# U.S. Human Rights Discourses on North Korea: The Liberal Subjects of Western Human Rights and the Post-humanitarian Distance

Kim, Hosoo

Universiteit Leiden
The Netherlands

Hosoo Kim 3231895

h.kim.12@email.leidenuniv.nl

# U.S. Human Rights Discourses on North Korea

## The Liberal Subjects of Western Human Rights and the Post-Humanitarian Distance

MA Thesis

Leiden University

Faculty of Humanities - International Relations (IR)

Supervisor: Christopher Green

Word Count: 16,150

June 3rd, 2022

# List of Contents

## Introduction

It should come as a surprise to no one that American Christians have devoted interest in North Korean human rights issues. In 2013, American missionary Kenneth Bae was accused of holding hidden motives of "missionary work" and of planning a religious coup d'état against the government in North Korea (Gladstone, 2016). Bae later claimed in his interview that he had held strong feelings for the "brainwashed people", leading him to now work as a leader of a North Korean human rights NGO himself (BBC, 2017). Well-known conservative activists such as Suzanne Scholte are also known to be highly devout Christians. Evangelical organizations in the United States (U.S.), especially considering their strong ties with right-wing politics, tend to use human rights as means to support a hawkish approach against the North Korean regime.

However, it is also true that recent media coverage dealing with North Korean human rights in the U.S. seem to be shaped by a broader spectrum of actors beyond evangelical groups and conservative politicians. For example, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, a bipartisan caucus in the U.S. Congress, strongly criticized the South Korean government's decision to ban the flying of propaganda leaflets on balloons towards North Korea (Byun, 2021). While debates about the anti-leaflet law in South Korea involve conflicting interests and rights that are entangled around the issue, discussions in the U.S. seem to be "filtered-down" (p. 592) to a narrow prism of human rights (Kim et al., 2020). The caucus law-makers only focus on the fact that the leaflets, filled with provocative messages harshly condemning the North Korean government, should be protected as a freedom of speech. Thus, we can assume that the underlying commonalities of human rights framings among different sectors in the American society would reflect ideas that are specifically rooted in the 'American' approach to human rights.

What are different ideas, perceptions, or historical processes that are involved in North Korean human rights discourses produced by U.S. organizations? Is there a certain reason why American organizations express particular interest in the 'human rights' of North Korea? Based on a historical analysis of Western human rights and its recent development towards a form of post-humanitarianism, what Sung (2019) calls a reversed form of "fetishized self-love of liberal humanitarianism" (p.355), this thesis analyzes how the ideas of both conservative evangelicals and

liberal democrats coincide to frame North Korean human rights discourses in ways that are agreeable to Western audiences.

The human rights situation in North Korea is no illusion. Data collected from investigations made by United Nations (UN) agencies, such as the UN Commission on Information (UNCOI, 2013), World Food Program (WFP, n.d.), or the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, n.d.) clearly prove that many North Koreans suffer from harsh situations of poverty or oppression. North Korean human rights is an issue that should be taken into consideration, especially through the lenses of global justice. However, this thesis tries to refrain from making a normative claim on whether we should take either a universal or cultural-relative approach to North Korean human rights. Rather, it aims to elaborate on different historical layers of the ideas that are implied in frameworks used by the American human rights organizations to push forward the issue.

This thesis will be divided into four chapters. The first chapter analyzes the historical development of 'American' human rights. The chapter focuses on two different periods; first, it examines the early Cold War period and how the discussions of Prisoner of War (POWs) during the Korean War led human rights to shift from a vague term to specific ideas of American liberalism against communism. Next, it deals with the 'bridge period' of ideas formed during the late 20$^{th}$ century. How did the historical basis of a 'liberal' individual survive, reshape, and reproduce itself through the transition from the Cold War to post-Cold War era? It also explains the concept of "post-humanitarianism" and hypothesizes how this concept will guide the upcoming discourse analysis. The second chapter describes the research methodology and the selection criteria for sources that are used in the following chapters. Finally, the last two chapters analyze the discourses used by four different organizations in the U.S. that currently (2004-2022) engage in North Korean human rights campaigns. By comparing both the conservative evangelicals and the liberal democrats, the chapters will examine similarities and differences based on a critical view with post-humanitarian sensibility.

## Literature Review

Research on North Korean human rights discourses has mostly been conducted in two different directions. First, there are studies on the reality of human rights of those living in and outside the North Korean territory (Jun, 2000; Lee & Um, 2002; Lee 2005). The recent development of migration studies has led to an increased research on North Korean defector groups that emerged as unprecedented examples of human mobility networks, mostly approaching the defector issues based on maladaptation and acculturation theories (Chung, 2004; Cho & Jeon, 2005; Khor, 2011; Jung et al., 2013). Secondly, some studies point to how North Korean human rights are relatively marginalized and overlooked, trying to raise awareness for more active solutions to be made by the international society (Ryu, 2018; Fahy, 2019).

Indeed, research on North Korean human rights is diversifying, due to the stretch of disciplinary lenses applied to the issue. However, within research covering North Korean human rights, there remains a lack of basic inquiry into the fundamental roots of human rights itself. What defines a violation of human rights? To what extent is the concept of human rights truly 'universal'? Who guarantees those human rights?

### The Universality of Human Rights

A rising number of scholars have started to deconstruct the concept of human rights, which had long been considered a bedrock of modernity. Based on a critical perspective on when, why, and how human rights was used as an important signifier of modernity, democracy, or civilization, there seems to be a rising consensus that considers human rights as a social construct of modern, Eurocentric history which can indeed be open to further controversies.

For example, a historical reflection on the origins of human rights sheds light on its colonial roots. Hunt (2007) examines the history in alliance with the politics of the modern state, which made the rights not a naturalized given but more a construct of alleged values. Scholars such as Feffer (2004) or Saghaye-Biria (2018) aim to decolonize human rights by highlighting that its modern usage tends to blur any kind of oversight of its colonial history. For example, they prove how the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights was heralded as a universal document only

when “almost two-thirds of the world were still colonies and without a voice” (Saghaye-Biria, 2018, p. 61).

The modern concept of human rights and its intimate interplay with liberal internationalism is another critique. A connection is made between liberalism and human rights as liberals try to place the ‘liberal individual’ as a common underlying factor that presumes and defines the “sacredness of the individual” (Douzinas, 2007, p. 3). Scholars such as Fassin & Rechtman (2009) or Hesford (2011, p. 7) further the discussion on how the liberal basis affects current “humanitarian politics”, leading to a dichotomy between rescuers and victims that easily justifies international humanitarian interventions. This builds up to the aforementioned concept of post-humanitarianism or the rise of a “human rights market”, which is viewed as a narrowed-down version of human rights discourses when rights are particularly driven towards tenets of neoliberalism (Couliaraki, 2010). The focus is not made on the victims but only on the viewers, and post-humanitarian approaches drive humanitarian work towards a self-promotion of the “liberal rescuers” (Sung, 2019, p. 357; Hough & Bell, 2020).

This tone of what Mutua (2001) calls a “Savior-Victim-Savior” (SVS) story grammar is frequently used when critically examining human rights and the influences of Christianity (as cited in Song, 2021, p. 51). The ideas of “salvation and redemption through the grace of Jesus” (p. 62) is resonated when Christians try to engage in contemporary human rights issues (Song, 2021). However, there are debates on to what extent Christian ideas are compatible with the secular language of human rights. Scholars such as Hopgood (2013) or Moyn (2015) argue that human rights after the Second World War had already been prefigured and inspired by Christian ideas at an earlier period, following the cultural and political needs of modern Christianity. Culturally, human rights was a new form of secular religiosity that emerged to deal with the decline of religious authority under modernity, and politically, it was a reinvented moral constraint used by Christian democratic parties during the early 20$^{th}$ century. On the other hand, scholars like Nichols (2008) argue that although contemporary evangelicals have indeed been involved in many modern human rights campaigns, there remains a “lingering ambiguity and incompatibility” (p.631) between the basic ideas of Christianity and secular human rights.

While taking North Korea as the main case study, this paper will analyze dominant human rights discourses in the U.S. based on the critical reflection that human rights can be "coded in different needs and causes" (p.7) from the discursive complexity that is entailed within the concept itself (Hesford, 2011). The two-part thematic issue published by *Critical Asian Studies* in 2013, and especially an article by Hong (2013) pointing to the narrow Western framework of an inculpatory and normative structure on North Korean human rights discourses, is one of the few precedent pieces of research that hold relevance to this particular topic. She critically points to the antinomies of contemporary North Korean human rights as an "ethic-political discourse" that strives to reassert the "dominance of global North over the global South" (p. 511).

This thesis will add to Hong's research by examining the distinct features of North Korean human rights discourses based on a particular focus on the commonalities that underlie both conservative evangelical and liberal democrat organizations in the United States. Although the two seem to be placed on different sides in terms of political stances, it can be argued that their ideas fundamentally interrelate within the context of deep-rooted American national identities when it comes to the dominant framing of North Korean human rights.

# Chapter 1. The Historical Development of 'American' Human Rights

The language of human rights in the U.S. has been a matter of debate when people witness the ironic attitude of the American government, especially when it applies double standards to human rights enforcement. For example, while President Carter showed "explosive affiliation" (p. 154) with the liberal language of human rights, strongly supporting disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, his application of humanitarianism to foreign policies was sometimes criticized as being selective (Moyn, 2010). The rise of American human rights in the 1970s was simultaneous with the period of unprecedented inequality and brutal occupation wars of the U.S. (Peck, 2011). The Eurocentrism of human rights is highly criticized when the United States, placing its foreign policies around the central goal of "promoting the respect of human rights" (p.60), fails to comply with human rights standards in and outside of the country (Saghaye-Biria, 2018).

However, this chapter does not embark on the problematic phenomena or symptoms of American human rights politics. Based on a constructivist approach that views human rights as a social construction (Hurd, 2008), it rather departs from an inquiry about the historical mechanism that allows different actors in the U.S., despite their polarized views in domestic politics, to commonly use the language of human rights in their attitudes towards North Korea. How did the Americans form the idea of human rights, and what structural assumptions did the concept entail? What exactly do they define as an inalienable right? Or thinking vice versa, to what extent is their category of 'human', who are considered eligible to possess these inalienable rights, universal? Starting from the early 20th century rise of Western liberalism to the Bush Doctrine and post-humanitarian critiques, this chapter will analyze how human rights were formed, shaped, used, and developed throughout modern U.S. history.

## 1.1.The Birth of 'American' Human Rights and the POWs of Korea

### *1.1.1. The Rise of Western Liberalism and its Subjects*

The mainstream narrative in the West tends to posit the formation of human rights in the history of liberal internationalism: Woodrow Wilson's idealism, Franklin Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms", the Atlantic Charter (1941), the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the

Helsinki Accords (1975) (Moyn, 2010; Yoon, 2016). However, it would be relevant to widen the lenses to see how this corpus of values has been shaped through international relations. According to Yoon (2016), the development of Western liberalism in the early 20th-century was highly influenced by the theories of Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and William Sumner (1840-1910).[1] Due to liberalism's emphasis on individual rights to freedom, further imperialist expansion and control over non-Western countries had gradually lost its grounds for justification. However, the theories of Spencer and Sumner continuously supported assumptions that were based on social Darwinism and progressive development. The former colonies will indeed be granted freedom, but the people would have to meet certain conditions in order to become part of the Western civilization. Thus, while placing rights to freedom at the basis of all human rights, liberalism was shaped as a response to decolonization processes, implying the interaction between Western thoughts and the colonized people.

