence of peace on the peninsula and Asia. Furthermore, he blames the USA to be imperialists and praises the North Korean Army and their basis in the Songun Politics to be true defendants of national sovereignty. Songun Politics are associated with strength and protection of the society and its prosperity. Therefore, Songun Politics are presented as the inevitable basis for development. This causality between a strong military leading to economic prosperity and a blooming society is directly

addressed by claiming that “prosperity [...] can be ensured when the country and nation prioritizes the military affairs”. Songun Politics are even referred to as the only “way of [...] winning victory” and the “principle of revolution” is called out to be “unchangeable” as well as the need for it as long as imperialism - mostly in form of the US - is threatening the DPRK. Here again it is not only considered to be certain in an optimistic view but “inevitable” that following Songun will lead to the final victory.

Just Songun Politics of DPRK – 20th Jan.

The article written by Ri Hak Nam and basically deals with confronting the international situation with the situation in the DPRK. Nam describes various conflicts with a lot of victims abroad and contrasts them with the peaceful situation on the Korean peninsula and in the DPRK especially. While the imperialists under the leadership of the USA started multiple wars all over the world, they did not in Korea thanks to the Songun Politics, according to Nam. The fact that there is no such war in Korea at the moment and their “lessons from history” verify and support this ideology so that building up the military and especially nuclear weapons is seen as the basis for economic development and prosperity as it secures national sovereignty. In his commentary, Nam uses metaphors and generally writes in a direct, figurative and emotive way. He does not use names and only refers to the DPRK, its people and the imperialist foreign countries, especially the US. Although this intention is quite widespread in the analysed articles to make Songun-Politics the reason for peace and national sovereignty it seems contradictory to this by comparing the DPRK to countries that do not follow Songun while at the same time presenting Juche and Songun as a special and not exportable application of socialist theory to the conditions of North Korea and its people. The stated universalism of Songun in this article is not compatible with the overall explanation of Juche as a North Korean uniqueness.

Songun Revolutionary Leadership of WPK Is Militant Banner for Final Victory – 29th Jan.

This article somehow resembles the appellative style of a speech, the language is quite figurative and the propagandistic message – the power of the North Korean army – is highlighted many times. One interesting argument in this article is the connection between Songun and Juche and Kim Jong-Il and Kim Il-Sung. Kim Choi Hak, the author of this article, connects these ideologies and leaders by explaining that the Songun Politics of Kim Jong-Il are an application of the Juche ideology introduced by Kim Il-Sung to the situation of Kim Jong-Il’s leadership. Thereby he links the ideologies and makes them compatible. Both ideologies and leaders are praised and the strategy and the standpoint of the DPRK are defended as a “rock

[...] despite severe storms of history”. Moreover, the military is addressed and throughout positively described as invincible and – going even further – set in context with miracles. The strength of the military is seen as the basis for a well working economic development and the well-being of the nation in general. The people of the DPRK are described as faithful to the leadership and the Songun-Politics as well as faithful to their current leader, Kim Jong-Un, who thereby becomes also rhetorically connected to his predecessors and their glorified thought. The Songun-Line is also characterized as “scientific and ever-victorious”, summing up the arguments of naturalization and superiority. This way, Songun-Politics become an undoubtable natural law, which is not up for debate but instead also naturalize the leadership and makes them immune to criticism. In socialist press theory it is one of the most important functions of the press to serve the revolution and in Lenin's sense this means to support the avant-garde of the party. The Rodong-Sinmun just like that presents the ideology and thought and the party and its leadership as a unity. By naturalizing one part of this unity, Songun-Politics, the rest of the unity becomes naturalized too.

U.S. Persistent Hostile Policy toward DPRK – 31st Jan.

This last article from January 2015 is directly addressed to the U.S. and deals with their presence in South Korea. Jan Yong Hui describes the situation of the division of Korea as “tragic” makes the U.S. accountable for this division. The imperialist politics of the U.S. are not only described as harmful for Korea and the rest of the world but also as a future problem for the U.S., whose politics towards are further described as “anachronistic”, “aimed at total extermination” and a “policy of aggression, war and domination” so that Hui demands a withdrawal of the US-forces and to “make a bold policy switch” as it is up to the U.S. and their military to establish peace in Korea. This way, the DPRK is presented as the peaceful but tragically divided player, which is due to the US and their imperialist politics. The DPRK presents itself as put into a situation where they cannot but answer the military threat with their own military power. Still, the US are the aggressor and Hui implies that it is inevitable, that the US will fail with their unjust politics. This shows once again the strong believe in the success of the DPRK and their Songun-Politics. They are not only the reason why North Korea can resist the threat and will finally win over the US but Songun-Politics are also a truth that cannot be questioned.

