

NORTH KOREAN DEPICTIONS OF THE FUTURE IN TEXT PUBLICATIONS OF THE KIM JONG-UN ERA


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External views about North Korea's future usually revolve around predictions of collapse, war, or unification with South Korea. In contrast, the North Korean state has its own aims and visions for the future which are still understudied. Major pressures post-1990s have led to changes in politics and economy, but changes in ideology remain debated. Futures are a central part for all ideologies, and thus an useful lens for studying them. This doctoral thesis explores **North Korea's future projections and its ideology** through the primary and secondary research questions below.

 **What are the characteristics associated with the future in contemporary North Korean publications?**




 Are North Korea's characterizations of its futures different to state socialist past futures? If so, how?




Figure 1: Let Us Bring about a Fresh Victory on All Fronts of Socialist Construction!, 2021. North Korean Archives and Library.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

 To describe North Korean **contemporary visions of the future**, through its domestic text publications, as a manifestation of its state ideology

 To place North Korea's ideological development in the historical context of global **postsocialism** after the 1990s, utilizing comparisons and exploring legacies of 20th century **socialist past futures**

 To analyze 21st century **ideological adaptation** of the North Korean state, with focus on change and dynamism within their political thought and narratives

The primary research question is answered by describing the contemporary North Korean future based on texts, and the secondary by contextualizing it with previous research.



The research design aims at minimizing common issues and limitations with studying North Korea by centralizing North Korean-made domestic content and utilizing novel approaches drawing from ideology studies, future studies and studies of (post)socialism.

METHOD

- Utilizing **Qualitative Content Analysis**
- Reduces large data into thematic categories through coding
- Reveals and highlights the main themes present in the data
- Creates from the data a detailed description of the main topic established in the primary research question, i.e. the future

DATA

- Main criteria: topically future-oriented
- Timeframe: **2012–2023**
- In Korean language, aimed for domestic consumption
- Only **textual** data, only **non-fictional**
- Different formats across **multiple data sets**: news, scholarly, political ...
- Primarily accessed online

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