The leaders of liberal internationalism, aligned with the U.S.'s post-war ambitions to impose a new global order, faced the need to compromise with racist thoughts that would allow former empires to maintain their control through a new model: the mandate system (Yoon, 2016, p.78). While the mandate system provided justifications for colonial governance to be entitled to a (Western) legal status by the League of Nations, sovereign subjects were to be established, re-shaped, and modified in terms of Western power relations. Consequentially, the precarious gap between liberalism and racism was replenished by redesigning the constituents of the sovereign subject based on "discipline" (Yoon, 2016, p. 77); the category of human was to entail a distinction between those who were and were not capable of becoming a citizen. A Kantian emphasis on a "self-disciplined and cultured" character as pre-requisites of liberalism highly engaged in the process of defining the enlightened "individual subject" who acquired access to the pillars of civilization: freedom and rights (Otteson, 2009).

It is also hard to deny the ideological connections between Western liberalism and anti-communism, which developed in the Cold War context. After the concept of human rights germinated among Western Europe conservatives (especially Christian parties) as a response to

[1] Herbert Spencer believed that, while opposing further imperial expansion and control, all colonized countries were destined to slowly but steadily take the step towards a modernized Western country. William Sumner was also against imperial expansion believing that cross-breeding between superior and inferior races would eventually bring degradation (Yoon, 2016).

Hitler and the "ghosts of totalitarianism", human rights and its usage remained ambiguous to American politicians (Moyn, 2010). For example, President Truman feared human rights being used as a challenge to the Jim Crow Laws that would incite rebellion in the South (Peck, 2011, p.19). While the U.S. felt the need to capture human rights as an ideal basis for its global aspirations, ideological competition emerged between the U.S. and the Soviets who were condemned for having "shrewdly perverted Western Enlightenment ideals" (p.22) to their own ends (Peck, 2011). As a result, the American version of human rights steadily receded from communitarian values. It was understood in terms of a highly particularized and individualized vision of civic freedom, which eventually paved the way for human rights to associate with anti-communism. To borrow the words of Moyn (2010), human rights was "consecrated as the basic values" (p.79) of Western democracy, against communism, in 1950.

### *1.1.2. The Rights of an Anti-Communist Individual: POWs in the Korean War (1950-1953)*

At the same time, the U.S. officially started its overseas anti-communist containment policies through foreign intervention in the Korean peninsula. Although the consecutive stages of the Cold War would add several layers to the American concept of liberalism, the start of the Korean War in 1950 signaled an incipient necessity to use liberal values in terms of global aspirations. In particular, the issue of Prisoners of War (POWs) during the Korean War, involving power struggles between the U.S., South Korea, North Korea, and China, touched upon the essential aspects of the U.S.'s definition of an "individual human" possessing due rights. The discussions around Korean War prisoners demarcated a transition of POW principles, from the protectionist Geneva Conventions (1949) to a more liberalist system, later settling at the heart of differences between communism and capitalism (Foot, 1990, p. 129). How did the U.S. decision to permit voluntary repatriation of the POWs influence the basic ideas of American liberalism?

While the Korean POW issue is often overlooked in the history of Western human rights, the case study conducted by Hak-Jae Kim (2015) shows how the issue is crucial to understanding the essence of America's liberalistic plans during the 20$^{th}$ century. The discussions about POWs were fundamentally part of international struggles between different ideologies and principles, becoming a field where principles of the Yalta Conference (1945), the Geneva Conventions (1949),

and American liberalism all seemed to conflict.[2] The struggles dealt with some core issues of post-war population politics: human mobility, the management and protection of war refugees, local rights and duties, and post-war treatment.

Amongst this chaos, the U.S. was determined to apply a voluntary repatriation principle to the POWs. This new principle was seen as an opportunity to start a new global era, in terms of bringing change to thought-patterns and worldviews that opposed earlier conventions (Tovy, 2011, p. 511). Nevertheless, while the U.S. tried to use voluntary repatriation to carry on the idea of a "free individual" (p.384), the U.N. compounds held more than 132,000 prisoners in December 1952 (Kim, 2015). This was an overwhelmingly high number of prisoners, especially when compared to the 11,500 prisoners that the North had presented at the time. In order for the U.N. and the U.S. Ministry of Defense to maintain their status as a promoter of liberalism on a global playing field, they needed to manage the large group of war prisoners in a way that would not contradict the basic idea of liberalism.

The number of prisoners increased to be more and more uncontrollable, until it reached a point making it inevitable for the U.S. to distinguish between those who were qualified for rights to freedom and those who were not. New screening systems were built to discern the (potential) ideologies of each prisoner, gradually presenting anti-communism as a prerequisite to gaining access to freedom (Kim, 2015, p. 388). At first, anti-communism was not pushed forward explicitly. The category of "civilian detainees" (p. 371), which was supposed to indicate anti-communist prisoners who were forcefully mobilized by the North Korean army, was introduced to encourage prisoners to appeal their hostility against communism (Kim, 2015). The screening systems were meant to emancipate these civilian detainees preferentially.

However, as possibilities for freedom emerged, hopes and dreams started to drift around the compounds; more and more prisoners sought ways to successfully portray themselves as an anti-communist. A screening committee was founded in each compound, and the level of anti-communist mentalities grew to become standards of hierarchy and power among the prisoners.

[2] Both the Yalta Conference and the Geneva Conventions concluded that all POWs must be repatriated to their home countries after the war ends. In particular, the Geneva Conventions had agreed to apply these principles even to war criminals.

Some active anti-communist prisoners willfully volunteered to become inspectors of the screening work and, going even further, suggested punishing the communist "traitors" (Foot, 1990, p. 110). Re-education programs were also instituted by the U.S. army in the compounds (Tovy, 2011, p. 512). While the programs were externally promoted as providing education and entertainment to the prisoners, they intensified internal ideological tensions. Guidelines to the re-education programs directly adopted the document made by the National Security Council, insisting that "the U.S. must use all the propaganda means at its disposal to end the Korean people's aversion towards the U.S." and "fan the flames of hatred against communism" (*Wilson Center*, 1950).

As a result, the prisoners began to engage actively in riots and resistance. While the empowered anti-communists solidified their authority and domination over the others, prisoners who were willing to be repatriated back to North Korea protested against the unfair treatment (Foot, 1990, p. 111). In May 1952, outraged prisoners succeeded to hijack American commanders in the compounds of Geoje Island using knives, gasoline bombs, and stones, while the U.S. Army used grenades, tear bombs, and guns in response (Kim, 2015, p. 422). The prisoners in revolt were completely condemned, newly categorized by the U.S. army as "Oriental communists" (Kim, 2015, p. 423). Violence against them was justified in the name of America's sublime political ideologies, believed to save the prisoners from "the world of genocide and slavery" (p. 100) that awaits them in the north (Foot, 1990).

The term of an "Oriental communist" connotes a double stigma that was imposed on the insurgent (or pro-communist) prisoners, adding an orientalist layer to anti-communist ideologies. While emphasizing their uprisings to be "meticulously planned" forms of barbaric violence, reports of the military police board in the U.S. describe the prisoners in terms of what they define as "Asian characters" (p. 424): sadistic aggression, savagery, insensitivity to life, and loyal patriotism to individual authorities (Kim, 2015). The Oriental communists were considered as lacking self-discipline, rationality, and culture.

> Asians hold a sadist and barbaric character that is not common among educated people in other worlds. (…) They underestimate their own lives and regard others' lives as well. (…) Recently, nationalist sentiment has grown among them, and the Eastern communist

> have used this powerful nationalism to spread their ideas (Collection and Document, 1957, as cited in Kim, 2015, p. 424).

Moreover, the tensions caused by the constant ideological split framed the prisoners who neither complied with anti-communism nor refused to go back to North Korea as "active enemies", instead of "surrendered non-combatants" (Kim, 2010, p. 162).[3] This framework of a threatening and complete 'other' justified the need to exclude these 'enemies' from the category of free individuals.

Going back to the grounds of Western liberalism, the issue of POWs' voluntary repatriation shows how the concept of an individual was conditionally shaped during the early Cold War period. Although the definition of human rights is assumed to be universally and inalienably applicable, human rights in the American context was already formed and manifested through a history that imposed a certain structure, distinguishing who ought to be entitled to rights. The Korean War had allowed the U.S. to bring the concept of an "enlightened individual" to POW population politics. At the base of this individual, pro-active anti-communist ideas laid as part of the "self-disciplined and cultured" character, as opposed to the threatening Oriental communists who were stripped of rights.

### 1.2.The Bush Doctrine and its Historical Foothold

Activism and investigations that report North Korean human rights situations have skyrocketed after the start of the 21st century. As the Cold War came to an end in 1991, North Korea also faced a series of internal challenges after the death of Kim Il Sung (1994), the Grand Flood (1995), and nationwide chronic food shortages, causing a drastic increase of North Korean escapees. In contrast to the previous escapees who had mostly been soldiers trying to cross the military border, more than 200,000 North Koreans from different backgrounds, especially a lot of working-class people, attempted to cross the border in search of food and/or jobs (Kim, 2012, p. 33).

Together with the great outflow of North Korean commoners, the aftermath of the Helsinki Accords and the activities of the National Endowment Democracy (NED) became a periodic

[3] The POW principles that were previously agreed upon in international law had assumed all war prisoners as "surrendered non-combatants" (Kim, 2010).

booster for the U.S. to show more interest in North Korean situations. As soon as the 9/11 terrorist attacks triggered President Bush to declare the "war on terror", Bush (2002) used the attacks as a chance to direct condemnations toward the "destructive regime" of North Korea by including the country as part of the "axis of evil". The so-called Bush Doctrine, emphasizing the U.S. to protect itself by promoting democracy, became a key ideological basis for the explosive interest on North Korean human rights activism, which started during this period and still dominates the mainstream discourses of the field nowadays.

While steering to find the current relevance of past dynamics, the analysis moves on to the 'bridge period' of ideas formed between the early Cold War and the 21st century. As previously discussed, human rights was initially shaped alongside the flow of 20th century Western liberalism, and it was crafted in a way that was only accessible to those who already acquired pro-active, "self-disciplined", and defensible characters amidst Cold War tensions. How did this historical basis of a "liberal individual" survive, reshape, and reproduce itself in the U.S. through the transition from the Cold War to post-Cold War era? To answer this question, this sub-chapter sheds light on the Bush Doctrine.

Although the Bush Doctrine played a crucial role in eliciting political (and public) attention to North Korean situations, also leading to the 2004 North Korean Human Rights Act, the doctrine itself can be seen as a product of different historical, ideological, and political strands that accumulated from the past. Which fundamental ideas led the Bush Doctrine to arise? Within the context of the Cold War to post-Cold War transition, two important strands should be considered when dealing with this question. First, the human rights development in U.S. foreign policy during the late 20th century, and secondly, the influence of deep-rooted ideas that have sustained what Monten (2005) calls American "vindicationism".

### *1.2.1. The Cross-Party Human Rights Development in U.S. Foreign Policy.*

Throughout his presidency, George H. Bush highly exemplified the 'hawkish' approach of American Republicans to foreign affairs. Nevertheless, the Bush Doctrine can rather be seen as, to a certain extent, aligned with previous liberalist waves that actively used human rights and democracy as a political agenda. The full-scale use of human rights started during the Carter

administration (1977-1981), in which the aftermath of American civil rights movements, the Vietnam War, and the Helsinki Process, led the Democratic Party to "restate their pre-existing positions" (p. 151) and to newly discover the language of international human rights (Moyn, 2010). While human rights did start to emerge during post-WW2 discussions, increasingly being linked to anti-communist ideas, it was the Carter era that tried to recapture the language and shift human rights from bottom-up mobilizations to the "center of global rhetoric" (Moyn, 2010, p. 155).

