

SUMMARY

Enhancing the Conceptual Framework of North, Wallis and Weingast. Application to the Case of North Korea

1. Justification for the topic selection

There has been little or no work published in Poland on the new Conceptual Framework developed by North, Wallis and Weingast, as outlined in their works, *Violence and Social Orders* and *In the Shadow of Violence*¹.

North Korea remains for many observers an unfathomable country and one that evokes measures of horror, disgust and fascination in that it appears, on the face of it, to be a throwback to an earlier age in twentieth century history when totalitarian regimes “stalked the earth” in the forms of Nazi Germany, Stalinist Soviet Union, Maoist China and Mussolini’s Italy².

It is argued that the Conceptual Framework constitutes an appropriate “tool of analysis”, subject to the refinement and enhancement thereof, as noted later below, to seek to understand and explain North Korea.

Thus, there is a gap in our knowledge with respect to both the Conceptual Framework and North Korea. In view of this gap identified, a case study would seem essential and North Korea as a case study would constitute an early stage application of the relatively recent new work of North, Wallis and Weingast.

¹ DC North, J Wallis, & B Weingast, *Violence and Social Orders*, CUP, USA, 2009; *In the Shadow of Violence*, CUP, USA, 2013.

² See CJ Friedrich & ZK Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship & Autocracy*, Praeger, USA, 1966 edn. A “flavour” of various authors’ sentiments regarding North Korea can be gleaned by reference to the titles of their works: V Cha, *North Korea: The Impossible State*, Bodley Head, UK, 2012; J Becker, *Rogue Regime*, OUP, USA, 2006; A Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia*, OUP, UK, 2013; N Eberstadt, *The North Korean Economy: Between Crisis and Catastrophe*, Transaction Publishers, USA, 2007; P French, *North Korea: State of Paranoia*, Zed Books, UK, 2014. Further examples, which might also serve as contenders, include B Bechtol’s *Defiant Failed State* and *Red Rogue*.

2. The Main Objectives of the dissertation

The objective of this dissertation is to examine and critique the Conceptual Framework of North, Wallis and Weingast and then to apply the enhanced model arising therefrom to the case of North Korea.

There are, in addition, a number of follow up questions to be addressed when considering North Korea:

- (1) Can we enhance the criteria for what constitutes “consolidated political control” over the Violent Capacity organisation? Can one-party control over the Violent Capacity organisation constitute such control and trigger the meeting of one of the “doorstep conditions,” as noted above?
- (2) Can we understand why North Korea’s economic performance deteriorated post 1973 despite, according to Angus Maddison, being comparable in GDP per capita with South Korea up to this date? What factors took place in the late 1980s/early 1990s to worsen the performance? How did North Korea’s government introduce a *de facto* transition to a market economy? What constitutes the system of rents for the dominant coalition in North Korea?
- (3) What is the role of North Korea’s Violent Capacity organisation, the Korean People’s Army, in the country’s economy and social order?
- (4) How does North Korea exercise control over the population? What is the significance of *juche* ideology and the operation of the *Songbun* social stratification system? What does the treatment of women in North Korea say about the operation of both formal and informal rules in this country?
- (5) Should per capita GDP measure for developing countries in the Conceptual Framework be supplemented by considerations of aid assistance, overseas remittances and other foreign aid?

As part of the dissertation, consideration is also given to the “theory of double balance” and its efficacy. Of note is that, based on their interpretation of recorded history, North, Wallis and Weingast can view the transition process as taking fifty years or more with progress in political and economic spheres interacting with each other with the “double balance” being achieved in a “staggered” manner ie progress in one not necessarily moving in synchronicity with the other. This process as it appears in North Korea is also be the subject of examination within the dissertation.

3. The dissertation hypotheses

Based on the abovementioned objectives and research issues, we can formulate the following supporting hypotheses which are set out in tabular form and divided between the *theoretical*, *justification* and *empirical* components of the research work to be embarked on. The *theoretical* component comprises the critique element of the process which seeks to arrive at an enhanced Conceptual Framework; the *justification* component draws on those items, encompassing key events and case studies, from the works of North, Wallis and Weingast and separately Douglass North, with a view to criticising and confirming the hypotheses; whilst the *empirical* aspect is the application of the enhanced Conceptual Framework to the particular case study of North Korea.