5. Conclusion

Coming back to the research question about the representation of the heritage of Kim Jong Il's Songun politics under Kim Jong-Un this analysis has shown a diverging picture. On the one side, Songun politics are still very present in today's North Korean publications. It still makes up the central ideological framework together with Juche ideology and is often referred to directly. Songun politics are described as scientifically accurate and proven by history. They are also the central argument when referring to foreign threat and the preservation of the DPRK's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This is done in a scientific, objective and down to earth language and rhetoric, especially in context of appraisal of the theory or its author, Kim Jong-Il or when the argument aims at the scientific dimension and approval of Songun. Furthermore, Songun-Politics are referred to in articles that are mainly directed at overall threatening the enemies, especially imperialist USA and its allies or "puppets" South Korea and Japan. There, Songun serves to explain why North Korean military forces are extraordinary strong and why a defeat of the enemies is inevitable. They are described as originally North Korean, a kind of unique feature that naturally provides superiority and serves to develop the country on multiple levels and dimensions. This is also the reason why I conclude that the hierarchy of the Juche-principles did not change under Kim Jong-Il. In the article from the 29th of January, the author exemplary states, that he considers the Songun Politics as an application of the Juche principles to the current times and that Marshall Kim Jong-Un is now executing the necessary steps in further pursuing the Songun-Politics. This is one clear statement that can explicitly or implicitly be found in the overall set of articles. Songun-Politics still do play the mayor role in internal and external questions – the primacy of the military over other policy fields, including the other two dimensions of Juche – political and economic autarky – prevails under Kim Jong-Un. The issue of reunification and connected to that the questions of territorial integrity and US-American threat make up the central part of Kim Jong-Un's New Year's Editorial and – apart from personal appraisals and foreign diplomatic recognition – play the most dominant role in the overall publications. This specific Kim Jong-Un editorial is not mentioned as frequently as I expected but the topics that are addressed in the editorial do play a central role in the further publications. The U.S. serve as the stereotypical enemy, dominating the globalized world with the exception of the DPRK and "progressive people" and the DPRK can only withstand the threats, attacks and in the end even achieve the final victory because of the wise leadership of the party and especially its leaders, Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il and Kim Jong-Un. These leaders and their thought is not portrayed as conflicting with each other, nor are the leaders equally important, influencing and powerful. Instead, the legitimiza-

tion of the younger leader works over their association with their predecessors. With very few exceptions Kim Jong-Un is only portrayed as the executive of his father's and grandfather's political plans, what seems logical, taking into consideration that especially Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il are honoured around the country in cult places like statues and giant portraits etc. The need for Songun-Politics is justified with the omnipresence of threat. This creation of omnipresent threat ultimately serves to justify the expenses for the military, the cuts in consumer goods production and the leadership of the party and Kim Jong-Un, who is portrayed as a genius strategist who keeps North Korea safe. This safety then can be the basis for economic development and if this might not take place, the blame is on the imperialist foreign countries. After all, to keep the focus on the Songun-Politics helps especially Kim Jong-Un and the party to maintain and secure their position in the political system. Every publication I analysed implied at least partly that the final victory is necessarily connected to the rule of the party and the work of Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il and Kim Jong-Un. This surprised me somehow, as I think that the main group, that those articles are directed to, are foreigners without a Korean background. This group does not need such an omnipresent justification of North Korean leadership but instead could much better be used to carry North Korean interpretations about world politics into their respective public spheres. Still the South Korean population could be the main target audience for North Korean foreign propaganda as they might actually have a more substantial interest in the Korean conflict only. Still, this does not explain why there is an English version available as the content of the propaganda does not seem to be directed at a broader international audience.

Songun-Politics still dominate over the other two dimensions of Juche, economic autarky and political independence. The need for military security serves as an explanation for shortages and lacks of economic development, while at the same time it supports the North Korean leadership around Kim Jong-Un as the one who can define what is in the national defence interest. The glorification of Songun, the military and the leadership as one unit and their faceless antagonists - the imperialist USA and their puppets Japan and South Korea - make up a simplistic worldview that favours propagandistic explanations and supports a strong and unquestioned ruling elite.

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