In particular, the Carter administration crafted an 'American' version of human rights by narrowing and redefining it to lean toward civil and political rights (CPRs).[4] In the midst of Cold War tensions, combined with the decolonization wave of Third-World countries in solidarity for non-alignment, Carter attempted to use human rights as means to protect the United States from both internal and external challenges; he enforced a particular definition that would be favorable for liberal democracies (Vance, 1977). For example, he was aware of the lessons of the Vietnam War, which pressured the U.S. to prevent Communist influences in countries like Cambodia. Although Carter is indeed known to have taken economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCRs) into rhetorical consideration, it was a strategic decision for him to afford them less attention (Søndergaard, 2020).[5] He had to take advantage of the growing tendency among Third World countries to draw a connection between human rights and the rights for sovereignty/self-determination. The external circumstances drove him to filter-down the definition of human rights to prioritize CPRs.

While the following Reagan administration gained a great deal of support by attacking Jimmy Carter's human rights-based foreign policy, it was impossible for the new presidency to simply settle down the heated public interest on human rights (Moyn, 2010). Human rights had become a new moral framework to the Americans as if it had to be represented in the "guise of forgotten national traditions" (Moyn, 2010, p. 160). Reagan needed to use human rights in a way that would maintain his political position, while at the same time considering the explosive affiliation that was being made between foreign policy agendas and human rights. The government

[4] In general, CPRs are classified as rights that protect and ensure individuals' freedom from state governments, social organizations, or private individuals. ESCRs are known to include the rights to food, housing, health, education, cultural identity, and more (General Assembly Resolution, 1966).

[5] Still, Carter's efforts to challenge human rights being placed within Cold War strategy should not be forgotten. His speech in 1978 claims that "The Universal Declaration do not describe the world as is. But these documents are very important nonetheless. They are a beacon." (The New York Times, 1987).

decided to associate human rights with the Kirkpatrick Doctrine, supporting Third World anti-communist dictatorships in the name of protecting human rights (Jacoby, 1986). CPRs were now explicitly elevated above ESCRs, embedding delimited, anti-communist implications into the notion of American human rights.

As a continuation of the former Republican presidency, the George H. W. Bush administration clearly stiffened the ties between human rights and anti-communism (Engel, 2010). While he had tried to, at least rhetorically, afford a place for human rights in his new world order, the administration was even more inclined to use it as an excuse for foreign invasions in countries such as Panama (Bush, 1990).[6] The Cold War did come to an end during his presidency, but George H. W. Bush did not decouple the ideological tensions entangled in the concept of human rights in any way.

Finally, the Clinton administration was known to be the "pragmatic crusader" of democracy as a grand foreign strategy (Cox, 2000). Based on the democratic peace theory, Clinton marked the official start of the post-Cold War era by rooting foreign policy agendas to what he defined as America's core concepts: democracy and market economy. Clinton's emphasis on democracy did use human rights in a way to neutralize foreign policy languages, which had been strained in ideological tensions, eventually demarcating a Cold War to post-Cold War shift. However, the need to establish a substantial link between democracy and neoliberalism led to the administration's insistence on individual rights to freedom (Lake, 1993).

Thus, human rights in the late 20th century was shaped through a selective approach prioritizing American security, anti-communism, or neoliberalism, particularly as a cross-party matter. Differences did exist between the degree of usage, detailed interpretations, or implementation of human rights, but the development of human rights in U.S. foreign policy formulated a coherent human rights narrative that was contingent to national interests. Clinton's idea of a "democratic crusade" would only become one of the several bi-partisan footholds for the upcoming Bush Doctrine.

[6] The historic vision of George H. W. Bush's new world order was "a world in which freedom and respect for *human rights* find a home among all nations" (Bush, 1990).

### *1.2.2. The Bush Doctrine and American "Vindicationism".*

George W. Bush's presidency and the Bush Doctrine has become a defining feature of U.S. foreign policies, influencing American human rights activism that expanded across different countries in the early 21st century. The "war on terror", explicitly stating North Korea as a target of the war, set up ideological reasons for a direct application of U.S. military and political power to promote democracy (Monten, 2005). During this process, human rights was indeed crucial to support the political identity of the U.S.

According to Monten (2005), the Bush Doctrine was not a temporary response to the 9/11 attacks, but it was rather a fundamental shift within American national identity. The shift was quite long-term, which started from the ideas of exemplarism (late 17-18$^{th}$ century), believing that U.S. institutions and values should be perfected and preserved to influence the world through the force of its example, to the belief in vindicationism (20$^{th}$ century), which the U.S. ought to move beyond being an example to be both a "beacon and crusader" (p. 114), undertaking active measures to spread its institutions and values (Monten, 2005). The 9/11 attacks were only a good "opportunity" (p. 152) to reverse popular reluctance about international intervention and to manifest the already prevailing sentiments that were accumulated throughout the 20$^{th}$ century (Monten, 2005). Thus, the strong ties developed between U.S. foreign policy and the language of human rights during the Cold War to post-Cold-War transition period can be seen as a concrete expression of American vindication ideologies that later culminated into the Bush Doctrine. Monten (2005) examines the ideological basis that was heretofore deeply rooted in American national identity, ultimately enabling the shift towards vindicationism.

The most significant roots of vindicationism come from a particular interpretation of the ideas of Calvinism and the Western Enlightenment. First of all, Calvinist ideas, known by the works of Huntington (2004) to be embedded in American constitutionalism, lays their faith on millennialist convictions and a redemptive history about the upcoming period of peace and righteousness on earth (Little, 2010). The Americans are the "elect people more immediate to God than others" (p. 127), who are required to act benevolently as "tutors to mankind" (p. 128) leading the world in this journey towards emancipation and salvation from the evil world (Monten, 2005).

Secondly, Western Enlightenment ideas have combined this sense of "divinely appointed Americans" with confidence in a setting of common rationality and a cosmopolitan spirit that is deemed to be applicable all over the world (Monten, 2005). Based on this "enlightened" faith in human rationality and a linear progress of history, Americans were led to believe that illiberalism and its disastrous consequences can be resolved through the "application of reason and good governance" (Monten, 2005, p. 138).

Monten (2005) views the ideological proclivities of the Bush Doctrine as a representation of neoconservative disposition, which combines realist power politics with a liberalist approach to International Relations (IR) that seek interaction through common values and ideas. The aggressive use of U.S. power is constructed as an instrument of liberal change, and the need to promote worldwide democracy and human rights became the primary pillars of "vindicating" American superiority. In the context of the American human rights regime, the overarching human rights narrative hold its roots in the belief that "we Americans", as the "benevolent chosen people", will aggressively spread our institutions and values by relying on the enlightened standard of universal morality.

Is the concept of an enlightened, pro-actively anti-communist, and self-disciplined individual in accordance with the human rights narrative of the late 20$^{th}$-early 21$^{st}$ century? Considering that human rights developed as a primary agenda for American foreign policy and the core drive to launch overseas attacks as a "war on terror", it is clear that human rights inevitably (even if not deliberately) implies an internal division in itself; in order to decide who is part of 'us' and the 'other', or in other words, who is qualified for their rights to be protected, the division is unavoidable. Although human rights is originally ought to be applicable to all human bodies, it has become embedded and crafted within a certain structure that already assumed a hierarchy.

## 1.3. Post-Humanitarianism and Hypotheses for Discourse Analysis

### *1.3.1. The Politics of Pity and the Post-Humanitarian Distance*

The explosive interest in international human rights and the surge of human rights organizations in the post-Bush Doctrine era brought up questions about the politics of pity. Boltanski (2009)

refers to the work of Hannah Arendt and her example of the French Revolution, especially to demonstrate how the "politics of pity" emerges in sites that are commonly known to 'bring justice'. Arendt (1990) points to the revolutionaries who had neglected profound discussions on the essence of liberty and rather politically engaged with "the sense of pity" (p. 85). The focus was primarily made on what is seen and on looking, or the "spectacle" (p. 95) of suffering, which established a fundamental distance between those who suffer and those who, regarded as the fortunate or the lucky, do not (Arendt, 1990). Based on Arendt's theory on the politics of pity, human rights advocacy groups were increasingly exposed to critiques pointing out that the organizations tactically used humanitarian arguments based on the "spectacle of suffering".

Along with the rising criticism of neoliberal influence in human rights advocacy, "post-humanitarianism" emerged as a new concept that added to the politics of pity (Chouliarakie, 2010; Reeves, 2016; Nunes, 2017). The concept critically approached human rights discourses by prophesizing the dangers of the moral imagination of the West to be framed in a way that privileges a "low-intensity and short-term" (p. 108) form of agency (Chouliarakie, 2010). Not only do human rights discourses produce a certain distance between the "sufferer" and the "observer", but the whole decision-making process overwhelmingly leans toward the position of the observer. This slanted distance is supported by two different, but interwoven, ideas: the assumption of *moral universalism* and the attitude of *reflexive particularism* (Chouliarakie, 2010). While moral and ethical standards are assumed to be applicable on a universal scale, especially by mobilizing action to human suffering, the observers tend to "rely on their own judgments" (p. 118), delimiting the subjects of reflexivity, to decide whether public action is possible or desirable (Chouliarakie, 2010).

The universalist propensity would expand human rights activities to different parts of the world (moral universalism), but a selected focus or approach would not be made by contemplating the structural circumstances of the sufferers but rather by reflecting on the observer's own sense of morality (reflexive particularism). The premised distance is made at the expense of a process that morally essentializes and victimizes the sufferers, creating the imagery of an ideal victim, and most of all, depriving their agency. Furthermore, when this process is placed within the context of Western liberalism, the degree of agency is measured only through normative liberal assumptions about human nature (Mahmood, 2011). An emphasis on atomized, individualized, and bounded

characteristics of a person conjoins with the belief in (Western) rationality, preconditioning a certain form of autonomy and freedom to be sought by the agent.[7]

Why is this problematic? Despite human rights being a concept that is presented as inalienable rights, its implementation produces a logic that implies a hierarchy contradicting its original intention. For example, even if the spectator does acknowledge West's complicity in worldwide inequality, post-humanitarian distancing leads human rights activities to seek narrow solutions through extrovert and assertive forms of indignation. Again, the activities end up focusing on 'us' being the benefactor (Chouliarakie, 2010). A fundamentally paradoxical relationship emerges within the human rights discourses, even if it were unintended, eventually reproducing and reenacting the complicity in power relations.

### *1.3.2. Hypotheses for Discourse Analysis*

While thoroughly examining North Korean human rights discourses in the U.S., the final two chapters seek to discover whether the discourses include a "post-humanitarian distance" between the American "observers" and the North Korean "sufferers". In order to investigate the degree and characteristics that are implied in the distance, the analysis will be centered around three core questions: 1) Does a certain distance exist between the organizations' identification of 'us' and the North Korean 'other'? 2) What are the ideologies that constitute the distance? 3) To what extent is the distance consistent with the ontological dangers, such as essentializing the sufferers of reproducing power relations, of post-humanitarianism?

How does the historical analysis of 'American' human rights allow the concept of "post-humanitarianism" to provide a relevant framework when analyzing current discourses? Based on the historical findings of chapter 1, I hypothesize that a distance between the observers and sufferers in North Korean human rights discourses is caused by the inherent hierarchy within

[7] The standards of rationality here is, again, restricted to the context of Western Enlightenment philosophy. It implies a distinction between the reasonable and the unreasonable, the self-conscious and the unconscious, and even the human and the un-human. When considering the genealogy of Western rational thinking, exemplified by the Kantian tradition, it is proved that non-Western people have long been regarded as incapable of being moral agents. Kant argued about "the grotesqueries of Indians and Chinese, the ridiculousness and stupidity of the Negro, and the lack of feelings among savages in North America" (Kant, 1764, as cited in Uimonen, 2020).