Item	Theoretical hypothesis	Justification from North, Wallis & Weingast works	Empirical approach
1	If Violent Capacity organisations are incorporated in an amended Conceptual Framework, then it will enhance our explanation of the social order.	Victuallers` case; Mexico case study; South Korea case study	We will examine the Korean People`s Army in the social order of North Korea with emphasis on its manpower, call on defence expenditures as well as its activities in Construction, Agriculture, Mining, Transport and Financial Operations, as well as its role in the ideology and belief systems of the country.
2	If informal rules are incorporated in an amended Conceptual	Britain`s 1832 Reform Act;	We will examine the role of the <i>Songbun</i> social

	Framework, then it will enhance our explanation of the social order.	Doorstep conditions of France and USA in XIX century	stratification system that operates in North Korea and we will examine, notwithstanding the existence of certain rights specified in the Constitution, how informal behaviours and constraints dominate in the sphere of womens` rights, religious and press freedoms.
3	If ideology and beliefs are incorporated in an amended Conceptual Framework, then it will enhance our explanation of the social order.	Douglass North`s earlier writings; South Korea case study	We will examine the role of <i>Juche</i> in North Korea as well as how it developed as an instrument of the country`s leadership to exercise control over the population, particularly in the areas of education as well as the Violent Capacity, Political and Economic organisations of North Korea.
4	If we examine the nature of consolidated political control over a Violent Capacity organisation as in a state dominated by just one-party, then this should not necessarily constitute a doorstep condition for transition to an Open Access Order, as envisaged by North, Wallis and	Britain, France and USA in XIX and XX century; Mozambique case study; modern China and pre WWII Germany.	We will examine the nature of consolidated political control exercised over the Korean People`s Army as effected through the mechanisms in place in the country and we shall seek to refine the criteria of consolidated political control over a Violent Capacity organisation for the

	Weingast.		enhanced Conceptual Framework.
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4. The Structure of the dissertation

In Chapter 1, we will examine the Conceptual Framework and the role of violence, rents, Political/Economic/Violence Capacity organisations, the definition of Limited Access and Open Access Orders, doorstep conditions and transition steps, as well as the historical and empirical basis. In particular, we will see how North Wallis and Weingast viewed Britain, the USA and France as open access orders in the nineteenth century and critically assess their treatment thereof. We will also look at how the authors have treated one-party states, of which North Korea is one, by reference to both China and Mozambique.

In Chapter 2, we will examine the historical narrative approach adopted by North Wallis and Weingast in connection with examples and case studies employed by them. We will consider their treatment of rents as well as critically assess their employment of the dominant coalition in the Conceptual Framework. We will consider the appropriateness of certain economic measures in the context of North Korea. Based on the aforementioned framework, we will proceed to look at how we may enhance the treatment of Violent Capacity organizations given the issues arising from our assessment of the authors` works and their historical examples/case studies. In addition, we will consider the treatment of beliefs and ideology. Given observations of North Korea, we will consider the nature of “totalitarian regimes”.

Chapter 3 seeks to reassess the case study on South Korea already carried out by the authors with particular emphasis placed upon a number of issues connected with both violence and Violence Capacity organisations. We will pay particular attention to the development of South Korea during the period from the 1960s to the 1980s when the South Korean army governed the country.

In Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, we examine, in their turn, the Political, Economic and Violent Capacity organisations as well as Beliefs and Ideology in the context of North Korea through the Enhanced Conceptual Framework.

5. Sources and research method

The central works reviewed were those set out above by North, Wallis and Weingast (“NWW” for the purposes of the table below) and particular emphasis was placed on the approach outlined in respect of “violence, organisations, institutions and beliefs”. The review in chapters 1 to 3 identified certain omissions or under utilisation or under theorisation of components of the apparatus embodied in their new approach. These can be broken down further into their component parts, based particularly on Douglass North’s earlier works on *institutions*, which differentiates between *formal* rules eg government law and regulations, and *informal* rules eg social norms and conventions. The table analyses the components, as follows and the sources accessed to refine the Conceptual Framework before applying to the case of North Korea:

Category	Present in works and dealt with	Present	Not Present	How rectified in dissertation by research in literature
Violence		Y		Considered Johan Galtung; Michael Mann
Organisations:				
Political	Y			But also Friedrich & Brzezinski and Saxonberg re totalitarianism
Economic	Y			
Violent Capacity		Y		Mann; Marxist-Leninist theory; Military-industrial and military-economic linkages; civil-military relations (Huntington, Janowitz, Finer).
Institutions:				
Formal	Y			
Informal			Y	Douglass North’s work; Gaetano Mosca
Enforcement			Y	North’s work
Beliefs		Y		North’s 2005 work; Mann, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim

Thus, the first part of the dissertation up to chapter 3 is to consider the examples provided in the works of North, Wallis and Weingast to ascertain points of interest to refine the Conceptual Framework with a view to applying to the case study of North Korea. North, Wallis and Weingast have already conducted in their second work, *In the Shadow of Violence*, eight case studies. The dissertation does not seek to negate the results obtained but merely to investigate a number of them, to refine the original concept of “violence, organisations, institutions and beliefs” in the light of the full apparatus of the Conceptual Framework, and then apply to the case study of North Korea in chapters 4 to 7. The refined Conceptual Framework is thus applied (or tested) in the case of North Korea.

6. Findings and results

Based on the work carried out, by reference to both the case studies noted in Chapters 2 and 3, as well as the application to North Korea, we can surmise:

- 1) If Violent Capacity organisations are incorporated in an amended Conceptual Framework, then it will enhance our explanation of the social order.

With respect to North Korea, the principal finding is that the KPA is substantially involved in business and economic activities, outside the military-industrial complex sphere. The KPA’s use of manpower in construction (including tourism projects), mining, agriculture and light industry reveal it to be a sizeable employer in the country. It also is substantially involved, via its financial operations, in what is termed “the court economy” – an important circuit of monies sourced from foreign trade as well as other activities, which secures support for the top leadership. In addition, the KPA is involved in the “informal economy” through acting in patron organisations that shield entrepreneurs.

- 2) If informal rules are incorporated in an amended Conceptual Framework, then it will enhance our explanation of the social order.

In North Korea, informal rules operate through the *Songbun* system which sets out what jobs you can do, what food, housing and education you may have access to and even who you might marry. It is an informal system of social stratification since there is no formal rule, as such, governing its existence in the Constitution. Instead, it is administered by the bureaucracy and secret police in line with the dictates (and whims) of the leadership. Informal rules also operate in North Korea through *juche* (which is noted in next section), education and the extensive deployment of propaganda which seeks to align the Kim

leadership with the Confucian (and also Christian) concepts of patriarchy. Propaganda also seeks to highlight the hostility of the world around it by accentuating the presence of South Korea and the USA and ensure a “wartime” atmosphere. The eleven year education system largely exists to inculcate the values of the authorities into the young from an early age before conveying them to the Violent Capacity organisation for further “processing”.

- 3) If ideology and beliefs are incorporated in an amended Conceptual Framework, then it will enhance our explanation of the social order.

Firstly, as noted by Janos Kornai, ideology is *key* to understanding the socialist system, particularly in North Korea. The importation of Marxist-Leninism to North Korea, through Kim and his Soviet backed Kapsan faction, clearly influenced the industrialisation and modernisation programme pursued as North Korea sought to build upon the existing foundations of the Japanese colonial era industrial and manufacturing base.

Ideology has also served as an effective instrument of control over its population rather than the wholesale application of violence. Foreigners, particularly South Korean, Japanese and American, are viewed through the prism of either colonial occupation or the Korean war of 1950-3. A constant recourse to “Military First” aims to ensure the population is permanently in a state of war and watchfulness, as well as sacrifice its wants for the greater good of its soldier-defenders.

- 4) If we examine the nature of consolidated political control over a Violent Capacity organisation as in a state dominated by just one-party, then this should not necessarily constitute a doorstep condition for transition to an Open Access Order, as envisaged by North, Wallis and Weingast.

A review of the nature of consolidated political control in North Korea highlights that a major criterion, ignored by North, Wallis and Weingast, is whether, under the Constitution or other formal rules, the Violent Capacity organization is serving as the protector of the Party in power and/or an ideology, rather than constituting, in the terminology of North, Wallis and Weingast, a Perpetually Lived Organisation.

In conclusion, it is argued that the Enhanced Conceptual Framework has achieved its objectives, as envisaged in the original hypotheses formulated to perform a more holistic analysis of the country and therefore better understand the social order of North Korea.

Keywords: Violence, Institutions, Limited/Open Access Orders, Douglass North, North Korea