‘American’ human rights. The dynamic but complementary relationship between Cold War tensions, national security, and a sense of American vindicationism is what constitutes the post-humanitarian distance between Americans and North Koreans. As a consequence, the hypothesis claims that the discourses will explicitly assume an American standard of moral universalism as the key motivation for them to engage in North Korean situations, while at the same time guiding the discourses to be justified by self-serving (physical and cultural) national interests.

Moreover, the hypothesis assumes that the distance will involve the ontological dangers of a post-humanitarian approach, making the discourses reenact a binary power structure. The distance created by the already hierarchical conditions of human rights inevitably causes a high level of indignation against the North Korean government, which leads to an essentialized image of the North Korean people suffering under the government. The dichotomy will require two-folded preconditions for the North Korean people to be part of the American human rights regime. First, they must not be a threat to the (physical and cultural) national security of the United States. Secondly, their ideas, lives, and desires should be shaped agreeable to the Western standards of rationality and freedom.

# Chapter 2. Methodology for Discourse Analysis

## 2.1. (Critical) Discourse Analysis

A post-structural approach to IR guides us to find relevance between the historical analysis and current human rights campaigns. While de-constructing key concepts in IR, post-structuralism shows how people are influenced by different historical periods with a "specific way of thinking" (Edkins, 2007, p. 88). Current human rights activism and their campaign slogans can be placed in a certain context of history (in this case the history of American human rights), allowing us to examine how reality is constructed as a result of social developments.

Discourse analysis is often used as a method to maximize the effect of post-structural lenses when applied to current movements. In particular, a Foucaultian (critical) approach views discourses as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49) and digs into a deeper layer of the phenomenon (Foucault, 1969). While discourses can be examined in many different ways, Jäger (2004, as cited in Wodak & Meyer, 2016) defines discourse as the "flow of knowledge *communicated* through time" (p. 129), emphasizing the importance of knowledge being communicated throughout different historical contexts.

Furthermore, Foucault associates discourse with the power of language, which is considered to be a transparent tool, or even a "naked state" (p. 374) that represents the means to communicate their knowledge within a broader episteme (Foucault & Gros, 2010). Here, the episteme itself is also built through power relations within a discursive order. An analysis of power relations embedded in language hence enables a critical (post-colonial) approach to discourse which, according to Loomba (2015), traces the connections between the "visible and the hidden, the dominant and the marginalized, or ideas and institutions" (p. 63). Therefore, critical discourse analysis will help us examine whether discourses continue to reflect the power structures in a historical concept (human rights), and to what extent these power structures influence current communication methods.

### 2.2. Source Selection (1)

While using qualitative research methods, the final two chapters will compare the human rights discourses that are produced by different strands of North Korean human rights activism in contemporary (2004-2022) American society. The first two organizations (chapter 3) come from a religious and conservative background, and the final two organizations (chapter 4) are founded by people from a more secular and progressive sector in the American society. It is assumed that the similarities would shed light on structural preconditions, derived from the historical development of American liberalism and vindicationism, which is embedded in the concept of human rights and manifested in the shape of a post-humanitarian distance.

Chapter 3 will focus on two organizations, the Defense Forum Foundation (DFF) and Christian Freedom International (CFI), which were selected based on their conservative political stance and high reliance on evangelicalism. The connection between the political stance and the religious belief, also known as the "Christian Right", can be explained in the context of modern religious history. Although the political standpoints of evangelicals have been contingent upon different time periods and countries, many American evangelicals were increasingly involved in the Christian Right since the 1960s, specifically as a reaction to the 1960s counterculture (Ryu, 2001). From then on, evangelicals have been regarded as an important voting bloc of the Republic Party and are now best described as a movement "within conservatism" (Miller, 2014; Kyle, 2006).

The Defense Forum Foundation (DFF) was founded during the Reagan administration, initiated by the need to "rebuild America's defense" (Roxann, n.d.). The organization's core motive for human rights activism is deeply rooted in the purpose to address national security and defense issues. Also, the DFF's focus on "how to win the war on terror" demonstrates its inextricable link with conservative approaches to foreign policies; its support for human rights advocacy is highly motivated by realist thinking.

Christian Freedom International (CFI) is also a human rights organization that has been actively working on North Korean human rights since the beginning of the 21st century (*About CFI*, n.d.). While the leader of the organization, Wendy Wright, is well-known for speaking about conservative religious causes, such as her belief against evolution, the activities of CFI are also

known to be centered on religious rights. The core mission of the CFI is to "aid, equip, and advocate for Christians who are oppressed or persecuted for their faith" (*About CFI*, n.d.).

The sources for both organizations were selected by recognizing the importance of communication and language in critical discourse analysis. They should include explicit phrases or sentences that were used to explain, convince, and justify the need for American human rights activism to be ongoing in North Korea. Chapter 3 will analyze a total of 10 interviews, articles (or excerpts of her words), and letters written by Suzanne Scholte, president of the DFF. 78 out of 90 of the posts on the DFF website (*North Korea*, n.d.) consist of interviews, speeches, or letters written by Scholte, who plays a leading role in publicizing the harsh situations of North Korea and condemning the North Korean government for its human rights abuses. The sources were selected by considering the immense influence of Scholte's ideas on the organization, as well as her influence on overall North Korean human rights agendas among American conservatives.

The CFI, when compared with the DFF, tends to narrow its focus more on the lives of Christians and about proselytizing North Koreas who have been "brainwashed" by the Kim dictators (*About CFI*, n.d.). Chapter 3 will analyze 6 monthly newsletters and 4 essays of the CFI that were published to shed light on North Korean circumstances and to announce prayer alerts. The monthly newsletters (*Newsletters*, n.d.) especially play a significant role to foster communication between the organization and its donors, impacting the language/discourse formation process of North Korean human rights. The newsletters include pictures, articles, and catchphrases that promote why North Korean Christians require 'our' help, and its contents become important agents that are responsible for gathering donors to provide spiritual and material support.

### 2.3. Source Selection (2)

The final chapter examines two organizations from the liberal democratic sector: the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission (TLHRC) and the Human Rights Watch (HRW). An interesting characteristic of the rise of human rights in American Congress is its bi-partisan initiatives. The Congressional Human Rights Caucus (CHRC), the nowadays TLHRC, was initially founded in 1987 based on a bipartisan agreement that the US should defend overseas human rights in broad

terms (Søndergaard, 2020, p. 92). However, the members of the organization are relatively distanced from the typical right-wing or religiously conservative viewpoint on human rights; the organization was crafted as a critical response to Reagan's relatively nonchalant behavior on human rights, also criticizing his instrumentalization of the human rights theme as a counter ideology against Soviet propaganda (Søndergaard, 2020).

In other words, the organization's stance on human rights has been shaped by a liberalist approach to international relations and American foreign policy. They claim to prioritize and acknowledge the importance of international cooperation and common values over realists' concerns of state power politics. The CHRC's change of name in remembrance of Democrat Tom Lantos (1928-2008) also reflects the organization's close connection with the democratic sector of American politics.

The Human Rights Watch, originally the Helsinki Watch, is another American NGO that has been working in collaboration with the CHRC, holding similar intentions and purposes. Although it started as a monitoring body to check on the Soviet Union's compliance with the 1975 Helsinki Accords, the organization accepted the criticism made about its preoccupation with Russia and Eastern European countries by changing its name and broadening its regional focus (*History*, 2020). While the TLHRC is a caucus that consists of politicians from Congress, the HRW is a non-governmental organization that conducts human rights investigations all around the world.

To analyze the communication language of the two organizations, as with the previous chapter, chapter 4 examines a total of 16 sources that were published on their official websites (*North Korea*, 2020; *News*, n.d.; *Hearings*, n.d.). The sources were selected based on contents that mainly insist on reasons or justifications for why North Korean human rights should be taken into American consideration. The analysis on TLHRC will use 3 hearing announcements and 4 press releases, while that of the HRW will use 8 commentaries and 1 news release that were written and published by correspondents of the organization.

# Chapter 3. Discourse Analysis I: Conservative Evangelicals

The findings of chapter 1 proved that the Bush Doctrine was not a temporary political commitment pursued by a certain individual; it was rather a culmination of core elements that shaped the national identity of the United States. Regardless of who or which party is in charge of the government, the belief that Americans should use power to "vindicate their right" in illiberal countries was deeply rooted and remains within the American society (Monten, 2005). The roots of a vindicationist identity in the U.S. collaborated with the development of human rights as a foreign policy agenda in the late 20th century, which laid the historical basis for North Korean human rights activism to thrive in the post-Bush Doctrine period.

The final two chapters will analyze the discourses produced by four different organizations in the U.S. that currently (2004-2022) engage in North Korean human rights campaigns. Based on the hypothesis of a post-humanitarian distance, the (critical) discourse analysis aims to answer the following questions: to what extent do current American human rights activism proceed in a way that involves a post-humanitarian distance between the "observers" and the "sufferers"? How does it reflect American perceptions of the North Korean government and the North Korean people? What kind of consequences (or dangers) would the human rights discourses lead to?

## 3.1. The Light vs. Dark Contrast and Conversion Narratives

The organizations' self-identification of 'us' in relations to the North Koreans was highly reflected by an imagery contrast between light and dark; it is the most significant and frequently used framework when introducing the readers to a brief conception of the situation. The framework tends to maximize the boundaries between the Americans and North Koreans, while at the same time generalizing the people into two clusters of completely different colors. They are colors that are, in common sense, not perceived as a horizontal contrast but rather as a vertical symbol of good vs. evil.

Scholte makes a contrast between the "land of darkness" or "blackness" (Scholte, 2010) of North Korea against the "bright lights" of the United States, stating that "pinpricks of light are breaking into the darkness there" (Scholte, 2013). The CFI newsletters also refer to North Korea

as a place "drenched in darkness" ("Getting Deep", 2020, p. 6), requiring the Americans to "pierce the darkness" ("Smuggling Truth", 2021, p. 5). Regarding the fact that both organizations are established upon Christian principles, it can be assumed that the metaphor of light and dark represents biblical symbols: the penetration of holiness, goodness, wisdom, and hope into the evil, sin, and despair (Robbins, 2018). Thus, the contrast shows where the DFF and CFI posit 'us' in terms of North Koreans and proves that the distance between 'us' and 'them' is structured in a highly contrastive and hierarchical manner.

At the same time, it is observable that the North Korean people are not the actual subjects of darkness. The people are instead portrayed to be residing in a land that is dominated by the darkness, meaning that there is a clear distinction made between the North Korean people and the country itself. The ultimate goal for human rights activities is assumed to make "light pierce into the darkness" by taking the 'innocent people' out of the 'dark land'. In order to prove why and how this is necessary, conversion narratives are occasionally used by both religious organizations.

The two organizations both rely their justifications on the narratives of individual defectors, stressing stories that articulate dramatic defecting journeys (or encounters with Western/Christian values) of the North Korean people.[8] According to Bruner (1986), narratives are forms of expression that are "socially constructed units of meaning" (p. 7), which have been shaped in socio-culturally shared forms. In this context, the North Korean narratives articulated by the religious organizations resemble what Jung (2015) calls, the "Christian Passage", construing "suffering, perilous migration, and development of a new self" (p. 77) through evangelical language. The process of achieving freedom after all the harsh suffering and tragic experiences in North Korea is portrayed in parallel with the process of conversion to Christianity; escaping North Korea and arriving in a Western country (or South Korea) is viewed as being the 'lost sheep' that is eventually 'found and chosen' by a divine God.

For example, Scholte introduces the story of a "healing" that happened when a North Korean woman started to listen to the Free North Korea Radio broadcast, a project led by DFF. After the woman encountered Christian values and wrote down the bible verses spoken through

[8] The sources of DFF and the CFI both rely on defector testimonies repeatedly, seven times (out of ten) and five times (out of ten) each.

the radio, her daughter became the "only one who survived the epidemic of typhoid fever" (Strand, 2018) in the town, motivating her to escape the country and achieve freedom in the Western world. The CFI newsletters also presented similar narratives. A newsletter published in 2019 describes the story of a former North Korean official receiving a smuggled bible (*Getting Aid*, 2019, p. 5). He experienced a "miracle" of "making it to freedom", meaning that he successfully escaped across the country border in 1988. Another newsletter written in April 2022 directly refers to the testimonies made by defector Kang.

> Looking back from my own experience, and I didn't know God, I begged to any entity for help and safety just prior to crossing the river from North Korea to China. (…) This kindness - provided with your (CFI) support - prepared me to give my life to Jesus (*Escape*, 2022, p. 6)

The newsletter also adds that when Kang "finally reached freedom", the first thing he wanted to do was "to be baptized". The North Koreans' confrontation with Christian values, especially those smuggled into the country, their motivations for escaping the country, and their successful 'strive for freedom' are all considered as salvation granted by a supernatural power. Thus, a "pierce of light (American influence) through darkness" (p. 5) is interpreted as a teleological and divine process ("Smuggling Truth", 2021).

The hierarchical distance between light and dark seems to rely on a process of self-transformation, including a religious conversion, in which certain defectors escape the 'dark' with the help of 'light'. The process can be seen as the defectors becoming subject to a "new cultural citizenship" (p. 78), particularly adapting to an "American set of norms and rules", and appearing to "alter and reproduce the boundaries of the North Koreans' local values and practices" (Jung, 2015). [9] At the same time, the conversion narratives of the North Korean people are parallel to, while adding a layer of religious language, the transformation process of the Korean War POWs who were required to actively appeal to their pro-active, self-disciplined (denial of North Korean identities), and anti-communist ideas to gain access to freedom rights.

[9] Winland (1994) and Ong (2003) defines "American norms and rules" as Christianity, Western individualism, consumerism, and the social welfare system in Western European countries (as cited in Jung, 2015, p. 78).

An active encounter and adoption of Christian values are regarded as both a pro-active and 'cultured' response that would entitle the North Koreans to freedom, while also being a divine 'choice' that was made by God. Therefore, the organizations' reliance on conversion narratives underlines a moral and religious duty for the Americans to use Christian values as a solution for overseas human rights situations. They emphasize the positive role of 'us' as the "elect people" (see Appendix A), according to the roots of American vindicationism, that would ultimately pave the way for the North Koreans towards freedom.

Recently, there has been an increase of voices problematizing certain defector narratives that dominate the public discourse (Song, 2021; Lee, 2016; Hough & Bell, 2020). The narratives tend to reduce the complexity of defector experiences into a "specific and generic framing" (p. 171), producing an inclusion/exclusion mechanism by establishing "hidden parameters of inclusion" (Hough & Bell, 2020, p. 171). To be fully accepted by the Western society, defectors are compelled to fit their narratives into a certain set of human rights discourses, or else they will risk being stigmatized as "North Korean sympathizers" (Hough & Bell, 2020, p. 175). However, both the DFF and CFI continue to use these narratives as a way to frame human rights discourses.

### 3.2. The Use of Metaphors and Unilateral Solutions

It is also noticeable that human rights appeals made by the two organizations are highly, almost entirely, reliant on a condemnation of the North Korean government. The appeals are deprived of any detailed or comprehensive information about the causal background or the various mechanisms that exacerbate the situation from different angles. Instead, all justifications are reduced to denouncing the North Korean government, mostly in a framework that lacks an explanation of the historical or structural context.

The condemnation is mostly expressed through the use of metaphorical language, which reenacts a good vs. evil dichotomy as the sole reason to act, as well as means to fulfill the organization's persuasive and rhetorical goals (Otenio et al., 2016). A complete demonization of the North Korean government is the most frequently used metaphor by both organizations. In her interviews, Scholte explicitly and continuously indicate the country as an "evil place" (Zaimov, 2018), and the leaders as a "personification of evil" (Jones, 2018) which created a "hell on earth"

(Scholte, 2010). The newsletters of CFI also repeatedly mention an "evil dictatorship" (*Getting Deep*, 2020, p. 7) that leads the country with "gruesome cruelty" (*Smuggling Truth*, 2021, p. 7).

At the same time, the two organizations accuse the North Korean government by placing it into different historical contexts. Scholte (2010) situates North Korean human rights in the "great world conflict", referring to the "ideals of freedom, democracy, and human rights" being in crisis against "totalitarian states that support terrorist ideologies". The North Korean state is placed among a collective of ideologies that are a threat to the U.S., along with communism, Marxism, and radical Islam. Also, the Second World War is frequently mentioned to compare the North Korean government with Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, and the North Korean people are referred to as survivors of the holocaust (Scholte, 2013). Scholte (2013) foretells that the next generation "will ask us the same questions the world was asked" when "the allies liberated the Nazi death camps". She also uses the analogy of late totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe during the Cold War when emphasizing the need to enable a "free flow of information" (Thomas, 2017). Thus, a metaphorical comparison is used to refer to regimes that were, irrespective of the time period, fighting against the United States.

The focus of CFI is more directed toward religious analogies. The North Korean people are referred to the enslaved and imprisoned Israelites, indicated as the "Jewish ancestors of Jesus" (p. 3), framing the North Korean government as the tyrannical kings of ancient Egypt (*Escape*, 2022). The escaping journeys of North Koreans are viewed as a sacred exodus, which applies a religious virtue to their need for emancipation. The metaphorical language of CFI tends to illuminate the situation as a spiritual battle focusing on the religious conflict between Christians and their 'enemies'.

What kind of solutions does the focus on harsh indignation lead to? A complete demonization of the "dark land" allows both organizations to support a unilateral injection of Western/Christian values into North Korea. According to the human rights discourses of the religious organizations, North Korean people are essentialized as mere victims who are either brainwashed or are 'waiting to be rescued' by someone, highly in need to encounter the 'truth' (see Appendix B). The DFF uses strategies like broadcasting the Free North Korean Radio, launching balloon propaganda pamphlets across the border, or smuggling USBs, SDs, small

laptops, and rice bottles with leaflets (Zaimov, 2018). The CFI offers similar solutions; they also smuggle solar-powered audio bibles and form underground churches near the Chinese-Korean border, strongly believing that they will "smuggle the truth" into North Korea. (*Smuggling Truth*, 2021; *Escape*, 2022).

The actual effectiveness of these unilateral 'injection' solutions can be a matter of debate in itself, but it is hard to deny that their justifications derive from a hierarchical distance made between the American 'us' and the North Korean 'other'. The only solution provided for the 'other' is to assimilate to Western values, lacking further consideration of the wider geopolitical implications of the situation.

### 3.3. Conclusion: Becoming a "Cultural Citizen" of Western Christianity

The framework of light vs. dark demonstrates the post-humanitarian distance that exists in the identity of religious organizations against the North Korean people. The distance is huge, almost as to the gap between black and white. While lacking any nuanced or structural understandings about the human rights situations, the distance tends to reenact a good vs. evil normality that justifies a full condemnation of the North Korean government.

As hypothesized in chapter 1, the distance is influenced by requirements imposing an active adoption of (Western) Christian values and demanding a behavior of callousness against the "dark" North Korean identity. These requirements work as "hidden parameters of inclusion" (Hough & Bell, 2020, p. 171) for the defector groups to adapt to a "cultural citizenship" (Jung, 2015, p. 78), in the Western society, making it deducible that inherent prerequisites had already existed within the concept of human rights in itself. According to the ontological dangers of the post-humanitarian distance, the distance may risk being shaped into a hierarchical form – reproducing power relations that focus on 'us' the benefactor.

Thus, human rights is a delimited concept applied only to those who do not threaten the security-driven, religious motivations of the evangelical organizations. Although the two organizations slightly differ on what they specify as an 'enemy', both the DFF and CFI commonly share their religious duty as "tutors of mankind" (moral universalism) and design their solutions

by unilaterally injecting Western conceptions of freedom and moral/religious rationality (reflexive particularism).

## Chapter 4. Discourse Analysis II: Liberal Democrats

During his speech at the 74th Session of the United Nations Assembly, former President Donald Trump mentioned that "when you undermine border security, you are undermining *human rights*" (United Nations Headquarters, 2019). Current President Joe Biden also claimed that "defending *human rights* and demonstrating that democracies deliver for their people is (…) at the center of my administration's foreign policy and it goes to the heart of who we are as a nation – and as a people" (Biden, 2021). Although its practical implications can be a different matter of debate, the protection of human rights has been deeply fixed as a central goal in U.S. politics.

Thus, individual rights are now considered a national value to be respected in both public and private spheres, and its sacredness is rightfully upheld even without using or borrowing religious language. This chapter aims to analyze recent (2004-2022) human rights frameworks of organizations, particularly the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission (TLHRC) and the Human Rights Watch (HRW), that come from a relatively secular and progressive sector in the American society.

### 4.1. The International 'Us' and the North Korean 'Other'

Compared to the religious groups, the TLHRC and the HRW were both reluctant on using specific metaphors to describe their own positions in relation to North Korean human rights. The descriptions were more detailed in a way that directly relates to current issues, such as U.S.-North Korea summits or nuclear negotiations, providing specific reasons on how North Korean human rights will impact international politics. For example, the hearing notice for the TLHRC in 2010 justifies the need for more attention by arguing that "we should not be simply satisfied by denouncing the situation in justifiably harsh language" (*Escaping North Korea*, 2010). They also emphasize that "constant documentation" is needed for a sophisticated approach to North Korean human rights.

However, this did not mean an absence of distance between the organizations and the North Koreans. Although not presented extremely, the use of an 'us' versus 'them' framework was occasionally found in the discourse language. A common way to describe the status of 'us' in the

two organizations was by referring to the "international community" (Seok, 2007; Seok, 2009; *Co-Chair Pitts*, 2016; *North Korea*, 2018b; Sifton, 2019). Even though the TLHRC and HRW are both U.S.-based organizations, they constantly position 'us' as an equivalent to the 'international community', creating a framework that assumes the United States as a representative of international consent made against North Korean human rights. Except for one press release of the TLHRC that stated "we must work with *our partners* in the international community" (*Co-chairs*, 2021), making an indirect distinction between 'us' and the "international partners", the immediate association between 'us' and the "international community" was taken for granted without providing any explanations on how they defined the community. An HRW commentary stated that the U.S. is acting "in accordance with international legal obligations" (Seok, 2004), justifying their appeals based on international law but also without specifically stating the exact legislation.

Interestingly, the TLHRC presented its will to "collaborate with the help" of other global and regional powers, including China and Russia (*Escaping North Korea*, 2010). While distanced from framing North Korea as an 'enemy' in the Cold War context, the organizations tend to neutralize North Korean human rights as an issue that should be managed in horizontal collaboration with "all government leaders and faith leaders" regardless of state ideology (*Co-chairs*, 2011). At the same time, it can also be interpreted as the organizations presenting human rights as a 'moral duty' for everyone, requiring other countries to participate in the American-led global order.

In contrast to the religious organizations that often criticized North Korean human rights based on normative thinking, the sources published by the TLHRC and the HRW openly associated the issues with their impact on actual, tangible problems such as foreign policy issues. While explicitly indicating that North Korean human rights are important for the "preservation of American safety and security", the TLHRC argues that there should be a "strategic use of human rights indicators" (North Korea, 2018b) in issues that, as the HRW sheds light on, directly influence "weapon proliferation programs" and "foreign negotiations" (Sifton, 2019).

Thus, the two organizations are rather in favor of reasoning their justifications based on realistic grounds, emphasizing the importance of human rights issues for U.S. foreign interests. Although human rights issues are often used as a significant negotiation tool in U.S.-North Korean

diplomacy, it is noticeable that the two advocacy organizations present foreign policies as the primary reason to why Americans should not overlook the humanitarian situations in North Korea. National security is used as the prominent standard to justify and build-up activities to support human rights protection of North Koreans.

### 4.2. A Tilted Focus on Civil and Political Rights

The division between civil and political rights (CPRs) and economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCRs) is indeed a historical product of Cold War tensions and a result of U.S. strategies to vindicate a selective implementation of human rights in Third-World countries.[10] As both the TLHRC and the HRW provide specific and concrete examples of North Korean sufferings, it was easy to sense that the majority of the accusations were based on CPRs.

Although a binary division of rights is nowadays regarded as an outdated framework, the justifications used by the two organizations were categorized into CRPs and ESCRs for the sake of analysis (see Appendix C). The chart demonstrates how both the TLHRC and the HRW hold a tilted focus towards CRPs, revealing what the U.S. prioritizes to define as a human rights violation. The restrictions on "freedom of speech, press, religion, assembly, movement" (Seok, 2004; Seok, 2009; *North Korea*, 2012; *North Korea*, 2018a; *North Korea*, 2018b; *Co-chair Pitts*, 2016; *Co-chairs*, 2021) were repeatedly mentioned in both organizations, while labor camps and political prisons were also a severe issue called "slave labor" (*North Korea*, 2018b) by the TLHRC and "enslavement" (Seok, 2009) by the HRW. As the TLHRC indicated "our international community" as the "free world" (*Co-chairs*, 2011), it was assumable that being "free" here preferentially meant being free from any unjust infringement from civil and political power. The HRW also explicitly criticizes the "conservative, male-dominated" society of North Korea by pointing to women lacking the "right to wear trousers and ride bicycles", which is an issue that receives relatively less attention as a core civil right to stand against gender discrimination in the West (Seok, 2009).

[10] CPRs were indeed already regarded as the original and most significant concept that form human rights; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states them as the first portion of the document. However, it is also important to keep in mind that the UDHR was drafted and documented during the initial periods of the Cold War, unable to avoid Cold War tensions, adopted with abstentions from eight countries including the USSR (Saghaye-Biria, 2018).

However, a higher level of attention also seemed to be steering towards different rights. Although asymmetrically mentioned when compared to CPRs, the situations of "poverty, famine, or a shortage of medical supplies" were increasingly mentioned by the two organizations, without relying on any kind of ruthless indignation towards the North Korean government (*Human Rights,* 2007; *North Korea*, 2012). Moreover, the TLHRC requested the American government to promote family reunions between separated families, suggesting it as one way to show respect for North Korean human rights situations (*North Korea*, 2018b). CPRs are mostly put forward as the first reasons to advocate North Korean human rights, but more and more space was provided to advocate ESCRs – including the need for state governments to actively engage in the issue of reuniting families who were separated during the Korean War.

The right to civil and political freedom is an important pillar that fundamentally supports human integrity, but a tilted focus on CPRs may also reflect vestiges of American security vigilance. An emphasis on civil and political freedom is what remains as the most agreeable language to convince the American audience, frequently used to gain more justification and support. So although the TLHRC and the HRW do not use extreme metaphorical language to spark a contrast between the position of 'us' and the North Korean 'other', CPRs still provide a significant basis to condemn the North Korean government as the "atrocious system" (*Co-chairs*, 2011) that is "cruel" (*Co-chair Pitts*, 2016) and "impossible to trust" (*North Korea*, 2018b), while also essentializing the North Korean people as those who are "taken every human right" (*Co-chair Pitts*, 2016) and who "live in fear" (Seok, 2004). The harsh lives of the 'sufferers' are highlighted, but none of the sources mention or try to look into the heterogeneity and diversity in North Korean lives that would lead the audience to a more multi-layered understanding of the situation.

### 4.3. Conclusion: An International Morality and a National Reflexivity

The attention of the two secular, progressive organizations seems to lean on collecting and disseminating as much information as possible about human rights issues in North Korea. Unlike the religious organizations directed toward demonizing the North Korean government, the TLHRC and the HRW provide more contextualized, fact-driven sources that guide the readers into how human rights are closely connected with sociopolitical issues in U.S.-North Korean relations.

The two organizations do not manifest a vivid distance between 'us' and the North Korean 'sufferers', and they are relatively reluctant on specifying the identity of 'us' in relation to the North Koreans. Instead, they repeatedly refer to the international community as the main subjects of human rights advocacy. This reference is based on a presumption of the United States as a forerunner (or even as the equipollent) of human rights actions in the international society, with the American members holding a moral and universal duty to lead the world towards progress (moral universalism). At the same time, the ultimate purpose for advocacy is elucidated in the context of foreign policies, nuclear negotiations, or security concerns in the U.S. (reflexive particularism), even in civic organizations such as the HRW. This naturally leads to a post-humanitarian distance that is tilted towards CPRs as the basis of accusing the North Korean state; human rights abuses are preferentially judged according to liberal, American-friendly rights.

Thus, in the two liberal organizations, a post-humanitarian distance that was hypothesized in chapter 1 appears to be vague. However, it still exists with underlying conditions that do not necessarily escape national security concerns. The commentary made by Tom Malinowski (2011), the Washington director of HRW, claims that "the more the West engages the North Korean government the better", because the regime is "not just monstrous or mad people" but is only "craving legitimacy". While showing a clear difference from the religious organizations that view North Korea as completely undiscernible embodiments, the liberal organizations are more inclined to view the concept of human rights through the lenses of international power struggles. The lenses postulate a linear and teleological conception of progress that parallels American vindicationist ideas, justifying more engagement of the West. Again, the actual effectiveness of Western engagement can be another matter of debate, but a distance built upon national reflexivity may entail the post-humanitarian dangers of establishing a hierarchical structure within the distance – reproducing power relations that might have been covered in the name of a 'universal' human right.

## Conclusion

This thesis aimed to analyze North Korean human rights discourses of U.S. organizations, questioning different ideas, perceptions, and historical processes that were involved in dominant framings of the North Korean situation. It examined how organizations coming from different sectors of American geopolitical grounds, both the conservative evangelicals and the liberal democrats, contribute to framing human rights discourses in North Korea. Although the organizations come from opposite stances in domestic politics, the commonalities underlying both stances were expected to reflect deep-rooted national identities that developed throughout the history of the American human rights regime.

Based on a post-structural and post-colonial approach to history, the first chapter sought to deconstruct the concept of Western human rights. A historical entanglement between decolonization, Cold War tensions, foreign policy strategies, and deeply ingrained national identities created an 'American' version of human rights. During the mid-20th century, the precarious gap between liberalism and racism created by decolonization was replenished by redesigning the sovereign subject to hold conditional access to human rights. In addition, the rise of Western liberal ideas and discussions of Korean POWs led human rights to shift from a vague term to specific ideas of American liberalism against communism. In the late 20th century, human rights developed into one of the most important foreign policy agendas of the United States. Although intended to be applicable to everyone, human rights was embedded and crafted within a certain structure that already presumed American supremacy, national security, and Cold War tensions.

The 21st century Bush Doctrine was seen as a culmination of the core elements of the American national identity and the previous liberalist waves in foreign policies. Thus, this thesis made an in-depth examination of the fundamental ideas that supported the Bush Doctrine to connect the dots between the Calvinist and Enlightenment roots of American constitutionalism, liberal internationalism, and anti-communism. The result was a "vindicationist" mindset, believing that the aggressive use of U.S. power would be an instrument of liberal change. Human rights became one of the primary pillars to 'vindicate' American superiority, seeking solutions through

an assertive condemnation of other illiberal governments, and also leading to an explosive interest in North Korean human rights advocacy since 2004.

To what extent is this historical analysis relevant to current discourses? The final two chapters conducted critical discourse analysis on the sources published by four different organizations, based on the hypothesis of the "post-humanitarian distance" mentioned in chapter 1. While examining sources that would emphasize the need for human rights activism in North Korea, chapter 3 proved that conservative religious organizations tend to identify themselves through an extreme framework of light vs. dark. The distance was wide enough to justify a full condemnation against the North Korean government, mostly supported by conversion narratives that praised becoming a "cultural citizen" of Western Christianity. The post-humanitarian distance of the conservative religious groups included an inherent hierarchy that would implement their religious duty as "tutors of mankind" (moral universalism) and offer solutions by injecting Western conceptions of freedom and moral/religious rationality (reflexive particularism).

Chapter 4 analyzed liberal democrats who highlighted the duty of 'us' as an international community (moral universalism), reasoning their humanitarian justifications based on realistic grounds. At the same time, their selective support for North Korean human rights was prominently based on American foreign policy and national security (reflexive particularism) with a tilted focus on CPRs. When compared to the religious organizations, the liberal democrats' post-humanitarian distance was rather vague. However, the inclination to view human rights through the lenses of international power struggles postulated a linear and teleological conception of progress that paralleled American vindicationist ideas, justifying more engagement of the West.

Although the evangelicals and the democrats differed on the extent or way of identifying the distance between 'us the observers' and 'them the sufferers', this thesis argued that both sectors presumed a self-serving post-humanitarian distance with a selective approach that did not contemplate the structural circumstances of the sufferers. Instead, the organizations reflected on the observer's own sense of morality, either religious duties or international security concerns, at the expense of morally essentializing or victimizing the sufferers based on Western liberal assumptions about human nature. Without trying to discount the importance of religion or security issues in U.S. international relations, this thesis aimed to raise the awareness of deeply embedded

power relations, both historically inherent and currently reenacted by human rights discourses, that can be easily mystified in the name of 'universal human rights'.

Due to its focus on discourse analysis, this thesis did not deal with the dominant influence of neoliberalism or marketization on current human rights activism, which is also an important point that has been brought up by post-humanitarian critiques. However, although this thesis insists that the post-humanitarian tendency (practiced based on moral universalism and reflexive particularism) is demonstrated in North Korean human rights discourses, whether or not the tendency actually produces a "short-term, low-intensity form" (p. 108) to the donation market should be a matter of further research (Chouliarakie, 2010). The religious organizations, especially, and their reliance on religious duties and values seemed to contribute to a high level of humanitarian support that has been quite consistent during the last 20 years.

Furthermore, because this thesis highlighted the historicity of the American human rights regime, it can be assumed that the post-humanitarian distance is not only applied to North Korea as an exception. It was noticeable that the organizations were actively engaged in other places like the Western Sahara, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, etc. where the discourses might also be shaped in ways that are vulnerable to reproducing power relations. The argument of this thesis can be seen as an overall analysis of the connection between history, Western liberal traditions, and current human rights discourses in the U.S., using North Korea as a case study.

But there are still reasons why the case of North Korea, in particular, was meant to be seen as an important example for a post-structural/post-colonial approach to American human rights. While North Korea remains one of the least transparent countries in the world, American politicians and civic organizations tend to express heated interest towards the issue of 'human rights' in itself, sometimes prioritizing them even more than issues of politics or economics. This thesis aimed to deconstruct the inner mechanisms of American national identity that cause vehement attention to be directed towards human rights issues, despite knowing so little about North Korea in general.

North Korea is regarded as one of the most prominent conflict sites in contemporary international relations, consisting of Cold War tensions, global power struggles, issues of sovereignty and governance, or nuclear concerns. Thus, for human rights movements to deepen,

not disturb, a multi-dimensional and holistic understanding of a global conflict site, it will be important for the human rights approach to be balanced by tackling the situation not only from a normative view but also from a structural perspective. As the term already speaks for itself, human rights discourses are closely related to the actual lives of *humans*; they should be dealt with through a more considerate and nuanced sensibility to its consequences.

## Reference List

### Primary Sources

*About CFI*. Christian Freedom International. (n.d.). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://christianfreedom.org/about/.

Archive, W.C.D. (1950, September 9). *United States Courses of Action with Respect to Korea*, Wilson Center Digital Archive. Retrieved March 28, 2022, from https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116194.

BBC. (2017, August 30). *Kenneth Bae on North Korea's 'brainwashed society'*. BBC News. Retrieved June 13, 2022, from https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-41095694.

Biden, J. R. (2021, October 14). *Statement by Pfresident Joseph R. Biden, jr. on the United States election to the Human Rights Council (HRC)*. The White House. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/10/14/statement-by-president-joseph-r-biden-jr-on-the-united-states-election-to-the-human-rights-council-hrc/.

Bush, G. H. W. (1990, September 11). *Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit*. George Bush Presidential Library and Museum. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/public-papers/2217.

Bush, G.H. (2002, January 09). *"President Delivers State of the Union Address". George W. Bush. Washington, D.C.: The White House*. Archived from The Original on May 2, 2009. Retrieved June 1, 2022.https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html

Byun, D. (2021, April 16). US Law-makers express concerns over S. Korea’s anti-Pyongyang leafleting ban. *Yonhap News Agency*. https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210416000200325.

*Co-chairs join International Parliamentarians in urging end to human rights abuses in North Korea*. Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. (2011, November 11). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/news/press-releases/co-chairs-wolf-and-mcgovern-join-international-parliamentarians-urging-end-human.

*Co-chairs Mcgovern and Smith Sign Bipartisan Letter urging Biden administration to appoint special envoy on North Korean human rights issues*. Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. (2021, March 22). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/news/press-releases/co-chairs-mcgovern-and-smith-sign-bipartisan-letter-urging-biden-administration.

*Co-chair Pitts sends message of hope and solidarity to the people of North Korea*. Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. (2016, February 8). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/news/press-releases/co-chair-pitts-sends-message-hope-people-north-korea.

*Escape from North Korea.* Christian Freedom International Newsletter Archive. (2022, April). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://christianfreedom.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/April2022_CFI-E-Newsletter-1-Merged-copy.pdf.

*Escaping North Korea - the plight of defectors*. Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. (2010, September 23). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/events/hearings/escaping-north-korea-plight-defectors.

FAO. (n.d.). *Democratic People's Republic of Korea*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index/en/?lang=en&iso3=prk.

General Assembly Resolution. (1966, December 16). *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. OHCHR. Retrieved June 3, 2022, from

https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights.

*Getting Aid and Bibles into North Korea*. Christian Freedom International Newsletter Archive. (2019, April). Retreived June 1, 2022, from https://christianfreedom.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Apr2019_CFI-Newsletter-1-Merged-and-flattened.pdf.

*Getting Deep Inside North Korea*. Christian Freedom International Newsletter Archive (2020, April). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://christianfreedom.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/April2020_CFI-E-Newsletter-1-Merged.pdf.

Gladstone, R. (2016, May 2). Kenneth Bae, Longest-Held U.S. Prisoner of North Korea, Reveals Details of Ordeal, *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/03/world/asia/kenneth-bae-longest-held-us-prisoner-of-north-korea-reveals-details-of-ordeal.html.

*Hearings*. Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. (n.d.). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/events.

*History*. Human Rights Watch. (2020, May 8). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.hrw.org/about/about-us/history.

*Human rights in North Korea*. Human Rights Watch. (2007, February 17). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/02/17/human-rights-north-korea.

Jones, E. (2018, April 28). *Christians call for International Day of Prayer for North Korea to fight 'demonic principalities'*. CBN News. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/cwn/2018/april/christians-call-for-international-day-of-prayer-for-north-korea-to-fight-demonic-principalities.

Jun, W.T. (2000). Understanding of North Korean defector's adaptation to the southern society and psychological conflicts. *The Source Book of Korean Psychological Association*. 67-91.

Jung, J.A., & Son, Y.C., & Lee, J.H. (2013). A Study on Defecting Motive and Social Adaptation of North Korean Defectors in South Korea: Focusing on Moderating Effect of Resilience, *Reunification Policy Studies* 22(2). 215-248.

Lake, A. (1993, September 21). *Johns Hopkins University*. Anthony Lake, "from containment to enlargement". Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/lakedoc.html.

Malinowski, T. (2011, December 22). *Is there any way to help the people of North Korea?* Human Rights Watch. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/12/22/there-any-way-help-people-north-korea.

*News*. Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. (n.d.). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/news.

*Newsletters*. Christian Freedom International. (n.d.). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://christianfreedom.org/news/newsletters/.

*North Korea*. North Korea | Country Page | World | Human Rights Watch. (2020, October 19). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.hrw.org/asia/north-korea.

*North Korea*. Defense Forum Foundation. (n.d.). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://defenseforumfoundation.org/north-korea/.

*North Korea: Denuclearization talks and human rights*. Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. (2018, September 13). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/events/hearings/north-korea-denuclearization-talks-and-human-rights.

*North Korea: Ongoing Human Rights Violations in an era of change*. Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. (2012, April 15). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/events/hearings/north-korea-ongoing-human-rights-violations-era-change.

*North Korea: Prioritize dire rights situation*. Human Rights Watch. (2018, May 28). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/05/north-korea-prioritize-dire-rights-situation.

*Policy Forum 04*-39A: *The North Korean Human Rights Act and other Congressional Agendas*, NAPS Net Policy Forum. (2004, October 07). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-policy-forum/0439a_lee-html/.

Roxann. (n.d.). *Mission and History* . Defense Forum Foundation. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://defenseforumfoundation.org/mission-and-history/about.html.

Sifton, J. (2019, February 20). *Why Trump needs to raise human rights with North Korea's Kim*. Human Rights Watch. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/02/20/why-trump-needs-raise-human-rights-north-koreas-kim.

Scholte, S. (2010, July 11) *Walter Judd Freedom Award Speech,* Defense Forum Foundation. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://defenseforumfoundation.org/north-korea/walter-judd-freedom-award-2010-press-release-by-the-fund-for-american-studies.html.

Scholte, S. (2013, October 28). *Will North Korea ever be Free?.* The Asan Institute for Policy Studies. (2013, October 28). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from http://en.asaninst.org/contents/special-lecture-suzanne-scholte-defense-forum-foundation-will-north-korea-ever-be-free/.

Seok, K. (2004, April 15). *Speak out about human rights in North Korea*. Human Rights Watch. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.hrw.org/news/2004/04/15/speak-out-about-human-rights-north-korea.

Seok , K. (2009, February 17). *Human rights in North Korea*. Human Rights Watch. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/02/17/human-rights-north-korea.

*Smuggling Truth into North Korea*. Christian Freedom International Newsletter Archive. (2021, July). Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://christianfreedom.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/July2021_CFI_E-Newsletter-1-Merged-copy.pdf.

Strand, P. (2018, January 26). *'He set himself up as god': A look at North Korea's counterfeit Trinity*. CBN News. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2018/january/he-set-himself-up-as-god-a-look-at-north-koreas-counterfeit-trinity.

The New York Times. (1978, December 7). *Excerpts from Carter's speech on anniversary of human rights declaration*. The New York Times. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.nytimes.com/1978/12/07/archives/excerpts-from-carters-speech-on-anniversary-of-human-rights.html.

Thomas, G. (2017, July 7). *Meet the American woman helping North Korea's defectors [video]*. The Daily Caller. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://dailycaller.com/2017/07/01/meet-the-american-woman-helping-north-koreas-defectors-video/.

UNCOI. (2013, September 17). *HRC: Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*. OHCHR. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/co-idprk/commission-inquiryon-h-rin-dprk.

United Nations Headquarters. (2019). *Remarks by President Trump to the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly*. National Archives and Records Administration. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-74th-session-united-nations-general-assembly/.

WFP. (n.d.). *Annual country reports - democratic people's republic of korea*. UN World Food Programme. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from https://www.wfp.org/publications/annual-country-reports-democratic-peoples-republic-korea.

Zaimov, S. (2018, April 25). *Trump-Kim Jong Un meeting: Hope for millions or deceptive ploy by North Korea's 'satanic' regime?* The Christian Post. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from

https://www.christianpost.com/news/trump-kim-jong-un-meeting-hope-millions-deceptive-ploy-north-korea-satanic-regime.html.

**Secondary Literature**

Arendt, H. (1990). *On Revolution*, Penguin Books.

Bruner, E. M. (1986). Experience and Its Expressions. In V. W. Tuner & E. M. Bruner (Eds.), *The Anthropology of Experience*. University of Illinois Press.

Boltanski, L. (2009). *Distance Suffering: Morality, Media, and Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Boettcher, J.G. (2006). The North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004: More Rhetoric or a New U.S. Policy Statement, *North Korean Review, 2*(1), 89-98. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43908681.

Cho, Y. A. & Jeon, W.T. A Qualitative study of North Korea Women Defectors' adaptation to South Korean life. *Korean Journal of Woman Psychology, 10*(1), 17-35.

Chouliarakie, L. Post Humanitarianism: Humanitarian communication beyond a politic of pity. *International Journal of Cultural Studies, 13*(2), 107-126. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877909356720.

Chung, B.H. (2004). Illusion and Maladaptation of the North Korean Refugees: The influence of the confusions in perception by the South Korean society. *Cross-cultural Studies, 10*(1). 33-62.

Cox, M. (2000). Wilsonianism Resurgent? The Clinton Administration and the Promotion of Democracy. In M. Cox & J. Ikenberry & T. Inoguchi (Eds.), *America Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*. Oxford University Press.

Douzinas, C. (2007). Many Faces of Humanitarianism. *Parrhesia 2*, 1-28.

Edkins, J. (2007), Poststructuralism. In M. Griffiths (Eds), *International Relations Theory for Twenty-First Century: An Introduction* (pp. 88-99). Routledge.

Engel, J. A. (2010). A better world...but don't get carried away: The foreign policy of George H. W. Bush Twenty Years on. *Diplomatic History*, *34*(1), 25–46. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7709.2009.00831.x.

Fahy, S. (2018). *Dying for Rights: Putting North Korea's Human Rights Abuses on the Record*. Columbia University Press.

Fassin, D., & Rechtman, R. (2009) *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*. Princeton University Press.

Feffer, D. (2004). The Forgotten Lessons of Helsinki: Human rights and U.S. –North Korean relations. *World Policy Journal*, *21*(3), 31–39. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40210234.

Foot, R. (1990). Victims of the Cold War: The POW Issue. In *A Substitute for Victory: The Politics of Peacemaking at the Korean Armistice Talks.* Cornell University Press.

Foucault, M. (1972). Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language (S. Smith, Trans). Pantheon Books. (Original work published 1969).

Foucault, M., & Frédéric. G. (2010). *The government of self and others: Lectures at the College de France.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Hesford, W.S. (2011). *Spectacular Rhetorics: Human Rights Visions, Recognitions, Feminisms.* Duke University Press.

Hopgood, S. (2013). *The Endtimes of Human Rights*. Cornell University Press.

Hunt, L. (2007). *Inventing Human Rights: A History*. Norton & Company.

Hurd, I. (2008). Constructivism. In C. Reus-Smit & D. Snidal (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Huntington, S.P. (2004). *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*. Simon and Schuster.

Hong, C. (2013). REFRAMING NORTH KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS: Introduction. *Critical Asian Studies, 45*(4), 511–532. https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2013.851154

Hough J. & Bell, M. (2020). North Koreans' public narratives and conditional inclusion in South Korea. *Critical Asian Studies, 52*(2), 161-181. https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2020.1740606.

Jacoby, T. (1986). The Reagan Turnaround on Human Rights, *Foreign Affairs, 64*(5). 1066-1086. https://doi.org/10.2307/20042781.

Jung, J. H. (2015). Refugee and Religious Narratives: The Conversion of North Koreans from Refugees to God's Warriors. In A. Horstmann & J. H. Jung (Eds.), *Building Noah's Ark for Migrants, Refugees, and Religious Committees*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Khor, L. (2011). Human Rights and Network Power. *Human Rights Quarterly, 33*(1), 105-137. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23015982.

Kim, H.J. (2015). *The Origins of the Panmunjom Regime 판문점 체제의 기원*. Humanitas 휴마니타스.

Kim, H.J. (2010). The Resistance of the Prisoners of War and the Anti-communist Orientalism – Focused on the incidents in the UNC POW camps during the Korean War 전쟁포로들의 저항과 반공오리엔텔리즘 – 한국 전쟁기 유엔국 포로수용소 내 사건들을 중심으로. *Sarim* 사림, *36*, 141-178.

Kim, S.K. (2012). "Defector," "Refugee," or "Migrant"? North Korean Settlers in South Korea's Changing Social Discourse. *North Korean Review, 8*(2), 94-110. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43910315.

Kim, T. (2020). From Humanitarian Relief to Democracy Aid: Foreign Assistance Towards North Korea, 1996-2016. *Inha Journal of International Studies, 15*(3), 585-612. https://doi.org/10.1111/pafo.12173.

Kyle, R. (2006). *Evangelicalism: An Americanized Christianity*. Transaction Publishers.

Lee, G.Y. & Um, T.W. (2002). Research on the satisfaction rate of North Korean defectors in cultural acculturation and its effect on depression. *Korean Academy of Mental Health Social Work, 35*, 217-234.

Lee, K.Y. (2005). Social Work Approach to North Korean Defectors' Resettlement as a Minority Issue. *Reunification Studies,* 9(2).

Lee, W., & Yi, J. (2021). South Korean Evangelical Narratives on North Koreans and Homosexuals. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 68(12), 1923–1949. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2020.1715140.

Little, D. (2010). Calvinism and American National Identity. In T. Davis (Eds.), *John Calvin's American Legacy*. Oxford University Press.

Loomba, A. (2015). *Colonialism/Post-Colonialism*. Routledge.

Mahmood, S. (2011). *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject.* Princeton University Press.

Miller, P. (2014). Left, Right, Born Again. In P. Miller (Eds.), *The Age of Evangelicalism: America's Born-Again Years* (pp. 32-59). Oxford University Press.

Monten, J. (2005). The Roots of the Bush Doctrine: Power, Nationalism, and Democracy Promotion in U.S. Strategy. *International Security* 29(4). 112-156. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4137499.

Moyn, S. (2015). *Christian Human Rights*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Moyn, S. (2010). *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*. Belknap Press.

Mutua, M. (2001). Savages, Victims and Saviors: The Metaphor of Human Rights. *Harvard International Law Journal*, 42(1), 201–245. https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/journal_articles/570.

Nichols, J. A. (2008). EVANGELICALS AND HUMAN RIGHTS: THE CONTINUING AMBIVALENCE OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS' SUPPORT FOR HUMAN

RIGHTS. *Journal of Law and Religion,* 24(2), 629–662. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25654332.

Niebuhr, R. (1952). *The Irony of American History*. Scribner.

Nunes, J. (2017). Doctors Against Borders: Médecins Sans Frontières and Global Health Security. In M. Hofman & S. Au (Eds.), *The Politics of Fear: Médecins sans Frontières and the West African Ebola Epidemic* (pp. 3–24). Oxford University Press.

Oteino, R.F. et al. (2016). Metaphors in Political Discourse: A Review of Selected Studies. *International Journal of English and Literature,* 7(2). 21-26. https://doi.org/10.5897/IJEL2015.0856.

Otteson, J.R. (2009). Kantian Individualism and Political Libertarianism. *The Independent Review,* 13(3), 389-409. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24562123.

Peck, J. (2011). *Ideal Illusions: How the U.S. Government Co-opted Human Rights.* Metropolitan Books.

Reeves, C. (2016). Developing the Humanitarian Image in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century China. In H. Fehrenbach & D. Rodogno (Eds.), *Humanitarian Photography: A History* (pp.115–139). Cambridge University Press.

Robbins, S. (2018). THE BIBLICAL SYMBOL OF LIGHT IN J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S THE SILMARILLION AND THE LORD OF THE RINGS. *Societal Studies,* 9(2). 171-186. https://doi.org/10.13165/SMS-17-9-2-05.

Ryu, D.Y. (2001). The Meaning of "Evangelicalism" in Early Korean Churches 초기 한국교회에서 "복음주의"의 의미. *The Institute of the History of Christianity in Korea 한국 기독교 역사 연구소*, 46. 15-21.

Ryu, E. (2018). Human Rights Situation in North Korea: Lack of Significant Progress from the United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms and What Can be Done. *Minnesota Journal of International Law,* 27(1) 555-580. https://scholarship.law.umn.edu/mjil/328.

Saghaye-Biria, H. (2018). Decolonizing the 'Universal' Human Rights Regime: Questioning American Exceptionalism and Orientalism. *ReOrient,* 4(1), 59-77. https://doi.org/10.13169/reorient.4.1.0059.

Shin, N.H. (2015). The Activities of North Korean Defectors Organizations in South Korea and the Politics of Recognition in the Context of Politics at Home and Abroad 남한사회 탈북 단체의 활동과 인정의 정치, *Cross-Cultural Studies 비교문화연구*, 21(2), 329-356.

Son, S. A. (2018). South Korea's North Korean Image Problem: Human Rights under the Spotlight. *Asian Studies Review,* 42(4). 662–681. https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2018.1510898.

Søndergaard, R.S. (2020). *Reagan, Congress, and Human Rights: Contesting Morality in U.S. Foreign Policy.* Cambridge University Press.

Song, J. (2021). The 'Savage–Victim–Saviour' Story Grammar of the North Korean Human Rights Industry. *Asian Studies Review,* 45(1), 48–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2020.1764492.

Sung, M. (2019). Balloon Warriors for North Korean Human Rights Activism: A Critique of North Korean Defector-Activists' Post-Humanitarianism. *Critical Asian Studies,* 51(3), 355–367. https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2019.1596750.

Tovy, T. (2011). Manifest Destiny in POW Camps: The U.S. Army Reeducation Program during the Korean War. *The Historian,* 73(3). 503-525. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24455302.

Uimonen, P. (2020). Decolonising cosmopolitanism: An anthropological reading of Immanuel Kant and Kwame Nkrumah on the world as one. *Critique of Anthropology,* 40(1). 81-101. doi:10.1177/0308275X19840412.

Vance, C. (1977). Human Rights and Foreign Policy. *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 223. https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/gjicl/vol7/iss3/3.

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2016). *Methods of critical discourse studies*. Sage Publications.

Yi, H.Y. (2016). International Dispositive of Human Rights and the Narrative of Tragedy: Focusing on a Case study of North Korean Refugees in Germany 국제 인권장치와 비극의 서사: 탈북 난민들의 독일 이주에 대한 사례 연구를 중심으로. Economy and Society 경제와 사회, 109. 191-223. http://www.dbpia.co.kr/journal/articleDetail?nodeId=NODE06635976.

Yoon, S.H. (2016). The Atlantic Charter and Liberal Internationalism. In H.D. Yoon (Eds.), *International Conferences that made Korea 대한민국을 만든 국제회의* (pp. 66-69)., National Museum of Contemporary Korean History.

## Appendix A.

### Religious organizations' language used to describe Americans and their role in relations to North Korea

| | |
|---|---|
| **Defense Forum Foundation** (words of Suzanne Scholte) | "to deliver our code of American sportsmanship and decency into the minds of people"<br>"you cannot stop communism and have if fall apart unless you resist"<br>"defensing the values of freedom, individual responsibility, and free markets"<br>"world of bright lights"<br>"us living in free societies to raise voice on behalf of North Korean people"<br>"to rescue those being led away to death" |
| **Christian Freedom International** | "using the light of god's word to pierce the darkness"<br>"the truth" (referring to biblical verse spoken by Jesus)<br>"to be the role of missionaries during the collapse of the Soviet Union"<br>"in the richness of life in Christ"<br>"like Jesus came and set the captives free" |

## Appendix B.

### Religious organizations' language used to describe North Korea

| | North Korean government / leaders | North Korean society | North Korean people |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Defense Forum Foundation** (words of Suzanne Scholte) | "people who have no regard for human life"<br>"a personification of evil"<br>"world's worst human rights violator"<br>"truly satanic regime"<br>"using deceptive ploy"<br>"an evil anti-God regime"<br>"a counterfeit god"<br>"perversion of the Christian Gospel Message" | "hell on earth"<br>"an evil place"<br>"pure evil"<br>"replicating the horrors of WW2"<br>"the only country in the world that do not enjoy one single human rights"<br>"world of blackness"<br>"land of darkness"<br>"worst human rights tragedy occurring in the world today"<br>"place of first and foremost spiritual battle"<br>"made of demonic principles" | "like the survivors of the holocaust"<br>"enslaved brothers and sisters"<br>"in a nightmarish paranoia"<br>"brainwashed to hate us" |
| **Christian Freedom International** | "using the art of deception"<br>"full of toxic lies"<br>"evil dictatorship" | "drenched in darkness"<br>"like a big jail"<br>"nation in bondage, great fear, suppression" | "worshipping a false god"<br>"enslaved and imprisoned Jewish ancestors of Jesus"<br>"brainwashed" |

## Appendix C.

### Civil and Political Rights (CPRs) vs. Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ESCRs)

| | **Civil and Political Rights** | **Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights** |
|---|---|---|
| **Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission** | - Arbitrary detention, torture, extrajudicial killings, human trafficking, forced abortion, freedom of speech, religion, assembly, movement<br>- Slave labor, labor camps<br>- Information blockade<br>- Prison camps<br>- Sentenced in prison camps<br>- Political repression, forced labor, torture | - Urge for family reunions<br>- Poverty<br>- Shortage on food and medical supplies<br>- Starve because of lack of food<br>- Famine<br>- Family reunions |
| **Human Rights Watch** | - Arbitrary executions, torture, forced labor, limits in freedom of speech and association, religious and press freedom<br>- Public execution, enslavement in prison camps<br>- No organized political opposition, independent labor union, free media, civil society, arbitrary | - Proper monitoring in food aid |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | arrests, detention, lack of due process<br>- Rise of torture and execution<br>- Severe restriction of freedom of expression, assembly, association, religion, prohibiting all political opposition, independent media, independent voices and organizations, trade unions<br>- Criticism on conservative, male-dominated society (The right for women to wear trousers and ride bicycles) | |